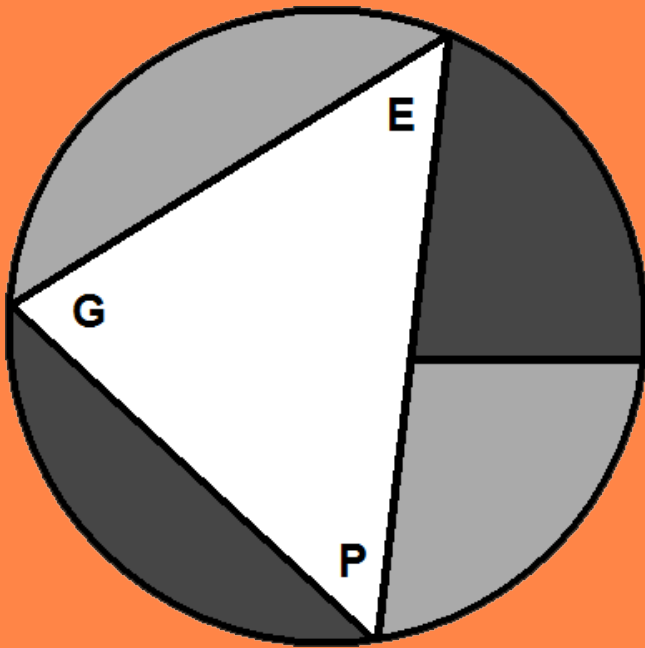


# Forum of EthnoGeoPolitics

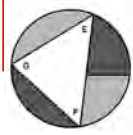


**Vol.2 No.2**  
**Autumn 2014**

**A publication of the Association for the Study of EthnoGeoPolitics**

**Amsterdam The Netherlands**

**Print ISSN: 2214-3211 Online ISSN: 2352-3654**



## Forum of EthnoGeoPolitics

### A publication of the Association for the Study of EthnoGeoPolitics (EGP)

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Registered at the Dutch Chamber of Commerce, Nr. 53597257

Print ISSN: 2214-3211 Online ISSN: 2352-3654

Publication date: 27 November 2014 (online edition)

Brill Typeface: <http://www.brill.com/brill-typeface>

### Scope

The aim of the Association for the Study of EthnoGeoPolitics (EGP), or EthnoGeoPolitics in short, is to further the study of and teaching on the cultural, social, ethnic and (geo-)political characteristics, processes and developments in different areas of the world, at universities, institutes and colleges in and outside the Netherlands. The association's journal, *Forum of EthnoGeoPolitics*, is above all intended to elicit analytic debate by allowing scholars to air their views, perspectives and research findings—with critical responses from others who may hold a different view or research approach (submit articles and responses to [info@ethnogeopolitics.org](mailto:info@ethnogeopolitics.org)). At the association's website, <http://www.ethnogeopolitics.org>, one can find more information about its foundation, founding members, aims, activities and publications—in particular freely downloadable copies of the journal's issues.

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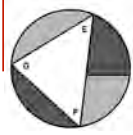
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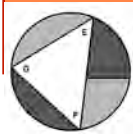


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## Editorial

# Patriotism and Brutality vis-à-vis Nationalism, Ethnicity and other Identity Formations: Conceptual, Normative and Empirical Reflections<sup>1</sup>

Caspar ten Dam

## Introduction

This extensive Editorial—provided in this issue by the Executive Editor rather than the Chief Editor Dr. Babak Rezvani, due to the latter's current commitments abroad—first discusses the challenge of how best to define patriotism and distinguish it from nationalism, ethnicism and other related, often overlapping concepts and phenomena. This is followed by, and intimately related to, my proposed principles on how best to define any concepts and phenomena in time and space. Suffice to say here now, is that proper, workable conceptualisation should be based on a tripartite distinction between *action*, *actor* and *motive* or human drive.

I then propose normative, i.e. moral and ethical, principles regarding the distinction between 'good' i.e. decent and defensible and 'bad' i.e. brutal and indefensible forms—that is to say, actions, norms and any other manifestations—of patriotism, based on the exemplary triad of *conscience*, *empathy* (or at least tolerance) and *honour* or self-respect. These principles are closely related to my ongoing research on brutality in armed conflict and other forms of political violence. Thus I will also say something about my *Brutalisation* theory and its constituent variables, and how forms of patriotism could either prevent, counter and combat brutality or rather, unfortunately, fan its flames.

I subsequently apply, in a very preliminary fashion, my main relevant concepts of patriotism, decency and brutality on a number of cases, often regarding contentious and sensitive events happening now or having transpired in the recent past, specifically from Poland, Ukraine and the Netherlands. I also address an unfortunately widespread phenomenon that is closely related to tendencies of brutality in general and 'bad patriotism' in particular: *intolerance*, which all too often leads to zero-sum politics and consequent violence against the 'unpatriotic' or 'alien' other.

Finally, I offer some normative and practical advice, to scholars, teachers, decisionmakers and citizens in general, on how to encourage, nurture and uphold the best, most decent and noble kinds of patriotism i.e. loyalty to one's home, community, people and state—which in the end amounts to loyalty to mankind and all other sentient beings within and beyond one's home.



### Defining patriotism—and any concepts and phenomena

Simply put, *patriotism* is one's readiness to defend or otherwise maintain and secure the peace and prosperity of one's home—ranging from one's personal and family homestead to one's village or regional community, all the way up to the homeland i.e. the (nation-)state one happens to live in. One's patriotic duty to defend one's chosen home and homeland may concern one's place of birth—but not necessarily so. It may concern one's loyalty to a newfound host home, nation or other locality after for instance emigration and intermarriage.

Therefore, patriotism may, but may not necessarily, equal tribalism, ethnicism and/or nationalism and statism; these concepts are distinct, even if these often refer to empirically overlapping phenomena—and thus typically have similar, overlapping definitions. For instance, the Collins Dictionary circumscribes *patriotism* as “devotion to one's own country and concern for its defence” (the word patriot derives from the Greek terms *pater* (father) and *patris* (fatherland; native land) ); it circumscribes *nationalism* as “a sentiment based on common cultural characteristics that binds a population” together (the word nation derives from the Latin *natio* (birth; tribe) )—but also as “loyalty or devotion to one's country; patriotism”.<sup>2</sup>

Be as it may, in my view patriotic identity may concern loyalty to a home, locality, tribe, nation and/or state other than one's own by birth. Essentially, patriotic loyalty may concern the host nation and not one's original fatherland or motherland.

In essence, patriotism, good patriotism, is all about repaying the hospitality of the place one happens to live in by defending that place with one's life if need be from internal and/or external aggression and other dangers (terrorism, gangsterism, etc.). Therefore, in my arguments, observations and research, I apply the following definitions of these distinct if often intertwined concepts:

*Patriotism*: the belief that it is one's duty, irrespective of one's motive—love, sense of obligation, sense of self-respect i.e. honour, or even self-interest and opportunism—to defend or otherwise maintain and secure the peace and prosperity of one's home—ranging from one's personal and family homestead to one's village or regional community, all the way up to the homeland i.e. the (nation-)state one happens to live in, not necessarily one's place of birth.

*Nationalism*: the belief that a nation i.e. a (supposedly) homogeneous people with common characteristics—shared history, territory, culture, religion, language, ethnicity (actual or perceived common ancestry; tribal if dispersed, clannish if geographically concentrated), race, etcetera—should have its own state i.e. system of rule. When a national people attain a state, i.e. governing authority, its rights are paramount over any other people residing within its territory.

*Irredentism*: the belief that a nation i.e. a territory with a supposedly homogeneous people with common characteristics—shared history, culture, language, ethnicity, etcetera—should have its own state, including territories of other, neighbouring states where (the majority of) people with the same characteristics reside. When a national people attain a state, i.e. governing authority, its rights are paramount over any other people residing within its territory.



*Statism*: the belief that the territory of a region, republic or any other unity should have its own state. Such a state does not necessarily have to be based on a homogeneous people of one race, ethnicity, or other common characteristic. Its citizens may belong to heterogeneous communities, yet they in principle hold the same rights of citizenship (*Expansionism*: parallel to irredentism).

Therefore my definition of patriotism is broader than most, as it may concern one's identification and sense of duty to one's personal homestead or locality, as well as to an overarching homeland, be it a recognised nation-state or another entity. One reason for this wide definition is to encapsulate also identities and sentiments equivalent to those patriotic feelings towards one nation and state, like so-called 'primitive', 'tribal', 'traditional', 'pre-state' or 'pre-modern' identities and sentiments—as these exist among many or most Albanians and Chechens towards one's family, extended family and clan to this day.

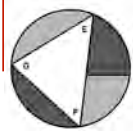
Naturally, all definitions are imperfect, and arbitrary in the sense of its demarcations and delineations due to either implicit, perhaps subconscious assumptions, or preferably explicit, well-argued suppositions. Nevertheless, I have developed the following conceptual principles in circumscribing and distinguishing all kinds of phenomena, which I proposition in my forthcoming book *Conceptualising Brutality and Violence* as follows:

It is best to a) base primary concepts on observable actions by humans and other (sentient) organisms that may occur at any point in time; b) base secondary concepts on observable actors i.e. individuals and groups of humans or other sentient beings; and c) base tertiary concepts on more elusive and fluctuating drives, motives and beliefs of actors across certain points in time—even if the latter two categories involve deeper analysis of the reasons why 'action-phenomena' occur.<sup>3</sup>

As a rule of thumb, (and again I quote from *Conceptualising Brutality and Violence*) "I classify phenomena of action, like the *methods* of violence regarding tactics and techniques, and *means* of violence regarding targets and lethal and non-lethal use of weaponry, as main or primary *universal concepts*; phenomena of actor-identity, like the *forms* of violence regarding rebel, other non-state, semi-state, state and other actors, I classify as intermediate or secondary *structural concepts*; and the more elusive phenomena of actor-contemplation, like the *ends* of violence regarding drives, motives, long-term goals and short-term objectives, I classify as sub-typical or tertiary *empirical concepts*".<sup>4</sup>

At first sight, patriotism as defined by me appears to be a 'mere' tertiary concept of motive—an elusive one indeed, for so far one hardly ever fully can know, grasp or prove the sentiments, motives and drives of any human being for his or her particular actions.

However, one may redefine patriotism as an *observable action* of defence, maintenance and furtherance of one's home or homeland, and thereby turn it into a primary concept. Or one may turn the conceptual hierarchy upside down, and deem human motives like patriotism as love for one's home or homeland to be primary concepts, and human actions to be tertiary



concepts; after all, many, most or even all human actions ultimately derive from human drives, needs and motives, hopefully in the form of well-reasoned, thought-through justifications of certain actions. The reason why I generally prefer and apply an action-actor-motive hierarchy of concepts above a motive-actor-action one, is because the first hierarchy follow or should follow a descending degree of provable observability.

### Distinguishing good and bad patriotism: brutality versus decency

More often than not, patriotism is based on ethnic, civic and other nationalist self-identifications with one's place of birth. This often leads to intolerance, discrimination and excessive violence against the internal and external 'other' in either defensive or offensive (including across-border aggressive) operations. Such extreme, bad patriotism, whereby the end supposedly justifies the means, is a typical cause and manifestation of brutality and *brutalisation* i.e. increasingly resort to terrorism, 'brigandry' (brigandage), gangsterism and other forms of violence<sup>5</sup> violating local and/or international norms—norms that are ultimately based on conscience, empathy and honour.

In my current research, I am developing an ethical model based on the 'triangle of goodness': any decent person feels, thinks, and acts or should feel, think and act through a) *conscience*, the sense of responsibility and the capacity to feel guilt and make amends towards one's fellow beings and other sentient, intelligent beings; b) *empathy*; the sense of identification and sympathy with or at least tolerance of other human beings and other sentient beings outside one's self-identified group and community; and c) *honour* or self-respect regarding oneself, one's own group and any wider community.

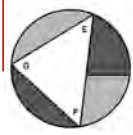
One's decency is best maintained if all these three human characteristics—conscience, empathy and honour—are present and fully alive within one's psyche and personality. Yet one is still able to remain decent and act decently if just one of these characteristics is alive and well.

For instance, one is still a moral being if one feels empathic towards the suffering of others, and is willing to help them—even if one's sense of direct or indirect responsibility for what is happening is weakly developed, or if one lacks the self-confidence and self-respect to act decisively to help those in need. In short, the heart is in the right place, but the necessary decisiveness and courage tends to be lacking.

Or one has become so weary, jaded and cynical, that one hardly feels empathy any more—perhaps even the capacity to feel guilty about anything has diminished or become fully subconscious. But so long as one retains a strong sense of honour, one is able and willing to stand up for oneself and help others, even rescue others in dire need. More importantly, a truly honourable person refrains from brutal violence against anyone, even against those whom he or she despises or cares nothing about.

Perhaps a minimal, basic degree of conscience is required for anybody to feel empathy or act honourably. After all, sociopaths without empathy and psychopaths without conscience and





empathy hardly ever act decently or with any honour. Still, in principle one is able to be and remain decent if just one of the three human conditions is strongly present in one's psyche and personality. One can only be a true patriot, or a patriot in the best sense of the word, if one possesses and retains at least one of these conditions.

For my current research on armed conflict and other forms of personal and political violence, I already have constructed a *Brutalisation* theory combining theorising elements from disciplines ranging from cultural anthropology to military psychology; a broad, multi-disciplinary approach has the best chance to significantly enhance one's comprehension of armed conflicts and their morally corrosive effects.

I have sought to falsify i.e. test the theory by exploring the values (norms, customs, beliefs), aims (objectives, aspirations, ideologies), and methods (tactics, techniques) and means (targets, weaponry) of violence by, for example, Chechen and Albanian separatists between 1979 and 2001, covering the crucial late Cold War and early post-Cold war periods. The theory's main variables are, which I normally depict as interconnected factors in a revolving cycle of violence:

- i) intolerant *violence-values* (norms of 'good' and 'bad' violence);
- ii) *conflict-inducing motivations* (grievances, 'greeds' or avarices<sup>6</sup>, interests and ideologies) i.e. motivations that cause or contribute to the conflict;
- iii) *combat-stresses* (stress-responses like shock, fear, fatigue, rage and consequent trauma among combatants); and
- iv) *conflict-induced motivations* (grievances, avarices, interests and ideologies) i.e. motivations that occur during the conflict and exacerbate it (particularly revenge born out of conflict).<sup>7</sup>

Undeniably, 'bad' and even 'good' forms of patriotism, nationalism and other kinds of collective identities and group bondings can be seen, or manifest themselves through, violence-values, combat-stresses, grievances, avarices, interests—and last but not least, ideologies.

Be as it may, these variables, their theoretical and disciplinary backgrounds, and preliminary findings on the values, aims and methods among Chechen and Albanian insurgents, already are described in my "How to Feud and Rebel" Series in the peer-reviewed journal *Iran and the Caucasus* (Ten Dam, 2010, 2011, 2012).<sup>8</sup> The overarching study *Ways to Rebel* is in essence an expanded, updated and more detailed and complete exposition of the analysis and findings presented in the said Series.<sup>9</sup>



My present reflections on patriotism eventually will become part of my ongoing and future research projects, including the large, long-term *Brutalities in Anti-Imperial Revolts* project with Prof. Tomasz Polanski<sup>10</sup>, on rebellion, banditry and other forms of violence that may or may not be inherently brutal.<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, the pessimistic brutalisation theory would posit that patriotism, as an ideology, grievance or any other motivational mindset, could all too easily lead to and justify atrocious behaviour toward the 'unpatriotic' or 'counter-patriotic' other.

Given the Brutalisation premise, the focus is on international and codified norms of good behaviour that safeguard and respect the life, integrity and dignity of the person. That is why one should focus on gross human rights violations (GHRVS)<sup>12</sup> that endanger life and integrity of the person in order to detect any 'bad' and ignoble forms of patriotism in their actions, methods of violence and kindred manifestations.

Still, for instance militant nationalism is not always bad patriotism, as long as it refrains from human rights violations—and from violating any other local and/or international norms of good behaviour. Conversely, even defensive patriotism may have a just cause but vilifies, effectively betrays, that cause if it employs brutal, arguably immoral means. For instance, a foreign aggressor may have an unjust cause (and thus no proper *jus-ad-bellum*, justice of war) but may fight decently according to the laws of war (proper *jus-in-bello*, justice in war).

The defender thus certainly has a right cause—defence of the home(land) against any form of unwarranted aggression—but may use wrong means, like executing, mistreating or torturing prisoners of war. By now it should be obvious to the reader, that I essentially argue that the end does *not* justify all possible means: cruel and other arguably immoral means sooner or later vilify even the noblest end.

### Good and bad patriotism: empirical examples and observations

In the preceding part, I introduced my hierarchical typology of conceptualisation: actions, actors, motives. However, this typology by itself does not guarantee scientific objectivity, certainly not in the practice of research on national or any other kinds of group identity. When scholars and observers lose their ability and willingness to be fair, even-handed and honest to themselves and others, even the apparently simplest, easiest observable and recordable acts in past and present become contentious, liable to different interpretations, or fall victim to embellishment, manipulation and downright forgery.

Indeed, throughout the known centuries, overeager, opportunist or doctrinal self-declared patriots and nationalists have resorted, both deliberately and subconsciously, to distort or invent facts for the supposed good of their own people and to the detriment of all others and supposed 'never-ending enemies'. Thus in almost every single country in Europe and beyond, so-called 'nationalist historians', all too often have resorted to myth-building and invention of 'facts'.



Even serious, less biased and less partisan historians may tend, either consciously or subconsciously, to downplay or deny the misdeeds of their own group, nation or people—and (over)emphasise the misdeeds of ‘other’ groups, nations or peoples. To put it simply, and bluntly: it is always the other who has been aggressive and has enslaved or otherwise mistreated one’s own people; never has one’s own people been guilty of the same crime(s) against others.

A typical example of a somewhat biased or partisan account of a people’s origins and history is Clarence Manning’s *The Story of the Ukraine* published in 1947. I happened to come across this book by this professor of East European Languages at Columbia University in New York, at an antiquarian bookshop in Leiden, the Netherlands. Bear in mind that this book came out just at the time when the Cold War was beginning between the Soviet Union and the United States (the copy of the book actually contains a stamp “Compliments of the Pan American Ukrainian Conference”—and a postage card of the same organisation).

From the very start, Manning’s account exhibits clear anti-Communist and anti-Soviet perspectives—perhaps also anti-Russian and even anti-Polish sentiments. It certainly aims to prove the Ukraine as being a people, country and culture distinct from Russia from the very start (i.e. the ninth century AD). Thus the Introduction contains the following passage, regarding the demise of the early Ukrainian state from the early thirteenth century onwards, ever since the heyday of King and Saint Volodymyr (or Vladimir), baptized by the Patriarch of Constantinople in 989 AD:

It was the tragedy of Ukraine that this collapse came at the very period when the countries of the Roman Catholic West were struggling to their feet. Those years when the Middle Ages were at their height formed the darkest and most hopeless years in Ukrainian history. It was the time when the old nobility were largely lost to the life of the people and when in large numbers they accepted the Polish language and Polish customs (Manning 1947: 11).

So, this passage seems to imply that the “darkest and most hopeless years” for the Ukrainians occurred when they adopted the “Polish language and Polish customs”—and when many switched from the Orthodox to the Catholic faith as well. Now, one could wonder whether the Ukrainians had fared that badly under the Poles. Anyway, this seems a barb directed at the Poles—and other neighbouring states and peoples—as aggressors and occupiers, imposing their language, religion and culture on the hapless Ukrainians. It is undoubtedly true that (and I quote) by “the end of the fourteenth century, the old state of Rus’ had lost all its independence. It was formally divided between Poland, Lithuania and Hungary, and the rulers of these countries fought over its possessions” (Manning 1947: 43).

However, these and other observations by Manning suggest that others states and peoples were invariably the aggressors, expending their territories at the expense of the Ukrainians, or occupying and ruling over the Ukrainians directly. But whenever the Ukrainians expanded or occupied territory, Manning is loath to use the pejorative terms of “aggression” and “conquest” to characterise such events. Thus in the ninth century, the “Rus’ of Kiev” were



“finally able to extend their control over the other Slavonic tribes and to organise the new state” (Manning 1947: 32). But it seems highly unlikely that this consolidation happened without any violence against and suppression of other indigenous people living within the wide expanses between the Dniester and Don rivers.

Therefore, the origins of almost any ‘nation’ and nation-state is based on some aggression and territory-grabbing against other inhabitants and neighbouring peoples; most ‘founding fathers’ of most nations effectively started out as robber barons, usurpers or even bandits. These ignoble pasts should be recognised, acknowledged.

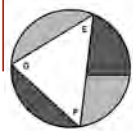
So I tell here a secret, that according many should remain a secret (i.e. a taboo): practically *every* people, whether as an ancient, semi-mythical tribe or as a more or less homogeneous nation(-state) in recent centuries or decades, has, at least during one time in history, committed aggression against another distinct, identifiable people, whether in the form of temporary conquest of territory or semi-permanent colonisation.

On the other hand, many other events and periods of a people’s past can rightly be described as noble and patriotic in the best sense, even if it concerns sacrifices that pragmatists might regard as futile, misguided and self-defeating. A clear example of patriotism based on self-sacrifice, even if born out of desperation rather than hope, is the seventh and most recent case in the first phase of our *Anti-Imperial Revolts* project mentioned in the preceding section: the Polish armed resistance against Nazi rule and subsequently Soviet and Polish-communist rule in the period 1939-1953.

The Polish resistance during and after WWII was arguably justified, and at the very least understandable, as manifestations of sincere, true patriotism. The Polish guerrilla and other resistance fighters directly fought colonial occupiers—the Nazis and the Soviets—in their country from 1939 until 1945 (we also refer to anti-Nazi resistance in our research, though our present focus is on anti-communist resistance).

From 1945 until around 1953, Polish guerrilla and other types of undoubtedly patriotic resistance—led or at least dominated by the underground and exile remnants of the former Polish state<sup>13</sup>, particularly the Union of Armed Struggle (*Zwiazek Walki Zbrojnej*, ZWZ), renamed the Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*, AK) from 1942 onwards—primarily resisted the imposition of ‘indigenous’ Communist rule, and thus was not an anti-colonial struggle in the narrow sense.

As so often the case, a patriotic urge to defend the homeland does not preclude diversity, disagreement and even factionalism amongst all those who consider themselves patriotic. Thus in Poland during WWII and the early post-war years there were serious disagreements within the exile government and the Home Army, and rivalries and even downright military confrontations with other resistance movements and political factions, like the Peasant Battalions (*Bataliony Chlopskie*, BCh) initiated by the (former) Peasant Party (*Stronnictwo*



*Ludowe*, SL), and the People's Army (*Armia Ludowa*, AL) formed by the Comintern-directed Polish Workers' Party (*Polska Partia Robotnicza*, PPR) (see e.g. Prazmowska 2013a, 2013b).

Even so, most Polish resistant fighters opposed the ideology and consequent state-system of Communism, and rightly saw the domestic regime as dependent on that of the Soviet Union. In that sense, the latter was the true colonial power they opposed, and the refurbished Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP; *Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza*, PZPR) was just the 'Soviet vassal' they despised and sought to overthrow.

As a form of colonial rule, the PUWP-regime was not that much different from the British *Raj* ("reign" in Sanskrit) in India until 1947—even though Poland was an informal Soviet 'satellite' in the Eastern Bloc, rather than a formal colony or province in an Empire. Therefore, these two cases present anti-colonial revolts in the wider ideological-cultural sense.

All in all, the Poles could be generally proud about their WWII and post-WWII-resistance. Ultimately, this culminated in the rise of the Solidarity (*Solidarność*) self-governing trade union movement in the 1980s, whose crucial role in the overthrow of Communism in and beyond Poland, and of the end of the Cold War and the Iron-Curtain division of Europe, was and remains a shining example to the world.

However, the Poles should be ashamed and embarrassed about some of the things that happened in their country and in their name prior to, during, and after the Second World War. Thus the treatment of minorities was often harsh, even brutal—particularly against the Jews. And such mistreatment was not only meted out by the occupying authorities of foreign powers and their collaborators, or by the newly Communist authorities after the war—but also by common citizens. In his seminal work *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, the historian Tony Judt observes that after "a series of post-war pogroms in Poland many of the surviving Jews left for good: 63,387 Jews arrived in Germany from Poland just between July and September 1946" (Judt 2005-2006: 24).

The Jews fared hardly better in most other European countries after the war—but one should not point to the misdeeds of others in order to belittle, ignore or deny one's own misdeeds or those committed by compatriots in one's own name, that is to say in the name of one's own country and nation. Thus one must face up to and deal with the sensitive question whether anti-Semitism has been as widespread in one's own country as in for instance Germany, France, Poland and Russia.

Can the Dutch be equally proud as the Poles of their overall role in crucial events and periods of their history, like during the Second World War or the more distant past? I wonder. My own country, the Netherlands, has been a colonial power for centuries in diverse places across the globe. The Dutch suppressed the local, indigenous people whenever they rose up in arms or even peacefully demanded their rights, and were one of the very last Western-European countries to give up the slave trade (in 1814) and abolish slavery in the East Indies in 1860 and in Surinam in 1863—while Denmark already abolished slavery in 1803.



Oddly (or perhaps not as strange if one thinks about it more closely), the Dutch hardly kept slaves in their own country (slavery within Holland itself effectively disappeared by the early seventeenth century)—slaves were concentrated in the colonies, or were traded with other nations, primarily in the New World (the Americas).<sup>14</sup>

Dutch slave traders were actually among the most ruthless and notorious. This may be one reason why the Abolitionist movement in the Netherlands was not as strong as in for instance Britain, where its own slave trade much more frequently reached its own shores. Dutch citizens or “burghers” hardly ever saw slaves with their own eyes, which once more supports the adage “*out of sight, out of mind*”.

Or think of the dubious, even evil role played by hundreds of thousands of my countrymen during the Second World War, passively or actively cooperating with the Nazi occupiers—in much higher numbers and degrees than, for instance, in Denmark, where most Danish citizens under Nazi occupation started to wear the Jewish Yellow star in order to protect their Jewish compatriots. We, the Dutch, should have adopted the same measure and exhibited the same kind of defiance back then. Instead, innumerable Dutch Jews were deported to concentration camps, in one of the highest percentages in the Nazi-occupied countries.

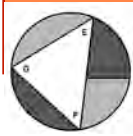
True, the high deportation rate was partially due to factors like the splendid infrastructure in the Netherlands—making it rather quick and easy for the Nazis to gather and deport Jews—and to the fact that most Jewish communities in the Netherlands were of the lower or middle-class, and thus did not have the money and connections to either flee before the outbreak of war, or minimally protect themselves during the occupation.

Even so, most departments and other structures of the Dutch state were kept in place—Queen Wilhelmina and the Dutch Cabinet were in exile in London—and most (non-Jewish) officials and civil servants, including the police, actively collaborated with the Nazis and pro-Nazi administrators (bureaucratic culture in the Netherlands had become surprisingly docile and servile during the preceding decades). Moreover, most Dutch resistance groups were relatively small, ill-armed, amateurish and splintered, certainly when compared to the massive underground resistance armies and governments in central-European countries like Poland and eastern-European countries like the Ukraine.

Thus the overall role of the Netherlands during WWII is hardly one to be proud of. Neither can one be proud of the generally indifferent and harsh treatment by particularly Dutch bureaucrats of Jewish survivors after the war, most of whom found it extraordinarily difficult or downright impossible to regain their homes or any properties that had survived the war.

Still, among the Dutch there were brilliant examples of heroism and humanity, like:





The Jewish girl Anne Frank and her world-renowned diary (*The 'House at the Back': Diary letters 12 June 1942—1 August 1944*) which survived the Second World War and her own death in a Nazi concentration camp;



Law professor Rudolph Cleveringa and his daring speech at Leiden University on 26 November 1940 protesting the dismissal of Jewish colleagues by the Nazi occupiers (Cleveringa was imprisoned half a year later and remained so during the entire occupation);



Dutch resistance fighters like Erik Hazelhoff Roelfzema, whose book about his WWII exploits and those of his comrades, *Soldier of Orange* (1970), became famous, even more so after it was made into a war movie in 1977 by Paul Verhoeven with Rutger Hauer in the lead role.

Now, particularly the latter two cases exhibit some mild, benevolent degrees of embellishment and myth-making in Dutch secular hagiography or pantheon (adulatory history of famous persons); still these examples are grounded in facts—facts and examples that any Dutch patriot can be rightly proud of.

Am I a true patriot, a Dutch patriot? Perhaps, and if so rather sparingly and intermittently given my cosmopolitan outlook—and above all my moral universalism. I believe that patriotism can be a great good, but ultimately must be subservient to and accord to universal norms of human rights and good behaviour, sustained by conscience, empathy and honour. I would not support—indeed, would actively oppose—the Dutch state or Dutch society if either or both commit GHRVS against supposed ‘traitors’ or ‘enemies’ of the nation, either at home or abroad.

Even so, I can be proud of my own country. A good example is the angry yet dignified response by the Dutch people to the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 over eastern Ukraine on 17 July 2014, and the terrible events that followed. The relatives and friends of the 298 victims need all the strength they can muster in coping with this loss. Among the 298 victims (all passengers and crew perished) there were 196 Dutch passengers.

MH17 was reportedly shot down by a Russian-built rocket from an anti-aircraft battery in the hands of pro-Russian rebels. Be as it may, one ultimately must identify and prosecute, and take (further) sanctions and other punitive measures against, those directly and indirectly responsible for the downing of MH17. And if Russian President Vladimir Putin is somehow responsible for this tragedy—as he certainly is, at least to some degree, for the conflict in Ukraine (and annexation of Crimea)—his personal assets abroad must be frozen as well.



### Patriotism vis-à-vis tolerance and pluralism

Many countries in turmoil, all too often in the shape of violent, brutal armed conflict, exhibit failing or faltering attempts at liberation, emancipation and democratisation. What would be the right, best kind of patriotism in those situations? This failure or faltering of processes that ought to be beneficial to the populations concerned, as shown in the present stage of the so-called Arab Spring, primarily happens because most or all of the opposing parties refuse to recognise the other's grievances, interests, demands or even right to physically exist. Typically, these parties concern the supposedly or (f)actually repressed communities and other (interest) groups in revolt against the supposedly or (f)actually repressive communities and groups in power.

This refusal to understand, accept or accommodate the other is, often but not always, based on true grievances about brutalities and other injustices perpetrated by the other in the distant or recent past, or even during the present confrontation or violent conflict. Such feelings, motivations and consequent enmities among the opposing parties tend to solidify an already existing culture of mutual intolerance. This intolerance is above all exhibited by a *zero-sum politics* of seeking a total victory over i.e. total defeat of the other at the expense of the other's position, privileges and rights, or even physical survival: think of mass murder and genocide.

The lack of a true non-zero sum game, cooperative politics based on consensus seeking, consociational power-sharing, mutual tolerance and the willingness to compromise, makes any newfound democracy a hollow one, even if the formal instruments of democracy—elections, referenda, parliamentary control over the executive branch of government, and so on—seem to function freely, fairly and lawfully.

Therefore, zero-sum enmity and intolerance between different social and political groups and communities appear to typify the tense stalemates in many divided societies. Think of the stark, often violent divide between the anti-regime, often Salafi (extremist Sunni) insurgents and the pro-regime, generally pro-Shi'ite and Alawite forces of the re-elected President Bashar al-Assad in Syria; between the supporters and opponents of the now banned Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt under the new President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi; between the mainly rural 'red-shirt' supporters and urban 'yellow-shirt' opponents of the deposed Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra in Thailand; between the 'pro-Western' supporters and 'pro-Russian' opponents of Ukraine's new President Petro Poroshenko and the current government in Kiev under Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk.

All sides in each of these countries in turmoil exhibit, in higher or lesser degrees regarding severity and scale, intolerance and brutality towards the other—even if one side can be deemed most responsible for the outbreak and/or continuation of the conflict.

In my ongoing and future research, I try to ascertain and explain, both qualitatively and quantitatively, the intermittent, persistent or increasing brutalities i.e. violations of local and/or international violence-norms, like in Thailand, Ukraine, Egypt and Syria. Generally, I posit that an intolerant zero-sum mindset essentially accounts for the lack of true





democracy, the sad absence or marginalised existence of true, honourable patriotism, and due to these and other reasons, the tendency towards endemic brutalisation in these countries. I will also try to offer suggestions on how to counter and curtail intolerance and brutality, and build truly civic, patriotic and pluralist societies i.e. truly functioning democracies in these and any such countries.

### Conclusion: promoting good patriotism in education, politics and research

Summing up, the main principles that teachers, scholars, politicians and citizens of any country or political and territorial entity should be aware of and uphold, are the following:

- Be aware, sceptical and critical of any written and oral accounts of a homeland or people that tend to adulate the positive, benign achievements and good deeds of only that homeland or people, and belittle, ignore or deny any factual, observable and proven misdeeds by its members.
- Be aware, sceptical and critical of any written and oral accounts of a 'foreign' or 'alien' homeland or people that tend to stress or exaggerate any factual, observable and proven misdeeds by its members—and ignore or deny any positive, benign achievements and good deeds by the latter.
- Be aware and (self-)critical of one's own assumptions and prejudices regarding one's own home, homeland and people and those of others: stimulate students and any other audiences to be aware and (self-)critical in this manner.

Therefore, any true patriot needs to be self-critical, about his or her own convictions, assumptions and perspectives. Thus one must be honest and *unsparing* about any misdeeds committed by one's home or homeland, and in one's name, whether these happened in the distant or recent past, are happening in the present, or may happen in the immediate and foreseeable future.

*Caspar ten Dam Leiden, November 2014*

### Endnotes

1. This Editorial consists of excerpts from my Keynote Speech, titled *Patriotism, Loyalty and Honour: Normative reflections on forms of patriotism, and their interrelationships with ethnic and civic nationalisms and other forms of collective identities*, held on 10th October 2014 at the conference "Patriotism and the Problem of Education and Teaching", at Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, Poland, on 10-11 October 2014. I wish to thank Dr. Agnieszka Ziętał for inviting me and taking care of practical matters, Bruno Wojtasik (PhD History, Kielce) for providing the translation in Polish during my speech, and Prof. Tomasz Polanski for his hospitality during and after the conference. The keynote paper eventually may appear in a book on the main contributions to the conference, or be published in another form in another publisher or journal.



2. Patrick Hanks, William T. McLeod, Laurence Urdang et al. (eds.), *Collins Dictionary of the English Language* Second Edition London/Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co., 1986 (1st Ed. 1979).
3. Citation from Introduction in C. ten Dam, *Conceptualising Brutality and Violence: How to Define, Grasp and Deal with Terrorism and Other Forms of Violence in a Post 11 September World* Cambridge Scholars Publishing (CSP), forthcoming.
4. Ibid.
5. I will extensively discuss and defend my definitions in future publications, notably in my *Conceptualising Brutality and Violence* (CSP, forthcoming).
6. The term 'greed' as a noun does not have a recognised equivalent in the plural tense, i.e. 'greeds'; yet I have not come across a better term to contrast it with the term 'grievance' and its plural 'grievances'. The best alternative or substitute term for greed I consider to be 'avarice'—as it has a recognised plural, 'avarices'.
7. From 2005 till 2013, I have described my Brutalisation theory, with some 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). Since then, I have widened and reformulated the theory's variables, so as to more equally represent different motivations as explanations of brutal behaviour.
8. This Series will include at least one more article: C. ten Dam, 'How to Feud and Rebel: 4. Conflict(-Induced) Motivations among the Chechens and Albanians' *Iran and the Caucasus* (forthcoming).
9. C. ten Dam, *Ways to Rebel: Values, Aims and Methods of Violence—Testing a Theory of Brutalisation on the Chechen and Albanian insurgents, 1979-2001* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, forthcoming).
10. Prof. T. Polanski worked at the Institute of Classical Philology at Jagiellonian University between 1998 and 2008 (Head of the Department of Greek and Latin Language), and since then heads the Department of Ancient History at the Jan Kochanowski University of Kielce, Poland.
11. C. ten Dam, with T. Polanski, *Brutalities in Anti-Imperial Revolts: Commonalities and Differences in Distinct yet Overlapping Forms of Violence by Peripheral Ethnic-Indigenous Communities and Imperial Powers in Classical, Medieval and Modern (Industrial) Times* Leiden/Cracow, July 2013, unpublished manuscript. I presented an earlier version of this paper at the conference "Ethnicity, Culture, Politics: Mutual Dependencies" at Jagiellonian University of Cracow, Poland, 18-19 April 2013. An expanded version of it may appear in a book on contributions to the conference.
12. Treaties nor jurisprudence come up with a single formulation of 'gross', 'severe', or 'massive' HRVS.
13. According to Tomasz Polanski, "the Polish resistance in 1939-1945 developed the civic structures which were parallel to the military structures. They had their 'parliament' in conspiracy, their charity structures, fiscal system, and education. Remnants of those structures survived to 1948-49. ... It was a state in conspiracy, based on the experiences from the anti-Russian uprising in 1863-64" (email-communication, 18-07-2013).
14. See e.g. Koninklijke Bibliotheek (Dutch Royal Library), 'Afschaffing slavernij (Abolition slavery)', <http://www.kb.nl/dossiers/geschiedenis/afschaffing-slavernij-1863> (acc. 7-10-2014).

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*August 1944* Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Prometheus, 2014 (27th printing of 1991 edition); © 1947 Otto Frank (AF 1164, renewed 1974, 578606); © 1986 etc. Anne Frank Fund, Basel, Switzerland; © 1986 Royal Institute for War Documentation (RIOD; renamed NIOD in 1999), Amsterdam, Netherlands).

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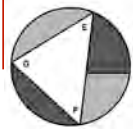
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\_\_\_\_\_, 'How to Feud and Rebel: '3. Combat-stress and Violence-values among the Chechens and Albanians' *Iran and the Caucasus* Vol.16 No.2, July 2012, pp.225-245.

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### *Main Article*

## **An Armenian Village in Turkey: An Identity Squeezed Between Inherited Memories and Future Prospects**

**Elif Kanca**

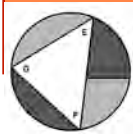
*Abstract* The last village still surviving out of the seven once Armenian villages of Musa Mountain, Vakıflı, is the only Armenian village in present-day Turkey. Being situated on the intersection point of Armenian and Turkish identities, whom recognize one another as “the other”, Vakıflı is full of deep symbolic meanings for both identities. This study is about the identity of the village Vakıflı of Musa Mountain, which is squeezed between the inherited memories and the future socio-economic and socio-cultural prospects and concerns of today.

### **Introduction**

Vakıflı, which is administratively tied to Samandağ district of Hatay in southern Turkey and is located on Musa Mountain, is an Armenian village with approximately 135 inhabitants. Being the last village still surviving out of the seven once Armenian villages of Musa Mountain, Vakıflı is the only Armenian village in present-day Turkey. Being situated on the intersection point of Armenian and Turkish identities, whom recognize one another as “the other”, Vakıflı is full of deep symbolic meanings for both identities. The “Turkish-Armenian” inhabitants of Vakıflı, who carry a sense of identity formed by a long historical process starting from 1915, have, with such inherited memories, the characteristics of a “symbolic” society.

At first glance, the economic facilities in Vakıflı seem to depend on agriculture. The production of organic citrus fruits is outstanding in the agricultural field; the organic agriculture in Vakıflı is variously subject of the academic and communicational media press, and has been honored by various awards. However, according to the field studies done, tourism has turned to be a more effective income resource for the village than agriculture, which has fallen into disfavour because of several reasons. The main object of the local tourism trade is the “Armenian” identity of the village. The increase of financial incomes stemming from tourism is not only causing a transformation in the village’s production relations, but also in its spatial organisation owing to the tourist realities and in its social relations due to the contribution in the tourist facilities.

This study is about the identity of the village Vakıflı of Musa Mountain, which is squeezed between the inherited memories and the future socio-economic and socio-cultural prospects and concerns of today. To observe the today’s situation of Vakıflı, along with my field work and interviews done in Vakıflı, the data of other studies are also regarded. Those studies are



done with the Armenians and the other identities communities with distinct identities that live in different regions (Samandağ, Antakya, İskenderun) of Hatay city.

### **Understanding Today's Situation of Vakıflı with Respect to the Cultural Memory and Spatial Relations**

#### *The Past*

The date 1915 and the incident of massive exodus and exile of the Armenians from the Ottoman Empire and present-day Turkey are very critical in order to understand today's situation of Vakıflı village. The inhabitants of seven villages on Musa Mountain—Vakıf (today Vakıflı), Yoğunluk, Eriklikuyu (today Hacı Habip), Bitias (today Batıayaz), Kebusiye (today Kapisuyu), Damlacık ve Zeytun (today Süleymanlı)—decided not to abandon their villages given the “Tehcir Kanunu” (Tehcir Law—Relocation and Immigration Laws) and resist the Ottoman Army on the mountain. After this fight—which lasted 40 days according to the sayings (transmitted stories), yet 53 days according to the written sources—some of the Armenians were brought to Port Said harbour in Egypt via French ships. They lived there in a refugee camp for four years and returned back to their original place in 1919.

By all means, the exile and its consequences are very significant to the Armenians and their history. The bad things that happened on Musa Mountain and the “inherited memories” as conceptualised by Kharatyan-Araqelyan (2010: 84) have a crucial place in this history. When we consider “the writing of history as the zero point of all kind of legends” (Benjamin 1995: 88), being both witness to and constituting the evidence of the incidents, Musa Mountain has turned to become a vital moment in Armenian history and became a door of the past which is continually opened to today, just as Ararat Mountain.

Therefore, the sayings about Musa Mountain are as historical as they are legendary. The people I have interviewed said that after 1919, a stone ship had been constructed at the summit of the mountain, then it had been destroyed by the army in 1980. The foundation of this ship, however, still remains there. Barthes (1990: 30) prefers sayings over written documents for the “objective history” and relates the reason of this to be the “good conductivity of common sense”. For, every outcome of oral culture have, in fact, a “functional meaning” in life and “people create a functional relation by means of sayings” (Barthes 1990: 180).

The Noah's Ark and the Flood, whose main symbols are the ship and the mountain, play fundamental roles in the construction of Armenian identity. The mountain (Musa Mountain) and the ship (French ships or the stone model built at the summit of the mountain) has appeared once more in the scene of history in 1915 and has charged the sayings with a sacred meaning.

Thus, having a sacred value in the social memory, Musa Mountain is symbolically regenerated during the times of being away from it. Assmann explains this situation as “the tendency of spatialization of the memory”. According to this “society and the spaces create a



symbolic common life together; although the society is away from its space, it keeps this togetherness alive by regenerating symbolically the sacred spaces" (Assmann 2001: 43).

According to Kharatyan-Araqelyan, the celebratory ceremonies that took place on Sunday after 20th of September in front of the Monument of Musa Mountain, which is 15 kilometers away from Erivan, is an example of how "old memories become holy and then they diffuse". In the ceremonies, at Saturday night just before Sunday morning, the traditional food "harisa" was jointly cooked together. The inhabitants of Musa Mountain gathered around the monument with their Armenian relatives and friends surrounding the cauldrons, talking about old memories and remembering their survived or death relatives throughout the night. A participant recounts the ceremonies as follows:

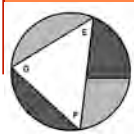
We here (meaning Armenian residents of places surrounding the monument devoted to the rescue of the Armenian population of Musa Ler) wait the entire year for the Musaler Day and get prepared for that day. Everyone cooks harisa on that day, but we try to bring it from that place, because that one is sacred. People from Musa Ler collect money ... no, not from us ... and then we receive assistance from somewhere. They prepare more than hundred pots this way. The number increases every year, as well as the number of sacrificed animals. We do not know exactly how many pots; we just see them lined up. If you ask them they would say 100, 110 and 120. The number of pots depends on the age of Musa Ler. Initially 40 pots were being prepared in memory of the 40 days of resistance, but now the number depends on the anniversary date. The priest does not sanctify the meat during the slaughter; he comes in the afternoon between 1 and 1:30 when the harisa is ready and blesses it, and only after that the harisa is distributed. The celebration starts on Saturday evening and ends the next day, Sunday evening, because as soon as harisa is distributed an artistic performance starts, then those guests who have their own food with them sit under the trees and keep on celebrating until the late night ... they leave only when everything is over." (Kharatyan-Araqelyan 2010: 95).

### *Immigration*

Along with the proclamation of the Republic, the land of Turkey bears testimony of the birth of a nation-state. Indeed, "The belonging ideology of the nation-state is a negative ideology, based on to object and to cast out 'the others' " (Somay 2004: 126). For Turkey, the process of becoming a nation-state, which was raised on the ruins of the multi-religious, multi-linguistic and multi-ethnic arrangements that characterised the Ottoman Empire, has been an agonized one:

The identity in Ottoman Empire was mainly based on religion and although the preeminent religion was Islam, the non-Muslim societies had a noticeable freedom in their internal affairs ... . The goal of the founders of the Turkish Republic was to create a 'Turkish identity' based on a unique language and a unique ethnic identity. Even though the Kemalist discourse was concentrated on a secular identity which is related to the illuminated values, Turkish identity was practically equated with a Muslim source. As a result of this, the non-Muslim citizens, despite the fact that they are local people of Anatolia and they are Turkish, were accepted as second class people (Neyzi 2004: 196).





The national Turkish identity, which in practice is effectively equated with the Turkish language, Sunni-Muslim roots and a homogeneously designed Turkish ethnicity and which has a single character, excludes all identities remaining from the Ottoman Empire if these do not suit the definition of 'Turkishness' described above and thereby creates the fact of 'the other'. Consequently, "This situation, as for the Kurdish and Alawite people, was valid for the Muslim groups which did not fit the new Turkish identity design. On the other hand, the important elements of Ottoman society such as Christians (and Jews) were totally cast out regarding the new identity" (Neyzi 2010: 15). In 1939, when Hatay became part of the Turkish Republic, the Armenians worried that the incidents in the past would repeat themselves. Thus they immigrated to Syria and Lebanon. The rest kept on living in Vakıflı village.

### **Continuous Internal and External Emigration**

However, the (re)immigration of Armenians or any other people never ends. The reasons of the (re)immigration may be classified under two headings of internal and external immigrations: immigration directed by power i.e. political considerations and pressures in and from the home or host countries; and immigration related to social and economic reasons (Komsuoğlu and Örs 2011: 225). Komsuoğlu and Örs (2011: 231) state the particular causes of the immigration of Armenians living in Turkey from Anatolia to Istanbul and from abroad to Istanbul or elsewhere in Turkey as:

1. Not having enough schools and active churches outside Istanbul
2. The difficulty of getting married within one's own community
3. Efforts by the [Armenian] Patriarchate to gather as many Armenians as possible in Istanbul, so as to have a concentrated community better able to resist assimilation efforts by the Turkish state
4. Social pressure: difficulties arising of being labeled 'the other'

In recent years, the immigration has increased due to "globalization, the 1980 military coup, and the encounter in the south-eastern part of Turkey" (Neyzi 2004: 195). In my interviews, the dire financial situation emerges as the main reason for the recent and past immigrations.

The immigration i.e. internal emigration started from Vakıflı because of financial insufficiencies, following a pattern of several stops: from the nearest point Samandağ, to Antakya, to Iskenderun and to Istanbul and then it continues abroad, thus eventually becoming a true emigration from Turkey.

Marriage is accepted as another reason to emigrate. The single young people in Vakıflı, having a prohibition of not getting married with 7th degree relatives, are open to 'foreign' marriages but in the village they are all relatives. There are women from different identities, but at this stage of the research there is no information about the ethnicity or other background traits of 'foreign' men. The same problem about marriage is valid among other



religious and ethnic groups in Antakya as well. Thus improving 'marriageability' forms the fundamental reason of internal emigration to Istanbul.

### **Today: Conserving and Regenerating**

In Turkey, the impact of global transformation started in 1980; it politically started on 12 September 1980 with a military coup with an outcome named the 1982 Constitution; it financially started with the decisions taken on 24 January 1980 to integrate the country with the global market. The consequences of those decisions did not only affect political and financial fields, but also different levels of social life. According to Neyzi, the impact on the national identity as an important part of the country's political dimension and the historical understanding of it was:

Chiefly the fights between the Kemalists and the Muslims, the Army and the PKK [Kurdistan Workers' Party, *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan* (PKK)], the fights from 1980 on to today, have brought about discussions in the public arena related to recent history and national identity. While revisionist history writers inquire the nationalist history, the interest for the history of minorities has increased. In the field of civil society, individuals and groups have also started to discover alternative histories and identities. The continuity of the individual and local memory increases the access to different historical sayings (Neyzi 2010: 16).

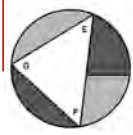
The query about one's history and the identity, constructs the way of self-expression of individuals and communities outside the border of the homogeneous Turkish 'us', and they thus become 'the others'. At the same time, "how the past was or will be remembered" appears in front of us as a critical question (Milas 2005: 22).

The museums, the places to conserve and to remember the past as the "evidences of culture", "constitutes the basic plans of the foundation of cultural legitimacy both in the national and universal manner" (Huysen 1999: 25). With "their role of being memory guards, the museums and the archives are effective in constructing, conserving, legitimating and approving our information and perception about the political systems, social organisations, identities and generally speaking about the world" (Levi 2011: 131).

On the other hand, according to Huysen, "the restoration of old city centers in accordance with the past, the villages transformed to museums, the increase in oddments markets, nostalgic movements, the obsessive self-cataloguing works done by video records" show that the museum can no more be defined as a single constitution; it has turned out to be one of the key paradigms of modern cultural identity formation (Huysen 1999: 25, etc.).

In the village of Vakıflı, having the internal emigration due to financial and political pressures, just one member of nearly all families remain in the village. On the other hand, the people who have gone to live and retire outside the village, permanently turn back to their villages or come there to pass their summer holidays. The old structures had been





restored for personal or public purposes. The village is being transformed in order to provide the visitors with daily or nightly accommodation needs with its cafes, churches and pensions.

Nevertheless, the idea of building a museum could not be realised among these spatial transformations. The reason for this is shown in the unwillingness of the villagers in giving away their folkloric objects which would be collected and exhibited in the museum, owing to these being family heritages. The distinction made by the villagers between a family heritage and a museum object is quite important. The choice of not exhibiting the objects is a choice for life.

Hence, the transformation of folkloric objects to catalogued ones is based on “the attitude of linear collection which illuminates the past and gathers it” and this understanding expresses an attitude for “life and renewing” contrarily to the understanding of a museum which can only collect and present its objects by ‘freezing’, ‘killing’ these in time (Baudrillard 1998: 21).

In one reported instance, while an inhabitant was telling about the history of a church in the village, he was mistaken for a tourist guide by the excited tourist groups. With his expressions, when everybody was talking at the same time and there was a lot of noise, the way he acted by saying “calm down! I am human” shows a superior way to the typical attitude of the (bored) museum guide or surveyor.

The villagers are denying the museum, however they cannot show the same attitude towards the tourist transformation happening to their local economy. The character of the village in having a spatial memory from past to present is the reason for this. Another equally important reason is that tourism, contrary to diminishing agricultural incomes, turned to be a noticeable money source.

In a small kiosk in the garden of the church, under the brand of Village Vakıflı Women’s Branch, the women exhibit home-made liquor, colorful marmalade and lacework with needles for selling. The ‘awarded’ organic citrus fruits of Vakıflı are taken to the tourist bazaar by means of women’s works. The share earned by the women is fair. Around 80% of the revenues is given to the producer, the remaining 20% is given to the Women’s Branch. The men proudly and clearly say that the money the women earn means a great deal for their families. This shows how different Vakıflı is from the surrounding villages.

The money collected is being used for the old buildings in order to transform them into tourist spaces. The statements of Komsuoğlu and Örs about Armenian women in their works about Armenian identity and emigration seem to be valid also for Vakıflı: “The Armenian women, regenerating the social togetherness, identity and the culture of the society, are the main support in the transformation of the culture which is a living concept. Hence the social communication of Armenian women is much more than [that] of men” (Komsuoğlu and Örs 2011: 237).

The extroverted appearance of the village due to tourism, increases the examples of “the perception of themselves exactly as ‘the others’ ”. For instance, before a football match between Armenia and Turkey, the answer “may the best men win” to the question of TRT



(Turkish Radio and Television Corporation) announcer “who you think will win?” is in fact a deliberate reaction. When cameras and microphones are directed to the village anytime there is an issue with Armenia, this is being perceived as “the recall of being ‘the others’” (citation from my field work data). The local Armenian reaction to such treatments is to say that “we are Turkish citizens like you”. And then one shows the identity card on which only the ‘religion’ part is different.

I observed such an identity card demonstration in Hatay for many times with different names as a cliché. This obvious attitude towards the authority and being branded the ‘other’, is based on another authoritarian (especially military) relation formed in the Ottoman and early Turkish Republic past: the identity card requirement in which “being the other” depended on one’s religion and then the city where one was registered. The military memories of men provide numerous examples from an earlier period in which the borders of “being the other” was clearly understood and the authority of the state was directly felt.

### **The Future**

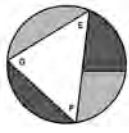
Two examples that I witnessed remarkably tell the perception of the future among the inhabitants of Vakıflı. Firstly, the positive change in the appearance of funds and associations owing to the changes of political atmosphere in Turkey creates an ‘easiness’ in the use of “minority” rights. For instance, nowadays it has become possible to build a school where the medium of instruction is the mother language, Armenian. However, the number of children in the village is not enough to open such a school.

The second example is the silence of the mothers to the questions about their children’s future. Why do the mothers keep silent? What is it that they are avoiding to tell? It seems to be about the following dilemma that they are facing: Should the children go and make a life for themselves elsewhere, or should they stay and try to keep the village alive? More research is needed to ascertain whether this dilemma is indeed silencing the village’s mothers—and if so, what steps could be undertaken to resolve this dilemma.

Every story of internal and external emigration can be found and told by a woman who remains behind.

### **Conclusion**

This study, instead of being a study presenting all the gathered data about the village Vakıflı, constitutes a first step in order to understand the today’s situation of Vakıflı. Although the content of this “othering” continuously changes due to political and financial changes during historical phases of transformation, both the Turkish and Armenian identities are located in the borders of one another. The last Armenian village of Musa Mountain, Vakıflı, forms a symbolic feeling of “belonging” over remaining spaces to construct its identity.



The internal and external emigration has been an inseparable fact of Vakıflı life from past to present. On the base of these immigration patterns, there lie social instabilities created by political and financial problems, which adds more pressure on the Armenian 'other'. The sensitivity of this Armenian identity forms one of the main causes of the population shifts away from the village. Besides these social causes, other ones such as the need to study and get married, increase the rate of internal and external emigration.

While the traditional economy based on agriculture in Vakıflı is losing ground, the tourism trade becomes the new economic field getting its reference from the presented and imagined identity of the local society. Even though tourism seems to be a good financial source, it almost compels the village to transform into a museum. This fact engenders different reactions from the villagers, ranging from hostility against presenting a simplified image of their identity to outside, transient visitors, to welcoming the attention and incomes generated by such visitors. Fortunately, these reactions provide evidence of the liveliness of the village.

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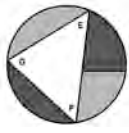
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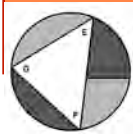
### **Critique on the article ‘An Armenian Village in Turkey’**

(First Critical Response to Elif Kanca’s “An Armenian Village in Turkey: An Identity Squeezed Between Inherited Memories and Future Prospects”)

The topic of this article is undeniably important. The history of the Armenian villages of Musa Mountain is one of the most famous cases during the Armenian Genocide, as a dramatic and successful self-defense against massacres and deportations. This historical event is not only part of the memory, identity and historiography of the Armenian Genocide, but also is described in European literature. The Austrian writer F. Werfel presented these events in his famous book *40 days of Musa Dagh* (1934). The Armenians of this village are the descendants of survivors of the Genocide and the tragic events on Musa Mountain during this time. I would like to recommend this book to the author of this article.

The date 1915 and the massive exodus and exile of the Armenians from the Ottoman Empire and present-day Turkey are very critical in order to understand today’s situation of Vakıflı village. However, these tragic events involved planned massacres, and thus are rightly called the Armenian Genocide; it did not just concern “massive exodus and exile”. Therefore, I have the following criticisms:

1. The author of this article does not make any mention of the Armenian Genocide, let alone call the entire tragedy a genocide. It is strange, because this village and the events at Musa Dagh are the part of the Armenian Genocide. This genocide is the part of



contemporary history, identity and memory of this village—but the author fails to make any mention or analysis about it.

2. The historical background is a very important part of this topic but is not satisfactorily and deeply analyzed in this article. There are numerous mistakes, confusions and omissions. For instance, the author does not mention what happened after 1919 and where the Armenians returned. They actually returned to their villages under the French protectorate (Syrian territory). They did not return to Turkey, because after WWI this territory was passed to the French protectorate. Only in 1939 did the French government give this territory (Hatay etc.) to Turkey, and the Armenians left again these villages. Only Vagf [Vakifli] remained an Armenian-inhabited village. Moreover, the author fails to mention in the next section that after 1939 that many Armenians from the Musa Dagh villages came to live in Soviet Armenia and established the village *Mousa Ler* (Mousa Mountain in Armenian) there. In this village a monument was built devoted to the Battles and Self Defense of Musa Mountain. Each year the commemoration took place there as well.

3. The author does not provide any quotes from field notes. The author does mention in the Introduction that “other studies ... are done with the Armenians and the other communities”, but in the text there is not any other identity analysis from such sources.

Therefore, I think that the author does not understand deeply the issues involved, and avoids using the term Armenian Genocide perhaps for political, social or personal reasons. To analyze Vakifli village as a marker of identity and collective memory without calling the atrocities of 1915 and beyond by its proper name, is a very strange and dubious position to take.

- Anonymous (historian from Armenia)

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### Review of 'An Armenian Village in Turkey: An Identity Squeezed Between Inherited Memories and Future Prospects'

(Second Critical Response to Elif Kanca's "An Armenian Village in Turkey: An Identity Squeezed Between Inherited Memories and Future Prospects")

This article is quite informative and detailed. Nevertheless, I have developed four recommendations that would further improve, in my opinion, the quality and the readability of her work, both content-wise and from the point of view of paragraphs' organisation. Provided that I have a rather different background if compared to the author's disciplinary field (Anthropology), I will make my points in reference to my studies and experiences (Politics and International Relations), wishing that my review will contribute to an inter-disciplinary dialogue and exchange.

First of all, the overall impression has been affected by a thin argumentative structure: while the descriptive parts are very interesting, I find them not very balanced with the 'analytic' sections. In other words, sometimes it has been difficult to keep track of the core argument: I would suggest to explicit the theoretical puzzle, and the research/cognitive questions, before putting forward the author's creative findings and interpretation of the facts.

Secondly, the author refers to her fieldwork research, from which she has drawn some empirical results. Fieldwork research occupies a fundamental role in my field of study, especially when it comes to area studies and the analysis of phenomena at the micro-, sub-systemic level. The collection of originally-generated data in the field provides the research with an ethnographic depth which should not be underestimated.

For that reason, I would recommend spending a few more words about the methodology employed by the author in the field and the techniques adopted by her not only to collect the data, but also to analyse them. For example, in the paper the author has mentioned the use of interviews: which was the target group? What about the rationale for selecting the interviewees (in case of non-random sampling...)? Could the author disclose any details about the timing and the location of the interviews (if relevant)? What kind of interview has she carried out (i.e. questionnaires, in-depth interviews, 'guided conversations'). These details would provide the reader with a clearer framework of methodological reference.

Content-wise, my attention has been particularly captured by two ideas. On the one hand, the concept of 'the other' is a very interesting one; therefore I warmly recommend exploring it further. A number of International Relations (IR) scholars have dealt with identity formation through the lenses of 'othering', intended as the process of construction of the 'self' through the identification of differences and disassociation vis-à-vis other groupings: in other words, through the construction of boundary markers. Iver Neumann, among others, pioneered the study of 'othering' in International Relations, admitting that the conceptualization of collective identity formation draws on 'the study of ethnic groups, subcultures, villages and other small-scale collectives' (Neumann 1996: 142).





Vakıflı might emerge as an even more fascinating case study, if the author wishes to exploit the different nuances of 'otherness' and problematize diverse imaginations of the same community: is there any variation in how Vakıflı is self-perceived and self-represented by its inhabitants (i.e. generational variation, gender variation, variation in case of people involved in migration flows)? Which categories of people living in Vakıflı are more involved in the processes of 'othering' and in which terms? How do the different narratives about 'the other' materialize? How do they coexist and how are they contested? In the paper, the idea of the other emerges as an 'object' whereas it would be interesting to think about it in terms of subjects (i.e. drivers and agencies of the process of 'othering', see also Jensen 2011).

On the other hand, I would love to read a more comprehensive reflection about the role of memory in the construction of the Vakıflı's identities—'identities' has been purposefully put in plural form here, meaning: i. the multiple identities of people living in Vakıflı (is there any identity contestation among them? Is it possible to have explain it through the lenses of the researches about the 'symbolic society?'); ii. the urban identities of the village's spaces and places; iii. Vakıflı's 'touristic' identity (the brand of the village and how the village is represented in the tourists' minds).

The reference to the spatialization of the memory is extremely fascinating concept, and I would suggest to explicit further its 'duality': on the one hand, how Vakıflı's inhabitants live and interpret their cultural heritage, and on the other hand, how tourism economy is trying to sell it.

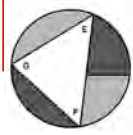
In the article, there is a starting point mentioning this 'duality': thus the author refers to the fact that the project of building a museum has been abandoned, due to the villagers' reticence vis-à-vis the exhibition of their families' souvenirs, not to be catalogued, disclosed and exposed as folkloristic pieces. I found this passage an excellent cue, to be further explored according to the opposition between private and public identities and their different mode of expression and embodiment.

Finally, I think that the article includes several good ideas, which are in embryo at this stage; they are interesting food for thought but they are all presented in an underexplored shape. All in all, the author's assertions should be more systematically complemented with the empirics that she surely masters. Furthermore, this work should pave the way to a more sustained interdisciplinary orientation. For example, the literature belonging to the area of 'Economic Anthropology' can be helpful in order to make sense of the linkage between the parts about Vakıflı's touristic identity and the villagers' construction of their collective 'self'.

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### Review of 'An Armenian Village in Turkey' from a Historian's Perspective

(Third Critical Response to Elif Kanca's "An Armenian Village in Turkey: An Identity Squeezed Between Inherited Memories and Future Prospects")

The author's investigation on Vakıflı village, its history, identity, and the memories and prospects of the Armenian and other inhabitants involved, is certainly worthwhile—and merits follow-up research. Still, I have some comments and suggestions, which I make from the viewpoint of a historian.

First, regarding your statement about the current "internal emigration" of Armenians from Vakıflı "due to financial and political pressures", you should explain what kind of political pressures you are talking about—and let us know the sources on which you base this statement.

Second, regarding known facts, I must note that there were six rather than seven Armenian villages on Musa Mountain.<sup>1</sup>

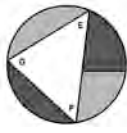
Third, originally among these Armenian villages there was not a village named Vakıflı. In 1939, when the French left the Sanjak to Turkey, Armenians moved from İskenderun and the Hatay region to Syria—but mostly to Lebanon, and by their own volition. The remaining thirty families on Musa Mountain were gathered by the Turkish government and constituted a new village named Vakıflı.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, there was no village named Zeytun in 1915; Zeytun was formed in 1928 by Armenians brought in by the French government from Syria.<sup>3</sup>

Fourth, regarding your statement on the Armenian fight and flight from Musa Mountain, while some of them lived at "Port Said harbour in Egypt" in "a refugee camp for four years and returned back to their original place in 1919": what are your sources for this statement? <sup>4</sup>

Actually, in 1939, when Hatay became part of the Turkish republic, the Armenians decided to emigrate to Syria and Lebanon which were under the French mandate. According to the agreement between Turkey and France, the Christian minorities had the right to choose for either Turkish and Syrian citizenship. Most of them decided to take Syrian citizenship and to emigrate. But this was not because of the fear of the past. The main reason was the economic problems they were having in Hatay, and the consequent hope of having a more prosperous life in Syria and Lebanon. During those years, the League of Nations and the French Mandate had started a resettlement project for the Armenians, and constructed new homes for them in Lebanon and Syria.<sup>5</sup>

It would be advisable to incorporate these known facts and the sources I mentioned, at least in a new edition of the author's article and/or in the author's future research and





publications. These modifications will only help to improve her insightful and promising research, on a subject matter which is admittedly a sensitive one.

- Dr. Halil Özşavlı is Assistant Professor at Kilis 7 Aralık University, Turkey; see [http://egitim.kilis.edu.tr/CV/akademik\\_halilozsavli.htm](http://egitim.kilis.edu.tr/CV/akademik_halilozsavli.htm)

### Endnotes—References

1. See British Foreign Office Archives: FO 371/23302 / No:E5905/5132/44, Bedros Saradjian to Edward Frederick Lindley, 4 August 1939.
2. See FO371/23302 / No:E5905/5132/44, Bedros Saradjian to Edward Frederick Lindley, 4 August 1939.
3. See *Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi*: BCA, (030.10.00.108). 710.17.
4. For archival documents, see: *Genel Kurmay Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Başkanlığı Askeri Tarih Belgeleri Dergisi*, December 1982: pp.193-200.
5. See: *Hask* (An Armenian newspaper), July-August 1939. On the Armenian exodus, see: FO 371/21915 / No: E4533/1528/89, Lambeth Palace to R.A. Butler, 28 July 1938; FO 21915 / No:34 A.W. Davis to British Foreign Ministry, 15 August 1938. For the resettlement project of the League of Nations, see: League of Nations Archives: L.N. C699. M.264. 1926. IV, L.N. A.22. 1935.XIII, L.a. A.48. 1927. XIII, etcetera (there are many documents about this project).

### Remarks on the paper ‘An Armenian Village in Turkey’

(Fourth Critical Response to Elif Kanca’s “An Armenian Village in Turkey: An Identity Squeezed Between Inherited Memories and Future Prospects”)

This paper deals with a very interesting subject. This study might have been more in-depth and could have touched on many more issues. However, these might be too sensitive and too political. This study as an anthropological ethnographic study of a small locality is interesting. There are a lot written observations about the Armenian history in the Ottoman Empire and about the relationship between Armenia and Turkey. However, unfortunately, the studies on the Armenian community in modern-day Turkey are scarce. This article is an exception. It is one of the few which deals with the modern-day Armenian community living in Turkey.

- Anonymous

NB: do you have any comments on Elif Kanca’s article and/or the critical responses? Please send these to [info@ethnogeopolitics.org](mailto:info@ethnogeopolitics.org) or post these on <http://www.ethnogeopolitics.org>.

Some of these comments the Editorial Board may publish as Critical Responses (maximum 3,000 words) in the next issue of the journal. Extensive critical responses with own source references may be published as full-fledged, separate articles. Please supply your name, contact details, academic and/or other professional titles and affiliations, as well as your research specialisms and any major publications.



### *Main Article*

## **Conflict and the Construction of Ethnic Identities: The Case of Ivanovka Village in Azerbaijan**

**Çakır Ceyhan Suvari**

*Abstract This research studies the dynamics of intra- and intergroup conflicts and their contribution to the construction of the Molokan ethnic identity in the Ivanovka village within the Ismailly department of central Azerbaijan. The fieldwork conducted in İvanovka has demonstrated that the tensions and conflicts which play an important role in the construction of the Baptist, Kharismat, Lesgi and Azeri ethnic identities cohabiting in the village along with the Molokans, were triggered and deepened by religious and denominational differences.*

**Key words:** Molokan, Azeri, Baptist, Lezgi, Kharismat, religion, ethnicity, conflict.

### **Introduction**

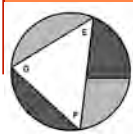
Ivanovka is a village with a population of 3,000, in the Ismailly Rayon. History of the village goes back to the settlement of Molokans exiled from Russia. With the Türkmençay Agreement signed on 10 February 1828, many Russian peasants, especially Molokans and Dukhobors, started to be settled in Azerbaijani lands (Süleymanlı 2006: 34-35).

According to information that Molokans in the village gave, six years after the Türkmençay Agreement, Ivanovka was founded in 1834 with the settlement of eleven Molokan families. Later, the population of the village was increased with the settlement of Molokans exiled from the cities Tambov, Voronezh, Rostov and Stavropol in Russia. Afterward, Lezgis coming from Dagestan and Azerbaijanis were settled in the village in 1949 and 1950 respectively.

It is stated that 2,500 persons having a Christian identity, mostly Molokan, and 500 persons with a Muslim identity live in the village. Even though different religions and sects live together in Ivanovka, it is known as a Molokan village from the outside. In addition to ethnic diversity of the village, another distinctive characteristic is currently the continuation of the *kolkhoz* (collective farm) system as established in the Soviet Union period. Ivanovka residents said they had distributed the *kolkhoz* system not only in Azerbaijan but also in all former Soviet countries.

My objective in this study is to show that conflicts and tensions between and within groups play a very important role in the construction of ethnic identity. However here, the dynamics of constructing ethnicity and providing continuity of existence of ethnic groups, rather than the quantity (size, power and influence) of each ethnicity, will be stressed.

It will be examined to what extent religion and sect differences in particular affect, trigger or curtail intergroup and intra-group conflicts, which are considered crucial in the construction



of ethnicity and the formation of its limits. This paper is based on fieldwork I carried out in 2006 in Ivanovka. Ivanovka village has been chosen for its distinctive feature of incorporating many ethno-religious communities.

### Ethnicity According to the Constructivist Approach

Ethnicity is a flexible, broad term which is differently defined by using various criteria that may change according to time and space. The term, which was identical with tribes and clans before the nation states' era, has provided the basis for different phenomena: thus nation states and political systems have been attributed to the term. The fact that the term is used as synonym to terms such as nation, race and ethnic minority, and that it has been politicized by being turned into a synonym for terms similar to ethnic identification, have caused it to carry a potential for leading to different types of disputes and conflicts (Eriksen 2004: 15-16).

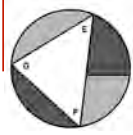
However, etymologically the adjective "ethnic" and the term "ethnicity" derived from the root "ethnie" are all derived from the word "ethnos", which means "the people" in Greek; with its original usage, it expresses a human communion rather than a political meaning (Aydın 1998: 53). In this definition, the term "irreligious" has been used to define the groups other than Greeks, to give the meaning of "pagan" (Eriksen 2004: 15).

As underlined above, the 'constructivist' approach considers ethnic identities, which are established mostly through religious and cultural variables, not as substantial selves, which have historical continuity but as social categories. These are shaped by social processes such as the groups' casting out 'others' or including each other during the value division and mutual interaction processes throughout history.

According to Barth (2001: 18), "the elements determining the belonging of the ethnic group are not the differences considered objectively but the differences that are formed during social process". Barth suggests that if the people feel themselves belonging to an "A" group rather than a "B" group which is relative or relatively close to them, no one can prevent this definition no matter how different or similar the people are in terms of behaviors (Barth 2001: 18).

Barth (2001: 13), who also suggested that the boundaries between the ethnic groups are not formed due to lack of communication but are resulting from social processes such as "casting out" and "inclusion", considers ethnic identities as "social categories formed as a result of definitions that people make regarding the groups within which they live". Barth also underlines that ethnic belonging is a flexible phenomenon depending on change rather than a given, stable and non-changing phenomenon.

Ethnicity is a device of "othering" which starts with the perception of differences (Eller 1999: 9). The people or communities making a certain demand bring their own differences i.e. perceived distinctive characteristics to the foreground in most identity demands. Yet these same people or communities are forced to remain with their differences i.e. self-



identifications in cases of discrimination. In the first case, the expression “I am/we are different than [from] you” prevails, whereas the expression “you are different than [from] us” prevails in the second case (Bilgin 2007: 33). However, these differences are variable, that is to say, each ethnic group may use any cultural element as a reference point in identity formation and identity maintenance. According to this point of view, ethnicity is the subjective identity formation among the groups whom are considered to share historical or cultural elements (Eller 1999: 9).

According to Tapper and Hann (cited by Aydın 1998: 116), the ethnicity is “not an objective phenomenon. It is a “subjective” situation starting at the point which is considered by a person or a group as discriminating for themselves or ‘others’. This subjective situation is determined by religion or affiliation to a ruler, family or dynasty, by lifestyle, the place of living, the place of arrival or by language sometimes”. According to Eriksen (2004: 15-16), the concept of ethnicity marks, characterizes, the relations between groups which define themselves as culturally different and also defined by others accordingly.

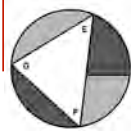
Eriksen (2004: 27) suggests that for the ethnicity to emerge, the communities must have a minimum degree of contact with each other and it is also compelling for them to perceive each other's ideas as different from others in cultural terms. That is to say, ethnicity is being shaped as a result of mutual relations and interactions; so at least two group needs to be in contact with each other for this to happen.

Since the groups themselves and the relations between them change constantly, the identities can never be defined completely and remain static. Cultural identities are continuously being established as a ‘non-finishable subjectivity’ (Altuntaş 2002: 3). Cultural identity is constantly established and re-established in accordance with the approximate experiences, relations, current symbols and ideas.

The fact that the symbols and ideas used in defining a cultural identity repeat themselves, does not mean that their meanings will be the same all the time or that they will not change through new practices (Larrain 1995: 223). Just as culture is not a stable and unaltered phenomenon, neither is cultural identity (Somersan 2004: 38).

DeVos (cited by Eller 1999: 8) defines ethnicity as a subjective phenomenon that is formed by bringing to the foreground any element of their culture so as to symbolically differ themselves from other groups. Providing examples from Cyprus in terms of usage of ethnic symbols, Volkan (1999: 132) has observed that Greek men have been wearing blue sashes (one of the colors of Greece's flag) and Turkish men have been wearing red sashes during the periods of increased ethnic tension on the island.

While the usage of the mentioned symbolic colors is not important during normal times of relative peace and quiet, it has been stated that a Cypriot Turk would prefer to die instead of wearing a blue sash (Volkan 1999: 132). Similarly, Azerbaijanis, who used the accordion in all their feasts and events before the Karabağ War with local Armenians and the neighboring state of Armenia, have developed a negative attitude to the musical instrument. Now, Azerbaijanis consider the use of the accordion, which they have come to think of as an



Armenian instrument, in Azerbaijani weddings and other festivities as high treason and they prefer the garmon instead of the accordion.<sup>1</sup>

A large majority of the identities are thus established 'constructively'. Human beings establish their identities under pressure, incentive or conditions of freedom i.e. free choice (Huntington 2004: 22). This identity formation and establishment uses materials from history, geography, biology, productive or production-oriented institutions, collective memory, personal fantasies, potency devices and religious revelations.

But the individuals, social groups, and entire societies process all these materials according to the social structures around themselves, i.e. the social conditions resulting from the space/time framework and cultural projects, and re-establish i.e. continuously shape and alter the meanings of all these materials (Castells 2006: 14). Especially, economical professions and political interests feed on the abovementioned materials and play a leading role in the increase of ethnic consciousness (Fawcett 2000: 7).

### Religion-Centred Identity and Belonging in Ivanovka Village

At first sight, two identities grab one's attention in Ivanovka village: Molokan and Muslim identities. These two identities also take their references from religion. Muslims describe Christian sects (Molokan, Baptist and Kharizmat) as belonging under the Molokan identity as a whole, sometimes as "people of the crucifix" to insult them. They also place themselves under the overall identity of "Mohammed" followers, eliminating or marginalizing all ethnic, linguistic and religious differences in their Azerbaijani (Shiite) and Lezgis (Sunni) identities when contrasting it to the Christian identity.

It is seen that Molokans also describe Muslims collectively, ignoring or downplaying the latter's internal differences accordingly. Molokans define Lezgis and Azerbaijanis under the Muslim identity, or as a "black nation" to insult them, in spite of their different ethnic belongings (and particular religious doctrines). However, it has been found that these different belongings between and within the groups in question are paid attention to by these groups on closer analysis, when one spends more time in the village, even if no Muslim-Christian tensions and conflicts occur between them.

In the first days passed in Ivanovka, the residents with whom conversation was made drew problem-free and compatible village images, with stereotyped remarks such as "we are all brothers", "we have no difference", "no problem exists among us", as if all inter-group relations and perceptions were harmonious.

The conversations that the researcher carried out on the second day in the village, such as with an Ivanovka resident around seventy years old, were enlightening: thus the latter said he was a Baptist, while pulling out potatoes in the garden of his house; this typifies the aforementioned situation. But the stereotypes used to express integrity of elements forming the Baptist community, in fact constructed "us" against "other" on closer analysis, so partnerships established between us and the other made clear the limits of us and the other:



“We have no difference with Molokans. Just as Muslims are divided among themselves, we are the same, we believe in the same God. All of us are Christian. Muslims, Jewish, Molokans and Baptists come from the same boiler. Some eat pork, some eat sheep, some also eat cattle but from the same boiler.”

In the conversation made with the Molokan-rooted school director, when he was asked about the differences between Baptists and Molokans, he responded as follows:

“There is not much difference between us; only Baptists are baptized, Molokans are not. However, baptism is not necessary to enter the path to God. Jesus is the son of God for [all of] us. We also do not eat pig, drink alcohol, and do not smoke cigarettes either. The one married with a Baptist becomes a Baptist, irrespective of being a woman or man. Because, Baptists do not marry with any person not of their belief. They stipulate how to be a Baptist for persons whom they marry from the outside. Therefore, Molokans decrease gradually [by such intermarriages].”

The school director repeats the word “us” frequently in his discourse, and the expression of “not necessary” in the sentence of “only Baptists are baptized, Molokans are not. However, baptism is not necessary to enter the path to God” in fact reveals clearly a major Molokan-Baptist contrast. Again, his expressions on marriage point out another significant contrast between the two sects.

A similar discourse idealized in the manner of “all of us are brothers” is also seen in the execution of religious practices. For instance, both Muslim and Christian Ivanovka residents who were interviewed in the first days of the field trip, said pork, meat and alcoholic beverages prohibited by religion are not consumed in their villages. During the first day of staying in the village, a Molokan family also said Molokans do not drink or even smoke cigarettes. Furthermore, their discourses were so strong; they seemed quite persuasive to those not being Ivanovka residents or even from neighbouring villages.

Thus a taxi driver taking the researcher from Baku to Ivanovka was from an Azerbaijani village bordering Ivanovka. He said he drunk much before, but stopped drinking alcoholic beverages because his beliefs had a strong influence later. The taxi driver expressed that he performed prayer every day, and stated he did not eat salami and hot dog as he was concerned that these could contain pork meat. While regretting his sinful past, he also complained about Muslims in Azerbaijan being not as faithful to their own religions as the Molokans were. He said Molokans were more Muslim than ordinary Muslims because Molokans in neighbouring Ivanovka were very religious people who did not drink, or eat pork meat.

This idealized image that Molokan and Muslim ‘Ivanovkans’ tell about themselves, matched to a high degree with the opinions on Ivanovka residents of those living in neighbouring villages. In both expressions, the profile of Molokans and Muslims in Ivanovka is one of strict adherence to their religions, like not eating pork meat and drinking alcoholic beverages.





However, it was quickly understood after the first days that the researcher came to Ivanovka, that the real situation is or can be quite different from these discourses.

For example, it soon became evident that alcohol drink was sold in each shop and dining room of the village. In evening hours, most of the peasants consumed alcohol very easily in every environment they were found. When an Azerbaijani operating shop in the village was asked that as Muslims and Molokans said they do not drink, then whom he sold drinks to, the grocer gave an answer suggestively, in the manner of “who says that”, instead of asking me “who doesn’t drink alcoholic beverage”.

The same attitude was observed among Molokans as well. Thus, expressions of the Molokan-rooted Ivan was also inconsistent with the idealized discourse of “religious” Molokan identity:

-Researcher: “Do you go to church?”

-Ivan: “No, I do not. Possibly I went there five times during my life.”

-Researcher: “Why do you not go?”

-Ivan: “Forget it, what they do when they go there, what do they say there, it’s all useless.”—he thinks some more, and continues while laughing—“I would go there after getting older, sometime.”

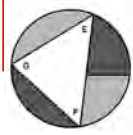
-Researcher: “Do you eat pork meat?”

-Ivan: “I did not eat it before but eat it since I became 25 years old. I was a technician. We had gone to Tiflis, worked hard there and got hungry. Friends cooked pig. I did not eat it at first. But as I was hungry, I ate it, it tasted very nice, so I started to eat pork meat since then. I also began to drink Vodka with beer. While I was working in Baku, my friends drank it. Water in Baku was not good.”—he laughs and adds—“I got hungry and ate pig, I got thirsty and drunk beer.”

In the interview with Presviteriy Matiyev [Presbyter of Molokans Vasily Terent'evich Prokofiev, according to website Ivanovka.net. Ed.] when the subject came to consuming alcoholic drinks by Molokans in spite of its prohibition by their religion, Matiyev complained about the subject but stressed that members complying with prohibitions still exist among them:

“Now the youngsters do not follow their fathers’ advice, by drinking beer. But there are youngsters present, who do obey to their fathers. However, there also are such adults who drink and smoke cigarettes. But smoking cigarette is sin for us.”

The Molokan couple Tatyana and Grigor also said that they were Molokan while describing their identities, but also added that they did not carry out the requirements of their religion. While Tatyana said that she did not go to Church, she at the same time complained that Molokan conventions were being forgotten slowly.



One church apiece was found in the village belonging to Molokans, Baptists and Kharizmats. Those going to the church hardly used it except for religious ceremonies, and arranged Sundays generally attended by old people only. However, the existence of one Church for each Christian community in the village, creates a feeling of confidence in protecting the identity of their members and projecting a message of “we are here” on a spatial dimension to others. This is a strong indicator that they maintain their religions, although the number of those participating in religious ceremonies is limited. On the other hand, although the population of Muslims in the village is (or was) 500, they have had no mosque to worship in.

Therefore, the Muslims of the village are deprived not only of a concrete symbol for their religious identity, but also of a tight community solidarity that the symbol in question provides—contrary to the Christian communities in the village. Only a few old men went to nearby villages or Ismayilli city for Friday prayer. It was noted in the conversations made with the village’s Muslims, however, that for some reason they had no wish to construct a mosque in Ivanovka.

As can be seen from the examples given above, belonging descriptions of Ivanovka residents are based on religious/denominational references, although they do not perform religious practices and comply with its prohibitions all that often; even a mosque belonging to Muslims is not found. In other words, Ivan who drinks alcoholic beverage, does not go to Church, and even evaluates things said and done there as “useless things”, still describes himself as Molokan; so do Tatyana and Grigor.

The Ivanovkan pulling out potatoes, explaining that “we have no differences with Molokans”, also states that he is a Baptist. Or the shop market-stall holder i.e. shop owner with the alcohol found on his table and pork in his stable, making the separation of “us” and “other”, using religious references again, saying to the researcher that “we are Muslims” and that they”—meaning Molokans—are “People of the Crucifix”.

Furthermore, the us-them separation in question becomes more distinct in constructing ethnic identity by indicators such as collective names, marriage, collective memory, and other signifiers of group solidarity—contrary to those of religious practices. Even so, the expression of “we are not religious but religion is always on our minds” by Vitali working as a servant in the school’s village, shows how strong religion still is for creating a sense of belonging.

Although people do not frequently or strictly carry out their religious/denominational practices as being the source for their identity in their daily lives, it is considered important through remembering in possible marriage situations that the religion/sect itself can be vital in face with the other, independently of religious practices. Thus by the use of such collective names to describe and distinguish oneself from the other—which is especially salient in moments of tension and conflict—whereby group solidarity needs to be strengthened.





### Role of Conflict in the Construction of Ethnic and Religious Identities in Ivanovka

Tension and conflict resulting from the very ethnic structure of Ivanovka can be seen in every area of daily life. Even though a restful and problem-free village image is presented to outsiders, tension and conflict are seen in all social units—such as intergenerational, within families, between families, within ethnic groups and between ethnic groups, within each religion/sect and between religions/septs during the field research.

But the most prevalent tensions and conflicts are seen between religions/septs. As also stated by Fawcett (2000: 1-2) and Pye (2003: 45), religious differences play mostly a driving role in the aggravation of conflicts, because, while religions and septs play an important role in the production of identities and the dependence to produced identity, these also function as important motivations in inter-group conflicts at the same time.

As violence and use of the gun is a widely acknowledged sin in Molokan belief, Molokans are generally defined as peaceful people avoiding all kinds of violence. Molokans themselves also state in their discourses that violence is prohibited in their religion, therefore they stay out of fights and warfare. Matiyev from the Presbyterians [V. T. Prokofiev, according to website Ivanovka.net. Ed.], with whom a conversation was made in Ivanovka, attributed the prohibition of violence in their religion to an event which happened to Jesus:

“[The] Drop of the sword in the hand of Pierre [Petrus/Peter] in the moment our master Jesus was caught, was the wish of God and in the message that God gave with this event, it prohibited the gun [the use of any weapon] to everyone.”

In the same way, it is recorded that Molokans subjected to exile and violence by the forces of the Russian Czar, due to their unwillingness to go into the army and their religion being evaluated as perverse by the Orthodox Church, did not show any resistance at the time. To the question of the researcher to Matiyev [Prokofiev] why the sect members did not resist the exiles and massacres, the (his) answer was: “the demon [Devil] cannot be resisted, so one must stay away from it; leaving this field to the Devil will take, and has taken, our people in the right direction”—i.e. by going away into exile.

By looking at the aforementioned features of the Molokans, one might conclude they have never experienced tension and conflict both among themselves and with other groups. But many discourses and practices falsifying this conclusion have been encountered—even in the short time of the field research, which took as much as one month.

The most important indicator of tensions and conflicts among Molokans is the existence and arrival of new septs, such as former Baptists and Kharizmat separated from their own septs. Although segregations seem to be based on theological discussions, it actually has emerged from social tensions in reality.

On the other hand, tension and conflict are experienced more extensively and intensely between Christian and Muslim identities, rather than among septs within each religious identity. So, the tension between members of both religions softens the tensions between different septs within each religion; even alliances between septs are formed against



representatives of a religion perceived as truly, fundamentally different from one's own. The tension in Ivanovka between representatives of both religions comes to light in the use of *kolkhoz* land, the distribution of the labour force and the managerial elite in the *kolkhoz*, and the construction of new houses or shops in the village.

With the researcher entering a small shop located in the street near the village centre, he took the first step of a long conversation from which the aforementioned tensions and conflicts have been quoted. The shop owner was named Lezgi.

When the researcher entered the shop, the conversation was initiated with the grocer about his tasks. But Lezgi (the grocer) showed a certain reaction to the researcher, saying that "you did not talk with the right persons, no way; talk with the right persons, and they say the truth to you."

-Grocer: "Come, I will tell you the truth. Look over there, there's a newspaper. There a complaint written in 1995 is shown: What is the Complaint of the Black Village? These Molokans did not allow us here at the time. When our child married, they said again that the land of our village is found 20-30 km below, go and construct a house there. However when their child married, they constructed their house in the village. While I bought this shop they wanted and tried to hinder me."

"They used to say that the "black nation" should not enter into the centre of the village. When I established the grocery store, having persisted, they were afraid of interfering themselves and they therefore brought in officials. "What you have done is not legal, demolish the store!" said the officials who arrived."

After that, he continues to talk about the Molokans:

-Grocer: "They also eat pork."

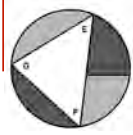
-Researcher: "Don't Muslims eat that?"

-Grocer: "There are also some among us, but very few."

While talking, customers are entering in and out continuously. When customers are present, the talk is being interrupted for a while, then it continues again from where it has been left off. Lezgi does not neglect to respect and welcome the Molokan customers entering the store. Even though this conflicts with what he talks about, he explains this as "a requirement of being a merchant".

-Grocer: "If they break up the *kolkhoz* and give out to everyone the land he deserves, one would do whatever he likes. They do not break up the *kolkhoz* either. Our Muslim government also helps them. We are not honest either. There are also betrayers among us. There he is, the director of the sheep department. He gets along well with Sedir. They scoop the money together."

Afterwards, he invites the researcher to his home for a meal. Leaving the store to his son, we are going to his house together. In the house, we meet the elder brother of the grocer as well.



During the meal, we again start talking about the Molokans. The elder brother begins to speak:

-“Look, during the Karabağ War [of 1988-1994 between Armenia and Azerbaijan about the Armenian enclave residing within the territory of the latter], none of the Molokans fought at our side.”

When the researcher reminds them of the tomb of the Molokan soldier who died in Karabağ that he saw in the village cemetery, the younger brother responds as follows:

-“Yes, there is one, he did not go from here, he did go from Bakü; his birthplace is here. You see, now there are no Azeri, Turk, or Lezgi among us. We all follow Mohammed. I am also against the segregation between Shiite and Sunni. Just as the Molokan supports the Russians, the Armenians—why? Because all of them are the people of crucifix.”

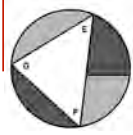
The thoughts of the Lezgi grocer regarding the Molokans are striking, as these display the conflicting structure of the relations between the Muslims and Christians living in the village. The intensity of the tension has shown itself clearly in the interviews by the researcher, in the statements such as who is or can be “an honest man” and “a dishonest man” made by the persons interviewed. Such statements expressed to the researcher indicated to the latter who should be the ones to be contacted and interviewed by him, indicating therefore the boundary between the major religious groups in the village.

In Ivanovka, at the place called “discotheque” in which the village youngsters come together to entertain for weekends, is where the tensions between the groups turns into physical violence from time to time. Though frequent fights in general appear to be a sign of “a matter about girls”, the inference of the researcher in line with the information narrated to him indicates that these fights are one of the reflections of the conflict between the groups. It may be easily said that the tensions about the sharing of resources and job opportunities in the village are being brought into the discotheque, through the youngsters, whereby the parties often escalate into fights.

The entertainments at the discotheque could be interpreted as the modern version of the entertainments called “pragolga” by the Molokans. Pragolga are the entertainments organised at picnics, in order for youngsters, including unmarried girls and boys, to get to know each other with the knowledge (and scrutiny) of their parents. This tradition is open to the public, though it is specifically intended for the Molokans.

The Molokan youngsters come into the discotheque in mixed groups of boys and girls, whereas the exact opposite situation is true for Muslim youngsters. Unlike the Molokan girls, the Muslim girls mostly do not participate in such entertainments; very few Muslim girl participants are welcomed by their co-religionists.

Therefore, continuous tension is encountered between the Muslim boys coming to the discotheque single, and the Molokan boys coming in often accompanied by (their) girls; this situation also has been observed by the researcher. It has been expressed to the researcher by



the youngsters of both religions that this tension occasionally leads to and turns into physical violence. Due to these fights, the village administration has banned the use of alcohol at the discotheque<sup>2</sup>; a small group consisting of Muslim and Christian youngsters has also been assigned to maintain security and keep the peace at the discotheque.

Victor, the administrator who is responsible for the village youngsters, can easily tell when the feelings of the Molokan youngsters that are uncomfortable because the Muslim youngsters come to the discotheque single, through the following question that he asked the researcher: "Is it fair in your opinion?". Mişa, who is one of the Molokan youngsters of the village, feels also uncomfortable about the same situation, and in response to the question of the researcher "Do fights take place at the discotheque?", says: "Ooh, sometimes very big fights take place; sometimes the outsiders look at the girls and this is not a big problem, however, we fight when they verbally attack", he replies.

While talking to a youngster who said he is Azeri, he replies to the question of the researcher "Do you have any Molokan friends?", as follows:

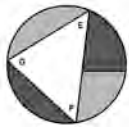
"No, well, they do not become friends [with us]. They are all alcoholic, there is no such a miserable nation as them. I do have Lezgi friends. Lezgis are also Muslims like us. They are not those of the crucifix like the Molokans. The Molokans make a crucifix from wood and pray to it. The Molokans are only afraid of the Lezgis in this village. Lezgis sometimes beat them up totally. Before you came, some Lezgis had beaten up some of the Molokans at the discotheque. The discotheque was kept closed for two weeks."

As Barth (2001: 21) states, "Each social group has its own set of standards and values. The bigger the difference between these value judgements, the easier the formation of different ethnic groups." The "value judgements" expressed above by Barth mostly revolve around religion and religious sects, such as those found in Ivanovka. While defining "we" and "other", the concepts selected from different religions and sects within those religions, of which some examples are given above, are used. In essence, the value judgements are formed according to the "ethics" based on a particular religion or sect within a religion.

### Conclusion

When the researcher examined the case of Ivanovka, it has been determined that the conflicts and tensions among the villagers are very important factors in the formation and maintenance of Molokan, Baptist, Kharizmat, Azeri and Lezgi identities. The mentioned conflicts could be observed in all fields of daily life. Conflicts rise to the surface during the contested use and (re)distribution of kolkhoz lands, the distribution of labour and managers in the kolkhoz, and the construction of new houses or stores in the village.

The only discernible place that the researcher has been able to determine where conflicts turn into violence, is the discotheque where entertainments are organised at weekends. The fights that frequently break out here, are, in their own statements, in general due to "the matter about girls".



However, the inference of the researcher in the direction of his observations and the information that was passed to him, confirms that this is just one of many expressions and manifestations of the tension and conflict between the ethnic and religious groups. It could be easily said that the tensions about sharing the resources and work fields in the village are being brought into the discotheque through the youngsters, whereby the parties escalate into fights. Therefore, the fights at the discotheque essentially take place not between the individuals, but between the groups. For example, fights mostly take place between the Molokan and Lezgi youngsters or more generally between the Christian and Muslim youngsters.

In the fights taking place between the groups in Ivanovka, it was seen that religious differences trigger the conflicts and cover up the real causes of conflicts, in other words form a type of cover for conflicts. For example, the Muslims who demand the (re)distribution of a kolkhoz or want to open a new grocery store in the village, see the Molokans as a blocking factor in realising these demands and undertakings. Because in view of the Muslims, the Molokans do not love the followers of Mohammed since they are “the people of crucifix”—and they do not want Muslims to get rich anyway. The Molokans in turn consider Muslims as “violence oriented” and “lazy people”.

Molokanism, historically embedded in the Russian peasantry, has given rise to an ethno-religious community known by the name Molokan in Azerbaijan and Ivanovka village in particular, throughout its periods of conflict with the Orthodox Church. It may be asserted that differentiating and opposing religious and denominational propensities serve as an ideological vehicle in the process of identity-formation within a class or ethnic group. Religious differences that played an important role in the formation of a Molokan identity as opposed to the Russian Orthodox one, are continuing to serve as an important ideological tool in face of the Muslim “others”, who are relative newcomers in Ivanovka.

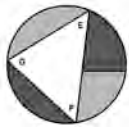
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### Endnotes

1. However, the garmon instrument, which creation is still inspired on the accordion and derived from the word “garmonia” which means harmony, has been brought to Azerbaijan by the Russian people (see <http://nedir.antoloji.com/garmon/>, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garmon>). Azerbaijanis in Kars consider the accordion as their “national” instrument, contrary to the situation in Azerbaijan.
2. However, the youngsters used to violate this ban by having alcoholic beverages that they hide out of the entertainment place.

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### **The Ethno-Cultural "Mosaic" of Ivanovka village in Azerbaijan**

(First Critical Response to Çakır Ceyhan Suvari's "Conflict and the Construction of Ethnic Identities: The Case of Ivanovka Village in Azerbaijan")

Ivanovka, a village in the Ismayili district of Azerbaijan, is arguably the last remaining Soviet-era collective farm (Kolkhoz) in the country. Ivanovka has preserved not only the ancient lifestyle of the Russian Molokans living there, but probably has preserved the only "relict" kolkhoz in the former Soviet space as well, which continues to operate in a scheme at least resembling collective farming. Actually, the study of Ivanovka—or any such village or locality at this time—is quite challenging, given the conditions of growing intensity of international communications, media development, and migrations, all of which makes





modern society extremely diverse in ethnic and/or cultural respects, which in many countries and localities is thus characterized by an ethno-cultural “mosaic”.

This complexity causes increased ethnic tensions. The growing role of ethnic factors in human behavior, both on the social and the individual levels, is undeniable. In a multicultural society, one of the most important predictors of interethnic relations is ethnic identity itself. In connection with this, the reviewed study seems to me an interesting research in the dynamics of intra- and intergroup conflicts and their contributions to the construction of the Molokan ethnic identity in Ivanovka village.

Nevertheless, I have a few critical comments to the author:

- 1) He should give a more detailed explanation of the religious sects among the Molokans, like the Baptists and, confusingly, the ‘Molokans’ as a religious identification (I have never heard about the ‘Kharizmat’). The Molokans are originally Russian and in that sense are an ethnic community, but the particular differences within their special kind of spiritual Christianity remain obtuse.
- 2) The historic context of this study is somewhat weak, and the methodological part of its research undisclosed. Although the description of the Molokans is very useful, for a better understanding it would be wise to make some comparisons—with for example Shemakhy province:

In the Caspian region settled dissenters: the Old Believers, Molokans, Doukhobors, eunuchs, Judaizing, or Saturdays. Molokans: they believe in Christ, but reject all external rites and church sacraments. Agriculture is conducted according to accepted rules of their forefathers ... . In addition, the rigidity of the old customs, being unadventurous and averse to all kinds of innovations, characterize them to a very high degree. ... The “Schismatics” (dissenters), lodged in the Caspian region in general behave soberly, modestly and peaceably among themselves, and the heads of the families are concerned about the welfare of their wives and children. Drunkenness among schismatics occur very rarely. Dissenters are among themselves very trusting, but regarding other residents not only trusting, but very secretive” (Note on the Russian settlers in the Caspian region, ‘Dissenter Acts’ *Caucasian Archaeological Committees*, Vol.10, 1885, pp.281,293; own translation from Russian ).

This excerpt gives us an idea of the typical behavior of the Molokan religious community.

Finally, I do not entirely agree with the conclusions of the author: in my opinion, there is tension and potential conflict in the village not so much because of religious differences, but mainly because of economic and social problems: the lack of involvement of Muslims in the economic life of the village, the (self-)isolation of the Molokans, who hardly maintain any relations with the local people.

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### Review of the manuscript 'Ivanovka and the Construction of Ethnic Identities'

(Second Critical Response to Çakır Ceyhan Suvari's "Conflict and the Construction of Ethnic Identities: The Case of Ivanovka Village in Azerbaijan")

The manuscript presents an analysis of the dynamics of intra- and intergroup conflicts and their contribution to the construction of the Molokan ethnic identity in the Ivanovka village of the Ismailly district of Azerbaijan. The author reports that the tensions and conflicts, which play an important role in the construction of the Baptist, Kharismat, Lezgi and Azeri ethnicities cohabiting in the village along with the Molokans, were triggered and deepened by religious and denominational differences.

#### *Merits*

First of all, the article's topic is specific, relating to a particular field and its language is formal and sophisticated, using field-specific vocabulary. The article is well-organized and contains all the expected components (Introduction, Methods, Theory, relevant sections and etc.). The article is well-written and easy to understand.

#### *Critique*

Unfortunately, there are errors in reporting of data. A crucial misleading statement by the author can be found in the article's section 'Ethnicity According to the Constructivist Approach': "Azerbaijanis, who used the accordion in all their feasts and events before the Karabakh War with local Armenians and the neighboring state of Armenia, have developed a negative attitude to the musical instrument. Now, Azerbaijanis consider the use of the accordion, which they have come to think of as an Armenian instrument, in Azerbaijani weddings and other festivities as high treason and they prefer the garmon instead of the accordion."

This is wrong information, most likely received from an unreliable source. I questioned friends, colleagues and musicians. But all of them, especially musicians, gave a clear answer: this statement is wrong. Azeri musicians do not play on the accordion and prefer the garmon in the Azerbaijani weddings, just because it is easier to play on the garmon than the accordion. Professional Azeri musicians play on the accordion perfectly (see in the References the links from YouTube).

Generally, the author does not do a good job on presenting and summarizing the literature; most of them are secondary translated sources.

Furthermore, the author briefly describes the history of the establishment of Ivanovka, citing a secondary source. There is a published collection of the official documents concerning the



issue: Acts collected by the Caucasian Archaeological Commission (ACAC), that should be used in the scholarly article concerning the issue.

I wish to point out that the settling of Molokans and other Russians in Azerbaijan started at the beginning of 1830s. The first settlement of Doukhobor-Molokans dissenters was established in 1830 (not in 1834) in Qizil-Qishlak village of Karabakh province, which consisted of the Don Cossacks, exiled by the court (ACAC: 128).

Moreover, the methodology is not clearly explained. There is no clear argumentation of why the author agrees with the constructivist theory of nation building and national identity formation.

I would like to indicate that the author's conclusions are not convincing. The determination type of conflict and its categorization are omitted. In his Conclusion, the author writes: "Because in view of the Muslims, the Molokans do not love the followers of Mohammed since they are "the people of crucifix"—and they do not want Muslims to get rich anyway. The Molokans in turn consider Muslims as "violence oriented" and "lazy people". This is an important point of view for the determination (characterization) of the conflict: is this an antagonistic conflict between implacably hostile social groups? Pacifism is a characterizing feature of Molokans, but at the same time the author's Conclusion suggests an antagonist relationship between different groups—including a rather intolerant and prejudiced view by Molokans on other groups.

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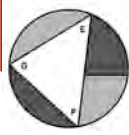
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### Critique on the paper 'Conflict and the Construction of Ethnic Identities'

(Third Critical Response to Çakır Ceyhan Suvari's "Conflict and the Construction of Ethnic Identities: The Case of Ivanovka Village in Azerbaijan")

The thesis is interesting, but this article shows a number of shortcomings, one of these being that the author does not show his or her familiarity with the existing literature about this



subject. In fact, there are a good number of works on the subject, such as “Socio-Political Accommodation and Religions Decline: The Case of the Molokan Sect in Soviet Society” by Christel O. Lane (1975), or *Istoriia Zakavkazskikh Molokan i Dukhoborov* by I. Semenov (2001), or *Molokan Oral Tradition* by Willard B. Moore (1973), just to mention a few. The author has not explained to his or her readers the background of the sect.

Also, he or she has failed to sufficiently explain the background of the village, since the phrase in the abstract “Ivanovka was founded in 1834 with the settlement of eleven Molokan families. Later, the population of the village was increased with the settlement of Molokans exiled from the cities Tambov, Voronezh, Rostov and Stavropol in Russia. Afterward, Lezgis coming from Dagestan and Azerbaijanis were settled in the village in 1949 and 1950 respectively” cannot be considered a serious, sufficiently grounded discourse of the village history. Thus it is unclear what “later” means and what happened between “later” and the 1950s. Last but not least, there is no clear connection between the theoretical part on ethnicity and interpretations of the results of the field trip.

- Anonymous

NB: do you have any comments on Çakır Suvari’s article and/or the critical responses? Please send these to [info@ethnogeopolitics.org](mailto:info@ethnogeopolitics.org), or through the contact form at <http://www.ethnogeopolitics.org>.

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### *Main Article*

## **East Mediterranean Energy Geopolitical Elbowing with an American, Russian, Israeli, Turkish and Iranian Prefix: international and regional actor's role**

**Thrassy N. Marketos**

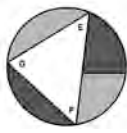
*Abstract This analysis, based on the neo-realist school of thought in geopolitics, aspires to shed light on the geopolitical game being played, astride the media coverage of the Syrian civil war, with and through the Eastern Mediterranean gas deposit potential. In a severely tense political environment, the presence of natural gas resources can become a highly 'toxic' issue and hence increase the geopolitical challenges that this region already faces and shrink the room for optimism. Provocative actions in the East Mediterranean region, such as regarding gas deposits, can only violate the spirit of talks and aggravate tensions. This in fact would be a serious threat to the stability and security of the whole Middle East. Conversely, a lack of regional stability will only have negative commercial implications and slow the pace of the extraction and transport of eastern Mediterranean gas resources.*

**Key words:** Energy security, gas and other energy deposits, East Mediterranean, Middle East, United States, European Union, Russia, Iran, Turkey, civil war in Syria, Israel, Greece, Cyprus, Kurds, Islamic sects.

### **Introduction**

Natural gas is not a toxic substance when inhaled. However, in a severely tense political environment it can become toxic and hence increase the geopolitical challenges the East Mediterranean region already faces and shrink the room for optimism. In such a case, it may fuel confrontations and add anxieties to an already volatile region. Provocative actions in the region can only violate the spirit of talks i.e. diplomacy and aggravate tensions. This in fact would be a serious threat to the stability and security of the whole Middle East. Conversely and at the same time, a lack of regional stability in the military, political and social spheres will only have negative commercial implications and slow the pace of the extraction and transport of eastern Mediterranean gas resources.

The Eastern Mediterranean holds, without question, large hydrocarbon resources even though the countries in the region, excluding Egypt, have retarded finding them. The estimations dating already several decades ago regarding huge deposits of natural gas resources in the southeastern part of the Mediterranean and the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Republic of Cyprus, came to be true when, in December 2011, official research studies reaffirmed existing estimates of gas deposits. Israel, had already discovered in 2009, in cooperation with 'Noble Energy' (Texas-US), an offshore natural gas deposit in the



Levantine basin, just 80 km west of the harbor of Haifa, containing some 238 billion m<sup>3</sup>, which was named Tamar. It was the most significant natural gas discovery of the year and of paramount importance for Israel, which was deprived of energy resources contrary to most of its Arab neighbors.

Map: D. Wurmser, 'Geopolitics of Israel's Offshore Gas Reserves,' April 4, 2013.<sup>1</sup>



A year later, a 450 bl m<sup>3</sup> and 5 km under the sea level offshore deposit was discovered, slightly in the west but still in Israel's EEZ, which was named Leviathan after the Bible sea monster. The geopolitical equation is completed by a 2-3 trn m<sup>3</sup> natural gas deposit which is presumed to be hidden in Herodote basin, under the jurisdiction of the Hellenic Republic (Greece).<sup>2</sup>

It came not as a surprise that, 3,400 bl c<sup>3</sup> of natural gas and 1,7 bl barrels of oil ready to be extracted from the depth of the Eastern Mediterranean sea—including the underwater deposits of the Nile basin in Egypt—turned once again the international spot lights on this troubled region and on the states surrounding it. Even before Tamar starting to be productive (the flow was inaugurated on March 2013), just the prospect of natural gas exploration in a region, so close to the 'energy thirsty' European Union market, changed the geopolitical map and is the cause of alliances' reconsiderations in the region.

This geo-economic reconfiguration in the Eastern Mediterranean region, coming up in the context of a steady worsening of relations between Turkey and Israel and the use of aggressive wording by Turkish officials against the Republic of Cyprus, evidently brought Israel and Cyprus, and Greece too, closer together. This realignment made the geostrategic corridor Cyprus-Crete-Peloponnese-Ionian sea-Italy probably the most effective export lane of Israel's energy resources towards the European market.

The geostrategic significance of the Eastern Mediterranean energy resources seems obvious if one considers that the European Union (EU) is currently importing some 83% of its needs in oil and 57% in natural gas, and that estimates show that Israel, Cyprus and Greece's deposits suffice for the exclusive feeding of the 27-member EU for around twenty years. Equally important is that the natural gas consumption in the EU reached 471Gm<sup>3</sup> in 2007 and is increasing at 3% every year, as well as the fact that the European Commission aims to reduce carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) air contamination by 2020 through reducing and abandoning coal burning. Adding to the extremely sensitive political and geostrategic transitions occurring in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and of course in Iran, and the highly competitive nature of relations between the Russian Federation and the Washington-London axis, one reconsiders the importance of the 'game'.





The same holds true for the Hebrew state, which until recently struggled for securing its procurement of natural gas from the international market, while its own deposits became depleted. At a time when the so called 'Arabic Spring' was ravaging the Libyan and Egypt regimes (Tel Aviv was getting 40% of its natural gas imports from Egypt until explosions lately interrupted the flow), the Islamic Muslim Brotherhood party's elected president in Cairo was overthrown, and the Lebanese Hezbollah claimed a part of the Tamar deposit with the support of the US, the prospect of quick exploitation of underwater resources gives Israel a powerful boost and sense of optimism.

It could not be otherwise, since the Houston-based Noble Energy along with the Israeli conglomerate Delek Group and its subsidiary Anver Oil Exploration are behind the exploitation of the Leviathan field, expected to produce initial volumes of 750 million cubic feet per day when it opens in 2016. In short, Israel and Cyprus now sit on at least 35-40 billion meters of gas—roughly two-year's worth of European consumption—and still have broad areas of exploration ahead of them. Indeed, Cyprus' waters remain largely unexplored. Only one block (block 12) has been systematically examined and only since the end of 2012 were tenders awarded for exploration in several more blocks, with international companies, such as Total, leading the pack.

The Republic of Cyprus Hydrocarbon State Company (KRETYK) estimates that, due to its advantageous geographic location being at the crossroads of major international energy routes to Europe and the Far East through the Suez Canal, the island is a natural regional energy hub and the natural location to develop a liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant.<sup>3</sup>

### The Russian–US factor

The EU market seems ideal for the supply of East Mediterranean hydrocarbons of the energy triangular of Israel-Cyprus-Greece, functioning with American blessings.<sup>4</sup> Either way, Cyprus' geopolitical significance was always tied to energy efficiency matters with the Anglo-Saxon alliance (US-UK). It would suffice to remember that the oil pipeline Baku-Ceyhan, whose construction was actively backed by Washington and London, ends up opposite to the Apostle Andrew cape in the Karpasia peninsula occupied since 1974 by Turkey. In other words, Cyprus is a strategically crucial point for the pipeline and the region's energy resources control.

It is true that for a while, the economic hardships facing Greece and the Republic of Cyprus and their close ties with Moscow, have led Athens and Nicosia considering an alternative to financial backing from the West to Russia, a country that has always been interested in the region's developments. Indeed, both Soviet and post-communist Russia's foreign policy has been engaged in a Real-politic strategic and economic penetration in Greece, Cyprus and Turkey, aiming to weaken those countries' links with the West and extending Russian influence to the south. The \$ 2,5 billion worth Russian loan to the troubled Cypriot economy, has assured the importance of Russian investments on the one hand, and has reaffirmed the



stable political and economic ties with Nicosia, on the other. It stands to reason that Moscow declared it would not accept the objections Ankara had to Cyprus signing a deal with America's Noble Energy Company aimed at developing its energy resources.

Russian interest in Cyprus matters can be easily explained. The worldwide climate change resulting in snow melting on the Earth's poles are creating an exit channel around the Arctic Circle necessary for facilitating the transportation of Russian trade goods. The Kremlin has been eagerly seeking such an exit channel in the Mediterranean Sea, the Baltic Sea, and even through Afghanistan in the Indian Ocean for three hundred years, but has always been denied these accesses by Britain.

Indeed, Russia is entering the second decade of the 21st century free of the "Rimland" burden, in other words, the strip of coastal land that, according to American geographer Nicholas John Spykman's theory, encircled Eurasia and obstructed Russia's free access to the Mediterranean Sea. Consequently, this gave the Ottoman Empire and nowadays Turkey a "special relationship" status with the Anglo-Saxon countries of the West, and then also with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the second half of the 20th century. Realizing this, Turkey has tried to find something unique in its geopolitical and geostrategic position on the map and invented the "New-Ottoman theory" to charm the Arab-Muslim and Persian-Muslim Shia world in order to use it as a tool for being accepted as the new hegemonic power in the oil- and natural gas-producing region of the Middle East.<sup>5</sup>

As to Russia, given that she faces the risk of losing Syria—its long-lasting Cold-War ally—due to the ongoing civil war there becoming regional, on whose soil it maintains a significant naval power base (Tatoush), there is a distant but, nevertheless, existent possibility that the Kremlin will seek to alternatively station its naval power in Cyprus, a member-state of the Eurozone, to which it is bound by an excellent relationship. This will give Russia the right to actively mingle in the island's energy resources development. Several Russian companies are already competing for acquiring sub-sea resources through exploitation permits by the Cypriot government, making quite many in the EU wary about the potentially strong positioning of Moscow in the natural gas sector of the island.

The signs of American strategic retreat manifested after President Barack Obama's reelection, as a tacit acknowledgment that the world's superpower does not possess the strength to support her posture in the worldwide political system like in the previous two decades, have definitely strengthened Moscow's position in the Eastern Mediterranean. Washington seems to have started abandoning the political perception that it is responsible for maintaining the world order and the will to militarily intervene like it did in Afghanistan or Iraq, unless there is a direct threat to its security.

The United States gave the impression that they were reevaluating their strategic priorities, a move that would lead the international system from the anomaly of the one power primacy (unipolar system) to a better balanced multipolar system. The current reduction of US military spending will lead to a diminished American presence in the troubled and heavily





militarized Middle East. Also new technological methods are allowing America to use shale gas and thus become less dependent to this region's oil, mark a strategic reorientation of the 'New Order-era sole superpower's relation to the problematic Middle East.

The rejection of a possible international intervention in Syria due to the risk of creating chaos and anarchy in the civil war torn country and a geostrategic balance loss in the whole region, seems to be a direct result. This might favor Israel, which prefers an icy but convenient relationship with the Assad regime more than the declared hostility of the salafist rebels, but it is also in Russia's interest. That shows that Washington has begun admitting that Moscow can be treated as a part of the new regional security architecture. In this regard, and as a direct result of Washington's strategic repositioning, comes also the rejection of the possibility of a military intervention against Iran due to this country's intention to pursue a nuclear program.

Russia itself is maintaining good relations with Israel. Tel Aviv enjoys Russian backing as it considers building an underwater natural gas pipeline, stretching from its deposits in the Levantine basin across Cyprus territorial waters to the Greek mainland, aiming to supply the European market. As a matter of fact, this is the third trustworthy alternative hydrocarbon transportation route to the EU market (the other two involving Russian and Azeri resources) that could ultimately provide Europe with the energy that the Nabucco project failed to offer.<sup>6</sup> The European states would no doubt prefer to rely on the reliable and, according to the International Law of the Sea, valid Cyprus EEZ demarcation with Israel than on analogous claims by Turkey, Lebanon, and Syria.<sup>7</sup>

In that sense, the United States' strategic retreat and the superpower's strategic rearrangements are shedding light on the possibility of the Cyprus Republic becoming part of a new regional security system in the Eastern Mediterranean and, perhaps, in the wider Middle East as well. Nicosia has signed a defense cooperation treaty with Israel to provide security to the mutual natural gas deposits<sup>8</sup>, and the Greek defense minister, while on official visit to Tel-Aviv, discussed the engagement of the Hellenic navy forces to the protection of energy installations.<sup>9</sup> Israel, Greece and the US are already conducting joint air and naval exercises in part to simulate defending seaborne gas drilling installations around the Eastern Mediterranean (Operation Noble Dina).<sup>10</sup>

The US had conducted similar exercises—the Operation Reliant Mermaid—with Turkey and Israel from 1998 to 2009, but these were canceled after Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan suspended military cooperation with Israel in 2010. Since then, Israel has pursued more military and economic ties with Greece and Cyprus.<sup>11</sup> Given that security is a decisive question for investing money in the creation of energy installations, these decisions offer a good framework for the cooperation scheme Israel is developing with Cyprus and Greece.



Furthermore, due to the number of Israeli citizens and family members working at the storage terminal to be constructed using Israel funds close to Famagusta, Israel and Cyprus have agreed to the stationing of an Israeli force, the task of which will be to protect them and the installations. The pact includes a procedure that provides the Israeli forces with access to the Cypriot defense units.<sup>12</sup> Obviously, Israel will be present in Cyprus for a long time and this no doubt is occurring with Washington's consent. As a consequence, the Republic of Cyprus is becoming part of the Hebrew state's strategic survival, security, and well-being.

This is creating a security belt around the energy deposits of the Eastern Mediterranean thought to be strong enough to block Turkey's designs on Cyprus, as well as Ankara's attempts to draw the limits of its EEZ with Egypt without reference to the lawful rights of the Greek island of Kastelorizo, another Turkish mechanism aiming to deprive Hellenic and Cypriot EEZ from sharing limits. In fact, for Turkey, the development of defense and energy cooperation between Israel, Greece and Cyprus with tacit support from Moscow, undermines a number of Turkish foreign and energy policy goals, such as the concept of Turkey being a regional natural gas hub.<sup>13</sup>

The Russian Federation wants to establish a strong presence in the emerging East Mediterranean gas deposit region. First, it wants to maintain its preeminent position as the number one gas supplier to Europe and, second, to counter Turkish efforts to establish itself as a key new transit country for Caspian gas. The US and the EU are against Russia's intervention in the Eastern Mediterranean natural gas deposits exploration and production. But Israel, Cyprus and Greece are favoring this in an attempt to strengthen their positions in an eventual conflict with Turkey, and in Israel's case, with other enemy neighbors. This has put Russia at odds with Turkey, despite the wide-ranging rapprochement between Moscow and Ankara over the past decade. The Kremlin has deployed naval vessels, including one or two submarines and the aircraft carrier "Admiral Kuznetsov", in the Eastern Mediterranean near Cyprus in late 2011.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, it is quite interesting that, having secured the right of passage through the Turkish EEZ in the Black Sea for the imminent construction of the South Stream natural gas pipeline (28 December, 2011), Gazprom, known for its connections with the Kremlin, has tried to purchase bonds of the Hellenic oil and natural gas state company (DEPA) but has finally upheld its offer at the last minute.

According to a statement by Leonid Zyuganov, Head of Gazprom's Project Management Department, "the company's interest in DEPA has no connection with the South Stream project and the decision that the scheduled pipeline will not cross Greek territory is solely related to the market, not to the owner of DEPA", meaning the low natural gas demand in Greece and Southern Italy due to the debt crisis in the two southern European countries. Many analysts think that, despite the fact that today's South Stream project is crippling Greece, "the officially declared Russian interest in the Greek energy market makes the



country's re-inclusion in South Stream planning quite possible". Some even argue that it is still being used as a negotiation tool for DEPA's purchase by Gazprom.<sup>15</sup>

It can also be no coincidence, that Gazprom signed an agreement with Israel on the production and preliminary purchase of 2 to 3 million tons of liquefied natural gas during President Putin's visit to the country (July 2012). Providing that it achieves DEPA's acquisition, Gazprom is planning to buy more Israeli and Cypriot natural gas, transport it in liquefied form to the Greek mainland, and sell it through DEPA's network to the European markets. In parallel, Washington, while providing a strong boost to Cyprus' right to exploit its energy resources, has established the first of a chain of "Energy Resource Bureaus" in the region in Nicosia.<sup>16</sup>

The United States has an interest in maximizing the gains and minimizing the risks associated with the natural gas developments in the eastern Mediterranean. Key elements of the US foreign policy in the region are:

- to support Israel's security;
- to provide an incentive for political reconciliation among states in the region;
- to promote European energy security through supply diversification by supporting the new Eastern Mediterranean Energy Corridor.

The increasingly tense relationship between Israel and Turkey has in recent years become one of Washington's most delicate and unwelcomed foreign policy challenge. It is thus possible that the US will try to ensure that energy rivalry does not spark a crisis between the two countries, and that the Cyprus conflict does not become interlinked with it as this would make both even more difficult to resolve.<sup>17</sup>

Speaking of an Israeli-Turkish gas pipeline, broadly discussed in recent months, Israel's recent experience with Egypt, where half of its natural gas supply was permanently severed following the collapse of the Mubarak regime, suggests that Tel Aviv will view with apprehension any scheme to anchor its critical infrastructure in countries beyond its borders, such as Turkey. For Israel, it would make more sense that ultimately the gas will be liquefied on Israeli territory and exported directly via sea to the consuming market.

### The Turkish factor

Ankara is trying to persuade Tel Aviv to build an export pipeline from the Leviathan field to its Minor Asia coast, provided that Israel ended energy cooperation with Cyprus. Turkey has even suspended some of its projects with Eni, the Italian oil and natural gas giant, including the 550-kilometer long Samsun-Ceyhan crude oil pipeline project, because of Eni's plans to explore offshore of Cyprus—with Ankara claiming that that Eni is in violation of international law. Given that Eni is working with Russian firm Gazprom to build the South



Stream pipeline scheduled to carry Russian gas through Turkey to Central Europe, Eni's suspension equally disadvantages Moscow.

However, what threaten most the realization of an Israel-Turkey gas pipeline—apart from Ankara's seeking to rehabilitate its bygone Ottoman glory—are the following:

- Tel Aviv would be exposed to Turkish blackmail;
- The pipeline itself would suffer vulnerability to Ankara orchestrated sabotage; and above all,
- Moscow would be utterly displeased since Israeli gas possesses a competitive pressure on Russia's supply to Turkish and European markets.

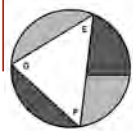
In addition, Russia sees itself threatened by the rise of a resurgent Ottoman Sunni empire to its south, and is thus seeking to cut Ankara's ambitions down to size.

As David Wurmster observes, "it would be a risky endeavor to be on the wrong side of Russia and Iran on the issue of a facility in Turkey which cannot be effectively protected from terror".<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, Israel's experience with Egypt and the Palestinians suggest that anchoring the Hebrew state's gas export system to Turkey is out of question. All evidence shows that Turkey, under the guidance of Tayyip Erdogan and the ruling Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) and despite people outcry, has abandoned 'Kemalism' as the founding ideology and set of principles of the secular state. Without doubt, it remains an utterly intolerant state that has univocally embraced 'New-Ottoman' ideology in order to pursue a pro-Arab and anti-Israel policy in the Middle East.

And not for a minor reason. As the French intervention in Mali highlighted, the rising tide of Islamist sentiments in North Africa and the Saharan regions threaten the stability of North African states. Centrifugal tendencies have arisen from the breakdown of central authorities in many Arab states and have reinforced the importance of tribe, sect, and (extended) family.

At the same time, the devastation left in the aftermath of the collapse of the reigning pan-Arab nationalist ideology, has driven many to seek the authenticity of Islam. Even without the overlay of ideology, the breakdown of the central state leads tribes and other local leaders to seek new arrangements with the residual central authority, neighboring tribes or individual leaders. The presence of an oil or gas pipeline or installation within reach of the tribe—with a choice of either sabotage or protection offered—lends tremendous negotiating leverage. It is in this middle-eastern context that Ankara is trying imposing its 'New-Ottoman' ideology using the common Muslim faith as a tool to achieve hegemony.

Unfortunately for the Republic of Cyprus, after Mohamed Morsi was elected President of Egypt, Nicosia's strategic challenges have grown as Egypt's upper house approved a draft law (March 2013) cancelling the agreement on maritime borders between the two countries and calling for the creation of new borders surrounding the economic zone in the presence of Turkey as a third party. The proposed law claimed that the agreement signed by Cyprus and



Israel in 2012 invalidated the Egyptian-Cypriot deal of 2013, since Egypt had the right to be present at the signing. In fact, Turkey has been leaning on both Lebanon and Egypt to reject the EEZ agreements signed with Cyprus.

This trend seems to have been reversed after a military coup in Cairo ousted President Morsi (August 2013) following massive demonstrations against Islamist policies. Furthermore, in a meeting the Greek and Egyptian foreign ministers (September 2013) agreed to discuss the two countries respective EEZ with the inclusion of Cyprus, which may end likely in the Greek EEZ reaching as far as the joint borders of those of Cyprus-Egypt.

In short, anchoring more than a sixth of Europe's entire gas supply to an area being torn by collapsing states and tempted by Islamist ideologies could represent a unique window of opportunity for Israel to nail down long-term agreements and align its export policy with a broader effort to reset Israeli-European relations.<sup>19</sup>

### Geopolitical Binding of the Energy Resource Potential of the Eastern Mediterranean to the Evolution of the Civil Conflict in Syria: International and Regional Actors

In July 2011, while the conflict in Syria was still a protest against the Basar Al-Assad regime, Iran, Syria, and Iraq signed a natural gas pipeline construction agreement totaling \$10 billion. This pipeline, using the South Pars Iranian deposits in the Persian Gulf (the world's largest deposit that partially lies in the territory of Qatar) and running across Iraq, would reach Damascus in three years' time and from there go on to Lebanon coast, thus supplying the European market. This would be a 'Shia' natural gas pipeline that would transport resources from Shia Iran though predominantly Shia Iraq to the Shia-friendly President Assad Alawi regime of Syria. This strategic planning gained impetus thanks to the discovery by Syrian companies of a huge natural gas deposit in Qara—comparable to that of Qatar—near the Lebanese border and the Russian naval base in the port of Tartous (August 2011).

If this Iran-Iraq-Syria pipeline scenario comes to fruition, Qatar—which hosts the U.S. Central Command headquarters—risks being cut off from the hydrocarbon transport routes controlled by the United States and Turkey. Therefore, it is cooperating with Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Israel, the U.S., its NATO allies, and various facets of the Syrian opposition (only recently organized and having a single representative) against the Assad regime, aiming to avoid the delivery of Iranian and Syrian natural gas to the Mediterranean coast. There is no doubt that a Syrian government controlled by a (kind of) Muslim Brotherhood would be in favor of building the Qatar pipeline, which could easily be extended to Turkey.

In a different scenario, according to the *Al-Akbar* Lebanese newspaper and information leaked by a big Western oil company<sup>20</sup>, the US is encouraging Qatar to construct an overland natural gas pipeline, which would transport its own gas and that of Israel and Lebanon from the Leviathan and Tamar deposits through Syria (particularly the Homs city area, a site of



ferocious civil conflict) to the European markets. Its first branch would pass through Turkey and the second one through the ports of Tripoli (Lebanon) and Lattakia (Syria). Nevertheless, despite the obvious geostrategic advantages this scenario offers Ankara, Doha, and in particular Tel Aviv (the latter acquiring an overland pipeline to transport its energy resources at minimum cost), the persistence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not offering the best guarantees of cooperation between the Hebrew state and Turkey.

In fact Ankara, even though it favors a policy toward international recognition of the loyalty of political Islam, does not wish to establish supranational state cooperation that could influence its policy in the Gulf, Lebanon, and Iran. Its activism appears very legitimate in light of Turkish political cooperation with Suni Qatar and Saudi Arabia. This is a major policy shift for Turkey, since by abandoning the “zero problem policy with neighbors” principle, it is evaluating state-society relations in a particular country in accordance with the level of protest or violence that the latter suffers from. So Turkey is turning against Syria, its old ally and a close ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin, aiming to undercut the Middle East policies of Russia and Iran.

Russia, in turn, is worried that the regional balance of power established during the last two years in the Middle East with the advent of the Arab Spring movement may favor the development of transnational Islamism. Populated by around twenty million Muslims, considering itself a victim of Islamist activism since the 1990s, and facing the revival of the Islamists as lawful power mongers in many Arab countries, Russia does not want Saudi Arabia and Qatar to reinforce their positions to the detriment of Iran, with which the Kremlin is cooperating on a wide range of issues. In fact, by intensifying its ties with Iraq too, Moscow is increasingly distancing itself from Ankara in a way that is turning the two countries into permanent members of opposite regional alliances.

It is worth mentioning that, should the Kremlin fail to strategically promote the development of the newly discovered natural gas deposits of its old Cold War ally, Syria, it risks seeing Turkey as a transportation and distribution hub of Syrian and Iranian gas to the international markets. As for Turkey, one third of the population of which is comprised of various national and religious minorities, is in danger of “being burned” in the same nationalist “fire” it is fanning in Syria by supporting the opposing Sunnis.

### Conclusion

Given that Syrian soil has become a battleground for the Iranian and Turkish secret services, the Israel-Cyprus-Greece axis is the only guarantee the West can count on in a region torn by the so-called ‘Arab Spring’ turning out to be an ‘Arab Winter’. Turkey is trying to act as a defender of “international legitimacy and humanism” in the Middle East in order to control the flow of resources from the new hydrocarbon Syrian deposits, as well as from the Eastern Mediterranean, by gaining the trust and support of the Arab World and the West. Ankara is well aware that should the Israel-Cyprus-Greece energy transportation axis become functional, it will no longer be in a position to bind the West to it by means of the Trans-





Anatolian gas pipeline (TANAP, June 2012) project it has signed with Azerbaijan in order to retain the geostrategic significance of the already then financially defunct Nabucco project.

The balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean is shifting as a result of the Arab Spring movement's cataclysmic effect in swiping away the Middle East regimes, as well as the energy alliance Israel has decided to form along with Cyprus and Greece. Thus the strategic military pact that Tel Aviv has signed with Athens is increasing Israel's strategic significance and providing it with a vital political and energy connection to the West (September 2011). The same is true for the strategic cooperation that Tel Aviv has established with US-supported Erbil (the capital of autonomous Iraqi Kurdistan)—the latter acting as a counterbalance to Iran, Syria and Turkey. Therefore, it can be safely assumed that the development of this alternative framework for supplying energy resources to the EU will be strong enough to counteract or even eliminate any growing Turkey-Russia energy cooperation.<sup>21</sup>

Keeping in mind that the potential of the energy axis connecting Israel along the Cyprus-Crete- Ionian Sea route with the EU could increase six-fold within the next six to eight years, the West will be happy to be free, at least partially, of Arab and Iranian hydrocarbons.<sup>22</sup> This might eventually satisfy Washington, which is embittered by the position Ankara has chosen to take regarding the embargo the West imposed on Iran due to its nuclear program. It may also satisfy the EU since it will free itself from its dependence on Turkey with respect to securing energy from Central Asia and the Caucasus.

This alternative energy route has raised significant interest. There have even been proposals to build an underwater natural gas pipeline called the East-Med Pipeline. This pipeline, connecting Israel-Cyprus-Greece, would continue through the Epirus region of Greece to the underwater section of the TAP gas pipeline (July 2013) that goes to the coast of Italy and to Central Europe or through the Interconnector Greece-Bulgaria (IGB) to Southeastern Europe.<sup>23</sup> This scenario is thought to be the best long-term alternative, provided that additional energy deposits are discovered in the EEZ of Israel, Cyprus, and Greece.

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- (USGS) issued a resource estimate report where was stipulated that the Levant basin (geological delineation that includes the maritime areas of Israel, Cyprus, Lebanon and even parts of Syria's waters), could potentially hold as much as 125 TCF (trillion cubic feet) of recoverable gas. Moreover, in 2011 a team of geologists from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) concluded that Israel "can expect at least 6 more 'Leviathans' in its territorial waters" (The Marker, *Ha'aretz*, January 9, 2011).
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### First Critical Response to Thrassy N. Marketos’ “East Mediterranean Energy Geopolitical Elbowing with an American, Russian, Israeli, Turkish and Iranian Prefix”

The paper is fine, the analysis fits well within the context. It needs some reorganization with subheadings, though; and the paragraphs are quite long. Some explanation about the realist perspective needs to be added, together with its inherent uncertainty. In the beginning, it needs to formulate the major thesis in a sentence or two, with a statement explaining the politics of gas pipelines behind the concurrent ME drama.

It can also benefit from analytical conceptualization concerning national interests, motivations, and conflicted perceptions, and substantiating the data analyzed so as to strengthen the paper analytically. It discusses various factors but without clear variables. These concepts can serve as variables. The topic is too long: it should have been delimited and summarized more clearly. Factor-wise, it should explore, besides the pipeline, how the other factors play various roles and affect or determine the foreign policies of players.

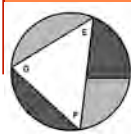
- Prof. Aftab Kazi, Senior Fellow of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Washington DC

### Second Critical Response to Thrassy N. Marketos’ “East Mediterranean Energy Geopolitical Elbowing with an American, Russian, Israeli, Turkish and Iranian Prefix”

The author proceeds from a very conventional realist geostrategic perspective, which may be partly reflective of the Greek school of geopolitics, in that it combines elements of the Anglo-American and Continental emphasis on struggle for control of territory and space to Mediterranean issues. While it is effective in the context of the analysis, stronger empirical validity and predictive power might be provided by drawing from some other theoretical approaches.

- Anonymous

NB: do you have any comments on Thrassy Marketos’ article and/or the critical responses? Please send these to [info@ethnogeopolitics.org](mailto:info@ethnogeopolitics.org), or through the contact form at <http://www.ethnogeopolitics.org>.



## The Palestinian National Reconciliation: Regional and International Implications

Fadi Elhousseini

*AP Photo by Manu Brabo*



*Palestinian success in burying a seven-year division between Hamas and Fatah has surpassed its domestic effects and has, without a doubt, regional and international implications. With the Palestinian unity government, the relationships between the Palestinians and Israelis on one side and the Palestinians, their Arab neighbors and the international community on the other side will experience a dramatic change*

*that may chart a new course of events and developments.*

### Introduction

In general, the Palestinian streets have welcomed the reconciliation between Hamas centred in Gaza and Fatah centred in the West Bank, but voices have varied between optimism and pessimism, confidence and skepticism and between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. Thus the Palestinians realized that the division was a painful chapter in the history of their cause, and was considered a very harmful element that distorted the credibility of their historical struggle in the eyes of many supporters.

Israel wanted, facilitated and supported the division, and has pushed throughout the past seven years to bolster the separation between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, either politically or geographically. The (non-)acceptance of Hamas rule in Gaza is just a case in point.

Israel's response was not surprising, and the announcement of the construction of 3,000 settlement units did not exceed expectations. More so, the talk of an annexation of some parts of the West Bank ("Area C") to Israel is really outdated and outlandish, as it seems obvious that the time of annexation policies has passed and will never happen or be accepted again.

Some politicians in Israel bet on the continuation of the Palestinian division, and found in it a convenient way out when speaking of an "unacceptable" settlement of the conflict with the moderate Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas, claiming that Gaza Strip was under the



control of Hamas at times, and saying that Abbas would be unable to implement any potential agreement on all the Palestinian territories at other times.

Many political leaders in Israel thought the results of recent efforts towards reconciliation would not exceed the results of previous ones. That is the reason why Israel allowed Fatah officials to visit the Gaza Strip, in order to meet with Hamas. But when the reconciliation was finalized, Israel not only prevented ministers from the Gaza Strip from attending the new government's inauguration in Ramallah, but also tightened its sanctions and restricted the movement of all the Palestinian officials in the West Bank and abolished their VIP permits.

### Looking at the implications of the Palestinian reconciliation

The significant implications of the Palestinian reconciliation were sensed by many Israeli writers. For example, in an Al-Monitor article titled "Israel should put Fatah-Hamas government to the test," Shlomi Eldar calls on Netanyahu to give the Palestinian new government a chance.

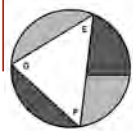
Alon Ben-Meir wrote in a June 10 article in the Jerusalem Post, "Netanyahu's rejection of the Palestinian unity government and his refusal to negotiate with it will only further isolate Netanyahu both domestically and internationally, as it stands in total contrast to the position of all major powers that are willing to give it a chance to demonstrate its readiness to seriously negotiate with Israel."

Ben-Meir was right. For decades, Israel has enjoyed international support for its position or decisions, but recently things have changed. In this vein, one may argue that Netanyahu has brilliantly served Palestinian diplomacy and credibility through his rigid positions, his challenging of international decisions, and by not listening to close allies.

Unlike the previous unity government, the new Palestinian government was recognized by the majority of the international community. The position of the European Union (EU) was represented in a statement issued by Vice President of the European Commission (EC) Catherine Ashton, who welcomed the unity government. The widening gap between the European and Israeli positions was reflected in the EU statement's commenting on Israel's "punitive" decision to build 3,000 settlement units, emphasizing on a European boycott of the products from the Israeli settlements.

The United States' position gave the effects of Palestinian reconciliation a global hue. Their response narrowed the gap in positions between the EU and the US. Their announcement in the aftermath of the inauguration of the Palestinian unity government was very similar. With weakening ties between the US and Israel—and very different from previous stances on governments supported by Hamas—the US accepted, welcomed and urged the Israelis to follow suit.

A number of regional conditions facilitated this reconciliation. The waning of Islamist forces in the region can be considered a primary reason, either voluntarily as in Tunisia or forcibly



as in Egypt. Developments in Syria and its repercussions in Lebanon have also prompted the Palestinian factions to reconsider their domestic policies.

These circumstances have been the only positive side of the so-called Arab Spring, as the latter caused a significant setback to the Palestinian issue, considering the amount of calamity in the region. Traditional Arab supporters of the Palestinian cause became busy with their own issues and with the continuity of the events of the Arab Spring; thus more attention has been distracted away from the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Some may wonder what makes the Palestinian cause so special to Arabs. The simplest answer takes us back to Sharif Hussein, the Sharif and Emir of Mecca from 1908 to 1924, who pinned his hopes on British promises to grant him an independent Arab state, in return for the Arabs' rebellion against the Ottomans.

While Hussein was negotiating Arab independence with McMahon, Britain and France were cementing their colonial presence in the region through the Sykes-Picot agreement and carved up Arab territories among them. Not surprisingly, many Arabs put this in the pattern of betrayal and manipulation by Western powers. Consequently, the increased presence of Jews in Palestine and the establishment of the State of Israel became a negative symbol to Arabs, one of betrayal and a rallying cry for a just cause throughout the Arab world.

### Concluding observations

While Palestinian national reconciliation is meant to unify Palestinian efforts to establish their independent state, uncertainty of the future lingers, as it remains vulnerable to the perils of security and financial challenges. After seven years of division, various security measures and concerns have been created in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

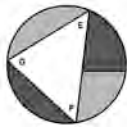
Merging these forces under one command is considered the biggest challenge. Another challenge is securing sufficient funds to pay the salaries of Palestinian public servants, bearing in mind that Hamas has recruited around 40,000 employees throughout the course of the past seven years.

Yet, the actions of this government will be the most critical challenge, as the international community, mainly the US and the EU, are expecting a peaceful approach towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

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Earlier versions of this article can be found on <http://www.middleeastmonitor.com/articles/middle-east/12086-the-palestinian-national-reconciliation-regional-and-international-implications> and <http://politikaakademisi.org/the-palestinian-national-reconciliation-regional-and-international-implications>.



## Qatar misses the plank on labour reform<sup>1</sup>

James M. Dorsey

*Qatari general announces labour reform*



A long awaited and much hyped announcement on a reform of 2022 World Cup host Qatar's controversial *kafala* or labour sponsorship system has sparked more questions than answers. The Gulf state thus lost an opportunity to gain the upper hand in a bruising debate that has significantly tarnished its image.

Confusion over what the proposed reforms meant was such that Sepp Blatter, president of FIFA<sup>2</sup>, and Theo Zwanziger, the FIFA executive dealing with the Qatari labour issue, cancelled a planned trip to the Gulf state. FIFA has come under severe criticism for failing to take harsh workers' conditions into consideration when it adjudicated Qatar as the host of the 2022 World Cup.

The confusion stemmed from the fact that the reforms appeared to involve a refinement of the *kafala* system rather than complete overhaul or abolition as the government had claimed. Furthermore, the confusion was fuelled by the announcement that future labour contracts would have to be in accordance with a model contract drafted by the government, the terms of which were yet to be disclosed.

The confusion was compounded by the fact that Qatar, in the way it announced the measures, failed to convey its sincerity by having a senior Cabinet official disclose the changes rather than a senior military officer in uniform. Also fuelling doubts was the fact that the reforms had yet to be sent to the Qatari Chamber of Commerce and approved by the Shura or Advisory Council. There is a lack of clarity on how long that process would take.

The proposed reforms were announced in response to widespread criticism of the labour and housing conditions under which up to one million workers were expected to build the massive infrastructure for the World Cup—and to reports that a significant number of workers had died on non-World Cup related construction sites since Qatar successfully bid for the tournament.

Trade union and human rights activists as well as the United Nations Human Rights Council have demanded that Qatar should abolish the *kafala* system which severely restricts workers' rights, including their freedom of movement and right to seek alternative employment, and puts them at the mercy of their employers.





“We still have many questions what is exactly meant by these changes. I don't think these measures go far enough,” said James Lynch, an Amnesty International official, who has worked closely with Qatar to change the system. He said the requirement for workers to obtain an exit visa that was “completely illegal” according to international law and a “human rights violation”, appeared to have not been completely abolished.

Beyond disappointing those activists with whom Qatar has engaged, the announcement threatens to strengthen the hand of hard line critics, foremost among which the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), which says it has 175 million members in 161 countries. The ITUC has threatened to organize a boycott of Qatar if it failed to abolish the kafala (sponsorship) system.

In a news conference, Brigadier General Muhammed Ahmed Al-Atiq of the interior ministry asserted that the measures amounted to abolition of the kafala system that puts workers at the mercy of their employer—but that was not evident from the reforms he spelled out. General Al-Atiq said that the kafala would be replaced by a system based on employment contracts. The general and other officials at the press conference refused to be drawn on the details or clarifications of the proposed reforms.

The reforms that will apply to all workers, including domestics ones, according to General Al Atiq and a ministry press release, would:

- Allow workers with a fixed-term contract to seek new employment without having to first leave the country or seek permission from their initial employer only at the end of their contract. They would not be allowed to break their contract without their employer's permission;

- \* Increase the penalty for employers who illegally confiscate workers' passports;

- \* Force employers to pay wages electronically to ensure on time payment;

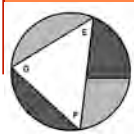
- \* Enforce as yet undisclosed standards for workers' accommodation;

- Streamline rather than abolish the requirement for workers to acquire an exit visa before leaving the country. Instead of having to seek their employers consent before departure, workers would apply through an automated system operated by the interior ministry.

The ITUC, which unlike groups like Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and the International Labour Organization (ILO, a United Nations agency), was not involved in discussions about reform with Qatari officials, said in a statement that the kafala system had been relabelled but was alive and well.

One possible reason for Qatar's bungling of the announcement of the proposed reforms is likely the lack of a domestic consensus on the need for change. Many Qataris opposed a relaxation, let alone the abolition of the kafala system because they fear losing control of their society, culture and country in which they account for only 12 percent of the population if they grant foreigners rights. The proposed reforms further failed to address a concern in





the business community that easing the exit visa requirement could potentially lead to foreigners running their businesses accessing company funds and leaving the country.

At the other end of the Qatari debate, assistant foreign minister Sheikh Mohammed Bin Jassim Al Thani said in a recent interview with Al Jazeera that "the sponsorship system was set up at a different time and according to a different demographic composition... but today the situation has changed and due to the flow of the expats, we certainly need to carry out many changes."

*James M. Dorsey is a senior fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS). He is also co-director of the University of Würzburg's Institute for Fan Culture, and the author of The Turbulent World of Middle East Soccer blog and a forthcoming book with the same title.*

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1. This article is based on an article with the same title dated 15 May 2014, placed on <http://mideastsoccer.blogspot.com/2014/05/qatar-misses-plank-on-labour-reform.html>. This is just one example of the author's articles on this and related Middle Eastern topics on <http://mideastsoccer.blogspot.com>.
2. The *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA) in French, or the International Federation of Association Football in English.



*Special Announcement from the Avaaz Community*

### **Stop this landgrab!**

**Appeal by the Maasai elders of Ngorongoro District, Tanzania**



*Tanzania's government is tearing up the promise we helped the Maasai win. Before they meet their Prime Minister to defend their sacred land, let's hit 2 million signers -- their email from last year is below!*

Dear friends,

Within hours, **Tanzania's President Kikwete could start evicting tens of thousands of the Maasai from our land** so hunters can come and kill leopards and lions. Last time Avaaz raised the alarm, the President shelved the plan. **Global pressure can stop him again.** Click to help us urgently:

We are elders of the Maasai from Tanzania, one of Africa's oldest tribes. **The government has just announced that it plans to kick thousands of our families off our lands so that wealthy tourists can use them to shoot lions and leopards.** The evictions are to begin immediately.

Last year, when word first leaked about this plan, almost one million Avaaz members rallied to our aid. **Your attention and the storm it created forced the government to deny the plan, and set them back months.** But the President has waited for international attention to die down, and now he's revived his plan to take our land. We need your help again, urgently.

President Kikwete may not care about us, but he has shown he'll respond to global media and public pressure -- to all of you! We may only have hours. **Please stand with us to protect our land, our people and our world's most majestic animals, and tell everyone before it is too late.** This is our last hope:

[https://secure.avaaz.org/en/stand\\_with\\_the\\_maasai\\_2014\\_mobctrl/?bHPKIeb&v=48691](https://secure.avaaz.org/en/stand_with_the_maasai_2014_mobctrl/?bHPKIeb&v=48691)

Our people have lived off the land in Tanzania and Kenya for centuries. Our communities respect our fellow animals and protect and preserve the delicate ecosystem. But the government has for years sought to profit by giving rich princes and



kings from the Middle East access to our land to kill. In 2009, **when they tried to clear our land to make way for these hunting sprees, we resisted, and hundreds of us were arrested and beaten.** Last year, rich princes shot at birds in trees from helicopters. This killing goes against everything in our culture.

Now the government has announced it will clear a huge swath of our land in Loliondo to make way for what it claims will be a wildlife corridor, but many suspect **it's just a ruse to give a foreign hunting corporation and the rich tourists it caters to easier access to shoot at majestic animals.** The government claims this new arrangement is some sort of accommodation, but its effect on our people's way of life will be disastrous. There are thousands of us who could have our lives uprooted, losing our homes, the land on which our animals graze, or both.

President Kikwete knows this deal would be controversial with Tanzania's tourists -- a critical source of national income -- and does not want a big PR disaster. **If we can urgently generate even more global outrage than we did before, and get the media writing about it, we know it can make him think twice. Stand with us now** to call on Kikwete to stop the sell off:

[https://secure.avaaz.org/en/stand\\_with\\_the\\_maasai\\_2014\\_mobctrl/?bHPKIeb&v=48691](https://secure.avaaz.org/en/stand_with_the_maasai_2014_mobctrl/?bHPKIeb&v=48691)

This land grab could spell the end for the Maasai in this part of Tanzania and many of our community have said they would rather die than be forced from their homes. On behalf of our people and the animals who graze in these lands, please stand with us to change the mind of our President. With hope and determination,

The Maasai elders of Ngorongoro District

### SOURCES

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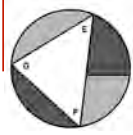
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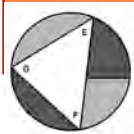
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# Forum of EthnoGeoPolitics

**A publication of the Association for the Study of EthnoGeoPolitics**

Amsterdam The Netherlands

Print ISSN: 2214-3211 Online ISSN: 2352-3654