Contingent Ethnicity in State(s) of Change: The Journey of Meskhetian Turks from the USSR to the Post-Soviet World.

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2003 Migration and the National Census: Who is Counted and What is Left Behind?, poster; Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Minneapolis, MN

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Contents

CHAPTER 1. Introduction.

A mother and a daughter are sitting on a *topchan*[1] at a low table enjoying a quiet afternoon on a lazy winter day. They don't seem to mind me, an awkward anthropologist, hanging around in order to write about their life. Mulkia, a portly 53 year old woman, is visibly concerned. She is worried about an upcoming resettlement to the United States. Her 17-year-old daughter Feruza is more excited. She cannot wait to leave the drab life in a Krasnodarskiy Krai village for the promise of something better and, perhaps, something more certain.

> Mulkia: *Life has lost its spark. Today, it is no longer interesting to live. Previously, it was much more interesting.*
> Ferusa: *That's why we need to go to the US. It will be more interesting there.*
> Mulkia: *Well, if things improve here, it will be interesting here as well. We know what to expect here. What will happen there – only God knows.*
> Ferusa: *Nobody respects you here. How would it improve here? Nothing will ever change – it has not changed in 15 years – the only thing <that is> certain is that we are suffering every day.*

This brief conversation struck me as reflective of many themes that interested me during my research. I arrived to the Krasnodar region eager to focus on ethnicity as a phenomenon defined by both state officials and regular people. Yet, as I continued to conduct the study, my focus shifted to uncertainties and continuities of everyday life that affect one's notions of identity (including, but not limited to, an ethnic identity).

Dramatic transformations of everyday life in a country that was shifting from one form of social, political, ideological and economic organization to another could be

[1] Topchan (Russian) – a low platform in one corner of a room used for socializing, dining and sleeping (more on this in Ch. 6)

experienced to their full extent in Russia in the first years of the 21st century. Everything was changing, yet, as both Mulkia and Feruza rightly observed, many things remained the same thereby setting limits to and a direction of changes. The brief exchange between the two women highlights the complexity of transformations that happened in Russia since 1991. On the one hand, as Mulkia noted, reforms that affected social, political and economic spheres were not able to annihilate what was familiar to everybody who was born in and raised in the Soviet Union. On the other hand, as Feruza alludes in her response, changes that happened were limited in scope. In this dissertation, I examine some parameters of the changing everyday life in Russia. I argue that processes of change taking place in Russia during the last decade of the 20th century were not chaotic or haphazard (even if they seemed this way to early observers) but were contingent on practices and attitudes that emerged during the Soviet period. Using the story of Meskhetian Turks's struggles for legal status in Krasnodarskiy Krai, I illuminate these transformations by tracing continuity and contingency of categories, practices and attitudes. In order to better understand the extent of changes, I focus on phenomena that over years of change retained value to my informants – like kinship and wide social networks, private property and public identities, - and that offered protection against the chaos of profound social transformations.

The history of my informants – Meskhetian Turks, - is closely intertwined with the history of the Soviet state. Muslim speakers of a Kars dialect of Turkish, they were originally from a region in Georgia bordering with Turkey. In 1944, they were deported to Central Asia and placed in “special status settlements”, a euphemism for labor camps.

Their efforts to return to their historical motherland were unsuccessful and they continued to reside in Central Asia until a violent uprising of Uzbeks in 1989. After violent clashes in the Fergana Valley, Uzbekistan, in 1989, many of the Meskhetians fled to Russia. In the course of the conflict, 69 Meskhetians were killed, 1,200 wounded and their houses and other property destroyed (Aydingun 2002). The Soviet Government assisted the Meskhetian Turks in their relocation to various areas of Central Russia. However, some of the Meskhetians chose to re-unite with family members residing in Krasnodar and opted to move there instead. Others followed their lead, justifying their choice with geographical proximity to Georgia, comfortable climate conditions and advantageous conditions for agriculture, a Meskhetian Turk's traditional occupation (Ossipov 2002). The Soviet Government promised that actions would be taken to assist the Meskhetian Turks in their eventual repatriation to Georgia. Thus, for 13,000 Turks, their residence in Krasnodar was perceived only as a temporary solution. However, after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, this temporary arrangement turned out to be quite permanent. Despite numerous negotiations on this matter between the Georgian and Russian governments and a pledge on behalf of Georgia to resolve the Mekshetian dilemma within 20 years (one of the contingency clauses that defined Georgian membership in the council of Europe), little has been achieved. The few Meskhetian Turks who succeeded in moving to Georgia faced discrimination and legal difficulties. The Meskhetian Turks who remained in Krasnodar (elsewhere in Russia the situation was resolved) were denied citizenship and the basic rights associated with citizenship. As of 2005 and throughout the previous decade, their legal status was defined as "stateless people temporarily residing in Krasnodar" (ibid.).

At the time when the Soviet empire crumbled, as prices were rising and hopes of a bright communist future dissipated, Meskhetian Turks, who relocated to the Krasnodarskiy Krai of Russia, found themselves in a new country, to which, they were told, they had no rights to claim. They were denied citizenship, not allowed to pursue higher education (beyond high school), denied retirement pensions and medical insurance (among other rights). Through all these years, the only form of identification documents they had was their old Soviet passports. Thus, effectively, Meskhetian Turks became the last citizens of a country that had long since disappeared. Constrained in their ability to move, Meskhetian Turks had been residing in that part of Russia trying to make sense of transformations around them. They also continued to appeal to authorities hoping to find legal permanence and stability. Yet, when after 15 years of struggle Meskhetian Turks were still denied Russian citizenship, their plea was heard by the United States where they were accepted as refugees of special humanitarian concern (Koriouchkina and Swerdlow 2007).

In this dissertation, I tell the story of Meskhetian Turks. Their tragic story is a looking glass that magnifies issues of ethnic engineering, interethnic tensions and social problems that affected other groups in Russia as well. It illuminates the effects of the state on specifics of everyday life during the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. Thus, the story of Meskhetian Turks is at the same time the story of the Soviet and post-Soviet state and offers a perspective on governance in Russia as a culturally and historically specific project.

By creating a historically informed account of social processes that contributed to the formation of Meskhetian Turks as a group, I make three broad arguments:

1) The language of citizenship and ethnicity that the state employs to communicate with its subjects in post-Soviet Russia bears the influence of Soviet discourses. Thus "the Soviet" persists on the level of interaction between the state and its people(s).

2) Through memories of belonging people domesticate grand history explicating the political and preserving the private. Thus, "the Soviet" persists on the level of personal reminiscences. Even though it loses a connection to a political regime, it retains a connection to a particular locale.

2.1) A corollary to the first two points is that the state and its subjects mutually legitimate each other.

3. Yet, the state's control over its people(s) is not absolute. Overview of Meskhetian Turks' history shows gaps in the state's management (imperfect taxonomies of ethnicity, loosening grip on migration, citizens' withdrawal into the sphere of kinship and domesticity) that fuel further change. Thus, I show that while the state influences people's lives at the micro-level of the family and the household, its effects "cannot be seen as determined entirely by the policy – the micro is refractory".

Conclusions drawn from the story of the Meskhetian Turks can be extended to other groups as well. Migrants from the Former Soviet Union experience similar discrimination in other areas of Russia (Pilkington 1999; Flynn 2003). Lack of proper citizenship regulations circumscribed rights of many people who could de jure claim Russian citizenship but yet were unable to do so de facto. The history of transformations in the meaning of their ethnic denomination – Meskhetian Turks, - helps one better understand complexities of societal changes that affected many other ethnic groups in the

Soviet Union. Social marginalization that members of this group faced was in many aspects similar to difficulties experienced by members of other social groups (retirees, state employees, etc.) differentiated by the degree of support they could acquire from the state. Thus, close analysis of shifting meanings of policies, actions and normative statements of the state and examination of their influence on people's everyday lives offers a perspective on the extent of and limits to social change.

Longue Durée of the Soviet?

By drawing attention to continuities between the Soviet and post-Soviet periods, this thesis contributes to studies of post-Soviet processes. The fall of the Soviet Union signified a major existential crisis for the social sciences. In a world that was no longer divided into Manichean categories of Soviet and Capitalist, it was not clear how to study what was happening in the USSR successor states. When trajectories of development, culminating either in glorious capitalism or shining communism (i.e., almost mirror images of each other), had to be abandoned, theorizing about social life and projections of the future needed to be modified as well.

One can identify two different approaches to the analysis of this period. One school of thought discussed the disintegration of communism as a final victory of modernity's great achievements that culminated to liberal democracy and a market economy (Murrell 1991; Boycko et al. 1995). Employing Hanna Arendt's and Martin Malia's discussions of totalitarian states, this set of theories argued that the fall of communist regimes led to a complete collapse of totalitarian structures and a regeneration and restoration of structures that existed earlier (Lipton and Sachs 1990). By proclaiming a capitalist mode of production and organization of social life a winner, this approach annihilated a large historical period symbolically erasing the Soviet heritage and focusing

on the re-emergence of pre-Soviet forms of life. Yurchak argues that these studies primarily reproduced Cold War metaphors in their analysis of post-Soviet processes and contributed little to the construction of new paradigms of studying social change (Yurchak 2006).

Another take on the Cold war and transformations in the socialist countries was presented as the "End of History" (Fukuyama 1994) and "twilight of modernity" (Hankiss 1990). Emphasis on disintegration, chaos and lack of structure are characteristic of this approach (Fierman 1991; Rakowska-Harmstone 1991). These "eschatological" visions of history were based on an idea of primacy of a Conflict for perpetuation of history as a culturally specific way to organize social life. Given that the grand juxtaposition of the First and Second worlds was resolved, these tensions could no longer animate social development. These studies pointed out that it wasn't only the Socialist but also the Capitalist worlds that were changing in the end of nearly a century-long standoff. This school of thought shifted attention to developing processes of globalization and the creation of new, rhizome-like connections that diffused power and intimately tied the center with the periphery in the post-Cold War world (Derrida 1994). Instead of erasing Soviet history, this school of thought chose to ignore it focusing instead on the emergence of new, more diffuse power configurations.

Despite disagreements about the directionality of changes taking place in the post-socialist world, most theories of post-Socialist developments favored the metaphor of transition that aimed to describe changes that afflicted an oxymoronic world of "unruly wilderness of complete regulations" (Wedel 1998) and that changed the USSR from "a world without meaning, without events, and without humanity" (Thom 1989, 156) into a

world “that was not quite communist, not quite capitalist, not quite anything else” (Wedel 1998: 5). Most studies focused on macro structures of the state and economy leaving little room for the analysis of the micro-world of everyday life (Burawoy and Verdery 1999: 1). They were driven either by a pre-given past (horrors of socialism) or uniformly defined future (joy of capitalism) (Verdery and Burawoy 1999: 4) and presumed progressive development. Despite its theoretical shortcomings, the power of the “transition” discourse is evident in the fact that it was not only employed to explain the events but also to direct changes (Abramson 1998; Wedel 1998).

A number of anthropological studies succumbed to the lure of the “transition” discourse. By presenting life in successor states of the Former Soviet Union through the idioms of “custom” and “tradition”, these studies aimed to uncover an “authentic” culture buried under Sovieticizating influences (Balzer 1992, Wolfe 2000). Thus, Ries described tropes of pessimism present in the Russian language (Ries 1997). Her linguistic analysis shows the influence of a persistent culture that survived despite economic and social changes (Wolfe 2000). Though in line with some Russian explorations about their national character and their striving to formulate the “Russian national idea” (Ivanova P. 1990; McDaniel 1996), these studies support stereotypes and myths leaving issues of class, history, and regional variation out of their analytical framework. They also lead to what Kandiyoti refers to as the “blind man” syndrome, descriptions that refer to the Soviet heritage to describe some aspects of life in the post-Soviet countries while employing the concept of capitalism to analyze other processes of change (Kandiyoti 2002).

Verdery and Burawoy suggest that instead of the metaphor of "transition" it is analytically more insightful to discuss the concept of "transformations", i.e., to examine multiplicity of changes that do not necessarily lead to the establishment of an ideal type of capitalism. This approach replaces prescriptions of earlier social models with the identification of general predilections of social development. By doing so, anthropologists of the Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe would provide an important perspective on processes of change that happen elsewhere in the world. Verdery and Burawoy's analytical framework mirrors the Comaroffs' discussion about historical anthropology and the incorporation of processual analysis in anthropological writing (Comaroffs 1992: 95-96). Just as the Comaroffs are calling for a closer attention to a dialectical interplay between local and global worlds, Verdery and Burawoy urge researchers to analyze the internal dynamics of local worlds while at the same time articulating a dialectical interplay between regional and global structures and agencies that influence local words.

One can point out several ethnographies that aim to do precisely that. In a revision of her revolutionary study of a kolkhoz economy in Buryatia (Humphrey 1983), Humphrey argues that in order to better understand changes affecting economic structures, it is insufficient to focus on the post-Soviet period alone. Humphrey shows that official institutions of the Soviet political economy – the state, the collectives, and the trade unions, - were always interwoven with informal multiple relationships (black and gray market, patronage, kinship). From this she concludes that, after the fall of the Soviet redistribution system, informal networks previously kept in the background came to the central stage (further discussion on this in Grabner and Stark 1997). Her analysis

provides a powerful explanation for the persistence of kolkhoz, collective agricultural organizations that under "transitology" theories were meant to give way to small-scale private companies. She shows that kolkhoz remains the dominant agricultural form not out of nostalgia and/or inertia but out of political and economic necessity of survival in the region (Humphrey 1998). In her later book, *The Unmaking of Soviet Life*, Humphrey is careful to avoid words like "democracy" and "capitalism" (2002). Instead, she focuses on processes of daily life that provide an invaluable perspective on transformations in consumption, symbolic constructions, hopes and expectations of Russians. Similarly, through close analysis of daily strategies of survival in rural Russia, Hivon (1998) shows that concepts of the "Russian culture of envy" or "Russian egalitarian culture" are too simplistic and cannot explain why agrarian reforms in the rural areas of Russia failed (Hivon 1998). Instead, she suggests that unwritten laws of private ownership, already in effect under socialism, influenced the course of introduced reforms.

My thesis follows a similar line of analysis and considers the case of Meskhetian Turks' discrimination in Krasnodarskiy Krai by carefully examining the history of ethnic policies in the Soviet Union, looking into transformations that affected laws on citizenship, and scrutinizing migration policies in the Soviet and Post-Soviet contexts. By so doing, I highlight both changes and continuities and create a nuanced portrayal of overall transformations that affected people in the wake of the Soviet collapse. A detailed historical discussion is necessary in this case as it allows me to the trace dynamics of change. In order to avoid conflation of history, time and process (cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 1992: 96), I separate my analyses of ethnicity, citizenship and migration. In so doing, I am able to focus on different aspects of transformations of these social

phenomena. Thus, in the chapters on ethnicity and citizenship, I focus on the relationship between the state and its subjects. In the chapter on migration, I examine continuity in state policies and the influence of cultural practices of the Soviet state on the specifics of governing in post-Soviet Russia. Even though these chapters cover the same time period and examine the same set of constitutive events, differences in my analytical focus help to broaden the emerging picture of changes that affected life in the Soviet Union and set the basis for further changes in the post-Soviet Russia.

Transitological theories focused more on the economic and political processes affecting FSU and Eastern Europe. More nuanced, anthropological investigations of those societies offered a perspective on changes that affected symbolic constructions of identity at the time when political and economic structures collapsed (Abramson 1998; Laitin 2002; Pilkington 1998). In her ethnographically rich study *Where the World Ended* Berdahl analyzes changes that occurred after the fall of the Berlin wall. Her primary concern is with "border zones" of daily life (social organization, gender, religion and nationality). She argues that during processes of change that affected both West and East Germany, people invented cultural practices that assist them in dealing with change drawing on a range of practices established during the socialist period. Using Bourdieu's theory of social capital, she shows how after the fall of socialism, inhabitants of a village at the border between Western and Eastern Germany translated practices of social reciprocity into new modes of exchange and stratification. In my investigation of Meskhetian Turks' case, I follow a similar strategy as I examine macro-level societal transformations through the prism of everyday changes on a micro-level by looking at culturally specific notions of the private or strategies of spousal selection. In my analysis,

I highlight disjunctions between the totalizing efforts of states to subsume individual and group identities and realms of private lives in which people could avoid the gaze of the state. My focus on both Soviet and Post-Soviet periods allows me to highlight unintended consequences of transformations in Russia. In people's memories, the soviet period is "domesticated" and stripped off of its ideological "Soviet" meaning. Thus, it continues to play a role in the present by becoming a point of reference for notions of normalcy and stability.

Effects of the Soviet on contemporary Russian society raises the question of "politics of memory" that Tilly defines as "a) the process by which accumulated, shared historical experience constrains today's historical action and b) the contestation and coercion that occurs over proper interpretation of that historical experience" (Tilly 1994:247). In the case of the Meskhetian Turks one can see how the shared socialist past shapes the contemporary situation in which Turks (as well as many other former Soviet citizens) found themselves after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Tilly continues his discussion of politics of history (and memory) by pointing at the interplay between two different histories. On the one hand, organizational structures of the state, international legislation, large migration movements, etc. contribute to large scale phenomena that Tilly refers to as changes in a "political opportunity structure". From the point of view of an individual (or even a small group), these changes are external to an individual. The other history affects the "stream of contention itself" and has to do with particular ways in which individuals internalize large history. In chapter 5 ("House"), I examine those "streams of contention" as I focus on Meskhetian Turks' narratives about houses and private worlds of domesticity and belonging during the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. I

argue that these narratives reflect the privatization of personal lives during the Soviet period. Furthermore, the Soviet as remembered through specific memories of houses, china, rugs and cars is "domesticated" and loses its connection with the ideological constructions of a political regime. This trend continued after the fall of the USSR as people inverted their attention to the private worlds of their homes in the context of rising economic, political and social uncertainty. This could explain the recent renaissance of the Soviet in Russia as nostalgia selectively targets those private memories and brings "the Soviet" back.

In this dissertation I argue for the necessity of a *longue duree* approach to the analysis of changes taking place after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Following Braudel's approach, I see *longue duree* as a *historical* relation between the state and its subjects and among subjects (Braudel 1980). By tracing changes in state policies over an extended period of time I examine state governance as a cultural project. This approach allows reconstructing large-scale historical changes in an open-ended way that accounts for transformations and continuities. In this, I follow Verdery's call to emphasize that Cold war politics had a profound influence on analysis of not only socialist countries but post-colonialism as well. Verdery argues that instead of perpetuating an artificial division of the world into post-socialist, post-colonialist, and something-in-between, it is important to examine processes that tie together former colonies and the former socialist bloc into a global capitalist economy (Verdery 2002: 15-17). I further this line of reasoning by applying it to a temporal analysis of Soviet heritage. Thus, through my close analysis of historical processes preceding Meskhetian Turks' arrival to Krasnodar Krai in the 90s, I show that the Soviet and Post-Soviet periods of Russia (and Central Asia) are

closely linked. Phenomena that were defined as "Soviet" (ethnicity, relationship between the state and subjects, notions of private and public) do not disappear but continue to influence specifics of daily life. Through my analysis of the complex history of the Meskhetian Turks, I show that even though social changes in Russia in the early 90s were profound, they could not completely erase the impact of the preceding 70 years of Soviet population management.

Ethnicity as a Paradigm.

The history of the Meskhetian Turks offers a perspective on one of the more contested categories of social analysis – identity. In this dissertation, I analyze cultural constructions of in-group identity through notions of kinship, external group identity through notions of ethnic identification and imposed group identity through notions of ethnicity formulated on the level of the state and enforced through passports, migration management and the state's continued efforts to ensure ethno-territorial congruence. In my analysis I highlight contingency of various manifestations of identity as they mutually influence each other and are also affected by specifics of wider social processes that shape the life of the community.

There can hardly be a less definite topic to examine than ethnicity. Even a first foray into the sphere of ethnic studies encounters a strange paradox. As early as 1970, Glazer and Moynihan emphasized that ethnicity is a new concept that needs further exploration and analysis. But shortly after, Daniel Bell argued that ethnicity is not necessarily "*the central concept to analyze social change in the world today*" (Bell, 1975: 172). A little later, Ardener proclaimed that ethnicity has had its day (Ardener 1989: 211). Developing his argument further, Chapman and McDonald proposed that the concept of ethnicity should be subsumed under the study of more general classificatory

processes (Chapman 1993: 21; McDonald, 1989: 310). Eriksen urged researchers to move "*beyond ethnicity*" (Eriksen 1993: 156). R. Just lamented the very fact that ethnicity entered the analytical discourse of anthropology (1989; 76). In a similar vein, Banks, in his overview of theoretical approaches to ethnicity, expressed his concern with the fact that "*the discourse on ethnicity has escaped from the academy and into the field*" (Banks, 1994: 189). At the same time, social scientists have also been pointing out at the phenomenon of "neo-ethnicity" (Bergesen 1977: 823), i.e., resurgence of ethnic solidarity and identification, in the context of increased inter-ethnic communication (transnationalism) and political integration (EU). Globalization studies introduced new grounds for a critique of "ethnic studies" and projected the demise of ethnic differences (Appadurai 1991) at the same time as studies of transnationalism introduced a new level to the study of ethnicity by linking it with the regime of neoliberalism (Glick-Schiller et al. 1992; Comaroffs 2009).

In contrast with constructivist theories of ethnicity, a school of thought that is most often equated with resolving ethnic uncertainty by taking a "scientistic" take on this subject is the Soviet ethnography with its theoretical basis in Leninist theories of nationalism and ethnicity. A position taken by adherents of this school, defined as Primordialist, postulates that ethnicity is extremely resilient; it persists through generations and various economic forms (Banks 18) and its group characteristics determine the behavior of individual members. The early studies of ethnicity in the Soviet Union were highly influenced by the Marxist-Leninist ideology that focused on material aspects of social organizations within the context of historical changes. Based on Marx and Lenin's teachings, theories developed within this school of thought aimed to resolve

the predicament between two major forms of attachment in a society – that of class and ethnicity. In their early writings, predating some of the later writings by Anderson, Lenin and Stalin argued that nationality emerged only with the onset of capitalism and was a consequence of capitalist forms of production. Even though it was not an essential or a permanent marker in a society, it was an unavoidable historical phase through which all peoples must pass on their way to internationalism and socialism (Martin 2003:5). A rise in national consciousness was seen as a way to boost class-consciousness and instigate class struggles that would result in radical transformations of socio-economic stratification. Both Lenin and Stalin argued that a merger and a consecutive dissipation of nationalities (ethnicities) would only be possible through a transitional period of the maximum development of national cultures (in Martin 2003:5-7).

Unlike structural-functionalism that primarily examined synchronic aspects of cultural organization based on particularistic field-data, Marxism-inspired (and constrained) soviet theories of ethnicity incorporated close attention to history and diachronic processes of change (Banks 1996 18). Thus, the consolidation of nationhood was associated with historical progress. Perceptions of a linear progress of history were slightly altered to allow for radical leaps in the development of nationalities among peoples that did not identify according to this criterion (indigenous people of Siberia and Far East; peoples of Central Asia) (Abramson 1999; Kandyoti 1999). Thus, according to this position, nationhood formation process among peoples of the far north had been accelerated and, instead of hundreds or thousands of years, took place within mere decades (Grant 1999; Martin 2003).

The Marxist model of ethnicity was dynamic and described social development incorporating transformations as an important constitutive element. Yet, as this model left the realm of academic musings and turned into a "model for" societal reconstruction, it became the nomothetic language acquired by all citizens and vital in their interaction with the state. Power of the state protected the core of this language from external changes transforming it into a cohesive whole, static and trascendental to the society it purported to describe. Shared by large collectivities, this form of ethnicity persisted even after the state structures disappeared (cf. Bergman and Luckman REF: 68-69). In Chapter 2, I show how the concept of "Meskhetian Turks" as a group emerged as a result of state manipulation of territories, peoples and categories and how it was acquired by people to communicate with the state asking for a resolution to their situation. I highlight the role of the state in creating and managing a particular ethnic "parlance"; yet, I also highlight agentative actions of state subjects that modify state imposed categories.

Being a Meskhetian Turk in the Soviet State had profound implications for one's life choices and possibilities. Yet, despite a real physical threat (deportation, difficulties in changing a place of residence) that belonging to the ethnic group engendered, the ethnic category did not disappear; on the contrary, by the end of the Soviet period, it powerfully emerged as an ethnic denomination (officially recognized as such by domestic and international analysts). Varied meanings attached to the concept of "Meskhetian Turks" offer a perspective on a range of interpretive communities (Fish 1980) that contributed to the construction of this category and perpetuated its existence. Recognition of a reality of ethnic categorization was shared by people, state officials and experts. Even though specific meaning of ethnic categories varied from one interpretive

community to the other, nearly everyone in the Soviet Union could exhibit ethnic competence, i.e., a widely shared knowledge of the importance of ethnicity in everyday life and application of ethnic categories to describe social processes (ex. Migration in the Soviet Union, as discussed in chapter 3).

In this thesis, I analyze ethnic competence as exhibited in theories of "*everyday Primordialism*" that define the Meskhetian Turks' fate in Krasnodarskiy Krai. I highlight a "*mercurial nature of ethnicity*", i.e., changing notions of ethnic identification, as I examine notions of ethnic belonging in the context of a state that follows the premises of national self-determination. Such an approach allows me to analyze how primordialism is constructed as it continues to play a role in contemporary Russia and its appeal extends beyond academic writing and into popular discourses on inclusion and exclusion (cf. Sokolovsky 2000; Arel 2004). In the case of Eastern Europe, the role of Primordialism in the maintenance of state stability requires closer analysis. I argue that after the fall of the Soviet Union, ethnicity did not experience a "renaissance"; "an explosion" (Shnirelman 1996) or a rise in the number of interethnic conflicts as well as an increasing popularity of nationalist sentiments is directly linked with the role that ethnicity played in the functioning of the Soviet State. Notions of group rights, political participation, and legislative enforcement of ethnic categorization uphold the ethnic competence of the population.

In tracing the influence of primordialist rhetoric of ethnicity on the history of Meskhetian Turks, I approach the paradox that I mentioned in the introductory paragraph to this section. Given the extended amount of critical analysis and broader developments in social theory, one could agree with Brubaker that it is rather surprising that everyday

Primordialism (both on the level of people and state experts) has not disappeared (Brubaker 2004: 10-11). In order to combat the myopic confusion of categories of ethnopolitical practice with categories of social analysis, one could follow Brubaker's call to break with vernacular categories and common sense understandings, to challenge everyday groupism and abstain from reifing ethnicity even further. Or, one could follow Latour's and Rorty's call for a more acute (or more ironic) description of contingency of categories. Ethnic categories as they are defined by state experts, appropriated by the state and exchanged in everyday circumstances by state subjects are as real as social categories could be. Yet, they're also contingent on wider structures of organization of social, economic and political life. Thus, beautifully constructed visions of a transnational world of dissipating ethnic differences as described in Appadurai's work are as true as Savva's carefully measured ethnic statuses that are used as an indication of "civilizational" differences (as discussed in chapter 2). Works of these two social scientists reflect varied conceptions of an individual and a group, notions of rights and responsibilities, ideals of society and its structures. Thus, models of ethnicity are not just models but cultural artifacts contingent on wider social contexts (cf. Shapiro and Kymlicka 1997: 4-5). By highlighting the interplay of notions of citizenship, ethnic groupings, individual and group rights as well as emic and etic notions of group boundaries, I show how the perceived reality of ethnic categorization affected the history of the Meskhetian Turks over the course of 3 generations and influenced their own sense of group identification. This contingent model of ethnicity mirrors James' call for "a serious engagement with the specific world circumstances in which humanity and its imagination struggles to live now. The human imagination is not everywhere allowed the

same amount of free play; external shaping circumstances may not always be visible but they are still there" (James 1995: 4). This dissertation appropriates such an engagement as its guiding principle and, while remaining true to the rigor of cultural constructivism, strives to account for culturally specific constraints that have played an important role in the history of the Meskhetian Turks.

De-territorialized, hysterical and compromised states.

The history of the Meskhetian Turks is intimately tied with the history of the Soviet and post-Soviet states. Even though the state is not the direct subject of my investigation, it emerges as a profound theme in my work as it is located in the intersection of citizenship and migration policies, ethnic discourses and identity politics. In this, I follow Foucault's and Althusser's critique of the state as the structure (Foucault 1978) or apparatus (Althusser 1971) and approach it instead as a contradictory ensemble of practices and processes (cf. Mitchell 1991; Trouillot 2001).

The story of the Meskhetian Turks serves as a horrifyingly perfect illustration to Foucault's discussion about state strategies of making populations legible through statistics, surveying, mapping, population movements and censoring. In so doing, the state officials create their own vision of reality. Thus, the space of the Soviet Union was reshaped, borders were drawn and redrawn, people were moved, and ethnic and social groups were created and erased. Alone, legibility of population was insufficient to ensure the stability of the state. Construction of internal and external enemies was of primary importance to the Soviet and post-Soviet state and provided external legitimation to its existence (Malakhov 2007). The notion of national (or state) unity is achieved through images of ever present enemies (Aretxaga 1997, Warren 1993). Thus, the state represents

not only a rational project of governing but an irrational project of preserving its legitimacy (my discussion of "geographical hysteria" in Chapter 3 illustrates this point).

The stories of Meskhetian Turks offer an important caveat to this proposition as people themselves take up the state project and reinvent their group by accepting the language of ethnicity in their communication with the state and non-state organizations. And herein is the irony of the contemporary state project. The state tries to control its subjects as much as it can. But the fact that Meskhetian Turks accept the rhetoric of the state on ethnicity does not imply lack of agency as notions of group membership are irreducible to ethnic categories alone. Social and kin networks, as well as concepts of motherland and belonging, offer competing bases for individual and group identification.

This dissertation furthers critical investigations of the state that question a radical divide between the state and civil society and show the full complexity of their interrelationship (Alonso 1994; Borneman 1998; Gupta 1995; Humphrey 2002). An analytical separation of civil society and the state conceals the specifics of complicity and resistance that arise in various state contexts. Studies of the Soviet period challenge monolithic portrayals of states by creating nuanced descriptions of life under totalitarian regimes. Thus, by examining the "black swan" event of the Soviet collapse, an event that was highly anticipated and that came as a shock to the majority of the Soviet population, Yurchak highlights the specificity of the "discursive regimes" of the last period of Soviet history by examining the diachronic changes in a heretofore-monolithic history (Yurchak 2005). Similarly, Creed argues that the construction of the socialist state in Bulgaria was taking place through "*domestication of revolutions*", i.e., a complex processes of negotiations between peasants and the state. He shows how these negotiations led to the

creation of "conflicting complementarities", an intricate series of balancing mechanisms through which villagers modified state policies while, at the same time, their own lives were modified by the state (Creed 1999).

The distinction between the state and civil society mirrors another popular dichotomy – that of private and public. In this dissertation, by following a recent critique in the literature on Soviet and post-Soviet processes, I challenge the accepted image of the Soviet state as one that subsumed the private and where the public dominated in everyday life. Through my ethnography of Meskhetian Turks' domestic lives, I examine notions of belonging and show that notions of private property and private worlds of domesticity played an important role in creating a sense of relatedness and identity. Using Creed's metaphor, I argue that Meskhetian Turks as citizens of the Soviet Union domesticated and appropriated the Soviet state through notions of private property (or, rather, came to interpret it as such through memories of its loss). In this, I further studies of the Soviet state by showing that memories of the Soviet period are emotionally important, serve as a reference to define normalcy during the Post-Soviet period and problematize the black-and-white distinction between the public and private. The state can be hysterical in its interaction with its subjects; yet, it creates strong emotive feelings of attachment among its subjects as well.

Anthropological investigations of statecraft question the homogenizing totality of states by highlighting disjunctions of differentiated treatment of citizens (Trouillot 1990). Differences in class, gender, ethnicity, and status are reflected in varying notions of citizenship as state power is experienced in particular ways among diverse groups and on a number of levels (Das 2003; Gupta 1995). The studies of Soviet and post-Soviet states

take this critique further by showing that even the most totalitarian states emerge through actions of their constituent subjects (Petryna 2004; Derlougian 2009; Scott 1995). By modifying T.H. Marshall's model to analyze the history of Meskhetian Turks' encounters with the Soviet and post-Soviet state, I highlight the polysemous quality of citizenship that encompasses political, social and civil engagement between the state and its subjects. Citizenship in this case is not just a legal status, but reflects notions of belonging, political participation, rights and obligations as well as a moral character. It is an instrument of instruction and control by the state. However, citizens also employ their rights to make claims, to challenge state power and to avoid the state. This analysis offers a perspective on continuities between the Soviet and Post-Soviet periods of state management and public participation.

Studies of the state have recently been transformed as they revised their fixation on geographical locations and extended discussions to include complex geo-political configurations of the contemporary world. Research in post-Soviet space is particularly interesting in this regard as social networks connect diverse areas into complicated spaces in which politics, cultural capital, economic incentives and legal restrictions amalgamate. Researchers of Central Asia and the Baltics tend to emphasize connections between Central Asia and the Middle East, and between the Baltic States and Western Europe (Eickelman 1998; Vizulis 1985; Clemens 2001). While these connections play a role at the levels of culture and politics, it is important to focus on bonds that exist between these regions and the rest of the former Soviet Union. Several studies of migration aim to fill this gap by identifying networks crossing political borders (Zayonchkovskaya 1999; Abdulatipov 1994; Susokolov 1994). Pilkington's analysis of the Russian diaspora

develops a concept of the "other Russians", ethnically Russian migrants who have spent their lives in Central Asia and Transcaucasus and moved to Russia within the last decade (Pilkington 1998). This approach allows one to examine disjuncture of ethnic identification (Russians –vs.- "Other Russians") while mapping out complex networks that tie disparate regions through information, support, and resource transfers (Vitkovskaya 1999; Payin and Mukomel 1999; Masanov 2000).The history of Meskhetian Turks' migration that traversed geographical, political and ideological borders offers an ideal starting point for the study of complex connections that link Soviet and Post-Soviet spaces, Russia and Uzbekistan, Georgia and the USA.

The story of the Meskhetian Turks is tragic. Yet, when used as a looking glass through which to examine social changes in the Soviet and post-Soviet world, it transcends the tragedy and points at constructive elements as the Turks create and recreate their lives anew in a new region, during a new period and under a new regime.

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A lazy winter afternoon continues. A TV-set is flickering in the background. Mulkia and Feruza put in a wedding video of Mulkia's second daughter Nasiba who was married to a doctor in Rostov a few years ago. For the hundredth time they watch the wedding celebration pointing out familiar faces, gossiping about guests and describing wedding customs and traditions to their resident anthropologist. For an instant it seems as if nothing can shake the certainty of this moment that brings this family together. But then, Mulkia mentions in passing: "I haven't seen Nasiba in a long time… We can't go visit them, you know. If militsia stops us on the road, they would want to see our papers. And

our documents, you know, they no longer work… So, I haven't been able to visit her in her new home". She pauses for a minute and then continues: "And my mother – I haven't seen her in 15 years. Ever after we left Uzbekistan. I could not go without papers. She stayed with my sisters. I haven't seen them either… I just hope one day we'll be able to get together again. But I am afraid this day will never come". Mulkia's answer highlights the detrimental effects of structural changes that have led to a restrictive regime of population management. Family connections were cut or lost, uncertainty of everyday life heightened.

Thesis structure.

The first chapter (introduction) outlines the main theoretical questions of the dissertation and positions them within the context of the wider anthropological literature. It further offers background information on methodology and factual information about the Meskhetian Turks and the region.

Uncertainty of everyday life in Krasnodar Krai contrasts sharply with the deadly certainty of ethnicity that was evident in the mass media rhetoric on the Meskhetian Turks. In the second chapter, I problematize the concept of Primordialist ethnicity by tracing its evolution through Soviet and Post-Soviet periods. In my review of Meskhetian Turkish history, I examine the complexity of the relationship between the state and its populations and show that changes affecting Russia in the 90s were rooted in theoretical foundations developed during the Soviet period. Discussing the contemporary situation in Krasnodarskiy Krai, I argue that as an explanatory framework primordialist ethnicity has not lost its significance but continues to define the fate of the Meskhetian Turks.

In the third chapter, I analyze the spatial aspects of social life of the Russian state and its people. By tracing the trajectory of Meskhetian Turks' migration from Georgia to Uzbekistan and then to Russia I show continuity and change in ways the Soviet and post-Soviet state handled population movements. Thus, I argue that a restrictive regime of migration in Russia in the 90s goes back to Soviet practices of population management that focused more on administrative approaches of handling population flows. The story of Meskhetian Turks shows that state-level "scientific" strategies of managing migration that were developed earlier continued to exert influence into the 90s as well.

Citizenship as both a strategy for exclusion and inclusion as well as a means of claims to the state from its people is examined in chapter 4. By contrasting de facto and de jure notions of citizenship, I show that the story of Meskhetian Turks' citizenship in the late 20th century highlights crucial aspects of citizenship in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia as the state and its subjects were trying to define social and political belonging. I show that continuity in practices and perceptions of citizenship between the Soviet and Post-Soviet periods brings into focus the extent of changes that affected social and political structures in the country. I highlight territorial, moral and ideational aspects of citizenship and argue that in the situation where social, political and economic structures were disrupted and changing, both the state and its people relied on concepts of social belonging developed during the preceding period to resolve the uncertainty of the present. Citizenship in newly Independent Russia preserved its role as a method of sanction and discipline as well as an instrument of instruction.

Chapters 5 and 6 contain rich ethnographic material about everyday life of the Meskhetian Turks and shift focus away from the state and onto people's lives. Chapter

five focuses on a particular aspect of the material world that was important to refugees in a new place – houses. Migrant experiences were frequently expressed in their stories of buying, repairing or trying to improve one's home. My focus on the material illuminates private memories of the Soviet period and explains why a group that had been prosecuted by the state did not become dissident. Chapter 6 takes on the classic anthropological subject of kinship and examines performative, ethical and ideational aspects of relatedness. By analyzing cases of *gelin kacirma* (bride kidnapping) I show that this practice is incorporated into the social fabric of the Meskhetian Turkish community and is perceived as a questionable but nevertheless acceptable form of contracting a marriage. Cases of *gelin kacirma* violate not only individual human rights of a bride, but rights of her parents to select a spouse and therefore to establish meaningful social connections with another family. By focusing on performative aspects of kinships, I highlight the significance of rituals to legitimate and sanction social relations. In the context of increased social and economic uncertainty, the practice of *gelin kacirma* affects social relations indirectly by disciplining men and women, parents and community elders who confirm notions of socially appropriate behavior in their discussions of this practice. Thus, the ethnography of this tradition offers a perspective on the specifics of in-group identification, social reproduction of a group as well as the influence of social inequality on processes within the community.

Finally, chapter 7 paints a broad picture of the Meskhetian Turkish experiences in the United States. Based on data gathered during early stages of the resettlement project, the chapter captures specifics of Turks' functional integration and a new kind of certainty they experienced in this country – a certainty of rights (in the context of uncertainty of

nearly everything else). As an approximation to a natural experiment, this chapter examines the relative influence of the wider context on inclusion/exclusion of particular cultural categories. As a counterpart to chapter 2 ("Primordialism"), the study of Meskhetian Turks' adaptation to life in the USA elucidates the changing meaning of ethnicity in the context where ethnic categories denote differences but are to a lesser extent connected with state structures and play a lesser role in social integration.

Themes of uncertainty, complexities of state and personal taxonomies, evident in the relationship between the state and its people are all brought together in chapter 8 (Conclusion), the concluding chapter that pushes these questions further by applying conclusions drawn from the Meskhetian Turks' story to explain recent developments in Russian society and politics.

Notes on Fieldwork.

Figure 1. Map of Meskhetian Turks' migration, 1944-1989.

I met with Meskhetian Turks for the first time in October 2002 when I came to Krasnodarskiy Krai to monitor the first Russian 2002 census. In my initial study, I was interested in a minority groups' response to the census. Demographic studies of census participation show that minorities could chose a number of options regarding their participation in the census as a popular and largest plebiscite. They could partake in the census thereby expressing agreement with state policies. They could ignore the census and show their discontents with state policies. They could manipulate their ethnic identification and blend in with an ethnic majority. For my study, I chose Meskhetian Turks, a group that made headlines in mass media for years prior to the census, and Cossacks, a group who presented themselves in opposition to the MTS and as supporters of the local state administration. In the course of that introductory research, I learnt more than I aimed to learn through initial questions.

On a rainy, bone-chilling day in early October, I made my way to V. village, a place that later became my field site. S.T., a community leader, met me and showed me to his house. He apologetically explained that he is preparing for a wedding of his son and is trying to complete house improvement projects as soon as possible. Indeed, the house looked like it was under a major reconstruction. Heat was off due to renovations. Yet, hot tea served seconds after our arrival warmed everybody up and started a conversation about repairs, plans for the future, concerns about the present and tragedy of the past.

Passion with which S.T. discussed problems of his people, his determination to seek justice and openness when talking about his personal history with a complete stranger immediately attracted me. After our initial chat, he took me to a small bazaar to

meet some locals and to talk to them about survival in Krasnodarskiy Krai. Despite drizzling rain, women bundled up in heavy coats and thick scarves that made them look like Russian nesting dolls were there, waiting for passing by cars to relieve them of walnuts, tomatoes and potatoes, a regular fall inventory of a market. Cars were infrequent on that grey day, and so women were happy to answer my questions. Most stories were similar – work in a collective farm in Uzbekistan, children, family; violence, fear, escape to KK; work on a dairy or a collective farm here; difficulties of surviving without citizenship. Words of one woman, the elderly Khadia Radjab-kyzi stood out: "Write, daughter, write. – The 80-year old urged me. – My husband and two of my brothers died here, in this land, during the Great Patriotic War (WWII). And I do not receive any assistance <from the state>… Write, daughter… No passport. So, <I can> not go to Uzbekistan, to see my relatives. I cannot cry anymore. God is one. We are all living under one God". Quiet power of her words inspired me; I felt it was my responsibility to return to this region of Russia in order to record the story of Khadia Radjab-kyzi and others, men and women, whose lives were closely intertwined with the history of Russia.

When the initial study of the census was over, I realized that questions examined in that research (Koriouchkina 2004) still remained unanswered and decide to explore them further in the dissertation research. Initially, my study was framed as a study of a conflict between local state authorities and Meskhetian Turks. However, as my research progressed, I realized that this framework was far too constraining and could not adequately explain the complexity of issues at stake in the region. A situation of a chronic standoff between the state and members of a number of ethnic groups required closer investigation of the history of the group as well as the history of the state. Thus, my study

transformed into an analysis of social change encompassing several generations of informants, interviews with experts and mass media monitoring.

In my study I did not aim to recreate a representative snapshot of a particular region. Rather, my goal was to understand how particular discursive configurations and practices come into being and affected life of a group during the turbulent period of radical social reconstruction. To do so, I examined relationships between analytic categories (for instance, citizenship, political participation, and ethnicity) highlighting their mutual contingency and illuminating transformations. By focusing on the history of Meskhetian Turks, I examined continuity and change of analytic categories while tracing the interplay between the history of the group and the history of the state. The picture of change that emerges through this approach is specific to the history of Meskhetian Turks in Krasnodarskiy Krai, yet the general approach could be used to better understand processes of change happening elsewhere in the post-Soviet space.

During my fieldwork, I resided with the S.T. family (comprised of S.T., his wife, the youngest unmarried daughter and son and his wife with 2 children; 3 other daughters were married and resided elsewhere). I also made frequent trips to settlements in other parts of the region to get a wider picture of processes taking place in the region. In the course of my research, I conducted over 120 interviews with 32 informants. I complemented repeated interviews with informal visits and participant observations. Most informants were from V. village but as personal connections linked residents of this village with other settlements in the region, I expanded my geographical focus as well. In the final stages of research, when visitors began to arrive to S.T.'s house seeking formal testaments of their ethnic background, I was able to further enlarge the circle of my

informants gaining a better understanding of a diversity of voices and perspectives. Excerpts from interviews presented in this thesis reflect only a small sample of all stories that I collected in the course of research.

A snow-ball style of introduction to informants was crucial in gaining informants' trust and building lasting relationships that could result in repeated interviews. Thus, a reference of a friend or a relative was nearly almost prerequisite to ensure sincerity of answers. For the same reasons I decided to abandon the idea of a survey. A staple ethnographic technique, surveys provide invaluable information while at the same time expanding research coverage. Given that statistical data on MTs was not available due to predicaments of their status, a survey could have been extremely important. However, as I detail in chapter 6, my initial inquiries about a survey did not receive an enthusiastic response. When I discussed this topic with ST, he advised me against this project. Earlier, a group of researchers from the Kuban State U conducted a community wide survey. But results of that study were never shared with the community members and there were rumors that numbers could have been used against the community. Given the overall apprehension of statistical inquiries in the context of impending resettlement to the United States, I decided to rely on qualitative methods to build informants' trust rather than to jeopardize it in order to gain few numbers. Also, a survey format would have attracted more attention from regional and local authorities that could have endangered the research project.

Even though the state is not the central object of inquiry, it emerges powerfully as a frame to the history of my informants. Initially, my research focused more on state officials. However, after the first months in the field, I realized that I could not

adequately interview both members of the discriminated community and state officials. Given my informants' previous experiences of interacting with researchers affiliated with the State University, informants questioned my commitment to telling their story when they heard that I spoke with state officials as well. Difficulties in arranging interviews with state officials reflected the fact that the topic of Meskhetian Turks in Krasnodarskiy Krai was receiving a considerable amount of international attention making state officials weary of extended interaction with researchers. At around the same time, several film crews arrived to the region interested in making news reports/documentaries on Meskhetian Turks' resettlement. As the crews followed a prescribed route of formally introducing their research to the local authorities, they encountered significant difficulties in conducting their work. Local vigilante groups interfered aiming to influence the production. After a consultation with Meskhetian Turkish leaders and local ethnographers, I decided against attracting further attention of the regional state administration to my project and focused instead on dynamics of everyday life in the community.

Religion. Sunni Muslims, Meskhetian Turks vary considerably in their individual relationship with Islam. In general, formal knowledge of religion was low. This is hardly surprising as during the Soviet period efforts to diminish a role of religion in everyday life were fairly successful. Atheist ideas infiltrated even remote villages of Central Asia rendering ethnicity rather than religion as the major signifier of differences among groups. Practical knowledge of religious practices among Meskhetian Turks was low and there were only a handful of people who could name the five pillars of Islam. Attitudes towards Islam among men and women markedly varied. For some men, getting together

for a Friday prayer was an important event of confirming their communal identity. These gatherings were not very large as there was no mosque in the village and Friday prayers were conducted at a house of a village mullah (a self-taught man of letters who discovered his calling later in life). For those men, a practice of religion was a public way of marking their group membership. For women, knowledge of Islam was more private as it involved practicing it at home. Women seemed more observant watching closely over younger household members. For men, practice of Islam did not seem to contradict other cultural practices like alcohol drinking during weddings or smoking. Overall, the level of displayed interest in and knowledge of religion increased with age as older informants reported better knowledge of Islam and were more diligent in practicing it.

Public display of Islam was fairly minor in the village. The community tried to arrange larger scale celebrations for Eid at a school gym. Yet, this caused numerous protests from village residents and attempts at large scale religious festivities were never renewed. Thus, only wedding celebrations (or funerals) could serve as community wide gatherings.

Despite specifics of individual beliefs (or lack thereof), Islam played a role of an ethnic marker emphasizing a difference between Muslim Turks and Orthodox Russians. Influence of the Soviet ideology could still be observed as ethnic group boundaries were perceived as more important than religious boundaries for notions of a community (the same was true of Russians – cf. Barrett and Buckley, 2002). Being Turk implied being Muslim and did not necessarily involve practicing Islam. Given that the topic of religion was brought up infrequently during everyday encounters, I did not dwell on this topic

allowing specifics of participant observation determine what was important to my informants and consequently to my research.

Language. Turks speak the Eastern Anatolian dialect of Turkish that is practiced in Kars, Ardahan and Artvin areas of Turkey. Their language differs markedly from the Istanbul dialect of Turkish (even though both are mutually intelligible). Turks refer to their language as *bizim dil* (our language) or *musumanca* (the Muslim language) (Kuznetsov 2007).

The history of deportations affected specifics of language. During their life in Central Asia Meskhetian Turkis picked up words and expressions from Uzbek, Kazakh and Kyrgyz languages. Changes in vocabulary were accompanied with changes in pronunciation further making *musumanca* more different from the initial dialect of Turkish.

In their daily lives, Meskhetian Turks speak *turk dil*" language mixed in with some Uzbek and Russian words. They take real pride in knowing many languages and being able to quickly pick up new ones. "A census taker asked me 'what languages do you speak?' Oh, he got tired by the end when I was done naming all the ones that I know. *Bizim dil* <our language> – I speak it. Uzbek, Tatar, Azerbaijani. Kazakh and Kyrgyz. Turkish, of course – after we got a satellite TV, I learnt that. Turkic languages are good, they are so close. Russian. If I need to, I can speak to a Ukrainian and get by. And now I will be learning English. Too much, too much!" – 50-year old Zemphira was openly proud of her linguistic accomplishments. Multilingualism was not an exception but a

norm in this community characterized with a continued exposure to a multitude of cultures and languages.

During my research, I made an effort to learn basics of Turkish. Even though I never attained functional fluency, I learnt enough of everyday categories to be able to understand basic household conversations and to understand complexities of kinship categories. My informants always made sure I could follow them by finding equivalents of Turkish terms in Russian (in case of kinship categories, they proved themselves much better versed in Russian categories of kin than me). Shifting between Russian and Turkish seemed almost effortless even for older informants. For the younger informants, the ones who grew up in Russia, Russian language was their second native language. Several older informants who were born in Georgia reported good knowledge of Georgian. Kuznetsov reports that there used to be entire villages where Turks spoke Georgian rather than Turkish (Kuznetsov 2007: 160). Meskhetian Turks became exclusively Turkic speaking only after the deportation. The history of Meskhetian Turks' reflects complexity of ethno-linguistic processes that contributed to formation of their identity and a sense of group unity.

Economic activities. Meskhetian Turks consider agriculture their traditional occupation. In Georgia and in Central Asia, Turkish villages were primarily focused on agricultural work. In Krasnodarskiy Krai they continued agricultural work as this was the only area where they could be self-employed and support themselves. In the eastern parts of the region, Meskhetian Turks were also employed in wood-cutting and tobacco growing industries. Development of tobacco plantations in the 80s was the project that initially brought Meskhetian Turks to the region.

Predicaments of legal status affect Meskhetian Turks employment opportunities. Given lack of citizenship and/or local registration, they were not able to purchase land. Thus, they were mostly renting plots of land from local collective farms. In many cases, this required cooperation among relatives as those with citizenship could rent land for those without one. At the time of fieldwork, 1hectar of land cost about $350 (12,000 rubles). Meskhetian Turks focused on eggplants, tomatoes and peppers – staples of the local agriculture.

Turks sold their produce at small local markets and bazaar. However, there is no evidential support to popular accusations that Meskhetian Turks were controlling markets and influenced produce prices. There is some evidence that they were trying to break away from regional constraints and take their harvests to other regions tapping into social networks that connected them with other regions in Russia. Given predicaments of registration regime in Russia this was also difficult.

Both men and women worked in the fields during agricultural season. During winter, women primarily stayed at home while men could find employment in construction work. Informants emphasized that large family size and good work ethics ensured that they could make good living for themselves. Meskhetian Turks in the western parts of Krasnodarskiy Krai were financially better off than Meskhetian Turks in the eastern parts who were primarily employed in tobacco and wood processing industries.

Demographics. As of 2004, there were about 75,000 Meskhetian Turks in Russia[2] (Khanzhin 2007: 25). 95% of them reside in the Southern Federal Okrug that comprises the following regions:

Name of the Region	Numbers (1000)	%
Rostovskiy Region	28.5	38
Krasnodarskiy Krai	13.5	18
Kabardino-Balkarskaya Respublic	11	14.6
Stavropolskiy Krai	7.5	10
Volgolradskaya Oblast	4	5.3
Kalmykiya	3.1	4.1
North Ossetia	2.8	3.7
Chechnya	1.6	2.1
Astrahanskaya Oblast	1.1	1.5
Ingushetiya	0.9	1.2

In most areas, the Meshetian Turks are dispersed with the other ethnic groups. There are only 4 reported compact settlements that are comprised almost exclusively of the Meskhetian Turks (khutor Trud Zemledeltsa – 70% of 76 people; and khutor Shirokiy Kamysh – 55% of 441 people) (Kuznetsov 2007: 149).

In Krasnodarskiy Krai, Meskhetian Turks live predominantly in four districts: approximately 9,000 live in Krymsk and 2,000 in Abinsk, to the west of the *krai*; in the east, 1,500 live in Apsheronsk and 2,500 in Belorechensk. At most, they form 6.4 per cent of the region's population (in Krymsk), and their highest concentration is in two towns of this region, in which they account for 12.5 per cent of the inhabitants. According to the 1997 census, Russians formed over 85 per cent of Krasnodar's inhabitants. Meskhetian Turks represent a very small proportion of the population, even in comparison with other minorities (Armenians (4.5%), Ukrainians (4%), Belorussians (0.8%), Greeks (0.6%), Adygeans (0.4%), Germans (0.4%)) (Ossipov 2000:13, 24-25).

[2] Of a total population of approximately 300,000. Most live in the former Soviet Union, in Kazakhstan (80-100,000), Azerbaijan (40-60,000), Kyrgyzstan (25-30,000), Uzbekistan (15-20,000), Ukraine (5-10,000) and Georgia (only 643). About 15,000 live in Turkey, mostly around Bursa (Aydıngün 2000:79; Ossipov 2000:10; Yunusov 2000:50).

Given lack of proper statistics, it is difficult to estimate the exact age characteristics of the community. According to some estimates, children comprise 33.8%-43.2% and the retirees make up 7.5%-10.7% (Ryazantsev 2000: 24; Kuznetsov 2007: 150). Levels of education vary a lot depending on when members of a cohort came of age. Thus, 45-55 year old men and women show the higher rates of education with men having higher education or advanced technical training degrees. Men in the 35-45 age groups mostly have specialized technical degrees. Men younger than 35 (i.e., the ones whose completion of high school coincided with evacuation from Uzbekistan) only have completed or incomplete secondary education.

According to official state statistics, in the fall of 1997, there were 13,581 Turks who arrived to the region in 1989. The largest settlements were in Krymsky Raion (where I conducted most of my fieldwork). There were 8,513 Turks (of whom only 303 had permanent registration). In Apsheronsky and Abinsky raions there were 1,054 and 1,710 Turks respectively (of which 1,054 were registered in Apsheronskiy raion and only 125 in Abinskiy). Apsheronskiy raion, located in the east of Krasnodarskiy Krai, was the original place of Meskhetian Turkish settlement in the 80s. This explains considerably higher rates of registration and far fewer legal problems experienced by Turks in the 90s and 2000s.

Fieldwork in the USA. In the USA, I conducted work in 2 settlements – in Lancaster, PA and Philadelphia, PA. Collaborating with Steve Swerdlow, I used his fieldwork materials gathered in communities on the West coast (in San Diego, CA). At the time of

my fieldwork in the USA, most of my informants were still residing In Russia waiting for travel documents. So, research in the USA did not directly match research in Russia. However, connections established in Russia helped me build trust with informants even though we only met for the first time in Pennsylvania. Over time, I was able to trace many more informants from Russia. Currently, the majority of contacts in Krasnodarskiy Krai reside in Arizona, Washington, and Pennsylvania. Right now, most of them were able to resolve their legal situation permanently and are rightful American citizens.

CHAPTER 2. "Sticky Primordialism" or a Search for Identity: The History of Constructing "Meskhetian Turks".

Months of fieldwork involved sharing daily minutia with my resident "family", learning about traditions and memories, past and present, and, in line with my research proposal, trying to understand what constituted an identity. The futility of this inquiry became obvious fairly quickly. A conversation with a 43-year old Marat, an engineer who had been working as a tomato farmer for the last 12 years made it explicit: "Who am I? I am a Turk, - he shrugged evidently perplexed with reasons for asking such an obvious question. - A Meskhetian Turk, they call us know. We are '*ierly'*, the people. During the Soviet period, I had to explain that we were Soviet Turks – people presumed that we were from Turkey and would always be surprised to hear that there were Turks in the Soviet Union as well… How do we know who is a Turk and who is not? The language that one speaks is important. The family – everybody knows which families are Turkish and which are not. Everybody knows about their "kuv"- if you are a member of kuv, and then you are a Turk". Murat's insistence on the fact that "everybody knows" one's ethnicity made me reconsider the constructivist paradigm of ethnicity. I did not despair and continued with my questions – "Can one become a Turk?" I tried to retain my constructivist composure and persist in questions, yet it was difficult to do so when Murat looked at me with pity but answered: "No, you have to be born a Turk… Although, a woman can marry a Turk and then she joins her husband's people… But no, even then she won't be a Turk, she will still belong to her parents' ethnic group."

To get another perspective, I asked several state officials how they can tell who is and who is not a Meskhetian Turk. Just like Murat, they gave me looks of pity; unlike

Murat, none of them dwelled on this question. “It’s written in their passport. They came from Uzbekistan and we’ve had many troubles with them. Everybody knows who they are. Why are you asking?” – Valentina, a portly middle-aged woman from Krasnodar passportniy stol (passport bureau), was visibly annoyed with my questions and happily wrapped up our interview after this question.

The conversation with Murat and subsequent discussions with other informants helped me reconsider passionate debates I carried out with my fellow anthropologists earlier regarding a mercurial nature of ethnicity. Mirroring discussions in Ardener (1989) or Eriksen (1993), together with a group of colleagues, I debated meaning of Russian-ness and ethnicity carefully noting contexts, shifting meanings and incongruities. Yet, ethnicity as it emerged through my informants’ answers was at once more specific and substantive. Notions of group membership differed profoundly from the ones that state officials used to describe this group. Hardly ever were there any clarifications necessary regarding ethnic groupings – one’s ethnic status was always quickly and correctly assessed and duly noted during interviews. Similarly, the state framed its rhetoric against Meskhetian Turks in definite terms of group membership.

In this chapter, by examining the state-level definition of ethnicity in its application towards a Meskhetian Turks’ case, I engage with a concept of essentialist primoridialism, a perspective that postulates ethnicity as an a priori fact of human existence that precedes any social interaction and is changed little (if at all) by it. According to an essentialist take on ethnicity (to which the Soviet and the Russian states subscribed), ethnic groups are natural and function as the major determinant of individual behavior. In my constructivist take on primordialism, I show how ethnicity emerges as an

integral part of the worldview according to which ethnic differences are not only real but serve as a justification for entitlement to power and control over resources. Diachronically tracing the concept of ethnicity in its application to formative events in the history of Meskhetian Turks I illustrate this proposition and problematize a role of ethnographers in delineating boundaries of the group. I argue that social scientists (and party functionaries) played an important role in defining ethnic categories and introducing them to the general population during the Soviet period. This had direct impact on the history of the group and their sense of identity as it prompted Meskhetian Turkish leaders to search for ethnic origins in order to answer who they were in ethnic terms using rhetoric similar to that of the state. Discussing contemporary situation in Krasnodar Krai, I show that as an explanatory framework primordialist ethnicity has not lost its significance but continues to define fate of Meskhetian Turks.

Ethnicity in the Soviet Union.

Speculations about an "ethnic" origin of (Meskhetian)[3] Turks are a fairly recent preoccupation. Prior to the October revolution of 1917, the group would have been defined through references to its religion given that a "religious confession" was a characteristic ascribed to all subjects of the Russian Empire[4]. Ethnographers also used a way of life ("settled"-vs.-"nomadic") as a marker of group boundaries. In the first Russian census of 1897, only two categories of social differentiation were deemed necessary – native language and religion (Anderson and Silver 1995: 151-156). With the

[3] The term "Meskhetian Turk" is fairly recent and was only introduced in the late 60s-70s in an attempt to better identify populations deported from border regions of Georgia (Bugai 1996). To make this point explicit, in my discussion of history prior to 1960s, I will bracket the qualifier (Meskhetian).

[4] Both the Russian national identity and the tsar's dynastic validity were largely associated with Orthodoxy; thus, identification of imperial subjects' religious denomination was not just an idle exercise of booKrasnodarskiy Kraieeping, but an effort to ensure complacency and legitimacy. (Slezkine 1994: 426)

spread of education, "native language" gained importance as a defining characteristic of the population in Russia. For residents of the Meskheti-Javakheti frontier region, "where Christians and Muslism, Georgians and Turks, lived side by side for many centuries while competing for the political power over [the] territory" (Khazanov 1996: 196), ethnicity was less significant compared to other differences. Given that bilingualism (and often multilingualism) was a norm, language differences were also secondary. Yet, there was a sense of group cohesion that is reflected in a term "ierli", meaning "the people" that Meskhetian Turks use even today when talking about themselves[5]. Thus, prior to the October revolution of 1917, as Slezkine points out, in the Russian empire there were national problems and national parties; yet, few had any idea of what nationality (or ethnicity) really was[6] (Slezkine 1994: 427).

After the revolution, the situation changed dramatically. National liberation movements were perceived as the main strategy to combat colonial heritage and as a general path towards an idea of a united mankind that would forgo all divisive distinctions (or, at least, those of class and nationality). The concept of ethnicity was central to the development of the country as a whole, and national self-determination in regions was perceived as an integral part of historical development (Beissinger and Hajda 1990;). The 20s saw a number of campaigns of enforcing national cultures in the republics of the Soviet Union thereby strengthening a connection between a territory, a language and a people in hopes of creating a more uniform space of the state. Yet, following Lenin's paradox that a surest way to unity was diversity in forms, these

[5] Today, the term *ierli* is used among the Meskhetian Turks. However, well versed in a discourse on nationality/ethnicity, they do not consider it ethnic.
[6] It seems that by 1926, on the basis of a rich theoretical apparatus developed in Lenin and Stalin's work <REF>, this question became far more straightforward. Beginning with the 1926 census, a category "nationality" became a stable fixture in all future censuses (Silver 1986: 71).

policies were not systematic and were at times reversed with campaigns of enforcing local cultures and ensuring rights of self-determination of smaller groups (Grant 1995:8-10). Thus, (Meskhetian) Turks (speakers of the Kars dialect of the Turkish language and adherents to the Hanafi school of Sunni Islam) experienced periods of Georgiannization that involved pressures to change Turkish names to Georgian names and education to Georgian in order to maintain ethno-linguistic uniformity of the Georgian republic. Later, politics of Georgiannization were replaced by emphasis on the Turkish language as a medium of education and the Turkish identity (Slezkin 1994: 421)[7], i.e. policies that were meant to encourage self-determination of smaller groups thereby propelling them into the communist future. It was during this brief period that the majority of (Meskhetian) Turks began to register as "Turks"[8] (Sheehy and Nahaylo 1980).

Social engineering of federative structures of the emergent state in the 30s was complemented with increased attention to ethnographic composition of the regions and efforts to further ensure ethno-linguistic legibility of the country as a whole. But despite efforts, ethno-linguistic cohesion was far from ideal. Frequently, one's mother tongue and one's ethnicity did not match (rendering those individuals "denationalized", in the Soviet classification categories). While some (Meskhetian) Turks complied with the state policies, the majority insisted on being registered as Turks[9]. Even though few did change

[7] Slezkine also mentions a considerable reaction against such an approach. Such party functionaries as Bukharin, Piatakov, Ioffe objected to the principle of national self-determination as misleading and potentially separatist by nature.

[8] Previously, there was no need to explicitly indicate one's ethnicity as religion played a more important role as a social marker. A denomination "Meskhetians" appears in ethnographic texts only in the late 50s and initially designates a wide range of ethnic groups (Khemshils, Meskhetian Turks, Kurds, and Karapapach) (Wixman 1984: 133-134). A term "Meskhetian Turks" is coined primarily after violence in Uzbekistan.

[9] Many informants proudly told me about their parents and grandparents resisting this policy. In one particularly striking case, a man threw away his passport 10 times to protest being recorded as Azerbaijani. He succeeded in having nationality "Turk" written in his documents. While the story might have been

their last names to Georgian names, their neighbors continued to refer to them as Turks (Akiner 1986: 261; Panesh and Ermolov 1998: 119). Social engineering of ethnicity carried out in 1920s-30s went hand in hand with a belief in: a) persistence of ethnicity as an important factor of social life; b) eventual demise of ethnicity through merger of ethnic groups into larger ones culminating in their identification as a united Soviet people. Thus, the politics of merger of larger nationalities with smaller groups was seen as a natural outcome of social development. Socialist nations, radically different from their bourgeois counterparts, could have no conflict amongst themselves and were hypothesized to eventually integrate into the central state by a path of "rapprochement" and "merger" (Simon 1991: 6).

The only minor wrinkle to this smooth path towards an eventual unity of all people was presented in a form of diasporic groups. While it was an existential and gnoseological matter of defining groups and then merging them into larger clusters through a notion of "natsional'nost"/nationality (glavnaya natsional'nost' and sub-group), it was a bit more challenging to incorporate diasporic groups that, formally speaking, had territorial links to countries outside of the Soviet Union (and frequently had literal family ties as well). If earlier, in the 20s, such nationality could be seen as a strategy of expanding the sphere of the Soviet influence and family connections could be used to export the Socialist ideology, by the late 30s when ideas of global revolution were put on hold, networks connecting USSR with neighbors were no longer necessary and furthermore were seen as a threat to an internal order. During fieldwork, older Meskhetian Turks told of their grandparents who used to cross the border between

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exaggerated as it was passed from generation to generation, stories of efforts to preserve one's nationality as "Turk" were quite numerous.

Georgia and Turkey very frequently. Indeed, family connections as well as business relations tied the Meskheti-Javakheti region with the Western part of Turkey. Yet, by the late 30s such trips were no longer possible. State authorities resumed their efforts to merge the Turks with either Georgians or Azerbaijanies in order to avoid dealing with non-Soviet nationalities across the border. Those family connections were yet to play their fateful role in the history of the (Meskhetian) Turks during deportations in 1944.

The 30s witnessed a remarkable qualitative change in a popular mode of identification. In the 20s, ethnographers reported general confusion in regard to people's responses to a question about their nationality (especially apparent in rural areas where religious, tribal, regional, and other distinctions played a far more important role in local taxonomies of group identification). By the 30s some uncertainties were resolved. People employed the language of nationality when negotiating with the state (Hirsch 2005: 145; cf. Abramson 2002)[10]. Hirsch argues that the census, the border making and the institutionalization of various documents that recorded one's natsional'nost' (ethnic affiliation) largely affected the way people began to perceive themselves and others (Hirsch 2005: 146). Also, the policy of korennizatsia – promotion of local ethnic cadres, - sent a strong message about the way Soviet citizens were supposed to identify themselves (more so if they wanted to succeed in the new country). The swift pace with which the process of change in identification took place and new categories for identification were introduced is a perfect testament to a power of administrative manipulation and a power of state officials over popular categories. However, it is hard to agree with Hirsch that all

[10] On the other hand, it is important not to over-dramatize the effect of state engineering of policies. Ethnic taxonomies were far from fixed. Upon relocation to Central Asia, many Turks received passports where their ethnicity was recorded as "Kavkaz"/ "Kavkazka". People did pick up on the fact that nationality became the language of the state and began to use it in official contexts, yet they were far from fluent in this language.

uncertainties and incongruities were resolved at that point. (Meskhetian) Turks' passports provide invaluable data in this regard. Even later, in the 40s and 50s, Central Asian passport officials were unfamiliar with a term "Meskhetians / (Meskhetian) Turks". Thus, when recording ethnicity of the new arrivals to the region, they changed the name of the ethnic group. The International Organization for Migration, that was processing information on Meskhetian Turks immigrating to the US in 2004-2006, lists "Kavkaz"/"Kavkazka" (Russian for "Caucasian"), "Kepkezler" (Uzbek for "Caucasian") as ethnicities recorded in refugees' passports. Curious ethnicities listed in passports confirm that during the Soviet period while people recognized the importance of ethnicity in the new state, they had little formal knowledge of it. Thus, they provided their own interpretation by transforming (Meskhetian) Turks into Kavkaztsi.

The 1930s was the time when after the social unrest of the tumultuous 20s, in Slezkine's expression, "each individual got stuck with a nationality and most nationalities got stuck with their borders" (Slezkine 1994: 444). And by the end of the decade, formal institutionalization of ethnicity had been completed – it was not only recorded in one's passport; it was inherited. As an inalienable part of social organization, it was also integrated at the administrative level. A transition from a religious to an ethnic classification of population was completed, and ethnic primordialism at the administrative level supported by academic research of Marxist ethnographers had taken hold.

Deportation: a Moral character of ethnicity.

During the next period, ethnicity emerged as a basis for action and a matter of social security. It further solidified the popular perception (as well as perception of authorities) of what ethnicity meant and how one could resolve interethnic problems.

Thus, one can say that primordialism was beginning to take its shape as notions of ethnicity were losing their fluidity and Lenin's earlier contentions about decolonization, the rights of nations for self-determination and development changed their meaning and were brushed aside. In November 1944, at the time when WWII had taken a turn for the better and victory over Nazi Germany was within sight, (Meskhetian) Turks residing in the Meskheti-Javakheti region - along with other small groups of the Southern Georgia (Khemshils, Kurds, Turkmen, etc), - were boarded into freight trains and deported to Central Asia. Khazanov argues that even today the reasons for this deportation are far from clear[11].

Geo-political safety at the time when the Soviet authorities considered declaring war with Turkey might have prompted them to remove frontier populations whose ethnic and religious affiliations might have influenced state actions against the Turks. Despite hypothetical formulation of this conclusion, most historians agree that it was fairly obvious that at that point during the war with Germany, collaboration between the (Meskhetian) Turks and German army was impossible (Pohl 1999; Wixman 1984). Yet deportees were not provided with any explanation regarding a rationale of their relocation. Khazanov places the (Meskhetian) Turks' resettlement in the context of deportations that followed the suite: in 1949, Greeks and Lakhlukhs (Aramaic speaking Jews) were also deported from Georgia. Khazanov argues that Stalin tried to clean the border area from "elements who did not enjoy his confidence" (1996: 197). Bugai quotes

[11] Massive resettlements were not unique in the history of Russia (Ref to other cultures as well). In the late 19th century, Jews experienced pressure to move to the outskirts of the empire (Poland and Odessa in particular) (Polian 2004: 20-21). In the Caucasus, resettlements were used to secure conquered territories and to minimize resistance of the local populations (For example, populations of the Prut-Dienster area were resettled to Crimea in the early 19th century; it was a "popular" measure during the Caucasian war (REF)). In 1914-1915, Germans, Turks, Jews experienced forced migration from the border regions of Russia into the inland Russian gubernias (administrative regions).

documents by Beria, Malenkov and Molotov that support this argument (Bugai 1994). Thus, Beria claimed that "a significant part of Turks, Kurds and Khemshils have been connected by ties of kinship with population of border areas of Turkey, involved in smuggling, revealed a desire to emigrate and served as the pool for recruiting espionage elements and implanting bandit groups" (Bugai 1991a: 110 in Khazanov 1995). In line with this, Martin argues that the 30s witnessed an emergence of a new phenomenon – a definition of a "border region" and the consequent formation of such territories in the USSR (Martin 2001: 312-313). Martin argues that deportations should be seen within a context of a developing sense of the Soviet identity, a particular notion of cultural geography that emerged by the late 30s and that linked a sense of a country membership, loyalty and morality with family connections.

A discussion of (Meskhetian) Turks' deportation was also carried out in the context of previous deportations in 1935-38 when at least 9 nationalities were considered "enemies of the people" and forcibly relocated to new territories (Poles, Germans, Finns, Estonians, Latvians, Koreans, Chinese, Kurds, Iranians) (Martin 2001: 311). Some historians argue that earlier deportations were also in part triggered by ongoing preparations for military actions that seemed eminent at that time (Conquest 1970). Whether or not deportations in the 30s were a part of war mobilization, one could trace their roots to an even earlier, pre-Soviet period. Holquist places deportations of "unreliable and harmful elements" in the late 30s in the context of the imperial military statistics, colonization of the Caucasus and the First World War deportations, all of which were triggered by notions of moral character assigned to some populations, a particular notion of body politic and an overwhelmingly strong belief in the power of social

engineering (Holquist 2001: 120-124)[12]. Yet, unlike the imperial "cleanings" that dealt with "mountaineers" and non-Christians, these mass scale population management tactics focused on ethnic groups, which thereby solidified the practical basis to the notion of ethnicity.

Deportations highlight further transformations in the notion of ethnicity in the Soviet Union. In the 40s-50s, ethnicity was perceived as the defining characteristic of an individual that tied him/her to a group and largely defined his/her morality, behavior and values. Discussions of a historical trajectory of ethnic development were no longer of interest. The world-wide revolution was no longer expected, yet there was a need to manage large territories and diverse populations. Thus, the state focused on ethnic groups within the country and ethnicity was reconfirmed as the primary characteristic of an individual and groups, a position to be further developed in theoretical works of Yurii Bromley in the 70-80s (Bromley 1974). Ethnic groups were now defined as an object of control and a source of potential destabilization and threat. The state took on an active role in managing ethnic groups in order to resolve social and tactical problems.

Deportees were resettled to Kazakhstan (29,497), Kirgizia (8,911 people), and Uzbekistan (42,618). They were classified as the "special status settlers", a concept that curtailed their basic civil rights. They were forbidden to change places of residence. Marriages between settlements could only take place after a special permission was granted and wedding celebrations hardly ever took place, which lead to a loss of cultural

[12] Holquist argues that deportations were hardly a Bolshevik innovation and denies them the dubious honors of inventing this practice. He shows that deportations as a "prophylactic" measure of improving social health of a given locale had been used by the Russian imperial authorities in the Caucasus region for decades prior to deportations of the 30s and 40s. Holquist takes this argument even further by showing that deportations were a part of a state power repertoire of many European countries who first introduced these policies in their colonies and during WWI "imported" them to their home soil (Holquist 2001: 125-127)

traditions (Kuznetsov 2008: 150-152). Material conditions in those camps were far from comfortable. Running water and gas were nonexistent. Settlers largely had to build their houses from scratch. During and in the first years after the deportation, mortality was extremely high. Due to a lack of records it is hard to estimate the exact rate[13].

Search for Roots: Ambiguity of Ethnicity

A period of 1950s-1980s was a period when the socialism had arguably reached its full development and (Meskhetian) Turks, like many other groups across the country, experienced a dramatic growth in their sense of themselves as an ethnic group. Forbidden to return to Georgia, they resumed efforts to appeal to the central government. The historical 20th Congress of the Communist Party in 1956 brought significant changes. In part, it granted many of the punished people an opportunity to return to their homelands (Pohl 1999; Bugai 1996). However, (Meskhetian) Turks were excluded from the list. According to a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (October 31, 1957), Georgian authorities were unwilling to accept (Meskhetian) Turks back anywhere in Georgia and blamed a lack of space on their inability to resettle and employ them. After the WWII, the Meskhety-Dzhavakheti area received a frontier status. Previous settlements were destroyed. Adzhars and West Georgians (Imeretians) were hurriedly transferred to the area, closing any chances for (Meskhetian) Turks' return. Given the special frontier status, Turks could not visit this area even as guests or tourists (Khazanov 1995: 199).

The only area (Meskhetian) Turks were explicitly allowed to migrate to was Azerbaijan. In the course of the next 30 years, some (Meskhetian) Turks did indeed make

[13] Khazanov quotes an astonishing range of 15,000-50,000 people who perished during this initial period; despite lack of reliability, even the low margin of this figure is astonishing.

their way there. Others either remained in Central Asia or moved elsewhere in the North Caucasus (Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia, Karachaevo-Cherkessia), Stavropol'skiy Krai and Krasnodarskyi Krai and even Moldavia (more on this in the next chapter).

Starting in the 50s, debates about the ethnic origin and self-denomination among the (Meskhetian) Turks intensified. Life in special status settlements provided measures of control that created a group cohesion; in the 50s, when restrictions on residence were lifted, people preferred to stay close together utilizing their kin networks to survive. (Meskhetian) Turkish collective farms were prevalent in some areas in Uzbekistan (Chikadze 2008: 92-93). Yet, despite a sense of mechanic solidarity, there was no agreement as to who (Meskhetian) Turks as a group were and, consequently, where they should be. Some (Meskhetian) Turkish fractions claimed that they were Turkicized Georgians; others contended that they were Soviet Turks (Osipov 1993: 69-70)). In time, two large camps with contrasting views of the (Meskhetian) Turks' future emerged. The" Georgian camp" insisted on an unconditional return to Georgia, arguing that the people should rekindle their national belonging and assimilate with the "real" Georgians (Osipov 2007: 392-393). The Turkish camp argued for a return to the Meskheti-Javakheti region without any conditions of assimilation. Osipov shows that both camps existed at about the same time and received relatively equal amount of popular support. Neither could claim absolute popularity and there were periods when one position would gain more popularity only to lose it later. Despite disagreements, all (Meskhetian) Turkish organizations that arose at that time had one goal in mind – to appeal to the Soviet government to grant them permission to return back to Georgia. Both camps were similar in their search for the truth about the historical origins of (Meskhetian) Turks and the

meaning of ethnicity. Those who argued about the "Turkish" origins of (Meskhetian) Turks subscribed to a view that links culture, language and ethnicity. Supporters of the "Georgian" story linked ethnicity with genetic heritage. In a sense, debates about "turkishness" or "georgianness" bracketed out historical development of a group in their search for the ultimate authenticity. Both approaches also reflected specifics of the state rhetoric on ethnicity that linked territorial residence, ethnicity and language. Thus, appeals to return could only be made from the "ethnic" point of view and using the language of ethnicity developed in the Soviet Union.

In 1962, a secret Constituent Congress of the (Meskhetian) Turks founded the Provisional Organizing Committee for Repatriation to the Homeland (Khazanov 1995: 199). Ten more Congresses followed the suite in the course of the next 27 years. Over 200 delegations made their way to Moscow and Tbilisi trying to argue their case (Panesh and Ermolov 1990: 19). Many of these meetings and resolutions were spontaneous and organized at a grass roots level rendering it less rationalized and more difficult to control. Frequently, members of the "Turkish" and the "Georgian" camps shifted their identification and "migrated" between the "paradigms" of ethnic belonging depending on the general perception and popular support. For instance, in the early 60s, Mavlud Barahtarov, one of the Meskhetian Turks' leaders, argued for Meskhetian Turks' assimilation with Azerbaijanis and encouraged migration to Azerbaijan with a goal of permanent settlement there. Yet, in 1973 he appealed to the Georgian authorities for a return as a Georgian (ibid. 393).

In May 1968, the special decree of the presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet curtailed the Meskhetian Turks' rights even further by postulating that "citizens of

Turkish and Kurdish nationalities, Khemshils and Azerbaijanians, who previously lived in the Georgian SSR, have settled permanently in the territory of the Uzbek SSR, the Kazakh SSR, and other union republics" (in Bulletin of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR 23 quoted in Khazanov 1995:200). The decree also noted that they "enjoy the same right as do all citizens of the Soviet Union to live anywhere in the USSR in accordance with the legislation in force on labor and passport regulations" (ibid.)[14]. The language of this decree is telling as it emphasizes the fact of (Meskhetian) Turks' permanent registration in the Central Asian republics. Thus, they were defined as a part of the permanent population of those republics.(Meskhetian) Turks' freedom to move was curtailed by the passport regulations, i.e., the fact of their permanent registration (more on this in chapter 3).

Trying to establish a compromise between the "Georgian" and the "Turkish" camps, leaders of Meskhetian Turks searched for an ethnonym that could consolidate their people. The term "Meskhetians" was introduced in the late 60s and referred to all those who were deported from the Meskheti-Javakheti region. Members of the "Turkish" camp frequently used this term in their appeals to the Georgian authorities in order to avoid the tricky business of listing "Turks" as their ethnicity. The terms "Meskhetian Turks" and "the Meskhetian-Turkish people" only emerged in the late 70s as a result of this practice. Major discussions about specifics of ethnic identification were put on hold

[14] Ambiguity of the decree seems to define the ambiguity of politics towards the Meskhetian Turks in the 60-70s. Thus, on the one hand, Meskhetian Turks activists seem to have managed to push Georgian authorities secede to some demands by allowing 100 Meskhetian Turks families a year to resettle to Georgia (Conquest 1970: 189). On the other hand, as it frequently happens with promises, this one never came true. Since 1960, only 185 families managed to move to Georgia (to areas other than Mesheti-Dzhavakheti). However, few of those managed to stay there for long. Thus, in 1989 only 35 Meskhetian Turks families remained there (Sumbadze 2008: 217).

until after the Ninth All-Union Congress of the Meskhetian Turks in July-August of 1988 and were only picked up after the tragedy in Central Asia and resettlement in 1989-1990.

This stage in the history of Meskhetian Turks and the Soviet Union reflects practical consequences of theoretical discussion of ethnicity in the Soviet anthropology. Further consolidating writings of Stalin and Lenin, the Soviet discourse defined ethnicity as the primary characteristic of a group that strongly correlates (if not predicts) behavior of individual members. This position was most articulately developed by Yurii Bromley, the head of the Institute of Ethnography in the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

According to Bromley's theory of ethnos (*etnos*), ethnicity is a resilient feature of social life that persists through generations and variety of social forms. However, the stable core of ethnicity is influenced by the prevailing economic and political environments and is manifested as an "*ethno-social organism*". Bromley defines ethnos as "*a historically formed community of people characterized by common, relatively stable cultural features, certain distinctive psychological traits, and the consciousness of their unity as distinguished from other similar communities*" (Bromley 1974: 66). In his later writings, Bromley added common territory and ethnonym to this list of characteristics (interestingly, this list is extremely similar to the list of ethnic features approved by Stalin in 1951) (Stalin 1951: 52). In order to bridge the gap between historical changes on one hand and the notion of ethnicity as something relatively permanent, Bromley postulated that while secondary traits of ethnos might change given transformations in the economic/material factors, the essential traits of an ethnos (fundamental cultural traits) remain constant through time (for a thorough discussion of the Russian concept of nationalism and, by extension, ethnicity, refer to Greenfeld 1992). Transformations in

the secondary traits of ethnos are not haphazard responses to specific social or economic conditions but follow a general logic of evolutionary change (Shnirelman 1996) that transforms tribes and clans into ethnic groups and nationalities (for a similar discussion of ethnicity in the West refer to Epstein's "*Ethos and Identity*" (1978) that argues with Cohen's notion of political ethnicity).

Bromley's theory closely tied the concept of ethnicity with a concept of territory. According to Bromley, ethno-social organism (ethnos within the socio-economic and political environment) is correlated with the compact contiguous territory. This position was part and parcel of the administrative division of the Soviet Union into a complex hierarchy of republics, autonomous regions, etc. Thus, those non-Russian nationalities that had their own republics were considered manifestations of the highest form of ethnos. Those with a lower status of autonomy or the ones that did not have any status at all were regarded as "narodnost", i.e., something similar to a tribe. Thus, the hierarchy of ethnoses was constructed on a territorial basis (Tishkov 1998: 10-12). This strategy of "*national-territorial de-lineation*" that aimed to reconfigure the administrative map of the USSR was based on a principle of a territorial hierarchy of ethnoses and aimed at "*replacing local, religious, clan and other group identities*" (Tishkov 1998: 20) with an ideology of a united ethno-nation. Critical analysis of soviet ethnic studies emphasizes researchers' engagement with the state project of "ethnic engineering" that helped to implement "divide-and-conquer" rule and with a help of ideology of internationalism provided stability within the borders of the Soviet Union (Hirsch ?; Sokolovsky 2000; Tishkov 1995). The history of Meskhetian Turks detailed in chapters 2, 3 and 4 illustrates

this proposition and shows significance of ethnicity in the interaction between the state and its subjects.

Given anthropological theorizations about persistence of ethnicity and the administrative structure of the Soviet Union that integrated ethnicity as an organizing principle, it is probably not very surprising that the late 80s brought about the "rapid growth of national self-consciousness… <that was> treated as a 'new step of spiritual maturity in <the> multinational society, a conquest of socialism, not a miscalculation or blunder'(Kommunist, 1988, No.8: 23)" (Tishkov 1989: 5). Such "calculating" politics encouraged discussions of "ethnic revivals", a phenomenon treated as yet another sign of positive influence of socialism on ethno-national cultures (Arutiunov 1989). Socialist theoreticians explained similar revivals in the capitalist world as a reflection of a subaltern wish to correct historical injustices accumulated over a period of colonial imperialism, discrimination against immigrants and as a reaction to the fast pace of technological development. However, in the Soviet Union, discussions of colonialism were largely limited to the tsarist "prison house of the people" dictum and a careful critique of the Stalinist social engineering. While these problems were recognized, they were considered an issue of the past as political leaders became far less concerned about nationality policies. Of all the Soviet leaders, Gorbachev probably paid the least attention to the nationality issue. In 1986, he only briefly mentioned the continued existence of nationalist sentiments (Easter 1989: 2). Furthermore, the Party Program approved by the 27th Party Congress in 1986 declared that "the Soviet Union has successfully resolved the national question that was left over from the past" (Easter 1989: 2). In the latter days of the Soviet Republic, much of the Party's attention was focused on economic problems

and the task of decentralization of economic relations between regions. The state officials' perception of matters of immediate concern differed significantly from issues important to the populations that they governed.

Deadly Certainty of Ethnicity.

The conflict in Uzbekistan has yet to receive a thorough treatment from historians. However, specialists agree that to a large extent interethnic clashes in the late 80s in Central Asia should be attributed to internal problems of Uzbekistan (in particular, economic difficulties in the context of demographic explosion and increasing unemployment). Meskhetian Turks were not the only ethnic minority that experienced the wrath of their Uzbek neighbors. Indeed, throughout the 80s, multiple interethnic conflicts were recorded in the area[15]. Khazanov argues that there is enough evidence to conclude that disturbances in Fergana valley were not spontaneous, but part of a plan organized in advance[16].

During June 3-11, 1989, major clashes between Uzbeks and Tajiks on one side, and Turks on the other side took place. Reasons for the clashes varied. Some mention disagreements about the price of strawberries; others remember individual insults. Clashes affected thousands of people and prompted military involvement. On June 11, to control the situation, the military gained control of Kokand and the western part of the region. About 15,000 Turks were brought to military camps to be evacuated by planes to

[15] In the winter of 1988–1989, there were ethnic conflicts in Tashkent and Andizhan between Russians, Tatars and Uzbeks (Osipov 2004).

[16] This theory is also very popular among Meskhetian Turks as well. Frequently, informants mentioned that they took the heat that was meant to be directed against Russians in Central Asia. Sometimes they go as far as name Uzbek authorities of that time as instigators of the conflict. Moscow authorities are also named as culprits of the massacre. This native explanation fits with a popular explanation of social problems in the 80s in the Soviet Union that linked specific problems with deficiencies in the socio-political structure (corruption, organized crime, etc). Regardless of which explanation is accepted as true, they are presented in a form of a conspiracy theory. There is always a secret side that clearly benefits from the tragedy. Meskhetian Turks are presented as either victims, or heroes (the ones who took the heat of the conflict away from Russians or other ethnic groups) or both.

Central Russia (Chikadze 2007: 118). More than 16,000 people were evacuated over the course of 10 days. Evacuation of Turks to six *oblasts* of the Russian *nechornozemie* was sanctioned by the personal decree of President of the USSR Soviet of Ministers Ryzhkov.

Although the mass troubles had ceased on 10–11 June, the situation both in the region and areas around it remained tense. Riots spread to other areas of Uzbekistan in part fuelled by rumours that Meskhetian Turks were preparing a violent revenge in response to events in Kuvasai (Tomlinson 2002: 63). As a result, panic spread across Fergana valley affecting Uzbeks and Turks alike. Studenikin and Lur'e report that crowds gathered on a collective farm Imeni Lenina in anticipation of the Turks' arrival. A head of the collective farm tried to dissuade people that atrocities were committed against rather than by Turks. His efforts were in vain, as crowds attacked Meskhetian Turks' homes and burnt and looted 32 dwellings in the village (Lur'e and Studenikin 1990: 70-72). Incidents of violence in Uzbekistan confirm that ethnicity emerged as the major rhetoric in social relations. Newspapers describing events in Fergana valley carefully avoided any references to ethnicity of perpetrators. In part, this further fuelled violence as fears of the population majority were interpreted in ethnic terms. And Meskhetian Turks – an ethnic minority in the region, - were defined as a threat that needed to be contained.

By September, more than 50,000 Meskhetian Turks had left Uzbekistan. In the fall, Turks continued to leave the republic concerned for their safety in and possibility of repeat violence. On February 19 -21 1990, in the Bukin region of the Tashkent *oblast*, altercations between Uzbeks and Meskhetian Turks renewed. Residents of this area were moved first to evacuation camps and then relocated to Central Russia. As news of the violence quickly spread across Uzbekistan, people began to leave. By the beginning of

1991, more than 90,000 Turks had left Uzbekistan, including those who had been evacuated from Fergana in June 1989. Migrants resettled in Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. An official list of casualties in June of 1989 includes 103 deaths (52 were Meskhetian Turks and 36 Uzbeks); 1,011 injured or seriously injured, 137 members of the internal forces and 110 policemen wounded; 757 houses, 27 state properties and 275 vehicles were burned and pillaged (according to data from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, in Chekadze 2007).

Rhetoric of ethnicity and its persistence that were developed earlier in academic theorizations of Bromley and other anthropologists in part reflected and in part further strengthened sentiments of the people. The significance of ethnicity in one's relationship with the state co-existed with an ideology of internationalism and friendship between the republics (and consequently, ethnic groups). My informants (born in the 60s-70s) fondly remembered the time when they used to study at schools with members of other ethnic groups and ethnicity never came between them (yet, they always mentioned ethnicity of their childhood friends, neighbors and teachers). In a sense, just as the dissolution of the Soviet Union came as a shock to much of the Soviet population (Yurchak 2005: 2-4), interethnic conflicts that emerged during that time were also shocking. A retrospective review of events shows limitations of the Soviet construction of multiculturalism. The country where ethnicity served as a central framework of the relationship between the state and its subjects was bound to experience interethnic violence; it was only a matter of the extent to which this violence could be contained. In the context of rising economic problems and rapidly changing social circumstances, ethnicity attained additional significance – it became a popular explanation and the most often mentioned cause of

problems that people faced. Economic problems that many regions experienced in the late 80s found an explanation in ethnic terms – the ethnic others were the ones responsible for what was going on. The ideology of interethnic friendship reached its limit. Ethnic republics blamed minorities for their problems; the Russians blamed the ethnic republics (and ethnic minorities and migrants in particular) and celebrated their final independence. As relatively recent newcomers, ethnic migrants looked differently, spoke different languages and adhered to a different set of cultural traditions. Following premises of the Soviet style theorizing, one could argue that they also differed in their "ethnic essence" giving basis for discussions of cultural and civilizational incompatibility. Given the importance of ethnicity through much of the Soviet period, it is small wonder that this rhetoric was also picked up and developed even after the Soviet Union disintegrated.

Expert theorizing on ethnicity: continuation of tradition.

After the Meskhetian Turks' arrival to Krasnodarskiy Krai in the 90s, they experienced a decade long standoff with the local state officials who objected to their residence in the region. The officials enacted laws and regulations that restricted residence in the region and constrained one's ability to move (for more details, refer to chapters 3 and 4). Yet, despite formal legislative support, the state felt a need to appeal to local experts for assistance with the situation. Some of those experts were eager to help and provided their extensive knowledge of social processes to the assessment of the situation. In this section, I examine work of several theoreticians who were instrumental in defining the state position in regard to migration and interethnic communication.

Michail Savva, a professor of political science, contributed his take to the situation of migration in the Krasnodarskiy Krai region. As an outside expert (as well as a

member of the local Parliament), Savva gained significant power and his opinion carried a lot of weight. He wrote extensively in the 90s, but his work culminated with a publication of an article "Migration and Ethnic Status" published in 2002. In it, Savva examined an "ethnic paradox of modernity" (Savva 2002: 3), i.e., strengthening of an ethnic affiliation in the end of the 20th century despite multiple prognoses that ethnicity will lose its position as an unmarked category of social taxonomy. To prove his argument, Savva referred to his work with the Meskhetian Turks whom he described as the ultimate "other", impossible to integrate and a source of interethnic problems (2000).

Using his work on the Meskhetian Turks, Savva argues that in "science", if a number of migrants exceeds 10% of the permanent population of a settlement, village, town or a city, the situation is considered dangerous and at which point the local population experiences hostile attitudes towards migrants" (Savva 2002: 56). To support this position, Savva refers to examples of France and Germany where after the number of immigrants reached 10%, the local population expressed their negative feelings by supporting ultra-nationalists during elections (Le Penn). He uses examples of other countries that experienced considerable migration since the 60s. In part, Savva explains rising nationalist tensions through rhetoric on incongruent modernization. A symbolic expression of such incongruent development is a woman in chador driving a car (Savva 2002: 57). He argues, "a situation emerged when a large part of a population has not had time to liberate themselves from problems of the past when it became a hostage of problems of the contemporary world" (ibid. 57). Peoples of the Caucasus received ready-made "fruits of civilization" and did not have to rid themselves of "archaic" norms of behavior and traditions. He describes the influence of "traditional" institutes (sharia law,

teip or tribal assembly, religious brotherhoods) that exist at par with the law of the state and, in Savva's opinion, supersede the authority of the state. Historical memory is another factor that destabilizes the situation. To support his position, Savva calls on the authority of a writer John Le Carre (sic!) and a social scientist Kudryavtsev, who linked subjective memory of history with destabilization of interethnic relations in a region.

Mixing general statements, orientalist visions of generic "Muslim" with strategically chosen examples, Savva blended Soviet theories of ethnic evolution with contemporary feelings of uncertainty and fears of the future that has animated much of mass media ever since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. He further linked interethnic conflicts with the migration of groups ethnically different from the local population and formation of closed ethnic communities (Savva 2002: 67). To resolve these problems, Savva suggested creating a system of monitoring interethnic conflicts. A list of ethnic groups from the 2002 census would serve as a basis for such a system. Other strategies include the training of the administrative personnel to deal with interethnic problems; closer interaction between regional authorities and national organizations (National-Autonomous Organizations); and increased work towards repatriation of Meskhetian Turks to Georgia (to exert more pressure on Georgian authorities in accepting responsibility towards Meskhetian Turks).

Savva's work is a perfect example of the evolution that Soviet discourse on ethnicity underwent following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The theories of Y. Bromley also were used as a theoretical foundation to limit migration on the premise of cultural incompatibility (a more detailed discussion of this in Ch. 3 and 4). Savva expertly plays on popular fears about the presence of migrants and alludes to dangers of

the "immigrant flood", "immigrant infection", and "emigration bomb" that diffuse popular fears by diverting attention away from social problems (economic recession being one of the most significant). The gist of his concern is expressed in terms of culture – the culture of "us" is counterpoised with "their" culture. Thus, it is not the presence of the immigrants – rather, the presence of their culture, - that is seen as detrimental to wellbeing of a nation.

References to the cultural incompatibility of "outsiders" played an important role in defining the status of the Meskhetian Turks in Krasnodar. Savva's expert opinion was picked up and further developed in the mass media, which presented the Meskhetian Turks as favoring norms of customary law and ethnic "traditions" over the civil laws of the Russian Federation (Russian Journal, 03/09/2004). The mass media focused on Turkish "compact" settlements and their refusal to learn Russian (Izvestia 02/20/2004) as examples of a radically different cultures in discord with Russian traditions. They were presented as unwilling to work in state organizations[17], involved in the organized crime, focused primarily on "buy-and-sell" activities that contributed little to an economic development of the region (Kubanskiye Novosti, 03/20/2003). Overall, co-existence of the Turks and the Slavic population in the region is presented as impossible due to "national, religious, moral, ethical (*sic! – LK*) and other reasons" (Decision of the Krasnodar Legislative Assembly, 08/03/1999; #253-П).

Discussions of the migrants' adherence to their traditions and cultural practices frequently invoked references to their religion. Numerous appeals by the Krasnodar

[17] This argument is put forward even though migrants without permanent registration and/or Russian citizenship are prohibited from gaining employment in the state sector. Though subsidized by the state, jobs in this sector offer some of the lowest salaries. Thus, the argument that migrants are not willing to gain employment in this sector is meant to emphasize the greediness of the migrants.

Legislative Assembly to President Putin connected the presence of the Meskhetian Turks with a threat of Islam[18]. Thus, in one appeal, deputies pointed out that "the Turkish leaders make claims to the Krasnodar territory, consider it to be an indigenous Muslim land and openly threaten the Slavic population of the region" (Decision of the Krasnodar Legislative Assembly, 02/20/2002; #1362-П). This argument linked territoriality with cultural differences by introducing a category of a "Muslim land" that, in turn, covertly invoked an idea of the "Orthodox land" and thereby strengthened a discussion of so-called "civilizational" differences, a rhetoric that was and remains fairly popular in Russia. In this discourse, religion is presented as a salient characteristic of cultural identity and plays an important role in the "imagining" of the generalized 'other'" (Barrett and Buckley 2002: 1).

Iom, Kuv, and Spravkas about Ethnicity.

The story of Meskhetian Turks received an unexpected twist when in 2004 the US Department of State accepted them as "refuges of special humanitarian concern" and a process to move them from Russia to the United States began. Neither Meskhetian Turks, nor state officials or even human rights activists could foresee such a course of events. The Russian state officials openly acknowledged that they "perceive this as the best… really, the only possible solution to the situation" (field notes; Sept. 2004). The Turks were cautiously optimistic even though they were concerned about their future in the new

[18] There is another reason why the Legislative Assembly emphasized strict adherence to religion among the Meskhetian Turks and their connections with the Wahhabi movement. According to a 1995 formulation of the law on citizenship, citizenship could be denied to people involved in activities incompatible with the constitutional principles of the Russian Federation and/or who call for use of force to change the constitutional principles of the Russian Federation (Ginsburgs 2000: 210). The Wahhabi movement falls under this category. Analysts remarked that this aspect of the law violated paragraph 1, article 19 of the same law stipulating that petitions to the admission to citizenship of RF should be carried out without regard to a person's political or other convictions (ibid.). It is important to point out that the 2002 formulation of the law got rid of this restriction.

country. Yet, their engagement with the essence of "ethnicity" was far from over. In this section I examine specifics of the resettlement project and show that even the definition of eligibility to participate in the resettlement was formulated in terms and categories similar to the ones circulated in Krasnodarskiy Krai. In my analysis I highlight the "sticky" character of primordialism as even the International Organization for Migration proved susceptible to its charm and used "ethnic" criterion to delineate eligibility in the resettlement.

The Meskhetian Turks' admission to the program was surprising; yet, it was consistent with the US policies of refugee protection. Over the years, the US had worked out a general framework for refugee admissions. Post-war Europeans in the 40s and 50s were followed by refugees from the Eastern bloc (Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia and China) in the 50s and 60s and from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos in the 70s. To regulate this process, an official definition of a refugee accepted in 1980 (and still used today) classifies a refugee as:

> *Any person who is outside any country of such person's nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of, that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion (Martin 2005).*

According to this definition, one's nationality and citizenship are conflated; yet the definition forcefully captures the central aspect of being a refugee – a fear of persecution from a range of factors that prevent a person from residence in a given country. Ethnicity in this case is left out. Instead, a concept of race or nationality could be used as its proxy thereby reflecting specifics of social differentiation in the

US. Given how general the definition is, it is amended and clarified on a case by case basis[19].

To define the boundaries of this group, refugee officials designed a set of criteria for eligibility. Thus, in order to be admitted to the program, a Meskhetian Turkish applicant had to:

1) Prove that (s)he is an "ethnic Turk";
2) Prove that he/she has resided in Krasnodar *krai* before January 1, 2004 and continues to reside there;
3) Have fled from Uzbekistan;
4) Experience difficulties "fully integrating" into the Russian Federation[20].

It is noteworthy, that in order to delineate a group, "ethnicity" was used as the first and most definite criterion. The program was initiated in a response to human rights activists' protests against both violations of Meskhetian Turks' constitutional rights to citizenship and discrimination on an ethnic basis.

Given the complexity of the citizenship issue (discussed in detail in chapter 4), "ethnicity" seemed like a logical and easy choice for a criterion that reflected a situation

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[19] In order for the definition to be applicable in the MT case, it had to be reformulated. Also, clarifications were required because the U.S. refugee program was in a state of crisis. After September 11, 2001, admission of refugees almost stopped. Dangers for personnel working with refugees were far too great and the overall attitude towards the continuation of refugee programs in the US were not positive; thus, the numbers of admitted refugees dwindled (from 142,000 in 1992 to 27,000 in 2002). The US State officials argued that the security concerns needed to be balanced while redefining the program for the new era (Martin 2005). Given a lack of an obvious enemy (like the Soviet Union during the Cold war), it was no longer feasible to expect that there could be a "blanket" admission of refugees: "resettlement initiatives will be marked by the need to draw clear lines around the group to be admitted….The quest will be for *finite groups*, and resettlement will work best if much solid work on identification and *line-drawing* can be completed before resettlement plans become known in the refugee camp or settlement." (Martin 2005, emphasis added).

[20] For critique of the other 3 criteria refer to Koriouchkina and Swerdlow 2007.

in the region and demarcated group boundaries. Yet, it re-affirmed a particular notion of ethnicity and once again forced Meskhetian Turks to reconsider what it means to be an ethnic Meskhetian Turk and how one can go about proving it. For the purposes of the program, internal discussions within the group about proper ethnic denomination proved immaterial and were left out for the time being[21].

In the "new era" of the U.S. refugee assistance, when the program was in danger of closing and when global connections made one rethink a concept of refugee and consequently assistance, ethnicity became the principle that was meant to streamline an application process, provide explicit and clear boundaries to group membership and ease work of the IOM personnel. Yet, IOM encountered difficulties in an application of this criterion of admittance as it had to figure out who could be considered a Meskhetian Turk. Few applicants to the program could show passports indicating "Turk" as their ethnicity. And almost no one could show passports bearing the ethnicity of "Meskhetian Turk", a denomination that came into use only in the 60s and 70s and gained international recognition after violence in Uzbekistan (Akiner 1986). As I examine in the previous section, in their official documents (mostly Soviet period passports) Meskhetian Turks' were classified as a wide range of ethnic groups. The IOM had to work in collaboration with community leaders to resolve this issue.

When the process of formalizing paperwork for resettlement started, the IOM approached community leaders with a request to assist in identifying members of the

[21] "Who we are – there are debates about it. In Turkey, we are called Ahiska Turkleri. There are some who call themselves Muslim Georgians… But as of now, the world knows us as Meskhetian Turks. We should stay as Meskhetian Turks for now. Then, after we move to the US we can assemble as a group and decide how we would like to be known. But for now, we are Meskhetian Turks" – Sarvar Tedorov, a leader in the village where I was staying clarified. Turks perceived the term as constructed and nearly everybody was aware of its fairly recent history.

ethnic group. It was presumed that if anyone, the leaders would know who is and who is not a Turk. Given a relatively small size of the communities of Meskhetian Turks in Krasnodarskiy Krai and close connections between families, it was not an unreasonable expectation. However, a question of proof of ethnicity presented a bit of a challenge. "I know many people around here… I know most people. And I know who they are, what families they are from. So, I can give them a paper <spravka> saying that they are ethnic Turks. But what about those who are not from around here? People are coming to me from everywhere. That's when I have to ask about their parents, about their kuv. If they know their history, if they know where they are from, then they are real Turks. Then I can give them a spravka" – S. Tedorov, a leader in the village where I was staying was very serious and official when answering questions involving this process[22]. Indeed, over the course of my research, I witnessed a never ending stream of people coming to his house with requests for an official testament of their ethnicity. Tedorov questioned them carefully paying special attention to their genealogy. Over the course of his work that lasted several years, he issued close to a 1,000 testaments of ethnicity. In all the cases, the decision about ethnicity was made on the basis of family connections and a respondent's ties with a place of origin in Georgia, a toponymic concept referred to as "kuv" (Tomlinson 2002). Through this process of official registration, "kuv" was becoming the decisive element in the concept of an "ethnic group". As an element of "in-group" demarcation it was now taken to indicate external group boundaries confirming to the outside world one's ethnic affiliation. A brief description of kuv as a marker of in-group

[22] Indeed, he had to be rather serious – a privilege of issuing spravkas was revoked in one instance when a leader was caught receiving a bribe and signing a testament of ethnicity for a person who was not an ethnic Turk and was from a region other than Krasnodarskiy Krai.

belonging is important in order to better understand the extent of changes that were affecting the notion of group identification.

Kuv is a toponymic kin group originating from villages in Georgia. The kuv name refers to the name of a village from which a particular kin group comes. One's kuv is the usual answer to a question "Siz nere'den? ('Where are you from?'). "We are from Klde (Gilde) … it was closer to the city, more civilized. Our village always had closer connections with Russia, we traded with Russia… Our village was of the plains – there were two types of villages, on the plains and in the mountains. Ours was on the plains" – Sarvar replied when I asked him where he was from. People belonging to a kuv are denoted as a group with a suffix –li: Hona-Honali, Gilda – Gildali, Boga – Bogali, etc. This denomination is used to differentiate one person from another – Yusef Bogali is different from Yusef Gildali. A tradition of last names was only introduced in the Soviet period and even though it is recorded in passports and used in formal situations of interacting with the state or in public situations, when dealing with internal differentiation one's identification was clarified with a reference to one's kuv (Tomlinson 2002: 167). Kuv groups are characterized by certain traits – some kuvs are known for their musicians, others – for their dancers, yet others for their ability to work hard (or to avoid work).

Identification of one's kuv plays an important role in marriage strategies. Marriage partners are ideally chosen from the same or a "neighbouring" kuv. Prior to deportation, kuv endogamy was preferred. However, after a forced resettlement to Uzbekistan, social networks were broken and it was hard to find former kuvler. Thus, this practice lost its initial significance (Kuznetsov 2007: 155) but kuv is still paid attention to during arrangement of marriages even if adherence to this principle is not as strict.

Patrilocal residence after marriage does not affect kuv affiliation and a wife continues to refer to her parental kuv. Even though formally children are considered to be a part of their father's kuv, at times their mother's kuv could be invoked as well (for instance, to explain why he liked to dance, Akhmet referred to his mother's kuv Gagvili who are known for their passion for dancing).

There are marked differences in the amount of detailed information that different generations can provide about kuvler. Thus, for the older generations who still remember villages in Georgia, information about kuv also triggered memories of the actual place of residence and was a part of narratives about the motherland. For the younger generations (those who were born in Uzbekistan or in Russia), kuv is less significant in the construction of origins and used as a tool of differentiation. Regardless of age, every informant was able to provide names of kuv of their immediate relatives.

Information about kuv is only shared when speaking in Turkish. Questions asked in Russian are usually answered with information about a current place of residence ("Ty otkuda? - Iz Varenikovskoy" – "Where are you from? I am from Varenikovskaya"). Sometimes, locations in Uzbekistan are also mentioned in order to provide a more detailed answer ("We are from Yangiyul, a collective farm 'Engels'"; additional information that many Gildeli were from that area was only shared much later, after I got to know my informant better). Neither previous residence in Uzbekistan nor in Russia plays the same role as kuv toponymy among the Turks. Despite its apparent connection with settlements in Georgia, for the younger generations it is only a marker of a group but not an impetus to return to the historical motherland. In the context of the resettlement, names of villages in Georgia became a testament to one's ability to resettle to a new

country. Given the persistence of historical memory through two forced resettlements, one can expect the kuv information to survive in the United States as well.

When faced with a necessity to evaluate one's claims of ethnic belonging, Tedorov resorted to his knowledge of kuv differentiation as a strategy to ensure that his "testaments of ethnicity" were valid. Neither one's identification as a Turk, nor a practice of Islam or a shared history of residence in Uzbekistan was sufficient to claim membership in an ethnic group. Kuv, a concept that links villages in Georgia with one's heritage, was a more definite way of ensuring that official information is as reliable as possible. In a list that Sarvar meticulously kept for himself and in which he recorded to whom he issued spravkas, he wrote one's first and last name, a current place of residence and a kuv. In an actual form submitted to the IOM, details about kuv were omitted. Kuv remained a marker of group membership designated for internal usage that acquired an additional significance. "I want my children to know their kuv. If they know it, they are Turks. If they forget about it, they are no one" – one of the visitors who came to Tedorov to obtain a testament said. Staying related and remembering one's historical origins (even if without intentions of returning to the historical motherland) was a way to sort out who is and who is not a member of the group and to preserve group integrity. Yet, it still retained its private character as this information was reserved for "internal" use only; to the external world in the face of the IOM, kuv categories were re-translated as an ethnonym.

Conclusion:

Overview of Meskhetian Turks' history in their engagement with the Soviet and post-Soviet state shows that ethnicity is not losing significance over time. Constructed in complex interplay between social theorists, state officials and populations, ethnicity in a form of "popular Primordialism" emerges as a powerful explanation to group destiny and state actions against a group.

Shifting identifications between the Georgian and the Turkish camps provide evidence of changing accents and priorities in one's search for belonging and a place of final residence. Yet, through all of this ethnicity does not wane and lose its meaning as immaterial; if anything , categories of group membership are clarified and enforced through both actions of people and of the state. Ethnicity – as a meaningful category of interaction between the state, non-state actors (ex. the IOM) and people, - receives additional significance and certainty. Primordialism is in the state's perception of how groups are formed and operate. Primordialism is in the use of ethnicity as a medium of interaction between the state and its subjects. Primordialism is also in the state's subjects' reaction to this as they try to preserve their group integrity and protect it the best way they know, i.e. through interpretation of the state definition of ethnicity and through maintenance of kin network filtered through the concept of kuv.

A discussion about continued influence of Primordialism that was initially developed during the Soviet period but that maintains its influence in contemporary Russia problematizes an extent of changes that affected Russian society in the 90s and early 2000s. Even though Socialism as a political regime disappeared and the Soviet Union fell apart, Soviet-period categories still exert influence in everyday experiences of

the state and its subjects. I continue this discussion in the next chapter that deals with the state level policies of migration management.

CHAPTER 3. “No people, no problem”: migration and strategies of effective population management in Russia".

Meskhetian Turks arrived in Russia at the exact time when the colossus of the Soviet empire was giving way to new forms of spatial organization of political relations. The Turks left Central Asia as evacuees, having lost relatives and friends, private property and certainty in everyday life. They arrived in Krasnodar as refugees, furthermore losing rights of citizenship, grounds for claims to the state and hopes of ever returning to the country they once considered their motherland. Meskhetian Turks were not alone in going through radical transformations as the entire country experienced dramatic changes that affected everyday categories, aspirations for the future and understanding of the past. The Soviet Union was falling apart as a political regime. But even more importantly, it was disintegrating as a set of practices and categories that held grip on people’s minds and ways of being in the world. At the same time, the state tenaciously tried to cling to practices that once constituted its modus operandi. In this chapter I examine disjunctions of social changes as those affected the way the state thought of and dealt with migration. By tracing a trajectory of Meskhetian Turks’ migration from Georgia to Uzbekistan and then to Russia I show continuity and change in ways the Soviet and post-Soviet state handled population movements. Thus, I argue that a restrictive regime of migration in Russia in the 90s goes back to the Soviet practices of population management that focused more on the administrative approaches of handling population flows. The story of Meskhetian Turks shows that the state-level “scientific” strategies of managing migration that were developed earlier exert influence into the 90s as well.

In the early 90s, it seemed that political disintegration of the Soviet Union caused a complete breakdown of the institutional system as well as cultural categories (thereby prompting analysts to use chaos metaphors when describing an emerging system of governance and a general mode of existence in the post-Soviet space (McAuley 1997, Nazpary 2001, Shevchenko 2008). Yet, some Soviet categories and structures remained in place and continued to affect people's lives. In this chapter, I illuminate transformations that occurred after the dissolution of the Soviet Union by tracing continuity in migration policies. I show that during the Soviet period the state used a combination of administrative restrictions and individual level incentives to control migration. In the late 80s, the state's grip on people's movements lessened. After the fall of the Soviet Union, as legislative regulations lost their power de jure and free market took care of individual level incentives, regional state officials aimed to regain control over migration by employing techniques of population management of the Soviet era (restrictive measures of propiska/registration enforced by militia). This chapter resumes the discussion introduced in the preceding chapter on ethnicity about an extent of and limits to social change.

A comprehensive review of migration processes in the Soviet Union is yet to be written. Most studies of the USSR focus on regional-level strategies of constructing local populations (Matthews 1993; Lewis and Rowland 1979; Shulman 2008). Few studies approach a subject of urban-rural migration in the context of industrialization (Kotkin 1995). However, the rest depict the Soviet Union as a fairly static monolith in the construction of which migration played a lesser role (for a notable exception refer to Polian 2004; Grandstaff 1973; Anderson and Silver 1985 and 1989). In part, researchers'

focus on permanent populations is understandable given dearth of available data on migration. Indeed, during the Soviet period, population numbers for migration were not available or were frequently falsified in order to disguise the extent of mass relocations due to purges, deportations, forced resettlements and military deployment (Zhiromskaya 2004). Surprisingly, even Soviet scholars avoided the topic of migration in their research. For over 30 years, between 1930 and 1964, not a single book was written on the subject of internal migration in the USSR (Grandstaff 1975). The situation changed in the late 60s and 70s as the Soviet state became more interested in the scientific basis of population distribution and defined migration as an important problem of national economy and an object of considerable attention. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the topic of migration became central to studies of the post-Soviet space (Pilkington 1998, Flynn 2004, Mukomel and Payin 1999; Vitkovskaya 1999). In this chapter I further this line of analysis by bringing together a discussion of the Soviet and post-Soviet strategies of migration management. The trajectory of Meskhetian Turks' movement across the Soviet and post-Soviet space offers a perspective unifying the two periods together in a way that highlights nuances of the state-level migration policies and a particular construction of the population (Clem 1980).

I break my discussion into 3 sections. First, I discuss Meskhetian Turks' deportation in the context of migration management practiced during the Soviet period. This discussion emphasizes a role of institutional and cultural restrictions in people's decisions to move or to stay. In the second section, I review Meskhetian Turks' evacuation from Uzbekistan, a project that illustrates the Soviet state's failing efforts to control population movements in the late 80s. In the third section, I examine experts'

descriptions of migration in the Krasnodar region in the 90s and statistical data and people's personal experiences. I show that migration hysteria animating expert reports is a reaction to the changing realities of the state government rather than actual population movements.

Managed Migration (40s-80s).

In November 1944, as the harvest was cleared away and a newly built railroad connected a border region of Meskheti-Javakheti with central Georgia, black land lease Studebakers rolled into quiet villages. Meskhetian Turkish residents of those villages, - mostly women, the elderly and children, - were told that they had 24 hrs to pack their belongings. Without any further information, they were boarded onto freight trains and relocated to the heartland of the Soviet Union, the far away empty deserts of Central Asia. In the majority of literature on the subject, deportations are discussed as violations of human rights and outrageous acts of violence (Polian 2004, Bugai 1996). Undoubtedly, those forced resettlements inflicted pain and suffering on millions of people and are crimes against humanity (Pohl 1999). However, it was also an example of a particular category of migration that established a certain type of relationship between the state and its people. For the Meskhetian Turks who were moved to Central Asia, this relocation signified the beginning of their consolidation as an ethnic group. It forever changed their internal connections and clan divisions, annihilated a number of ethnic traditions while introducing Turks to traditions of their immediate neighbors (Uzbeks) (Kuznetsov 2007). This deportation also set a tone for the next 70 years of interaction between the state and Meskhetian Turks. The majority of Meskhetian Turks continued to reside in Central Asia years after the Soviet regime rehabilitated them (but prohibited

from returning to places of their original residence). Just like the majority of the Soviet citizens, Meskhetian Turks accepted a right of the state to define their lives in a particular way. This meant accepting a considerable amount of control over one's movement and residence.

A forced resettlement of Meskhetian Turks was not unique but was a part of establishing ethno-geographic congruence of the Soviet Union (as elaborated in Chapter X) in which migration played a role as well. Between 1920 and 1940, the Soviet State was gaining an increasing control over its population. As detailed in chapter XY, passportisation introduced in the mid-30s became an important tool of managing populations and directing flows according to the country's needs (Martin 2001). In the late 30s, 3.4 million people were forcibly moved away from areas of their original residence and placed in concentration and special status camps (Zhiromskaya 1994: 391). According to Martin, efforts to enforce ethnic and territorial legibility led to radical measures to alter population composition (those efforts were more benign in the 20s and outright genocidal in the 30s) (Martin 2001: 312-314). Just like Poles, Koreans, Germans, Finns, Chechens, and Karachaevs, 140,000[23] Meskhetian Turks were forcibly deported from their lands. Deportations on the basis of one's ethnicity affected about 6.5 million people over the course of 20 years (Polian 2004; Rosefielde 2009; in 1941-1949 over 3 million people transferred on a basis of their ethnicity).

Given lack of reliable migration data for this period, it is hard to place deportations within overall volumes of migration. However, from 1940s and onto 1950s,

[23] Numbers for deported vary. Sumbadze quotes 81,324 MESKHETIAN TURKS were deported from Georgia (2007: 213). Discrepancy between the two could be attributed to a) lack of data; b) different ethnic identification recorded at the time of deportation; c) lack of numbers for men who were serving in the army at the time.

administrative methods of population management were the major force behind population dislocation. Imposition of military discipline (used to transfer labor, to mobilize populations to work and to serve in the army); restrictions on quitting jobs, and use of criminal punishments for infractions of discipline defined the way in which the Soviet state dealt with a problem of labor resource allocation and consequently migration (Grandstaff 1980: 19-20). In addition to deportations from Georgia, army subscriptions of able men that affected the majority of Turkish men in the early 1940s was another mass scale project that transferred people from villages in Georgia to frontlines in the USSR. Upon their return, conscripted men had to find their families elsewhere in Central Asia.

In Central Asia, the deported were settled in several republics: 53,163 Meskhetian Turks went to Uzbekistan; 28,598 – to Kazakhstan, and 10,546 – to Kyrgyzstan. Between 1944 and the mid-1950s, the state had full control over Meskhetian Turks' movements (or lack thereof). Settled in special status camps, they were not allowed to change residence or move from one camp to another. Changes in household composition – births, deaths, escapes, marriages, - had to be reported to authorities within 3 days. Despite strict regulations, there were quite a few efforts to escape. In the course of the first 4 years, there were 2,671 attempts to run away from camps, most of which were unsuccessful (Bugai 1994).

After the war and in the late 50s, the state control over migration changed. In 1956, by the decree #135/142 of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Meskhetian Turks were allowed to leave special settlers' camps and choose residence of their own (other than in Georgia). However, prohibited from returning to Georgia, they were insistently encouraged to stay where they were. In the 60s-70s, administrative management of

Meskhetian Turks was handled differently and was achieved through propiska and a set of institutional structures that also directed migration of the rest of the Soviet population (for a more detailed description of propiska management, refer to Chapter 4 "Citizenship"). Those measures were sufficient to retain the majority of Turks in Central Asia.

Like most citizens of the Soviet Union, Meskhetian Turks were subject to general policies that aimed to make movement of labor force more legible. Aside from a requirement of propiska that limited residence in a number of metropolitan areas and strategically important regions, migration was arranged through institutional structures (OrgNabor) and individual level incentives that stimulated migration to areas in need of additional labor force (or to keep the required labor in place). Wage differentials (regionally specific pay scale that included coefficients for unfavorable living conditions), organized recruitment and resettlement as well as moral persuasion were strategies that the state primarily employed in the 50s-70s. The Virgin Lands campaign (1954-1960) and Baikalo-Amurskaya Railroad (BAM) (1938-1984) were the largest projects that directed considerable numbers of people to areas specifically targeted for further development. For example, during the intercensal period of 1959-1970, a combination of a Virgin Lands project, a wage differential (a pay in Central Asia was 15% higher than elsewhere in the Soviet Union (Grandstaff 1973: 36)) and quotas on post-university employment brought over 1.2 million people to Central Asia (Goskomstat 1970). The same measures were also successful in keeping the majority of Meskhetian Turks in Central Asia.

Informants who received education in the 60s and 70s remarked that they did not have much choice after completing their studies. Instead, they were either sent back home or to specific destinations in Uzbekistan where they had to work a certain number of years before returning home ("po raspredeleniyu"). Compulsory two year service in the army for all men aged 18 was another mechanism that took Meskhetian Turks away from their homes but nearly always resulted in returns. During interviews, men who were conscripted in the 60s and 70s mentioned a number of destinations outside of Central Asia where they served (including Central and Northern Russia). However, in all cases, they returned home upon completion of their service. The majority of Turks lived and worked in "Turkish collective farms" or settlements, i.e., communities organized on a basis of special settlers' camps and that were comprised almost exclusively of Meskhetian Turks (Chikadze 2007). Meskhetian Turks residing in towns also preferred to settle closely together[24]. If a move from one settlement to another did occur at that time, it affected fairly large groups of people (migration due to marriage is not considered in this case).

In addition to administrative control over migration, cultural factors also played a role. Although the Soviet regime unified and homogenized institutional structures over an astonishingly large area, language and ethnicity/nationality continued to influence people's decisions to move or to stay in a particular region. By and large, Russians were the most mobile ethnic group in the Soviet Union (Grandstaff 1980: 57) who moved not

[24] Despite an official policy of "friendship between peoples" and proclaimed "brotherhood" of republics, on a local level, ethnicity served as a socially significant marker (as detailed in Chapter 2). Thus, even in a situation where people did not have much choice in selecting their housing (like in cities) and apartments were allocated by authorities, there were "ethnic" areas. According to informants, some apartment complexes were known to be "Russian" or "Uzbek" or "Turkish" based on a predominance of residents of a particular ethnicity.

only within Russian Republic but to other republics as well. Russian as the state language of the Soviet Union and existence of Russian enclaves in most urban areas eased further migration of Russians. Ukrainians, Belorussians, and Tartars also exhibited high levels of migration. Mobility of other groups was far lower. During that time, Meskhetian Turks were mostly present in the Central Asian republics, in Azerbaijan and later, in the 80s, in Russia. Their migration out of Central Asian region would have been complicated by limited knowledge of Russian language and vast cultural differences (in addition to institutional restrictions). Furthermore, in nearly all cases, migration to places outside of Central Asia was not spontaneous but was arranged in negotiation between ethnic leaders and Soviet state authorities. Migration to Azerbaijan and Russia illustrates this proposition.

In October 1957, following a decree of the Presidium of Supreme Soviet of USSR on rehabilitation of Azerbaijanis who were deported from Georgia, Meskhetian Turks (24,000 of whom were listed as Azerbaijanis in their Soviet passports (Yunusov 2000: 70)) were offered an opportunity to move to Azerbaijan. State authorities of Azerbaijan encouraged Meskhetian Turks to move to the South-Eastern part of the republic to cultivate virgin lands there and in 1958 passed a resolution in this regard (Yunusov 2007: 131). Mavlud Basharov, an MT leader from Samarkand region of Uzbekistan, was instrumental in organizing the relocation movement to Azerbaijan. He negotiated with Azerbaijani authorities details of assistance with the move and helped set up 9 Meskhetian Turks collective farms there (Osipov and Swerdlow, 2007: 388). In 1958-1961 about 10,000 Turks (identified as Azerbaijanis in their passports) moved from Central Asia to Azerbaijan. The 1979 census recorded 7,900 Turks in the republic.

According to Yunusov (2007: 131), 25,000 Turks arrived to Azerbaijan during this period but were listed as Azerbaijanis.

Migration to Azerbaijan was precipitated by Meskhetian Turks' expectations of an eventual return to Georgia and an overall similarity in culture and traditions that eased migrant integration after their arrival. A search for an ethnic identification also played a role as many Turks who opted to move to Azerbaijan eventually identified as Azerbaijanis in consecutive Soviet censuses further blending with receiving population. But it is notable that despite geographical proximity to Georgia and cultural similarity, this movement did not engender a larger scale resettlement. As of 1989, there were still over 160,000 Turks in Uzbekistan (of which over 106,000 identified as Turks) (Chikadze 2007: 90-91), over 100,000 Turks in Kazakhstan (Savvin 2007) and 30-50,000 in Kyrgyzstan (Ray 2007) . Meanwhile, in 1989 there were under 40,000 Meskhetian Turks in Azerbaijan (of whom 23,000 identified as Azerbaijanis[25]) (Yunusov 2007: 132).

Ever since the decree of 1956 was passed, Meskhetian Turks tried to return to Georgia. They appealed to local and federal authorities. Ethnic leaders travelled to Moscow in order to make their plea heard. Yet, none of those efforts were successful. In the early 60s few families managed to resettle to Western Georgia but shortly thereafter they had to leave due to pressures from authorities (Sumbadze 2007: 215). The Georgian dissident movement sympathized with the Meskhetian Turks plight for return. In 1969, with dissidents' help 250 families were able to move and settle in the region of Gali (collective farm Achigvara). In 1977, few more families settled in a village Nasakirali near Ozurgeti. Between 1982 and early 1990s, 1,270 Turks attempted relocating to

[25] Discrepancy in numbers between 1979 and 1989 censuses could be due to return migration from Azerbaijan to Uzbekistan during the 80s (Chikadze 2007).

Georgia. Due to administrative restrictions that blocked their access to social services, eventually most of them had to leave and return to Central Asia. As of 2005, there were only 592 Turks the majority of which were living in Western Georgia.

Migration to Russia was relatively minor among Meskhetian Turks during the Soviet Period. Yet, it also bore influence of state control. The first families moved to Kabardino-Balkar region in the 60s as a part of labor allocation (*raspredeleniye*). Later, in the 80s, Krasnodar officials approached Meskhetian Turks' collective farms and Uzbek authorities and negotiated arrival of 2,000 Turks to help with tobacco growing farms. It was argued that traditional involvement with agriculture, good work ethics and familiarity with the climate would help new settlers succeed in this enterprise (Ossipov and Cherepova 1996: 5). The majority of new migrants settled in the Western parts of Krasnodar Krai (Apsheron and Belorechensky regions). During the 80s, the number of Turks in Russia did not change significantly. This confirms that state-level regulations played a role in directing and limiting migration.

Comparing Soviet population dynamics with that of Western countries, Lewis and Rowlands argued that legislative obstacles of propiska and passports were of little importance in directing and containing population flows (1979). Similary, Grandstaff (1980) proposed that despite institutional level strategies of migration management, there was a labor market at work. If propiska and passports had any tangible effect on social life, it was primarily on a level of individual liberty; its influence on an aggregate level of society was insignificant (Matthews 1993). However, the overview of Meskhetian Turks' migration history in the 40-80s shows that even though legal restrictions could not fully contain and direct migration on an individual level, those restrictions did form a basis for

control over large groups of people. Mass migration of Meskhetian Turks to Azerbaijan and Russia only happened after extensive negotiations with authorities. Meanwhile, despite individual efforts, resettlements to Georgia failed miserably. Also, the overview of Meskhetian Turks' migration shows that by using a combination of individual-level incentives and institutional restrictions, the state was able to create and enforce residence restrictions in some areas and towards particular categories of migrants. Thus, even though on the grand scale of the Soviet Union complexity of migration processes might have cancelled out effects of state control prompting one to hypothesize existence of a labor market (Grandstaff 1973), on the level of particular groups and specific regions, those effects were real and had significantly influenced migratory decisions. Ideological effects of this history of migration management cannot be underestimated and, as I will argue in consecutive sections, continued to exert influence even after the Soviet Union fell apart.

Space Management in the late 80s.

The next chapter in the history of Meskhetian Turks (and the Soviet state as a whole) began during the tumultuous period of 1989-1990. For Meskhetian Turks, pogroms and a violent outbreak in June of 1989 marked the onset of changes. The state began to crack along fault lines of ethnicity as conflicts in Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan were unfolding. Amidst rising nationalist sentiments, economic uncertainty and changing political realities, even Meskhetian Turks who lived in areas unaffected by direct violence did not feel safe in the region that was forced on them as a place of permanent residency 45 years earlier. Thus, they began to leave Uzbekistan making their way to

Russia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey. On a smaller scale, this movement affected Turks residing in other Central Asian republics as well.

The story of Meskhetian Turks' out migration from Uzbekistan is indicative of dichotomies that characterized a relationship between the state and its people at that time. On the one hand, the state tried to control population processes as much as it could. Yet, on the other hand, lack of resources, difficulties of structural re-organization, bureaucratic inertia incapacitated the state and impelled people to rely more on their own resources, social networks and cultural capital, rather than anticipate help from state authorities. With military assistance (called in to restore order), about 15,000[26] Turks were evacuated from areas immediately affected by violence. Evacuees were first brought to military camps and then transferred to areas designated for their further residence in Russia. When I asked informants about evacuation procedures, I heard a nearly identical story.

> *Ruslan and other men were out. They armed themselves with what they could find. And we were hiding in the house, packing whatever we could. Then, the military came and took us to a camp. We spent 2 nights there sleeping on cement floors. We put clothes on the floor, and that's how kids slept. And then planes took us away. We knew we were not going to stay – we have to be with family. We had to find our relatives, and so we did shortly after. Then we came to Krasnodar. Ruslan's second cousin from his mother's side was already here, and so we knew we could settle there (Nargiz, 45, mother of 3).*

> *My cousin, Gulbahor, was evacuated. In the rush of events we lost track of her. We did not know what to think of her fate. But then a year later we found out that she was evacuated to a village, near Tver. Along with few other families she and her baby were just brought and dropped off there. There were barracks to live, but other than that there was nothing – no help, nothing. And climate was horrible. It is so humid there! Humid and cold. They used to wear rubber boots all summer long, and then one's feet start rotting. Bread was brought in to a village shop once a week. After a year, she could not take it any longer. As soon as she found us, she moved. And then <she> left for the US. She was always the bright one (Zamira, 42, mother of 2).*

[26] Numbers for evacuated Turks vary. According to Osipov, 17,000 Turks were moved from Central Asia to Russia (2007).

Stress of interethnic violence unparalleled to anything previously seen in the USSR explains lack of coordination from authorities[27]. There was no proper legislation to deal with refugees (an official definition of refugee did not exist in the USSR). Evacuees were designated as subjects of ad hoc special measures. A decree #503 of the Soviet of Ministers of the Russian Federation (June 26th, 1989) followed by a Decree #220 (July 13th, 1989) outlined a set of measures to protect social wellbeing of evacuated Turks. They were offered financial assistance (2000 rubles per family and 500 rubles per person), and additional resources[28] were directed towards regions designated to receive refugees (Osipov 2007: 322-323). Beneficial as those measures were, they were inadequate to fully protect the Turks. The decrees proposed one-time assistance and did not define evacuees' status. Financial and social assistance was also insufficient to help evacuees settle in new areas and many of them, like Gulbahor in the testament above, left within a year or two after the evacuation. Later, after many Meskhetian Turks made their way to the Krasnodarskiy Krai, local state authorities used a precedent of allocated Nechernozemye regions as a pretext not to register Meskhetian Turks locally. Given that the decree #220 listed 6 areas of Nechernozemye as targets to receive additional financial subsidies for accommodation of arriving evacuees, state authorities of other regions interpreted that as a requirement for Turks to settle only in those areas (Osipov 2007: 322). "We were told that we have nothing to do in Krasnodarskiy Krai, we had to leave

[27] An earthquake in Armenia in 1988 also created a large number of dispossessed people who required immediate assistance and whose situation was not unlike that of Meskhetian Turks. Similarly, help to victims of the natural disaster was haphazard and poorly planned. A number of those victims eventually found their way to Krasnodar Krai and were denied registration and then citizenship (Dubrovina et al. 2009).

[28] Much of those resources was squandered and never made it to refugees (cf. Voronezhskhiy Kur'er, 06.15.1993)

because we were supposed to go to god-knows-where. And mind this – it was years after the conflict, after we have long settled in Krasnodarskiy Krai, after our kids were born here. But they <the authorities> still remember. They have good memory." – Gulpasha, a 40-year old migrant from Tashkent region and a 10-year resident of V. village in Krasnodar Krai, bitterly remarked.

Emergency evacuation procedures aimed at alleviating stress in the areas of conflict while increasing populations in demographically depressive areas of Russia. The state paid little attention to lack of preparedness on behalf of receiving communities, climate and cultural differences and lack of assistance. Earlier in the 40s and 50s, the state could rely on its military prowess and ideological grip to keep people in a place where they were sent. But in the late 80s, the situation was different. Many informants remarked that they could not fully rely on the state to resolve their problems and had to employ their own networks and connections (some of which were damaged during the evacuation process) in order to survive. In most cases, this implied leaving initially allocated areas and making their way to Rostov, Krasnodar and Stavropol regions, areas that had more favorable climate conditions, relied more heavily on agriculture, a traditional occupation of Meskhetian Turks, and could accommodate newly arriving work force (unlike unpopulated but economically non-viable Nechernozemye areas). Also, pre-existing social networks in Krasnodar (with those Turks who were invited to set up tobacco farms in the 80s) eased relocation to the region.

In the early 90s, nearly 90,000 Turks left Uzbekistan with the majority making their way to Russia (Grankina 1996). Approximately 15,000-20,000 Turks made their way to the Krasnodar Krai. Given importance of family connections and a large family

size[29], once they arrived and settled in a new place it was harder for them to leave. Large family size that helped them to survive difficulties of a transition period limited options for their secondary migration and kept them in one place. Migration and transformations that carved out independent countries after the fall of the Soviet Union and largely refashioned borders inside the Russian Federation cut across family networks and split families apart. The state proved itself unable to efficiently direct migration flows and assist migrants in re-establishing their lives in the new lands. People had to take control over their own migratory decisions.

Meskhetian Turks in Krasnodarskiy Krai: Migration in the 90s.

Even though the timing and circumstances of Meskhetian Turks' arrival in Krasnodarskiy Krai were not fortuitous, their arrival would not have been an extraordinary event. One of Russia's strategically important southern frontiers, Krasnodar Krai contains a Black Sea port (an important trade outlet); it is known for extensive agricultural production and takes pride in the quality of land and produce. Migration has historically accounted for much of population growth in the region starting with colonizing troops. Cossacks and Russian tenant farmers had been seeking new lands since the 18th century. Prior to Russians' arrival, Greeks, Cherkess and Armenians had inhabited the area in scattered settlements (a pattern that is preserved in the region even today with a number of the so called "ethnic" villages) (McAuley 1999: 110-113). Migration – both forced and voluntary - played an important role in the region's population dynamics during the Soviet period. In the 30s and 40s, the region experienced

[29] Statistics on family size is hard to deduce from statistical data available for the MESKHETIAN TURKS. However, based on a limited sample data that I obtained from my interviews, at the time of relocation an average family size was 5.5 (cf. Chikadze 2008: 95-96).

forced ethnic deportations as Germans[30], Poles, Greeks[31], Cossacks and several other ethnic groups were moved out of the region to Siberia and Central Asia. After WWII, the region has been growing fast as soldiers[32] returned from the fronts, and evacuated factories resumed their work. Organized migration campaigns brought new settlers to take over lands vacant after deportations. Workers from different parts of the Soviet Union were attracted (and often invited by local authorities) to this region due to its ample employment opportunities, and in the 70s and 80s technical and administrative intelligentsia as well as retirees took advantage of the area's economic conditions and favorable climate (Derlugian and Cipko 1997: 1485-1488; Toje).

Through much of the 20th century, migration in the area was internal. There were no posts between Russia, Georgia and Ukraine. And thus, boundaries of the region delineated administrative powers rather than indicated limits of a particular sovereignty. After the fall of the Soviet Union, migration patterns changed as now Krasnodar Krai became one of the border regions. In the early 90s, when socio-economic and political tensions in many adjacent with Krasnodarskiy Krai areas uprooted thousands of people, migration gained momentum and the Krasnodar Krai became one of the main recipients of the inter-state migration flows into the Russian Federation. In the 90s the region was one of the few that actually experienced some population growth – according to the 2002 Russian census, the region's population increased by 8.72% (Goskomstat 2002) (natural population growth was low; overall age structure of the region tipped towards the older retired population attracted to the area by favorable climate conditions).

[30] 34,300 Germans were deported from Krasnodar Krai in 1941 (Matveev et al. 2003: 112)
[31] Over 57,000 Greeks were deported after the war was over and strategic reasons for deportations ceased to exist. Greeks were defined as "politically unreliable elements" (Hunagov 1999: 90).
[32] 600,000 men were conscripted to the army over the course of war (Matveev et al. 2003).

Migration to the region in the 90s was comparable to that of the preceding periods (Zayonchkovskaya 1999: 107-109). Given difficult socio-economic conditions, many people opted to weather hardships at home where they could rely on assistance of relatives and friends. Overall levels of migration in Russia as a whole declined (as well as elsewhere in the post-Soviet space) (ibid.). However, numbers of involuntary migrants – those who were fleeing rising nationalist sentiments, economic uncertainty, as well as direct physical violence, - increased. Thus, even though in absolute numbers migration remained comparable, composition of migratory flows changed. Lack of proper legislation (that influenced difficulties of Meskhetian Turks' integration after evacuation) played a role in dealing with migrants. While newspapers published alarmist articles about migrants "flooding in", only 15,000 were registered as refugees or "forced re-settlers" (Russian alternative to an "Internally Displaced Persons" concept).

Migration to the region was counter-balanced with out-migration. As soon as external borders of Russia opened, Jews, Germans and Crimean Tatars began to leave en masse. Meskhetian Turks' arrival coincided with Crimean Tatars' return to Crimea. Given similarities in historical backgrounds (both groups were deported and experienced restrictions on return to their motherlands), Tatars were more willing to sell houses in Krsanodar Krai to Meskhetian Turks further easing their settlement in the new region (more on this in Chapter 5 "Houses"). And yet, Meskhetian Turks' arrival and their consecutive stay in the region received the most negative reception from local authorities who prohibited them from receiving registration and continually threatened them with expulsion. In order to understand why arrival of fewer than 20,000 people to a region

with a population of 5 million has caused such uproar, it is important to consider general discussions of migration carried out in mostly state-controlled press.

Press on Migration in the 90s and early 2000.

"The actual number of migrants to Kuban continue to increase. This could result in a demographic explosion. Along with people who are genuinely dispossessed, there are many deserters from national armies, criminal elements who are striving to carve out a juicier slice of a country that is not native to them. Over the course of the last few years, nearly two thirds of a million of people settled in Kuban"(ORT, News 10.11.1993) – a news report aired on the main TV channel in 1993 was cautiously alarmist, utilizing a few tropes that were to become staples in discussing migration in Krasnodar later. "Two thirds of a million" in this context is a metaphor rather than an actual number. Yet, it achieves a factual status after a regional expert backs it up in the report.

"Everyone agrees: Kuban is like a gunpowder barrel. A wick is not lit yet. But it can happen sooner or later. How can we prevent this from happening?" (Zhurbenko 1996). References to "migrant flood", "local Kosovo" and "Krasnodar Rwanda" (REF) peppered local press through the 90s creating a sense of danger associated with migration. Kuban[33] was described as a symbolic frontier protecting the rest of Russia from "hordes of invaders" (REF) and "unwelcome guests" (REF), common euphemisms for migrants.

Rhetoric of a symbolic frontier was complemented with discussions about overcrowding. Population growth in the context of economic transformations of the early 90s raised concerns about population density in the region. According to Ostrozhniy,

[33] A local name for Krasnodar Krai derived from the name of the river flowing through the region.

Krasnodar region is overcrowded with 66 people per $1km^2$(REF). State officials concurred that this is an extremely high indicator that is 8 times higher than an average population density for Russia as a whole (an impressive albeit problematic comparison given Russia's overall size and a relatively small population). Social and ethnopolitical tensions as well as rising crime rates were linked with high levels of migration and increasing population density (REF).

Building on expert rhetoric on migration (discussed in chapter X), newspapers emphasized that migrants' arrival disturbed "an established balance between ethnic groups" (Bukina 1997). It could eventually (or as soon as in 25 years (REF)) turn Russians into an ethnic minority in the region (Knyaz'kin 1997), and Russian language would lose its status as the state language.

"Even legal migration <in this situation> becomes a cover-up for the messengers of the Wahhabi movement", governor Tkachev emphasized in an interview when asked about migration to the region ("Naslediye Otechestva 01/31/2004). Given such circumstances, Tkachev argued, the region could not receive Meskhetian Turks and provide them with Russian citizenship. Tkachev pointed at a threat posed by interethnic tensions and the role international organizations play in the instigation of these tensions (thereby linking regional migration with threats coming from the "Distant Abroad", or countries outside the post-Soviet space). Shortly before the interview, Meskhetian Turks went on a hunger strike hoping to attract national and international attention to their plight for stability. Yet, in Tkachev's interpretation, even a hunger strike was seen as a challenge to the territorial integrity and the power of the local administration.

The press focused on Meskhetian Turks and described them metaphorically as "people with severed roots" and legalistically as "violators of passport regime" or "unsanctioned residents of the region". They were criticized for bringing about "traditions of wild markets", "cultural traditions, incompatible" <with permanent population of the region>, "discordant life style" (Kubanskiye Novosti 1997). An important concept applied to the discussion of migration in general and Meskhetian Turks fate in particular is "indigeneity". In the Krasnodar mass media, Meskhetian Turks as well as Kurds, Yezids, and Azerbaijanis were portrayed as unwelcome guests who contributed little to the economic development of the region (Kubanskiye Novosti, 03/20/2002), while Russians and Cossacks are described as the indigenous population of the region[34]. Given that Meskhetian Turks were not indigenous to the region, state officials argued that they could not bear responsibility for Meskhetian Turks' decision to move – be it to Georgia or to the US (Izvestia, 02/20/2004). Furthermore, appeals of the Krasnodar deputies to President Putin emphasize that the historical motherland of the Meskhetian Turks is Georgia (Decision of the Krasnodar Legislative Assembly, 11/19/2003; #416-П) despite the fact that many of the Meskhetian Turks were born in Uzbekistan (and a younger generation was born in the Krasnodar Krai) and had never been to Georgia. Claims to indigeneity as a guarantee of moral character and a basis for socio-political entitlement went hand in hand with the regional administration's efforts to claim more political rights to the region. Imitating constitutions of ethno-republics[35] that

[34] Trying to prove his "open-mindedness" on ethnic issues, in an interview governor Tkachev made a remarkable statement: "We will support the indigenous populations of Krasnodar <…>: Armenians, Greeks, Slavic peoples" (Erkramas, 06/16/2003). However, in the Krasnodar charter, Armenians and Greeks are not listed as indigenous.

[35] The emphasis of the Krasnodar officials on territorial integrity becomes clearer if one places it within the context of Russia's federal asymmetry. Russia comprises eighty nine 'federal subjects' that include twenty one higher-status ethno-republics, and sixty eight lower level subjects (forty nine regions, six territories

aim to protect the rights of titular nationalities, the charter of the Krasnodar region stipulated that Krasnodar is "the historical territory where formation of the Kuban Cossack-dom took place and is the original ("*iskonnoye*") place of residence of the Russian people who comprise the majority of the population of the region" (Charter of Krasnodar Region, 07/18/1997; #95-КЗ).

Even this brief overview of press coverage (and few legislative documents) shows that over the course of 90s and into the early 2000s, rhetoric regarding Meskhetian Turks and negative attitudes towards migration changed little. The number of articles on this topic slightly increased in the late 90s as the story of Meskhetian Turks' plight received international attention after UN officials visited the region in order to investigate it further. This topic received an even greater coverage in the mid-2000s, when the US accepted Meskhetian Turks as refugees.

Despite changes in regional state administration, economic transformations and international involvement, the overall tone of press coverage remained the same. Discussions of dangers associated with migration nearly always concluded with concerns about lack of control over migration and introduced calls for more specific and strict measures to be applied to migrants in the region. In the course of 15 years of Meskhetian Turks' residence in Krasnodarskiy Krai, they became an iconic emblem of an unwanted

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(krais), ten autonomous districts, the Jewish autonomous oblast, and two 'federal' cities (Moscow and St. Petersburg) (Smith 2000: 347). The asymmetry of the federation is determined by the fact that ethno-republics are defined on the basis of accommodating national minorities (nationality-cum-territory principle), while the lower level subjects of RF are defined as territorial units (with the Jewish autonomous oblast as the only exception). Discussions on the RF's further development during the early 90s, centered around debates of whether the federation should be based on the equality or differentiation of federal subjects (ibid. 351). Some of the proposals even included suggestions of transforming territorial units into republics thereby ensuring equal rights to all citizens of the Russian Federation. In January 1992, Russia's Supreme Soviet adopted a proposal according to which differentiation between the republics and the territorial units was preserved. However, regions were endowed with autonomy to adopt their own charters and were later granted the right to elect their leading officials, including their heads of state (regional governors). This brought regional subjects closer to the administrative organization of the republics (ibid.).

and dangerous migrant. However, similar rhetoric targeted other groups as well (Armenians, Yezids, Kurds, etc).

Extreme as the situation in Krasnodarskiy Krai was, it was nevertheless comparable to developments in other regions. Humphrey shows that migrants from the North Caucasus regions whose presence is most strongly felt at markets in Central Russia also take the heat from nationalistic efforts "to strengthen Russians" and to combat the presence of foreigners (Humphrey 1999). Traders who form diasporic communities are often accused of bringing disorder to the Russian cities, inflating prices and increasing crime rates. Newspapers frequently publish stories about Chechen or Azerbaijani mafia groups thereby perpetuating "the stereotypes of the Kavkaztsy as flamboyant, sexually disgraceful, and violent" (Humphrey 1999: 40). Despite reports in press showing that disputes between criminal gangs most often happen due to territorial claims and not ethnic differences, the majority of the public "link<s> trade, crime, and disorder with "blacks" in a mutually self-reinforcing circle" (ibid.). Humphrey connects concerns over presence of "foreign" goods (that include produce from Central Asia and Moldova) and of "foreign" traders (Chinese, Azerbaijanis, Georgians, etc.) with regional administration fears over loss of power. She argues that an increased presence of traders challenges vertical territorial hierarchy that was created during the Soviet period and was reinforced during the past 15 years of Russia's "independence". Trading networks transform Russia into "a more horizontal, relatively egalitarian territoriality" (ibid. 44). Thus, this discussion is not limited to members of one ethnic group but to a larger-scale matter of migration management. Horizontal connections created and perpetuated through

migration of people and goods clash with a "vertical of power" that the state has been trying to recreate since independence in 1991.

Newspapers describe Krasnodar Krai as a "border province" (Derlugian and Cipko, 1997) endangered by a high inflow of migrants in the years since Russia's independence. The presence of the Meskhetian Turks in Krasnodar contributed to a "borderland anxiety", an acute sense of threat posed by migrants who are perceived as endangering the boundaries of the Russian Federation[36], a "diagnosis" that is not unique to the Krasnodar Krai alone - fears over the Turks' presence in Krasnodar are very similar to concerns over presence of various ethnic minorities in other regions of Russia and is reflective of an overall "geographical hysteria" after the fall of the Soviet Union. In the next section, I will examine specific policies that the regional administration pursued since the fall of the USSR in order to rectify "a problem of migration".

Managing Migration: Policies and Actions. Between 1989 and 2004, five people occupied the post of the head of Krasnodar Krai administration. Yet, despite changes in leadership, Meskhetian Turks' situation had remained almost the same through all this time. Administration of N. Egorov[37] (1992-1994, 1996-97) and later N. Kondratenko (1997-2001) set a premise for dealing with migrants that governor A. Tkachev (2001 – present) continues to uphold years later. All Krasnodar leaders followed an extremely restrictive policy that narrowed the definition of a refugee and an IDP and incorporated

[36] Humphrey "diagnoses" border anxiety as endemic to not only international frontiers of RF but also to borders of certain territories and sites inside of the country (Humphrey 1999: 33).
[37] In 1994, N. Egorov became the Minister of Nationalities (May 1994-June 1995). His take on the situation in Chechnya differed radically from that of his predecessors (V. Tishkov and E. Shakhrai, who tried to carry on peaceful negotiations). He was known for his uncompromising stance that ended all negotiations with Chechnya and prompted more forceful measures

ethnic bias into processing of citizenship applications. They nearly uniformly presented themselves as the region's protectors against uncontrolled migration and ethnic others (prompting critics to accuse them of ultra-nationalism and xenophobia. Of course, the case of Meskhetian Turks was complicated by the fact that initially, their residence in the region was perceived as temporary and steps were taken to negotiate their return to Georgia (REF). But even this explanation fails to account for other migrants like Khemshins, Kurds and Yezids who found themselves in a situation similar to that of Meskhetian Turks but whose fate was more uncertain as there was no one to lobby for their return to places from which they were deported in the 40s. Despite idiosyncratic factors due to changes in leadership, the general line of migration policy remained very similar over time.

Initially, control and management of migrants was under the jurisdiction of the departments of Passport and Visa Services (UPVS) the task of which was indeed overwhelming and included decisions regarding denial or granting of citizenship. UPVS-es issued passports, entrance permits for border regions, registered foreign visitors; these departments issued documents for the duration of visitors' stay in Russia, processed documents and entrance and exit permissions for country residents. It also "actively took part in fighting crimes, ensuring law obedience and prevention of law violations"[38]. Even though all of these missions were set on a basis of federal laws, regional level policies came to define work of UPVSes considerably. Later, departments of Federal Migration Services (FMS) were formed and took on some of these duties.

[38] As stated on the official website of the Federal Migration Service (Bureau) (http://www.fms.gov.ru/about/history/details/38013/5/) that later replaced UPVS-es.

In chapter 4 "Citizenship", I show that in the early 90s federal-level legislation on citizenship was very broad and upheld ethos of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Yet, as early as February 1992, the Presidium of the Regional Legislative Assembly issued a decree XXX that defined Meskhetian Turks' special status in the region and established a separate set of rules for their registration. According to this decree, Meskhetian Turks were allowed to reside in the region without permanent registration awaiting their departure to Georgia. They were allowed temporary registrations, work permits and car registrations. They were not offered an option of receiving Russian citizenship. After negotiations with Georgia in 1994-1996 failed, and Meskhetian Turks began to appeal for a more permanent status, regional policies changed. In 1995, the Assembly considered an option of deportation as a solution to the problem but decided against this measure (Grankina 1996).

Through all this time, local authorities argued that specifics of migration to Krasnodar require separate legislative basis and cannot fully comply with federal legislation. In 1993, they appealed to President Yeltsin arguing that abolition of *propiska* cannot be applied to Krasnodarskiy Krai at least until 1995[39]. Effectively, *propiska* remained one of the main tools of population control and management in the region until 2008. In an extended interview in 2004, following in footsteps of his predecessors, governor Tkachev also argued that Krasnodar as a border region should be granted a special status that requires more extensive control over migration to the region (Naslediye Otechestva, 03/01/2004). He claimed that there are latent sources of tensions at the borders of Krasnodar. In an effort to enforce registration regime, during the 90s and in

[39] Interview with M. Savva, the head of the department of migration in Krasnodarskiy Krai, aired on ORT, 10/11/93

the early 2000s, charges for temporary registration as well as fines for violations of registration regime continued to increase.

In 1996, the Legislative Assembly passed a resolution that required all adult Turks to undergo a special registration procedure and pay registration fee equal to a minimum monthly pay (about $15 at the time). Temporary registration allowed them to find employment for a period of no longer than 2 months. Since June 1997, regional authorities further restricted registration procedures and permitted registration for 45 days charging a sum equal to about $33 per person for each registration. Only in January 2000, this requirement was eased and registration extended to 8 months at a time. Complexity of registration procedures and exorbitant fines for violations of registration regime prompted many Turks (and other migrants) to avoid UPVSes (more on this in Chapter XY) and risk local fines and troubles with police. "Whenever militsia comes, I stay quiet and my wife – she has Russian citizenship, - says that I am at work. Sometimes, on my way to work, I see patrols and try to avoid them. But you can't do it all the time. So, sometimes you have to pay them" – 38-year old Mukhlis frankly shared his story of dealing with migration control. "I used to have a temporary registration. Then, once when I submitted my papers for renewal, at the UPVS they told me that they lost my papers… I tried arguing with them. But no result. Then, later they issued me a copy of my lost passport – but it was still the old, Soviet one. And it did not have any registration stamps. Since then I gave up. What's the point to register if they'll lose your documents and it wouldn't matter anyway" – he asked rhetorically.

According to Grankina, several state officials agreed that Meskhetian Turks' denial of citizenship and registration was a strategy to encourage them to leave the region

(Grankina 1996). The state used administrative measures to limit or, at the very least, to selectively control migration relaxing *propiska* requirement for Russian migrants and crunching down on non-Slavic residents of the area. For example, between 1989 and 1994, nearly 20,000 people (of whom 8,500 were Turks) applied for registration in Krymsky raion of Krasnodarskiy Krai. Registration was granted to 11,000 of whom only 14 were Turks (Osipov and Cherepova 1996: 23-25). In 2004, restrictive measures on migration were taken a step further as the Soviet of Regional Safety approved creation of deportation camps in the region. At the Soviet's assembly, Governor Tkachev pointed out that illegal migration and terrorist activities are directly linked. It was further announced that as of 2004, there were over 40,000 foreign citizens residing in the region (of whom only 1200 were actually deported). And following changes to federal legislation on citizenship, Meskhetian Turks, Khemshins, Yezids and many other migrants from the former USSR territories who hadn't received Russian citizenship by then were considered foreigners regardless of how long they have stayed in the region. The governor emphasized that work with illegal migrants should be systematic and thorough (Turyalai 2004).

In a number of interviews, state officials justified migration policies in the region by referring to negative public opinion (REF) and quoting Cossack uprisings and everyday xenophobia. "Our hands are tied. People don't want migrants around here. They come and ask us: 'what have you done? We don't want all these arrivals (prishliye) here'. What can we tell them?" – V. Ostrozhnyi, the head of the Migration Department in Krasnodarskiy Krai explained at a round table on migration and xenophobia at a youth

organization "Uyzhnaya Volna"[40]. While a topic of popular xenophobia is yet to receive its proper analysis (Sokolovsky 2003), a question posed above raises an important issue. In a region of 5 million people, only few would have had personal contact with 20,000 Meskhetian Turks. Yet, given rhetoric in press that dutifully reflected position of regional state authorities, they became the symbol of violators of migration regime. Thus, this discussion cannot be reduced only to matters of rising popular nationalism in the region.

I received an explanation to some of state authorities' actions when I interviewed a state official who preferred to remain anonymous. He had worked with both governors Kondratenko and Tkachev. "At this point in time, there is no other way – the state officials are not ready to back out. This would have affected their reputation. Yes, legally speaking, the Turks had a right to claim citizenship. Or, at least arrangements could have been made. But the administration did not cooperate at that time. And now they <the administration> can't. Or they would lose their face, they would lose control. Fortunately, the US interfered and is accepting them <Meskhetian Turks>. This is the only way out of this stalemate. The only one." – The young man sitting across from me was frankly sharing his view on the history of Meskhetian Turks' plight for resolution of their legal status. The highly ranked government official in charge of migration issues in the Krasnodar Krai, he was dispassionate in his analysis. Clarity of his explanation could be mistaken for sympathy towards people who found themselves in a legal limbo. Yet, he wasn't – "No people, no problem – he summarized his assessment. – Once they leave, it'll be better for everyone". During the interview, he indicated that a conflict between the Turks and the regional administration resulted from differences in a perception of the situation. Regional administration was headed by Soviet functionaries who upheld

[40] October 5th, 2005

principles of population management practiced in the 70s and 80s. He emphasized that for him (and other younger officials) ethnicity of region residents did not matter. He made it clear that the strategy of choice for migration management in the region was through enforcement of control over migrants.

Conclusions.

From Georgia to Uzbekistan, from Uzbekistan to Russia and finally to the US – a trajectory of geographical displacement that Meskhetian Turks experienced over a course of two generations is impressive. Their story provides a rare opportunity to examine changing notions of population politics and offers a perspective on developments that affected state structures. The state changed as it was losing control over population movements and matters of identity and belonging. Yet, despite proclaimed allegiance to democratic development, it largely relied on strategies of Soviet-era population management striving to restrict and enforce rather than integrate and account for matters of individual choice. In Krasnodarskiy Krai, migration was perceived as a threat and Meskhetian Turks became symbols of uncertain times linked with rising crime levels, social unrest and changing cultural categories.

The overview of Meskhetian Turks' migration shows that the state had undergone considerable transformations. Forced deportations, total control over population movements that defined Meskhetian Turks' fate in the 40s was no longer possible in the late 80s, when the country as a whole struggled with issues of national/ethnic identification, personal and group freedoms and changing socio-economic realities. Yet, through much of the 90s, migration policies retained some of the Soviet era restrictions based on the use of propiska/registration as a basis for determining one's social, economic and civic entitlement. I show that despite changes in regional leadership,

migration policies preserved their general character leaving the case of Meskhetian Turks unresolved until the US' involvement in 2004.

The story of Meskhetian Turks' "failed" evacuation from Uzbekistan shows dramatic changes that affected the Soviet Union in the late 80s and in the early 90s. The state was able to save people from immediate physical danger and evacuate them from the epicenter of violence. Yet, unwilling to use military power to the extent it did earlier (cf. Kramer 2003: 28-29), it could not enforce migrants' resettlement in the new areas designated to receive them. Notions of legitimate use of power have changed, and people could no longer be forced into submission.

The state could no longer have a unified plan of development. Georgia was able to refuse receiving Meskhetian Turks and later stalled negotiations about their fate. After the fall of the USSR, regions were striving to gain greater independence from the central authorities. The story of Meskhetian Turks' struggles over status in Krasnodarskiy Krai shows that regional state administration asked for and was able to implement its own laws that often contradicted federal level legislation. But if power hierarchy could no longer tie the center with the periphery as it did in the totalitarian state, within regions, traditions of Soviet population management remained strong.

CHAPTER 4. From "Citizens without Rights" to Non-Citizens: Meskhetian Turks' Legal Status in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Russia.

Akhmed is holding a small worn red book with a Soviet emblem on its cover – his Soviet passport. Shyly looking away from the camera, he asks me to take a picture of him and of the passport, the source of his troubles and concerns. "Look at all these stamps, - he urges me. – "They <passport officials – LK.> ran out of pages for renewal stamps. And then they stopped giving us renewal stamps altogether. And I didn't bother – why should I, if a stamp did not mean much. With or without it, we are not recognized as citizens. We are nobody". Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and until the surprising turn of events in 2004 when the Meskhetian Turks were accepted as refugees of special humanitarian concern to the US, almost 20,000 Turks in the Krasnodar region of Russia had lived in a legal limbo. Citizens of a country that had disappeared, they were denied access to Russian citizenship and therefore could not effectively claim access to higher education, state sponsored medical services or retirement pensions. Fifteen years of struggle with regional authorities, multiple appeals to the European and International Human Rights organizations did not change their situation much. In this chapter I examine the story of little stamps on vitally important pieces of paper that defined the fate of a large group of people. By contrasting de facto and de jure notions of citizenship, I show that the story of Meskhetian Turks' citizenship in the late 20th century highlights crucial aspects of citizenship in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia as the state and its subjects were trying to define details of social and political belonging. I show that continuity in practices and perceptions of citizenship between the Soviet and Post-Soviet periods brings into focus the extent of changes that affected the social and political structures in

the country. I highlight territorial, moral and ideational aspects of citizenship and argue that in the situation where social, political and economic structures were disrupted and changing, both the state and its people relied on concepts of social belonging developed during the preceding period to resolve the uncertainty of the present. Citizenship in the newly Independent Russia preserved its role as a method of sanction and discipline as well as an instrument of instruction.

The story of Akhmed and other Meskhetian Turks is the story of hundreds of thousands of people who have struggled to get citizenship and resolve their legal status in Russia since 1991. According to experts, in the first 10 years after the fall of the Soviet Union, over 4.7mln people had been granted Russian citizenship (of whom 2.9m received it while residing within Russia). This number is comparable to the number of people who have experienced problems with acquiring citizenship or were not able to acquire it altogether. During the period 2002-2003, according to the Plenipotentiary for Human Rights, over 400,000 former citizens of the Soviet Union reported difficulties in obtaining Russian citizenship or legal registration (Mironov 2003), and as the 2002 census revealed, 1.3m people refused to answer the question about their citizenship and 400,000 indicated no citizenship (Izvestia 12/6/2003). Human rights activists point out that the current situation in Russia violates the Universal Declaration of Human rights and the European Convention on Citizenship (1997) (Mironov 2003). It also violates Russia's own 2002 Law on citizenship that proclaims that the Russian Federation encourages "the stateless people <without citizenship> currently residing on the territory of the Russian Federation to apply for Russian citizenship" (the Law "On Citizenship", 31.05.2002, #62-ФЗ , Article 4, Paragraph 6).

To examine the case of Meskhetian Turkish citizenship struggles, I employ T.H. Marshall's classical model of citizenship. Marshall's tripartite scheme, which distinguishes between civil, social and political citizenship, provides a framework to organize a review of changes that affected access to citizenship during the Soviet and the Post-Soviet periods. This analytical exercise illuminates the complex nature of citizenship that is at the same time an administrative category of governance, defining the relationship between a state and its subjects; a social status that serves as a basis for differential treatment; as well as a moral category defining belonging and identity. Following Marshall's distinction of the various categories of citizenship, I break my discussion into 3 parts. An analysis of civil citizenship shows that during much of the 20th century, access to civil rights and freedoms in the Soviet and Post-Soviet worlds was linked with questions of territorial integrity and security. Immediately after 1917 (and 1991) an urge to protect all civil liberties resulted in extremely liberal legislative reforms for citizenship acquisition, while later laws were severely restricted and linked with questions of one's specific residence (cf. Brubaker 1992: 35-37). Ultimately, liberties were traded for security during both the 1930s and 1990s. This section provides a perspective on a concept of civil society that is fairly contentious in both the Soviet and the post-Soviet Russia. In the second section I examine the specifics of social citizenship, i.e. provision of economic welfare, one's ability to share to their fullest the social heritage and to live according to accepted standards. Providing the corner stone of the Socialist membership, social benefits were linked with adherence to a particular moral ideal, thereby turning social citizenship into an instrument of discipline. Emotionally charged, the Soviet ideal of a moral citizen created a backdrop against which the Post-soviet

notions of citizenship were measured. In the post-Soviet world, the legacy of social citizenship as a disciplinary tool continued to justify the exclusion of some members from access to social benefits. Finally, in the third section I discuss political citizenship, i.e. access to political power and decision making. In the West, a rise in civil liberties led to a development of individual political rights and freedoms; in the Soviet Union the development of collective rights and freedoms shaped the specifics of political engagement of its citizenry, making political participation a function of a group rather than of an individual. An application of Marshall's framework offers an explanation to the exclusion of Meskhetian Turks from full membership in the Russian state. At the same time, close examination of the Meskhetian Turks case helps to clarify relationships between different concepts of citizenship outlined in Marshall's approach and shows that the development of a concept of citizenship[41] is far from linear (cf. Kymlicka and Norman 1994).

Territorial Restrictions of Civil Citizenship.

The stamps of temporary registration in Akhmed's passport restricted his access to the state's benefits and protections. As a temporary resident of Krasnodarskiy Krai, his claims to Russian citizenship after the Soviet Union fell apart were compromised. In order to understand how and why territorial residence played a role in the protection and provision of services by the state, it is important to examine the history of citizenship regulations in the Soviet Union and Independent Russia.

[41] This approach allows me to extend a discussion about citizenship to contexts beyond that of the Former Soviet Union. Compare this with Stewart's approach that posits 2 separate models of citizenship – the first one encompassing benefits of a welfare state and the second one representing political participation of "democratic" citizenship (Stewart 1995:63-64).

Early Soviet efforts to craft citizenship laws were premised on a notion that citizenship is an essential human right. Thus, anyone on the territory of the Soviet Union was automatically guaranteed Soviet citizenship (if he or she so desired)[42] (Ginsburgs 2002). However, after an initial euphoria of these social transformations passed, citizenship rights became restricted. Eventually, decisions regarding one's recognition as a legal, lawful and rightful resident of the state were transferred to federal authorities. Furthermore, as Alexopoulos states, "<p>ersistent fears of anti-Soviet elements and other dangerous enemies produced various waves of political repression in which all citizens became vulnerable to severe restrictions on their citizenship rights and even exclusion from the Soviet polity. At different times and for different reasons, certain groups were targeted more than others, but all Soviet citizens could be subject to accusations of political disloyalty or deviance" (Alexopoulos 2006: 489). Thus, the initial equality of citizenship was replaced with an 'equality of vulnerability', a condition under which anyone, regardless of background, could be denied access to some aspects of citizenship rights (Fitzpatrick 1993: 745-750). Protection of the common good was a justification for this limitation on execution of citizenship rights.

According to the 1931 Law on Citizenship and its consecutive amendment through a charter in 1938 and reformulation in 1978, Union citizenship was defined as comprising of a legally recognized membership in the Soviet Union and in the Union republics (a two-tier citizenship concept) (Ginsburgs 1983: 31-33). While the sovereignty of the republics was largely fictional, the republics did exercise the right to admit individuals

[42] Soviet citizenship was initially defined as the equality of a particular class and not of a specific state. This implied that citizenship was not bound to a specific territory and could expand with the ultimate goal being worldwide revolution. However, as the Soviet state established itself and had to define itself as a subject of the international law, it had to abandon such far reaching plans and restrict the scope of its membership.

into their body politic (ibid. 30). According to Soviet analysts, there was no conflict in the implementation of the two types of citizenship as the two functioned in "organic concordance" with each other (Shevtsov 1969 in Ginsburgs 1983: 31). Furthermore, it was argued that "citizenship in a union republic cannot be refused to a citizen of the USSR" (Kulik 1982 in Ginsburgs 1983: 31). However, there was no legislative basis to determine the requirements of republican citizenship save for the principle of permanent residency in that republic. Thus, a citizen of the RSFSR could be recognized as a citizen of the Ukrainian SSR only if (s)he settled permanently within the territory of that republic. In case his/her settlement was temporary, (s)he retained the citizenship of RSFSR[43]. Also, according to both 1938 and 1978 laws on citizenship, it was theoretically possible that a person would have Soviet citizenship without a corresponding citizenship in a Union republic. Ginsburgs argues that the complexity of laws on citizenship in the Soviet Union was affected by the fact that citizenship was perceived as an honor that needed to be earned, rather than an integral aspect of universal human rights (Ginsburgs 1983: 368-390).

In the 30s-40s, as fears of external threat exacerbated, more categories of citizens were classified as "enemies of the people". As such, they were stripped of rights associated with citizenship but not of citizenship itself. T emergence of the category "enemies of the people" was also correlated with another process that was taking place at that time – the *passportisation* of the population and an introduction of a system of propiska aimed at the control of the population movement. Passports recorded one's ethnicity thereby making it a part of an official interaction between the state and its

[43] The situation with the autonomous republics complicated the matter of citizenship even further. Thus, a person residing in Tatarstan was considered a citizen of the Soviet Union, a citizen of the RSFSR and a citizen of the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (Ginsburg 1983: 33).

subjects[44]. Passports also strengthened a bond between one's geographical residence and access to social provisions. From the start, passports were used to rid certain areas of particular types of residents. For instance, "unreliable elements" like 'spekulianti' (petty traders), former aristocracy, thieves, Zionists, etc, could be denied a passport and propiska and evicted from urban centers (Kessler 2001). Those implicated in criminal activities were sent directly to labor camps; those who were denied a passport based on an unfortunate fact of their birth or other non-criminal reason, could move to smaller towns and villages and reapply for a passport and propiska there. Thus, over the course of the 30s, the state created a regime that restricted citizens' freedom of movement and choice of domicile and strengthened a link between social provisions and a territorial residence. This was to find further implementation during mass deportations of the late 30s and 40s.

"They were loaded into cattle wagons, my mother told me. They only had 24 hours to pack their belongings and then they were shipped off. They did not know where they were going" – 50-year old Rustam related what he knew about the deportation of 1944.

[44] From the start, the process of passportisation aimed to exclude a wide range of people from receiving passports and possessing the right to reside in urban areas. According to a secret decree shared only with party officials, the following categories of citizens were to be excluded (given the similarity to restrictions on citizenship acquisition after the fall of the Soviet Union, I am quoting the entire list):

a) persons that are not involved in production or the work of institutions or schools, and that are not engaged in any other form of socially useful work (with the exception of the disabled and pensioners)
b) kulaks or dekulakised persons that have fled from the countryside, even if they are employed at enterprises or soviet institutions
c) persons that have arrived from other towns or from the countryside [...] after 1 January 1931 without a formal invitation to work at an institution or an enterprise, if they are currently without fixed work, or if they are working at an enterprise or institution, but are obvious flitters or have been fired [in the past] for disorganization of production
d) persons deprived of the right to vote
e) all persons with a criminal record
f) refugees from abroad, with the exception of political emigrants
g) all family members of persons falling into one of the former categories insofar as they are part of the same household." (Kessler 2001: 484)

"We thought we were going to be thrown into the Black sea. The train stopped there on the way. And we were scared, looking out of windows and thinking that they will just take the train into the water. But then it continued moving. It went on and on, without stops, without explanations. Hundreds of people cramped together – young, old ones; healthy and sick; mostly women and children. And the train was going and going. It did not stop if somebody was sick. It did not stop if somebody died. It just went on. At one point we wished that we indeed were thrown into the sea – it was hard to take the unknown," – 72 year old Maria recounted her own experiences. Mass deportation was another step in the direction of limiting citizenship rights and entitlements through restrictions on territorial residence. As discussed in chapter 2 (Sticky Primordialism), a rationale for a decision to resettle vast numbers of people (including the Meskhetian Turks) is still unclear. Geographical and strategic reasons (Khazanov 1996, Martin 2001) as well as some state-level xenophobic attitudes (Pohl 1999) are usually quoted as possible explanations. But it is clear that these actions had 2 consequences: 1) they further reaffirmed that a group rather than an individual was an object of the state actions; heretofore, membership in a group determined one's fate (I will discuss this point further in the third section of this chapter); 2) the state had the right to manage its territory at the expense of citizens' rights.

Experts largely agree that propiska and passportisation only marginally succeeded in controlling migration flows on the grand scale in the Soviet state (Buckley 1995; Grandstaff 1975; Lewis and Rowlands 1980). The state was not omnipotent in managing people's movements in and out of regions. However, closer attention to particular areas –

large urban centers, special status settlements and so called "closed" cities[45] , - shows that the state did succeed in controlling population composition and in and out migration processes in those specific places. Meskhetian Turks' appeals to central authorities to reverse restrictions on residence in the Meskheti-Javakheti region of Georgia were unsuccessful. The state authorities confirmed Meskhetian Turks' permanent residence in Central Asia, a fact that defined them as a part of that region's population and therefore ineligible for a move back to their original motherland.

Upon arrival to a number of Central Asian locations (in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan), Meskhetian Turks were required to reside in special settlers' camps--settlements that did not have any basic conveniences and often had to be built from scratch (Polian 1994). Material difficulties aside, the settlers were not allowed to leave camps and their lives were highly regimented by authorities (Bugai 1996). In 1956 Restrictions on residence were lifted. However, a ban still remained on the Meskhetian Turks' return to Georgia. Thus, once again, the civil rights of Meskhetian Turks were circumscribed by territorial considerations of Soviet authorities. Meskhetian Turks remained in Central Asia, and since they were no longer special status settlers, they were able to receive permanent registration in the respective republics of that region. That registration was going to continue defining their fate for the next 5 decades.

Territorial restrictions on citizenship rights became literally life threatening in 1989 when during inter-ethnic riots, Meskhetian Turks were evacuated from Uzbekistan in the first instance of refugee relocation within the boundaries of the Soviet Union. A law on refugees was absent in the Soviet Union ("Migration Program", 1992). The legal status of

[45] A closed city or a closed town is a settlement with travel and residency restrictions in the Soviet Union and the post-Soviet Russia. Initially founded in 1940s, such towns were known as "post boxes", referring to a practice of directing mail to residents of those towns via postal boxes in other cities or towns.

the Meskhetian Turks and the corresponding state assistance were determined according to the separate decrees/resolutions of the RSFSR (ibid.). The Meskhetian Turks were issued financial compensation and several areas in Central Russia were recommended as areas for their settlement. As mentioned earlier, when the Meskhetian Turks arrived in Krasnodar, many of them were intent on relocating to Georgia (which was still a part of the USSR at the time). Therefore, they were considered only temporary residents of the RSFSR and retained their citizenship of the Uzbek SSR[46].

This situation became even more precarious after the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the introduction of a new legislation regulating the acquisition of citizenship in the newly independent Russia (RF). The first attempt at defining the law on citizenship in Russia (statute on citizenship of 1991) employed the language of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and pronounced that in the RF every person has a right to citizenship (Ginsburgs 2000: 181). In a move reminiscent of the early Soviet state policies, the Russian state strove for a very humanistic approach and initially gave an impression that the acquisition of Russian citizenship was automatic. To amend this formulation, the 1993 Constitution avoided the discussion of rights to citizenship and instead defined citizenship as a status that could be acquired or lost according to federal laws (ibid. 182).

The 1993 Law preserved the 2-tier structure of Soviet citizenship according to which citizens of the national republics of RF possess the citizenship of the RF and of the corresponding republic. The requirement of permanent residency as a criterion for the

[46] During the 2002 census, when asked about their citizenship, some of the Meskhetian Turks showed their old Soviet passports that indicated their Uzbek SSR citizenship. It is not unlikely that census takers recorded Turks' current citizenship as that of Uzbekistan (personal interviews; LK). Refer to the last section of this paper for further elaboration on this.

acquisition of a republican citizenship was retained in this formulation as well. The tension inherent in the 2-tier citizenship status, evident during the Soviet period, remained unresolved in the newly independent Russia[47]. While authors of the federal legislation perceived republican citizenship as a "passive appendage to federal" (ibid. 185), the republics --as well as some of the regions and krais--manipulated eligibility for citizenship as a way of controlling access to residency. Republics and regions introduced bans and restrictions on entry and settlement in their territory on the basis of registration or propiska – a situation that even prompted an intervention of the office of the Procurator-General of the Russian Federation (Churilov, November 23, 1996).

The infamous "propiska" or registration of permanent residency, a much talked about limitation on residency in various regions during the Soviet period, became one of the most contentious issues in the newly independent Russia. In October of 1991, a Committee on the Execution of the Constitution (*Komitet Konstitutatsionnogo Nadzora*) issued a historically significant decree that proclaimed the institution of propiska in violation of the right to freedom of movement and the choice of domicile. It announced propiska invalid as of January 1992 (Grankina 1996). However, this decree was not enforced and a number of regions of the Russian Federation (Moscow and St. Petersburg, Krasnodar and Stavropol regions among others) passed regional laws that restored registration regimes in their territories (Grankina 1996). In accordance with the charter on the freedom of movement, permanent residency registration could be perceived as simply a bookkeeping device meant to provide statistics on population and migration. However, today propiska "remains the bureaucracy's most potent weapon for controlling as it

[47] The 2002 Law "On Citizenship" finally abolished the 2-tier citizenship regime. However, further research is needed to see how the new law is implemented in the republics and regions.

pleases access to the country's citizenship rolls" (Ginsburgs 2000: 213). What is more, propiska remains one of the main criteria for defining the limits on the acquisition of not only Russian citizenship, but of refugee and forced re-settler status. By referring to the Soviet decree on the limits of registration in several areas of the Krasnodar Region (24.12.87 г. #1476), the Krasnodar authorities denied Meskhetian re-settlers permanent registration status. Once Russia became independent, registration became the central issue in defining the rights of the Meskhetian Turks towards Russian citizenship. In 2002, Krasnodar authorities continued to refer to the Soviet era registration restriction of 1987 in order to explain the fact that the Meskhetian Turks are considered "the stateless people temporarily residing on the territory of the Russian Federation" (Decree of the Krasnodar Region, 04/24/1996, #291-П; Decree of the Krasnodar Region, 02/20/2002, #1362-П).

To live without citizenship is to live without political rights, the social recognition of one's existence or a sense of legitimate belonging. Because of frequent changes of registration laws in the Krasnodar region in the 90s, having no legitimate citizenship involved obtaining temporary registration permits issued for 3 to 6 months (with a maximum up to a year). Just like Akhmed in the opening vignette, many Turks showed me their Soviet passports with the last pages covered in blue registration stamps. However, temporary registration was not even a temporary solution. "They could kick you out after you obtained 2 registration stamps. Just like that – they would refuse to give you a registration," – one informant told me. – "What would we do after that? You just continue living without a registration[48]". After changes in the law regarding citizenship in 2002, upon crossing the Russian border, a migrant would receive a migration card that (s)he would file with the local registration office (passportniy stol) to receive a residency

[48] Interview in Varenkovskaya Stanitsa, October 20th, 2004

permit. “There are no problems in getting migrants registered today. All they have to do is leave and then re-enter a country,” – a high-ranked administration official told me in an interview[49]. In reality obtaining registration turned out to be nearly impossible, because migrants without citizenship could not leave the country because no other country would accept them with their expired Soviet passports. “Because I do not have any legal documents save for my old passport that is no longer valid, I have not seen my parents who live in Uzbekistan in more than 6 years!” – Mulkia T., a 50-year old woman, emphatically pointed out[50]. “Where would I go if I came to Kransnodar when I was 11. I grew up here, went to school here, but I have never had a proper passport. Where would I go?” – Navruz T., a 27-year-old man asked me[51]. Indeed, Meskhetian Turks in Krasnodar found themselves in a “catch-22 scenario”. They could not stay in the region because their registration expired; they could not leave because they did not have any other documents. A majority of Turks remained unregistered and hence violated the registration regime. As stateless subjects, the Meskhetian Turks’ civil rights were not even an issue – there was no country to protect their freedoms.

Navruz summed up the situation:

> *Well, this militia guy comes to check documents to our house. He was a very young guy – must have just started at the militia. So, I give him my passport. He looked at it and asked ‘what is it?’ I told him that this was my expired Soviet passport. He could not understand at first. So, I had to explain to him that this is the passport I have been issued in 1994, and that even though it is no longer valid I cannot obtain any other form of ID. Also, I had to explain to him that even though my family had been living and owning this house for 15 years, none of us are registered in it. He really did not know what to do about it. So, he just left*[52].

[49] Interview with O., Krasnodar, September 24th, 2004
[50] Interview with Mulkia T., Varenikovskaya Stanitsa, February 17th, 2005
[51] Interview with Navruz T., Varenikovskaya Stanitsa, February 11th, 2005
[52] ibid.

Navruz's story is unfortunately not unique in Krasnodar. I heard variations of it time and again when interviewing people. A legal limbo in which thousands of migrants found themselves after the fall of the Soviet Union is evidence of a particular implementation of citizenship in the Soviet Union and later in the independent Russia that aimed to forge a particular territory and a sense of identity linked with it (Tolz 1998: 267). Unregistered marriages, children who grow up with only a certificate of birth (metrika) as a primary form of ID[53], multiple fines for violating registration regime – stories of the complex interaction between the Turks and the state abounded (cf. Soysal 1994). Yet, there did not seem to be a solution to this predicament as the state endured in its insistence on importance of territorial safety that migrants seemed to endanger, and migrants did not have anywhere to go.

Graduated Scale of Citizenship and Social Benefits.

According to Marshall, civil and political rights developed in tension with class divisions in Russian society, which eventually led to further improvements in social provisions and rights (Marshall 1950). The social citizenship was a function of the civil and in part political participation of citizens. In the Soviet Union, however, social identity became the primary foundation of Soviet citizenship (Alexopoulos 2006). The civil and political aspects of citizenship were secondary. In this section I examine how the social base of citizenship affected the differentiation of Soviet citizens and influenced their perception of one's entitlements to citizenship status (cf. Petryna 2004).

In 1930s, as the Soviet state was gaining its stronghold, more and more aspects of the social provision (such as education, medical services, food supplies and employment)

[53] There is a whole generation of 16-25 year old, whose primary form of identification is a birth certificate issued prior to the fall of the USSR.

came under state control. Access to these services was now a function of formal membership in the state; survival outside the public sphere turned out to be nearly impossible (ibid.). With private employment proclaimed illegal and food provisions distributed largely through one's place of work, dependence on the state for nearly everything was firmly established. The denial of social benefits became one of the primary strategies of social control. Mass purges, industrialization and collectivization denied access to the material benefits of social citizenship to millions of people. The term used to describe some of these groups – *lishentsy*, those who were denied, , - succinctly summarizes the ethos of that time. Meskhetian Turks, just like many other deported peoples, were also deprived of access to material provisions. "What do you pack in 24 hours? Just necessities, food. Everything – cattle, chickens, etc. –was left right there. Later, they were told about some compensation. What compensation? Two sacks of flour is a compensation for a house with everything in it? But back then, it helped <us> to survive" –Maria illustrates this point as the material aspects of citizenship ensured physical survival. Subject to mass deportation, Meskhetian Turks became "citizens without citizenship rights" (Alexopoulos, 2006: 510). Along with many other categories of lishentsy, they became a part of the graduated scale of citizenship, a status that no longer signified common equality but represented state-sanctioned differentiation based on the extent of one's access to social services. Ironically, the equality of vulnerability of one's civil rights was now complemented by an inequality of social provisions in the country where economic equality was proclaimed as the founding principle. What is more, the existence of a large number of citizens without citizenship rights normalized exclusion of some from the public goods. Given that at this point Soviet citizenship was

already perceived as an honor rather than an essential right, it was no longer an aberration but almost a fact of life that some could get access to more benefits of membership in the Soviet state than others.

Despite a practice of graduated citizenship, the Soviet constitution outlined an ideal model of Soviet state membership that emphasized everyone's equality. As a very special honor, Soviet citizenship carried with it not only certain rights (a right to education, medical assistance, and economic protection) but also obligations and duties. Some obligations were defined in terms of rights (a right to work or to defend one's country) thereby alleviating their moral status. All of this contributed to a construction of a new type of a person, a Soviet citizen, one who differed profoundly from its bourgeois counterpart in his/her feeling of security ensured by the state and his/her particular moral sense. In words of a Soviet period expert, "a new Soviet citizen <is the> one capable not only of exercising rights but of fulfilling the sacred obligations placed before him by the country of socialism and its great Stalin Constitution. The rights of Soviet citizens are indissolubly bound with their sacred obligations to the socialist motherland" (Volin 1938 in Alexopoulos 2006). Thus, the ones who did not match this ideal and failed to fulfill its obligations became the "enemies of the people". An actual act of violation was not even necessary; suspicions of treacherous acts against the state could trigger state actions (Fitzpatrick 2002). Meskhetian Turks' residence in the border region with Turkey (and family connections with an alien nation) could be a sufficient justification for renunciation of some of their citizenship rights.

Soviet citizenship not only specified rights and obligations, but the moral characteristics of a citizen as well. As such, soviet citizens needed to be enthusiastic in

their outlook on the bright future and active in their engagement with the public sphere. At the Eighth All-Union Congress of Soviets in November 1936, Stalin proclaimed: "According to [the USSR Constitution] all citizens are active" (Alexopoulos 2006). The extent of citizens' activity represented a measure of their worthiness to the state with party members constituting the most active and conscious citizens (Kessler 2001). But regardless of their party affiliation, all citizens were expected to join trade unions, youth organizations, sports and military organizations, a whole range of public societies thereby merging the public and the private lives. A proof of one's moral character – enthusiasm, participation in the public organizations and service for the good of society as a whole, - became a commonplace practice during the Soviet period. Combined with these moral considerations, the growing reliance of Soviet citizens on the material provisions created a graduated scale of citizenship. Access to social provisions was not only determined on a basis of an actual contribution to a common wellbeing, but on a basis of one's fulfillment of the citizenship ideal. To be a full citizen of the state one needed to reflect its moral character as well. The legacy of social citizenship developed in the early days of the Soviet Union came to affect specifics of the Meskhetian Turks' integration to the Krasnodarskiy Krai after their evacuation in 1989.

"Why should anyone bother giving them citizenship? What did they do – they arrived, with cars full of things and moved into houses. They took away our jobs. They did not want to work at low paying jobs in the state sector – no, they went for the private sector right away. Of course, they did not want to break their backs for *kopeks*. Be as it may, why should we reward them with citizenship in this case?" – a passionate philippic of a disgruntled old lady whom I met at a bus stop when travelling to in Krasnodarskiy

Krai succinctly summarized the Soviet ideal of citizenship that remained strong even after the Soviet Union disappeared. Meskhetian Turks' arrival to the Krasnodarskiy Krai took place amidst worsening economic conditions, with disintegrating structures of social provision and support. They arrived at the time when the most basic necessities were distributed via a system of coupons that limited the amount of goods one could purchase and were linked with a *propiska* status. One needed to be recognized as a permanent resident in order to be included in the circle of distribution of goods. Leaving aside the formalities of obtaining permanent registration, local residents of Krasnodarskiy Krai were concerned about these newcomers. They interpreted the Meskhetian Turks' lack of propiska and employment in a private sector as a sign of a morally compromised character that could be punished according to the Soviet standards – by denying of their access to social provisions. "I was standing in a line for bread. I was with my 2-year old. We did not have any coupons to buy flour, could not bake our own. So, we were just standing. And all women started screaming at us –' why are you taking away our bread? Why did you come here? Go back, you don't work but eat our bread'. And we just stood there. A sales woman refused to sell us bread. She said she did not have enough. Then, one woman took pity on me and gave me one loaf. I will never forget this," – Gulbahor, 40 year old mother of two, could not hold her tears back at the painful memory of their first days after arrival.

Migrants, with their different appearance, manners, and way of life, came to be seen as competition for the resources of the state. Their claims to citizenship were not only claims to a legal status, but first and foremost to the social benefits of state membership. And as claimants to social benefits, migrants were perceived as competing with other

social groups (esp. retirees, veterans, etc. – the ones that were the most dispossessed after the fall of the Soviet Union (Edele 2006)). Aspersions cast on the migrants' morality in daily interaction (as well as in mass media) were not only an attempt to discredit them, but were seen as an actual reason to deny their right to citizenship. Because they did not match an ideal of a (post-)Soviet citizen, Meskhetian Turks as migrants were not worthy of being admitted as members of their new country.

Identity and ideals of belonging influenced the specifics of Meskhetian Turks' reception in the region. But Meskhetian Turks also adhered to notions that linked identity and citizenship. As it was illustrated during the Russian 2002 census, the Meskhetian Turks could have chosen a number of different options with regard to their participation in the census. Demographic literature shows that recent migrants and people of the lower socio-economic and educational background are less likely to take part in the surveys and censuses (Fein 1989; Iversen et al., 1999; Jones 1979). As recent migrants, Meskhetian Turks could have chosen to hide or flee (not to participate in the census) or compromise and register themselves as Russians or another ethnic minority. Also, they could have chosen to use their voice and manipulate the format of the census to protest against their discrimination. Given that the national census can be viewed as a plebiscite (Arel 2000) that allows citizens of the state to voice their mis/trust, to challenge or to accept state imposed categorization, the Turks' responses about their participation in the national census clarify specifics of their identification vis-à-vis the state.

When conducting research on 2002 census, I interviewed a number of people who reported that even though they did not have any citizenship save for that of the Soviet Union, they indicated Russian citizenship during the census. Fatima, a woman in her mid

40s, clarified this position: "*I said that I am a Russian citizen. I've spent 13 years here… When they give us a place to go, then we'll leave. But for now, we are Russian citizens. Even though we do not have permanent registration, we live here. We have nowhere else to go to*[54]*."* Another respondent elaborated on this further - "*What else could I answer about the citizenship? We've lived here, we are living here now and we will be living here – where else can we go? We are the same law abiding citizens as everybody else. We pay all the taxes. We are doing everything that is required. Where else would we go?"* During the census, a question of citizenship was one of the most important for the Meskhetian Turks as it is directly related to a question of legal status, employment opportunity, medical assistance, education and even retirement pensions. As citizens of a country that disappeared over a decade ago, the Meskhetian Turks were trying to make the case that they should be recognized by the state. However, despite their leaders' efforts to define their position , people often seemed to be uncertain what the correct answer to the question of citizenship was. Thus, some replied that they did not have citizenship or have Uzbek citizenship (although, in reality they only hold citizenship of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic).

Sarvar Tedorov, one of the Turkish leaders, emphasized that he hoped that the census would help to clarify the situation of the Meskhetian Turks. Tedorov clearly distinguished between the truth of the local administration that presented Meskhetian Turks as aliens without any rights and the truth of the Meskhetian Turks, who considered themselves rightful citizens of Russia. The truth of the local administration was reinforced with the power of the state expressed in the form of registration stamps in old

[54] Interview with Fatima and other respondents were conducted on October 11th, 2002; interviews were complimented with observations of the census October 7th-15th, 2002

Soviet passports. The truth for the Meskhetian Turks could only gain power through people's participation in the census when the "truth" of their citizenship became a social fact expressed in the "hard" numbers. In another interview, Sarvar Tedorov shared his hopes that the census would help to clarify the actual number of the Meskhetian Turks in the region. While the Turkish community was relatively small, the mass media frequently presented it as one of the fastest growing communities and exaggerated its size, providing local authorities with an additional argument to deny Turkish claims to Russian citizenship. Tedorov argued that the significance of the census results would be two-fold. First of all, the census would provide a reliable estimate for the Turkish community. Secondly, people's responses would be addressed to the federal authorities, thereby overriding the administration at the regional level.

I asked people why they decided to participate in the census. Despite my efforts to assuage their concerns and establish rapport, several respondents appeared to be offended by it. "*We've spent almost 14 years here. What, we are not people or something? Why should we not?"* – one woman responded, even this turning away hiding her feelings. Another woman continued trying to correct my misunderstanding: "*Why are you saying that we don't want to participate in the census – no, we want to participate in it. It is important for Russia to enumerate us as well. We want to participate in the census*." This somewhat defensive attitude reflected an uncertainty of the people's position vis-à-vis the permanent population of the region. Even the slightest suspicion that their behavior – census participation in this case, - might be different from that of other people raised strong emotional protests. In this regard, one can conclude, the Meskhetian Turks perceived the census as one of the ways to confirm their inherent

similarity with the rest of the country, with the rest of the "people". It was their way of proving their morality and worth, categories associated with legal membership in the state during the Soviet period.

Following up on questions about the reasons for participating in the census, I asked my informants whether they were concerned as to how the results of the census would be used in the future. Many of my informants expressed hopes that the census would bring a change for the better: "*No, we are not scared. Why should we be? I am not concerned about that*." – Fatima told me. Several other women joined our conversation at that point: "*I know that some people were even staying at home waiting for the census takers to come over to their house. They wanted to make sure that they are included in the census." –* "*Everybody should participate and everything will be fine*." *– "It should be good. We'll write our names down in the history of Russia. Nothing bad can come out of it*." - "*We'll be considered local after that – that's good. We have nowhere else to go*." The rhetoric about the statewide importance of the census was clearly reflected in these responses, combined with the expectation that such a significant event in the life of the state would have direct positive consequences for the people – be it simply local recognition ("we'll be considered local") or the official legitimization of their status.

Despite the Meskhetian Turks' hopes, state authorities never used figures of the actual number of Meskhetian Turks' in the region after the census results were revealed. Attacks against the Meskhetian Turks continued as before. Their participation in the country-wide plebiscite confirmed their sense of identity but did not translate it into a more public statement. The Meskhetian Turks' responses to questions regarding their participation in the census show that one's citizenship (or lack thereof) is not just a matter

of a legal status, but has profound implications for one's sense of belonging and identity as well

Despite their allegiance to Russia as an heir to the Soviet Union and repeated attempts to resolve their legal predicament, many Meskhetian Turks failed to obtain citizenship. The most vulnerable categories – retirees, - needed to receive retirement pensions. Despite strong family ties that ensured that even older Meskhetian Turks almost always found family support, additional money was important in the volatile climate of uncertain economic conditions. Also, retirement pensions were a symbolic confirmation of the state's recognition of one's hard work. ""My father – he was a WWII veteran. He was wounded many times during the war. He had medals for bravery. Throughout all his life he worked for this state <USSR>.But then we came to the Krasnodarskiy Krai and he never received a ruble from the state. Not a kopek – they did not honor his retirement pension because he was not a citizen. It really hurt him. He died having received nothing from the state. How is this possible?" – Aybek L. asked me rhetorically[55]. The memory of his late father visibly upset A., who was also denied Russian citizenship. In order to resolve statelessness, some Meskhetian Turks' chose an alternative strategy and sought citizenship in the former Soviet republics (Uzbekistan or Ukraine). Given that the Turks were forced to flee Uzbekistan after the massacre in the Ferghana valley, few of them considered resettling in Uzbekistan. However, some chose to obtain Uzbek citizenship in order to visit their relatives and to settle their current situation in Krasnodar. The choice to apply for Ukrainian citizenship was most frequently

[55] Interview with Aybek L., Lancaster PA, December 9th, 2004

motivated by a desire to receive retirement pensions for the elderly[56]. Respondents pointed out that they would have rather received Russian citizenship given that their lives are concentrated in this region. But due to their lack of choice, they were forced to find other survival strategies. Thus, in the aftermath of social and economic transformations that affected the republics of the Soviet Union, citizenship became a utilitarian tool that assisted its bearers in getting through passport regulations and/or as means of survival in a form of retirement assistance. It no longer signified one's moral worth or a particular way of life. It lost its ideological charm, while nonetheless retaining some of its connections to state provisions (cf. Berdahl 2005: 236).

Citizenship as Collective Rights and Obligations and Political Participation.

There was a period of time when it was still possible to obtain citizenship. It seemed that authorities were going to "close their eyes" on this process. - Sarvar T. mentioned one evening. - *But we would have had to do so covertly – few cases from one settlement, few cases from another settlement, etc. And other leaders – they wanted everything done at once; they did not want to wait. So, they filed a lot of requests. And that's when authorities became concerned. They "red flagged" our cases. Mass media began a huge campaign of telling people that the Turks are taking over the region*[57].

[56] Today, this presents one of the biggest predicaments in the Turks' relocation to the States. It is not uncommon that members of one and the same family would have different citizenships. Thus, parents might have Ukrainian citizenship while their children would have either no citizenship or a Russian citizenship. In this case, even though children are be eligible to seek asylum in the States, their parents are not. Family connections are very strong among the Turks, and children cannot abandon their parents. Thus, children have to remain in Russia to take care of their parents.

[57] Interview with Sarvar Tedorov, March 5th, 2005

Sarvar's testimony reveals that the situation regarding Meskhetian Turks' citizenship involved a complex interplay between several actors. The denial of Meskhetian Turks' claims to citizenship was not just a matter of state authorities' steadfast refusal. It had to do with notions of collective rights and responsibilities, the specifics of interaction between the state and its subjects and people's political involvement in the life of the state (cf. Heinen 1997: 577-578). In this section, I argue that the Meskhetian Turks' statelessness provides a perspective on a phenomenon of political participation in the post-Soviet Russia.

According to Marshall's model, civil participation and individual equality before the law increase individualism of public life, while at the same expanding the number of those eligible to participate in a political life of a given society. Political life in the form of open contestations between competing interest groups was not possible in the Soviet Union given that the country was united in its ascent towards communism. Political life centered on protecting the state from enemies (both internal and external) and on constant cleaning (or purging) of the population of possible foreign influences (Conquest 1970), thereby eliminating sources of potential conflict and competition. The political engagement of Soviet citizens was manifested in a confirmation of the party line, a display of unity during holidays and political functions, and the affirmation of the Soviet moral ideal and a membership in a collective. Thus, political life in the country of a victorious proletariat was built around a different set of premises. Instead of fostering individual engagement through a concept of individual rights, collective rights were a cornerstone of the Soviet constitution (Davies 2000).

The collective organization of social life was central to the Soviet regime as a way to ensure coherence of behavior and mutual monitoring of collective members (Kharkhordin 1999: 75-90). An individual's private and public behavior was largely a function of one's membership in a particular group (ibid: 123-130). There were different forms of collectives in the Soviet Union – from collective farms and production collectives to sports unions and living communes (Siegelbaum 1986). In 1986, there were over 2.5m collectives in the Soviet Union. Therefore, virtually every citizen of the USSR was a member of one. Although collective groups were organized on a premise of joint activity[58] and therefore mostly defined as professional, work or production groups, this discussion can be extended to include ethnic groups and nationalities, membership in which was also a fact of life and largely determined one's public behavior (career, education opportunities, etc.).

Collective rights generally, and specifically rights of ethnic groups for self-determination and development, were recognized and recorded in the Constitution. Collective rights were so highly respected, that when in 1990 efforts were made to change Constitution to incorporate more individual rights, it was considered too contentious and these changes were abandoned (Article 1.3 of the 1990 draft of the Constitution in Sakwa 1996: 119). Later, after the fall of the Soviet Union, a new Constitution incorporating many more individual rights was accepted. Yet, the public reaction remained largely suspicious of the whole concept of an individual. "In the absence of a civil society in our country, Parliament and the Congress of People's

[58] Collective – "people united by constant joint labor and membership in the same organization, institution, enterprise, and so forth" (Slovar' in Kharkhordin 200?: 75).

Deputies are today virtually the only guarantors that can stop our country from plunging into a dictatorship of **individuals**" (emphasis added.- LK)(in Sakwa 1996: 121).

Despite changes that affected the socio-political organization of Russia in the development and inclusion of individual rights in the Constitution, the legislative basis of the Russian Federation continues to record and protect collective rights as well. Thus, "The Russian Federation guarantees all its peoples the right to preserve their language, [along with the] creation of conditions to study and develop it" (Part 3, article 68). The Russian Federation guarantees protection to preserve and restore culturally-national specificity <samobytnost'> of a small number of communities of the Russian Federation" (article 22). "Languages of the Russian Federation are a national treasure of the Russian state. Languages of peoples of the Russian Federation are under protection of the state" (Preamble). The Russian Federation guarantees all its peoples regardless of their numbers equal rights for the preservation and comprehensive development of a native tongue, freedom of choice and use of language of communication" (Part 2, article 2). According to the most important legislative document of the Russian Federation, groups are not only real but are subjects of the law and are endowed with certain rights. Given that the state perceives group membership as real, it is probably not surprising to find that people also perceive their status as members of ethnic groups as giving them certain rights.

"We were evacuated together. <We were> brought to Central Russia. Then we made our way to Krasnodar, settled in this village. It didn't matter at that time – we were citizens of the USSR. So, when it all happened, we were still living there. We thought – the state brought us here; it should give us the proper status. We are citizens after all. We should have citizenship" – Timur, 49 year old father of 3, explained to me to account why

he did not apply for citizenship on his own, but instead waited for the state to resolve his situation. Many informants repeated his response nearly verbatim, trying to make a case for the state responsibility over their fate as a group. "We did not know what to do. Our leaders communicated with state officials. They told us to submit papers to citizenship – we did. Then our case was rejected. So, we just waited after that" – X., 46 year old mother of two reported, clarifying her position on this matter. Meskhetian Turks' leaders disagreed as to where they wanted to see the group resettled. Few argued for a return to Georgia, even fewer appealed for a migration to Turkey. Most of them agreed that Russia as the heir to the Soviet Union must recognize them as rightful citizens, thereby resolving their legal status and giving them an opportunity to further decide the fate of their group.

Despite their continued affirmation of collective rights in public life, the Russian state pursued a neoliberal agenda. "We do not deal with groups. We can't. If they want citizenship, they need to apply for it as individuals and we'll deal with them on a case by case basis. There are rules and regulations. It's all straightforward, actually," – a state official explained to me. This explanation seemed simple and in line with the rules and regulations of the Western countries whose experience Russia strived to emulate at that time. However, this explanation largely ignored multiple violations of this straightforward principle of state functioning that targeted Meskhetian Turks (and other ethnic groups) as a distinct collectivity. (awkward) The statements of public officials in the press explicitly described Meskhetian Turks as a group (REF), but Krasnodarskiy Krai deputies' appeals to federal authorities to save the region from an invasion of ethnically different people did not follow official neoliberal principles (REF). The principle of direct interaction between the state and individuals was a mere pretext to

deny the state's responsibility and to blame lack of legal status on the improper actions of individuals. My informant, a young politician, was clear about this as well: "We cannot always function this way, of course. I personally do not care either way. But the older colleagues – they have different feelings. Take for example, the previous governor of Krasnodar <Kondratenko>. He was adamant and nothing could stop him. Those kinds of actions brought us to the point where we are now – the state now cannot back out, cannot offer blanket citizenship because then it would lose reputation. The only option is for them <Meskhetian Turks> to pursue citizenship individually. Like they should, really".

Notions of collective action and group rights defined the state and its interaction with the Meskhetian Turks. Yet, just as the state was beginning to acquire a neoliberal rhetoric, learning to navigate in the new terrain of economic relations, so too did the people who adjusted some of their expectations and found new ways of survival in the new country. While some waited for the state to resolve their status as a group, others opted to search for their own solutions. One strategy that migrants used to resolve their situation was to purchase citizenship[59]. It would be misleading to call this a full scale "citizenship market"; rather, it was part and parcel of a bureaucratized apparatus that mastered the art of bribery during the Soviet period and applied its knowledge to the new conditions of a market economy. It is difficult to measure the extent to which the "citizenship market" existed in Krasnodar. Of course, there was and still is a clear demand for it. However, local registration procedures made its emergence difficult. Many Turks who were able to obtain citizenship did so in other regions of Russia (primarily in the Kalmyk republic and Rostov) where registration laws were more lax in the 90s.

[59] Given ethical nature of this question, it was difficult to approach it directly. Data for this discussion was gathered through indirect questions about people other than my informants. In few cases (discussed in this paper) informants volunteered information themselves.

Obtaining citizenship in other regions was also fairly complicated as it involved considerable expense in relocating and also of paying money to the *passportniy stol* officials (ranging anywhere from $50 to $500).

Even when a passport was obtained, one could not guarantee that it would be effective. Thus, Z. shared with me the history of her pursuit of proper status:

> *I went to Rostov to get a passport. I had everything done, only to be contacted later by the militia. Apparently, a woman who issued my passport was under an investigation for passport fraud. So, they confiscated my passport. I was without any papers for few months. Then, I went back and asked for my passport. I showed the militia inspector my Soviet passport that expired in 1999. I think he took pity on me because he released my passport, but warned me that it is no longer valid. So, since then, I have been living with a "fraudulent" document. I don't know what would happen if I were to apply for an external passport that I need to go to the States*[60].

Nevertheless, when one's status was clarified, the civil and social rights of a passport bearer were constrained by registration procedures in the region and the specifics of political imagination discussed elsewhere (Koriouchkina 2009 and 2007). Frequent passport checks by the militia and negative attitudes towards the "Kavkaztsi" dominate in the region. Turks were facing the same discrimination as the Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Georgians and members of other ethnic groups that also resided in the region and held Russian citizenship.

Besides purchasing citizenship, Meskhetian Turks tried to pursue a legal route thereby combining claims of civil and political participation. Some Turks tried to appeal to the state authorities with requests to find a solution to their case and filed petitions in courts. Human rights activists in close collaboration with the Turkish leaders tried to bring the problem of Turks' legal status to the media and administration. The Novorossiysk NGO "Shkola Mira" ("School of Peace") headed by Korostelev was the

[60] Interview with Z., February 27th, 2005

most instrumental in this endeavor. In the early 90s, several cases were successfully defended in court and a few Turks were indeed able to obtain citizenship and resolve disputes about land and property ownership. However, shortly thereafter, all legal procedures initiated by the Turks were brought to a halt. "Once they saw a Turkish name on a court file, they would automatically reject the petition. We could not do anything," – Tyanshon Swanidze, a leader of a community in A. village, told me. The work of human rights activists who strived to emphasize the importance of resolving the legal predicament of the Meskhetian Turks' status and to defend the proper execution of the Constitution of the Russian Federation (after all, Meskhetian Turks had the right to Russian citizenship), were following an example of Soviet dissidents who used a strategy of civil obedience to raise awareness of multiple violations of laws in the USSR (Nathans 2007). Just as in the USSR, human rights activists were accused of political and civil disobedience.

A number of Krasnodar NGOs and Turkish leaders continued their daily struggles with the Krasnodar authorities. They filed petitions asking the state administration to resolve the statelessness problem, to legalize people's private property and to regulate the militia's overzealous prosecution of non-Russian individuals. Also, "Shkola Mira" conducted a series of workshops that aimed to educate minorities about properly interacting with the militia. For example, during a two-day workshop in Gelendgik in 2005 they instructed people to write down a militiaman's name, badge number and the specific reason for passport checks. The goal of the workshop was twofold. On one hand, it aimed to ease people's fears of the militia and to build their self-awareness as rightful citizens of the country where they resided. On the other, it was meant to enforce public

control over state institutions. Efforts like these were particularly interesting as they provided a perspective on the specifics of civil society in Russia, a much-contested category in the literature on the Former Soviet Union (Verdery and Burawoy 1996).

Conclusions.

Marshall's model of citizenship largely focused on Western countries and traced an expansion of this concept in scope from the sphere of civil rights to social and political rights and entitlements. However, in the Soviet Union social aspects of citizenship played a far more important role, overshadowing political and civil rights. Unlike in the West where the equality of citizenship was at odds with inequality of social stratification, in the Soviet Union citizenship seemed to signify ultimate equality – civil, economic and social. Similarly, civil freedoms and rights were crucial in the context of a capitalist economy, as it ensured that large masses of people who were dispossessed economically could at the very least hold on to the guarantee of their rights. In the Soviet context, where equality was guaranteed by the state and there was no need for to compete on the free market, civil rights played a different role in the trajectory of social development. Guaranteed de jure, civil and political rights were severely circumscribed de facto on a premise of protecting the state's territory from internal and external enemies.

Citizenship plays a major role in forging identities (Barrington 1999: 731). A review of citizenship regulations in the case of Meskhetian Turks offers a perspective on such phenomena as regional identity. Verdery argues that adjustment of citizenship provisions came as a result of an ultimately transnational process that brought along dissolution of the Soviet bloc (1998). Indeed, democratization is a global phenomenon and the desire to join democratic world was strong enough to knock down the iron curtain

of existential differences that separated the Soviet and the capitalist worlds. Paradoxically, once a process of change was underway, transformations that affected former Socialist countries displayed very local, nationalizing tendencies that picked up on the previously existing patterns of group membership, while at the same time integrated some aspects of the newly emerging neo-liberal ethos. An analysis of the exclusion of Meskhetian Turks from membership in the Russian Federations uncovers strong concepts of regional belonging and identity that emerged and received formal recognition in the 90s. Territorial limitations on citizenship practiced during the Soviet period in a form of propiska/registration received a new meaning as now this instrument of control over population movements and composition was used to define regional boundaries and ensure the particular identity of the region's residents vis-à-vis the newcomers.

The political inertia of the majority of the Russian population is puzzling. Yet, if one were to use insights from the case of Meskhetian Turks' interaction with the state, it is possible that the lack of political engagement is due to a general perception of what political involvement means and who can and should participate in the political life of the country. Analysts point out that Meskhetian Turks are fairly democratic in their outlook on authority. They have always had a wide range of leaders whose positions varied considerably on such important issues as a place of final residence and a return to the former motherland. Meskhetian Turks were frequently skeptical of their leaders relying on their own opinion to decide matters. However, in the case of citizenship acquisition and a general interaction with the state, a large proportion of Turks waited for their leaders' directions to guide them. I suggest that notions of collective belonging instilled during the Soviet period defined their attitudes about and expectations of the state. One

was not to interact with the state directly and as an individual, but as a member of a collective and through appointed leaders. The same is also true of state officials who, despite their allegiance to neoliberal principles, continued to deal with Meskhetian Turks as a definite group. Thus, I demonstrate, citizenship is not just a status but an "instituted process" (Sommers 1993: 587) that determines specifics of relations between the state and its subjects and shapes expectations of both parties involved in this interaction.

A story of Meskhetian Turks' interaction with the Russian state in its developing neoliberal form provides a perspective on an emergence of a new phenomenon that R. Castel calls "individus par defaut" (individuals by absence) (2001). In the contemporary Western world that puts an individual on a pedestal of human rights Castels notes a curious configuration of individuating practices that create subjects whose claims to an individual status are based on a premise of lacking social resources (Castel 2001: 40-42). The Russian state with its adherence to neoliberalism agreed (and agrees) to formally interact with Meskhetian Turks on an individual basis. Yet, it is their lack of citizenship and belonging to a particular group (or, rather, NOT belonging to the correct set of ethnic groups) that creates the basis for the interaction between the state and the people. In this case, a group status emerges as a necessary condition for one to be perceived as an individual (i.e. a citizen). The Meskhetian Turks' participation in the census was meant to prove that they were human just like everybody else and that they were the rightful subjects of the state. Thus, as individus par defaut, Meskhetian Turks and the state defined their individual existence on the basis of ethnic belonging thereby solidifying the role of ethnicity in one's individual being and providing a perspective on a development

of a particular form of neoliberalism in Russia that incorporates Soviet heritage in a form of ethnicity.

In the global world of transnational connections citizenship is becoming more and more flexible (Ong 1999). However, as analysis of Meskhetian Turks' struggles to acquire citizenship reveals, there is a considerable continuity between the Soviet and the post-Soviet periods. Notions of social entitlement, collective behavior and territorial identity play a considerable role in the interpretation and implementation of legislature. The Soviet Union disappeared, yet its legacy continues to exert influence and define people's lives. Akhmed's worn out Soviet passport lost its legal validity, but as a symbol of membership in the Soviet state, it retained its power over people's choices and ideas.

CHAPTER 5. Houses / Homes: Private and Public of Group Identity.

On a hot July night, the street in front of Zh.'s house was filled with people. Usually a crowd like this would mean that there is either a wedding or a funeral. However, that was not the case this time. It was a farewell "party" – neighbors, relatives and friends gathered to say good bye to the Zh. family who were leaving for the US. Packed bags were stacked near a minivan that was to take the family to the airport later. A dog guarding the house could no longer take all the commotion in the yard and hid in a dog house. "I heard when a family left… On the other side of the village… They left their dog, and it died…[it] could not bare separation" Mariam, my guide on today's party, mentioned nonchalantly. Further adding to the overall gloom, she pointed at a sign "House for sale" lying on the ground near the front gates. "They could not sell the house… Leaving it as is –they hope their relatives might be able to sell it later, but who knows? So, they are leaving it".

We proceed to the main house. There, in the courtyard, tables are set. Plov[61] and salads, cheese and homemade bread, candy and yogurt are served to welcome guests who came to say good bye. A middle-aged energetic woman, the wife's sister, conducts this farewell party making sure that plates are filled, tea is hot and guests are not bored. "Good that they are leaving… Although, I don't see why they have to go – this was their country, wasn't it? Our father fought for it during the war. We worked for this country – we were breaking our backs! And now they are leaving and have to leave this house behind. Why is it? Why do they have to go?" - She throws these questions at me and

[61] A dish of rice, meat and carrots prepared in a large wok-like pan (kazan).

speeds off to the kitchen, leaving me along with other guests to ponder predicaments of the Soviet history.

Just as farewell parties punctuated a flow of life in V. village, rhetorical questions concerning the reasons for Meskhetian Turks' leaving for the United States were a consistent feature of interviews during the days before departures. "Why do we have to leave? Why does Russia push us out? Weren't we Soviet citizens just like everybody else? And why does the US accept us?" In asking these questions, my informants hardly ever expected an answer. Rather, they simply voiced their frustration, symbolically reclaiming their right to social recognition that the relocation seemed to be denying them. The fact that my informants nearly always mentioned their pride for the Soviet period of Central Asian and Russian history made me wonder why this group that had been persecuted so much during the Soviet period did not harbour negative feelings against a regime that oppressed them and why they never became a dissident minority. Contrary to what I expected, during interviews many informants emphasized how much they loved the country back when it was the Soviet Union. To me, this presented a paradox that I kept in mind when interviewing people or when simply chatting with them about their lives.

The individual life stories that I gathered during fieldwork were closely tied with stories of houses and private domesticity. Time and again, recollections of one's everyday life or milestone events triggered detailed descriptions of one's home, plans for reconstruction or stories of losing a house. General narratives of losing one's motherland were intertwined with more specific stories of losing private property. During interviews, houses were mentioned not only to pinpoint a location of one's public/formal and

informal residence, but to elaborate on one's understanding of the home as a site where one's identity was formed. Dwellings served as a reference to the discussion about the past and the present, but also as a way to imagine the future[62] (cf. Golden 2001). The domestic space of Meskhetian Turkish houses as it was presented and created by my informants illuminates the relationship between private lives (and spaces) and public identities. But also, cultural biographies (Kopytoff 1986: 64) of houses presented in this chapter hold a key to the paradox of Meskhetian Turks' relationship with the past and their attitudes towards the Soviet history. Narratives about houses and overall attitudes toward the sphere of the private explain why most Meskhetian Turks never objected to the Soviet regime.

This chapter builds on the recent studies of public and private spheres in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia (Bucher 2006; Barker 1999; Caldwell 2009). The fascination in the country where the public was said to have taken over the private sphere gave rise to studies of the private world of Soviet citizens. Analysis of communal shared spaces (Field 2007) or the world of pornography (Goldschmidt 1999), importance of pets (Barker 1999; Nelson 2006) and trash (Boym 1999) transcends the impenetrable Iron curtain (of the past and of the present). A study of memories surrounding houses in the Soviet period presented in this chapter furthers this line of analysis. By so doing, I show that the private world of the Soviet citizens not only existed in the past (Burawoy and Verdery1999), but remains important to them today (cf. Koriouchkina 2004). Nostalgia over the private world of the Soviet period characterizes attitude towards the past among

[62] During interviews, if informants knew that they were leaving for the US, they invariably asked me whether they could purchase houses in the US and/or build houses. It was probably the second most frequently asked question (after weather conditions in particular states). I interpret this as a strategy to imagine the world my informants have never seen and to locate this unfamiliar world in more familiar terms of weather and houses.

many people in Russia today (Boym 2001). An analysis of Meskhetian Turks' stories of their houses helps one better understand the current "Soviet renaissance" in Russia by taking into consideration the specifics of public and private memories of the Soviet period.

An analysis of Meskhetian Turks' domestic spaces contributes to the literature on adjustment of refugees to life under new conditions. It follows along the lines of Eastmond's argument that refugees strive first and foremost for the "normalization" of everyday life. To do so, they try to recover stability and predictability in their social lives, and that means recovering their private as well as social and professional identities disrupted during the war (Eastmond 1998: 174-75; cf. Becker et al. 2000). As Ries succinctly puts it, for refugees '<l>ife is not normal in the sense of being easy or calm, but in many ways it seems to have achieved the level of the mundane: routine and predictable' (Ries 1997:163). To understand the process of achieving a normal everyday routine, it is important to focus on refugees' efforts to create a sense of belonging and home in a new place (Pattie 1999). Thus, examination of the private, the domestic and the material world of everyday objects provides an understanding of how Meskhetian Turks created their lives in the context of public uncertainty over the last 15 years (and previously during the Soviet Period as well).

A sense of place, an important category in the sociology of place according to Agnew (1987), is achieved through cultural geography (in part discussed in the "Migration" chapter) but on a smaller scale, it is also acquired through the material world of objects that comprise the domestic universe. Rugs and *minderler*[63], *pialas*[64] and crown

[63] Minder(ler) - flat pillows filled with wool; minderler are usually an important part of a woman's dowry
[64] Piala – a shallow cup without handles

molding create a sense of home, thereby strengthening a link between people and their dwellings. A sense of place contributes to the normalization of everyday life, and by so doing it helps refugees rebuild what they have lost. If at first an asylum is simply a safe place, after years of living there it also becomes a place of belonging and identification (cf. Pigg 1992: 491-492).

Traditionally, studies of refugee integration have closely examined displaced persons and the construction or reconstruction of national or ethnic 'identities' (for example, Czegledy 1997, Eastmond 1998, Malkki 1995a). Yet Loizos (1999) argues that refugees are far less interested in the impersonal and non-localized project of "preserving the nation", but rather exhibit a preference for the concrete, the personal and the local. Indeed, it is questionable whether national or ethnic identities alone create a sense of a group and belonging and are exclusive in serving as a base for normalcy in everyday situations for displaced persons. As important as ethnicity or a nationality might be, this form of identification does not exhaust other forms of relatedness in the world. A study of the private world of homes and being at home contributes to a better understanding of how Meskhetian Turks as a people, who were displaced three times over a period of 60 years, establish their lives in a new land.

Inside the house, inside the private world.

During the first months of my stay in the village, Mariam, a 57-year-old mother of 5, took on the role of my guide and introduced me to the private space of Meskhetian Turks' houses by taking me to the houses of several of her relatives. Introduction to the private spaces was combined with a lesson in etiquette, gender norms and individual life histories. Mariam did not need to be asked twice to remember details of her life in

Uzbekistan. She enjoyed talking about those days and was happy to find a new listener. In Uzbekistan she worked on a collective farm. After her family's relocation to Krasnodar Krai, she worked at a dairy farm at first, and then moved to work in a sovkhoz[65]. After the dairy farm and the sovkhoz suffered financial troubles and laid off workers, she stayed at home. Cooking and taking care of the house took most of her time when her children were growing up. However, at the time of the interviews she was busy watching her grandchildren and supervising her daughter-in-law.

> *Come in, let me take you around. When one enters the house, one needs to remove shoes. We never walk inside with shoes on. When you come and see that there are many shoes on the steps outside the door, you know that there are guests. Careful, don't hit your head. Now, come in, this is just a corridor. If there are male guests in the house, women should see in which room they are and <then> go to another room. No, there is no strictly defined women's side of the house. We decide depending on who came. When my friends come – although, they come rarely - they might sit in our family room. Then S. <Mariam's husband> will not come. Or, if people are visiting S., then my daughters and I will be in another room. So, it all depends.*

Shoes left outside[66] the entrance door clearly mark the division between the public and the private spaces. A number of shoes outside and a composition of shoes tells an acute observer exactly who is inside the house and how one should behave upon entering. While there is no strict gendered division of space in the house, norms of gender behavior affect how the space is used on a daily basis. Public space outside the house was more accessible to men than to women. Age further influenced this distinction. Thus, young girls (up until marriage in their parents' home and then, after marriage, in the house of their husband) mostly socialized at home where their mothers, older sisters and sisters-in-

[65] Sovkhoz – sovetskoe khozyastvo – a type of an agricultural collective farm all the property of which belongs to the state. Sovkhoz type farms were first introduced shortly after the revolution, in 1918

[66] Russians also take off shoes and change into home slippers upon entering a house. MESKHETIAN TURKS rarely wear slippers and prefer to walk barefoot or in socks inside. Despite that, a tradition of leaving shoes at the door was not interpreted as an ethnic marker.

law could supervise them and protect their reputation. Young men had more freedom in this respect and were able to go to local disco clubs ("diskoteka")[67]. Men's reputations were based on a different set of criteria (see more on this in chapter 6), and thus they had a wider set of options open to them for socialization.

> *Come in, this is our bedroom. We brought this bed with us from Uzbekistan along with these rugs. It all came packed in a large container. We waited for months for it to arrive. Fortunately, everything came in one piece. We had rugs, this bed set. It took us months to receive it – believe it or not, it was lost for several months on the railway station!*

Containers with household items shipped from Uzbekistan served as a contentious point between the Turks and the local residents. In the early 90s when stores were empty and food was distributed via coupons, containers filled with items considered luxuries in Russia – rugs, refrigerators, china, - alienated locals against the newcomers who seemed to possess so much (cf. Flynn 2004; Pilkington 1998; Tishkov 1997). While Soviet society had never been completely uniform and people's possessions varied, the overall ideology of equality kept some of the contradictions at bay. Yet, in the 90s when the Soviet ideas of forced equality gave way to a spirit of unabashed accumulation, generally associated with capitalism, distinctions between people as manifested in differences in their material possessions acquired a more profound meaning. For those who were able to catch up with the changing times, material wealth became a signifier of new opportunities, achievement and morality (Malakhov 2007; Patico 2000; Ries 2002). For those who were caught in between the changing realities – retirees, state-employed personnel (school teachers, collective farms workers, etc.), -the material gains of few

[67] Young Meskhetian Turkish men socialized with Russian women in those clubs. Given that Russian men were also present there, fights between Meskhetian Turks and Russians over women happened from time to time. Russian women were rarely considered for spouses (more on this in the next chapter).

reminded of their own material losses. Thus, private possessions purchased during the Soviet period became a public signifier of a new capitalist era and increased disparities between social hierarchies (Shlapentokh 1999: 1167-1168).

Cultural differences came into play as well. In Russia rugs were interpreted as a symbol of wealth. Better rugs were usually placed on walls as decoration. Rugs on the floor were cheaper (and in villages were usually handmade). Migrants from Central Asia not only brought rugs but also used them differently. They "wastefully" displayed them on the floor (it is important to mention here that rugs frequently substituted as furniture for the Turks). Thus, private possessions acquired public meaning as they defined a position of Meskhetian Turks in the receiving communities.

> *This is our living room – we eat here, watch TV. When guests come, we bring them here. When people who we don't know well come, we take them to another room – it is much larger than this one and there is no TV. This way, S. <Mariam's husband> can see them without disturbance, and we can watch TV here. We have a dish <satellite antenna> – with it, we get Turkish channels. We usually watch few programs, there is a nice cooking program on the Turkish TV… also they show good movies.*

Satellite antennas marked Meskhetian Turks houses. Even though some Russians also installed antennas, many more Turks could boast of watching TV via satellite. Indeed, Meskhetian Turks had more incentives – despite access to many channels via antenna, they were mostly interested in the Turkish television that allowed them to feel more connected[68]. But satellite antennas also marked Meskhetian Turks houses as more

[68] During Ramadan, Turks watched the Turkish TV to know the precise time they could break their fast. Even though there was a common understanding about when the fast could be broken ("when you can no longer distinguish between a white and a black thread outside", it was explained to me), they preferred to wait for a Turkish "seal of approval" to do so. According to Islamic law, the time of fast depends on astronomic calculations and varies depending on the latitude. Even in Turkey, different cities breakfast at different times. Thus, during the final hour of fasting, one can see a pop-up announcing when this or that city or town can break fast. MESKHETIAN TURKS residing in Krasnodarskiy Krai located in a time zone different from Turkey waited for a number of Turkish cities to be announced before they agreed to break

prosperous because antennas are perceived as a luxury item. For Russians, who don't have an immediate reason to watch satellite television, antennas on Meskhetian Turks houses served as a physical reminder of not only ethnic, but also financial differences.

Mariam takes me to a living room. The room is almost empty; topchan, a large 4x7 feet construction covered with pillows, is set up in one corner. Mariam and I sit down on this platform; as if out of nowhere a table low to the ground appears between us (Mariam's youngest daughter quietly brought the table from the kitchen and quickly set it up for tea).

> *When we moved into the house, the first thing we built was this topchan <a raised platform>. It is much more convenient to sit on it than on a couch. You put minderler on it, and you have a couch, a bed, an arm chair – anything you want! Will we be able to build the platform in the US? This is the way we live.*

Topchans, or raised platforms, in the living room are one of the more important items in Meskhetian Turks houses. A topchan marks a center of family life – people have meals on it, watch TV and even sleep there (when guests arrive and there is not enough space in other rooms). In wealthier houses, a topchan in one corner of the room is complemented with either a sofa set or a table set to receive non-MT guests. Sitting on a topchan requires a certain flexibility that cannot always be expected of guests. That is why when non-Turkish guests visit and there are no alternative arrangements for sitting, hosts always apologize to their guests and bring out chairs for them to sit on. Topchans are so important to Turks that even if they are renting houses and are not sure how long they would be able to stay in a house, they nevertheless construct these platforms. Topchans clearly demarcate Meskhetian Turks' way of arranging space as different from that of

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their fast. "The entire world of Muslims is fasting and breaks their fast all at the same time" – they explained to me as one reason for being so keen on Turkish TV.

Russians. As such, it serves as an ethnic marker that in public situations reinforces one's ethnic affiliation and in private family settings immediately creates a sense of belonging.

A topchan is also used to serve meals. Unlike Uzbeks who set up *dastarkhan* (a cloth on which food is served) on the floor, Meskhetian Turks use low to the ground tables that they put on the topchan. They also refer to the process of setting up a table as "*dastrakhan*" borrowing the term from their Uzbek neighbors. But when asked if there is a difference between their way of eating and that of Uzbeks, Meskhetian Turks emphasize that it is not just the table that makes a difference. "We never put bread on the floor. We respect bread too much to do this. That's why we use tables – we show respect to our bread" – Mariam explained to me.

We go outside, and Mariam continues the tour of the compound.

> *We never keep the gates locked, the door is always open. But there is always somebody at home, we never leave the house empty. When you have animals – cows, goats, - somebody always needs to be at home to take care of the animals. When I go to visit my daughter in Rostov, then my daughter-in-law will be milking cows and taking them out in the morning. And if she goes to her parents, then I have to stay. This is our cow shed. It is cold, but winters are not that cold here, so the cows survive just fine. Goats and a dog also live here.*

In Turkish households, which are usually big, there is always somebody staying in the house. Life, closely connected with land and animals, requires one's constant presence and care. Meskhetian Turks rationalized this in a different way. They emphasized a need to keep a house "alive" and "going".

Space inside the house is private. But even a brief tour of a Meskhetian Turks house shows that the "public" and the "private" are not absolute categories but relative. Their meaning shifts depending on circumstances. Tomlinson argues that Meskhetian Turks do not fit a model of 'house-societies' in part because they do not identify with the

physical space of the house.[69] *Ev içine* refers literally, like 'household,' to the *people inside* the house, without specific attachment to the house itself. Most frequently they are identified by reference to their 'village' or father (cf. Pine 1996). While this is indeed true, it is important to distinguish the private and public forms of identification. And though, indeed, a group does not have a strong symbolic affiliation with a house (given the Meskhetian Turkish relocation history, it would be hard to expect that), for individuals the intimate space of a house as a representation of their private lives remains an important point of reference and identification. It is a location of memories and emotions, and as such it plays a role in forging normalcy in everyday life and in creating a base for one's identification.

Mariam takes me back to the house. It's a quiet afternoon, grandchildren are asleep, and before taking a nap herself, she pours some tea and talks to me about the past and the present, the way life was and the way she hopes it would be.

Houses in Georgia.

For Mariam, memories of her house in Georgia were vague. She was born in Uzbekistan, and thus her memories centred on a house of her parents as well as her husband's house later. I did interview several people who remember life back in Georgia. For them, memories of their home in Georgia are memories of their childhood.

> *Our houses were terrace houses… We used to play on the roof… We had a large garden. It was cold and empty that day. We were playing in the garden when my mother's brother came and told us to go home. We had to pack up and leave…We had a big house, many rooms. We had guests all the time. That's how my grandmother taught me – you have to respect guests, they get everything.*

[69] See chapters three and six for discussion of Meskhetian Turks non-territorial identification.

Brief, scattered memories of the past are reflected in the few photographs that remained from that period. Even fewer material domestic objects survived to remind people of the past. During the deportation people were not able to take much with them, as they were often only given few hours to pack. Hence, few non-utilitarian, non-perishable items[70] were taken on that long journey.

> *When we were told that we had to leave immediately, my mother went to the kitchen and started frying flour. She cooked a lot of it and packed it in a sack. Then, during the trip, she would take a little bit of flour from the sack, mix it with water and we had an instant soup. That's how we survived. Others who did not take food with them did not make it. Animals were left behind… Some were slaughtered, but not all meat could be taken – one could take only few bags. Everything happened so fast, we could not plan anything.*

The horrifying journey to Central Asia is most frequently invoked through memories of food – lack of it, provisions for survival and constant feeling of hunger that accompanied people on that long trip.

For the older generation, childhood memories of Georgia were real and poignant. Yet, they hardly ever transmitted those memories to their children and grandchildren. It seemed as if those memories were too painful to become public even among family members.

"My father hardly ever spoke about Georgia. And I never asked. Now I wish I had, but there is no one to ask now. I know that Georgia was our motherland, but I don't have memories of it…" – Ruslan, a 50 year old driver, told me. His lament was not unique as few informants of the post-deportation generation could tell you anything specific about Georgia. However, indirect information about villages in Georgia did

[70] Gold beaded necklaces passed on from mothers to daughters on their wedding days were one of the items that ensured continuity between generations and between places (Georgia-Uzbekistan-Russia). Jewelry was easier to carry during forced migration. However, before a trip to the US, some families were forced to sell their gold beaded necklaces to get money for the journey.

survive beyond 1944. The relationship between families and their original villages affects the specific of kinship (as discussed in the following chapter) through a concept of kuv.

The pain of losing their homes in Georgia is still real for the older generation of the Meskhetian Turks. "You lose a handkerchief, and you are upset. We lost homes, we lost land, we lost motherland… Our hearts hurt and cry inside" – 85 year old Fatima summarized her emotional response to a TV program about Georgia that was on when I was interviewing her. "I close my eyes, and I see the mountains, our house, our orchard. My mother is in the kitchen, baking bread… But now it is all gone, not even the TV can show me what I lost".

It is hard to explain why memories of Georgia were not passed down through the generations. Perhaps, the older generation did not have much time to mourn the loss of its motherland because it had to survive in the hard conditions of special settlements in Central Asia. And then, the later generations knew nothing of the land from which they were expelled. They already built houses and established their home in Central Asia.

Symbolic meaning of houses during the Soviet period (life history of a house).

"More tea?" – Mariam pours me a piala (a shallow cup without handles). More tea means more stories, and even though I feel as if I cannot possibly drink any more, I accept the piala and this prompts another lesson: "When I was little, my mother taught me – we never pour full piala, Uzbeks do that. We pour just half a piala. A good hostess will offer her guests tea many times, and every time it will be hot. If you pour full piala, tea will get cold before a guest can finish it".

For Mariam, Uzbekistan was a place she considered her own. Indeed, most informants remembered Central Asia fondly. Despite the painful rupture of ties with

Georgia, it seemed that many accepted Central Asia as their new home and established their lives there. Stories about houses in Uzbekistan were gathered slowly, over a course of many conversations. Sometime, details of life in Central Asia would be remembered over dinner. Other times, a joint activity like peeling potatoes or onions for a wedding would open gates for a conversation about the way life was during the Soviet Period. The story below was selected because it captures themes mentioned during other conversations well.

> *When we arrived to Yangiyul, it was all empty... Dusty streets with a few houses here and there… Uzbeks – they didn't know how green a village could be. They were ok with dusty streets. We changed it all. We set to build houses right away, nice houses, large and spacious… We had large orchards around houses… Our entire village was green. People dug canals <aryki> that brought water directly to their gardens. In the spring, canals would fill up with water, overflow. It was important to keep an eye on children – it was dangerous, they could drown. But during the summer, canals would dry up. We still had enough water for our gardens though. We brought water and turned those villages green. All those orchards – our kolkhoz was famous for that! In the spring, you come out of the house and see gardens turning white with flowers. It was so beautiful!*
>
> *Our people were dropped off right in the middle of nowhere – there were no houses there, nothing. People used to dig houses in the ground and live there. But then we built proper houses and even brought central gas heating to the houses. Between the city (Tashkent) and our village – there were 2 Uzbek villages. They did not have gas either. But they did not even bother. We put money together and brought gas to the village.*

Nostalgic reminiscences over times long gone frequently juxtaposed the Meskhetian Turkish way of life with that of Uzbeks. The introduction to memories about the private world of the Meshetian Turkish village was prefaced with the public denunciation of the Uzbek organization of settlements. These comparisons were never hostile, but rather

served as a reminder of a difference between them, the Uzbeks, and us, the Turks[71]. A general organization of settlement space further reinforced markers of group cohesion.

> *After marriage I moved to my husband's family. He was the youngest son, so he had the responsibility of caring for his parents. We lived in their old house at first. I did not like it, it was too small. His older brother also lived there. Then we decided to expand. We decided to build a large house, two stories… Bedrooms on the second floor, the kitchen on the first floor…A Large terrace on the second floor. When you have guests, you set up minderler on the terrace ,a light breeze blows gently, guests are enjoying their meal and tea, they can talk for hours there! … The house had a nice big internal yard. Our new house, the old house, the summer kitchen and my husband's brother's house formed walls around it. Animals were in the back. It was easy to keep an eye on the children – they would play in the yard, and either I or my sister-in-law could always see them. I could cook in the kitchen and watch them play in the yard.*

According to the Meskhetian Turkish traditions, the youngest son in the family stays with his parents and takes care of them in the old age. Thus, he does not have the burden of building a new house but inherits the land and the old house. But in reality, brothers frequently stayed together or lived in close proximity even after marriage. Houses were built on one plot of land forming a family compound. Buildings surrounded the inner courtyard where people socialized, women got their work done and children enjoyed safe space to play. This architectural design was not unique to Turks alone, but was also shared with their Uzbek neighbors.

In a compound, even though cooking was done separately, certain responsibilities like bread baking or yogurt making could be shared. Preparations for weddings or funerals also required participation of the extended kin (more on this and specifics of kinship in the next chapter).

[71] Curiously, a similar pattern was observed during fieldwork in the US. Stories about life in Russia were usually prefaced with a discussion about negative changes that affected Russia after the Turks had left.

Life of a household was extremely private. Only family members could gain access to the house's private quarters. Guests, whose relationship with the family could not be established on kin terms, were usually hosted outside or in the formal dining room. Hospitality laws require that bread and tea are offered to any guest who enters a house. Yet, culturally specific notions of public and private determine who is allowed into the family quarters and who is received in a more formal setting.

> *Kitchen… We had 2 kitchens. One was inside the house, and the other was a summer kitchen. When it was too hot to cook inside the house during the summer, we would move cooking there. All the kazans for plov were there as well.*
>
> *I baked bread every day. For our large family, I had to bake at least 4 loaves. My mother-in-law taught me to bake. We did not have a very good relationship, but she taught me to bake bread. Do you see this fork? <she showed me a wooden fork with nails on top forming a circular pattern>. This is what we use to make designs on our bread. My mother-in-law gave it to me and I will pass it on to my granddaughter when she is a little bit older. She will know how to bake good bread, our bread.*

One cannot overestimate significance of bread in the Turkish tradition (cf. Tomlinson 2004). Stories of bread making and the overall mastery of baking were mentioned as the defining features of good Turkish cooks. My informants described bread as both a sign of continuity between generations (a skill of bread making was learnt either from one's mother or mother-in-law) and as a characteristic of the ethnic group[72]. "We can bake over

[72] Upon several occasions I have been told a "modern" myth about the mastery of the Meskhetian Turks in cooking. "Once, a president of Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev, called several Kazakh and MT women. He gave them bread, flower, water and meat and asked them to cook whatever they can. Kazakhs were only able to cook beshbarmak – soup with noodles and boiled meat. But our women were able to cook 30 different dishes. We make samsa, bread, puff pastry (need to get proper names for these dishes) bread – a lot of different types of bread, we cook manti, khinkali, different soups. When Nazarbayev saw all of this, he told the Kazakhs: "Look, you should learn from the Meskhetian Turks – they will never go hungry as they can cook so many things from so few products"". I heard this story twice in this household – it seems to be their favorite story that proves the abilities of their people (I am curious whether it has any historical truth to it – need to double check). They made 3 types of bread this time (see listed above). Samsa was filled with grated pumpkin. I think I like the plain bread (etmek) the best. I didn't enjoy samsa or the puff bread all that much.

100 different styles of bread!" – Zaravshan, 62 year old driver, boasted during dinner (notably, he personally could not cook anything; his remark transformed a female skill of baking into a defining feature of the entire ethnic group). Surprisingly, very little attention was paid to the ovens where bread was baked. My informants mentioned a wide range of cooking devices – from tandoor-style ovens to the electric "chudo" (miracle) portable ovens. Unlike other Turkish groups (REF), for Meskhetian Turks it wasn't so much the hearth as the product itself – a wide variety of breads, - and a skill of working with flour that defined the group.

> *It took us a long time to rebuild the house. First, children were born. And my husband was away frequently, he was always traveling, never at home. So, I was the one caring for the entire household <semya> - cooking, cleaning, taking care of my mother-in-law, all of this was on me. But I never complained. I was just hoping that one day we'd have this big new house.*
>
> *We had 2 cows, several sheep and chicken. Cows were very good, they gave lots of milk and we made yogurt, cheese, tvorog with it. Some we sold, the rest was for us. We had good cows. You have cows you have money.*
>
> *We had many minderler. I brought many with me – my mother made them. I was also making some as dowry for my daughters. One needs good quality wool for that. We had nice things in the house – we bought a dinnerware set "Kristina" <the Czech china>, nice rugs. I had many cuts of fabric. It was hard to buy ready made clothes. Even good fabric was hard to come by. So, I had many nice cuts stored. My mother-in-law had a sewing machine, a real "Zinger". All of this was left. Not long before leaving we bought a refrigerator – Samarkand. All of this we had to leave behind. We, could not arrange bringing it with us.*

Stories about dowry and dowry preparation played an important role in women's narratives. Brought by a young bride to her husband's family, dowry served as an indicator of a woman's status in the new family (Delaney 1991; Hart 2007). The

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Later, I got a continuation on this story. Apparently, Nazarbayev's father died when Nazarbayev was a student. The Turks arranged for his funeral – that's the reason why he is so favorably inclined towards the Turks. That's also the reason why he wanted to prevent any possibility of conflicts between the Turks and the Kazakhs. The competition was arranged at the time when the tensions between members of these two ethnic groups began to rise and it was meant to diminish animosity between them

enumeration of brand names when describing dowry is interesting as it indicates a rise of consumerism even in the Soviet Union in a rural setting in the 1970s. Items made in the house – like minderler, pillows for sitting, - contrast with items purchased in a store. Manufactured things are frequently remembered with a particular brand, almost like a personal name, which also elevated its status. While there were only a few types of dinnerware sets available, "Kristina" was one of the most popular. Produced in Czechoslovakia, the set carried with it an aura of being "*importnyi*" (i.e., imported). Thus, mentioning a particular name raises the status of my interlocutor because at that time she possessed a highly prized item. The material world of private property during the Soviet period also reflected gendered differences. Thus, while women mentioned domestic items in their stories of life in Uzbekistan, men more frequently mentioned cars – Ladas and Volgas. The private and the public worlds of a Soviet citizen colluded through consumption of goods. Thus, consumerism of the Soviet period, even if markedly different from a similar phenomenon in the capitalist society, nevertheless was an important aspect of everyday life (Reid 2002: 245).

> *Our house was big. It was almost finished in 1989. We just completed putting the wallpaper, bought new mattresses, put in windows. And then those events <uprising in Fergana> happened. I remember our village went so quiet. Many people left. My husband was away on a trip, so we could not go anywhere. And the village was empty. And I was there alone, with 5 kids. My youngest was just a year old. So, we hid in the house. We put mattresses on the floor in one room. All children were sleeping on mattresses. My sister-in-law and her children were with us. And we stayed up, taking turns guarding the house – 2 women and 9 children. It was so scary. Dogs were howling through the night, they knew that their owners left. A few men that stayed in the village got together and were patrolling the streets. They pulled down some of the street lights to block off roads so that no intruders could come unannounced. But it was even darker on the streets because of that.*
> *But where could we go? My husband wasn't there. And our new house… Only one night – that night, - we spent in it, women and children sleeping in one room. And then my husband returned and we had to leave right away.*

"I was comforted to hear dogs barking. I knew then that I was not completely alone… and so many dogs died – they were missing their owners too much. So, they just died. There were many dead dogs laying around… There were nights when I could not sleep – I would just stay up acutely listening into the night trying to hear whether anybody was coming. My aunt was also staying in the village. So, I would stay in my house during the day and then go to her house for the night. At least, it was not as scary this way". She begged her husband to come and get her otherwise the Uzbeks would come and kill them. "What would you do then, she asked her husband. Well, I would come and kill the Uzbeks, he replied. He did not think it would be too late for us to make any difference. And so, he did not come".

Sudden abandonment of their houses, fear for their own lives and lives of their children, trauma of leaving everything behind in order to flee – all of this was present in stories narrated to me by my informants. Yet, despite profound feelings of loss and tragedy of this forced relocation, Meskhetian Turks do not seem to publicly acknowledge what happened to them as a group. On one hand, there is no public space for Meskhetian Turks to commemorate their past (Tomlinson 2002: 72). As citizens of a state that disappeared without acknowledging crimes of the past, Meskhetian Turks have difficult time fighting for a right for a public recognition of their tragedy. On the other hand, there does not seem to be a private need among the Meskhetian Turks for such recognition either. There is a gap between generations in terms of their memories of the Soviet period. For several generations born and brought up in Uzbekistan (after 1944), memories of the Soviet period are in a sense "private" – they are filtered through individual memories of everyday life. Memories of the Soviet Union are memories of going to work, getting married, rebuilding a house, watching children play in the yard and dividing household duties. Meskhetian Turks shared with the rest of the Soviet people a sense of certainty of the future, certainty that helped them focus on the private world,

knowing that the future was taken care of by the state. Meskhetian Turks do not mourn or condemn an abstract Soviet empire, but remember the more concrete aspects of their lives: their houses, rugs, china sets and cows, and of course, people (more on this in chapter 6).

The symbolic meaning of houses after the Soviet Period.

Discussions with Mariam took a different turn when a wave of relocation reached the V. village. Packing and leaving everything behind became a reality once again. During the Fergana uprising, evacuation was more urgent and there was hardly time to contemplate the inevitable. In case of a resettlement to the US, the lack of an immediate physical threat and the extended period of time over which the formal processing of documents took place contributed to a somber atmosphere that fell over villages anticipating the relocation. My conversations with Mariam became more intense. We still drank copious amounts of tea, but now the conversation shifted back and forth as Mariam shared her concerns about leaving and inquired about life in the States.

> *It was hard for us to buy a house. We came to Krasnodar because S.'s relatives (Mariam's husband's) moved here. So, we decided to follow them. We built this house, almost from scratch. And now we are leaving – and everything stays behind. I feel as if something died inside of me. I cannot think of what was in the past, I cannot think of what is going to be in the future. I just go through the day like a ghost*

When Meskhetian Turks moved into the region, they had an option of selecting their residence. Their relocation coincided with a resettlement of Crimean Tatars back to Crimea and thus Meskhetian Turks had a greater availability of housing options open to them. Barak-style housing was generally cheaper and far less desirable by the local people. Thus, it was more readily available for purchase (particularly in the Eastern areas

of the region). Private houses were highly prized by both the Meskhetian Turks and the local population. Difficulties of registration in the region, the unwillingness of local residents to allow newcomers in, and changing laws of private property ownership introduced certain difficulties in purchasing houses (Allina-Pisano 2008). Decisions to come to Krasnodar Krai were usually influenced by the decisions of other family members (more on the role of individual and collective see the next chapter). .

> *When we came, the Crimean Tatars were leaving. So, there were some houses available. But locals were buying them as well. It was hard to buy a house… Prices went up, it was expensive…. Then, we found this house – it was small, the owner was a local drunkard. He had another house, but kept this one as well. So, he sold it to us. We just gave him money and he let us move in. Then, years later after he died, his relatives tried to take us to court about this house. There was lots of arguing; we ended up paying them a bit more. Right now, I don't even know whether we'll be able to sell the house and who the official owner of it is.*

> *Our house is a single story, individual house. Some of our relatives bought houses in "barak" style buildings – kind of like an apartment building. Those "baraks" were built as temporary housing, but there is nothing more permanent than temporary, right? Baraks were cheaper, but we did not want to live in a place like this. In this village there were very few baraks, but we did not even look at those. We wanted to buy our own house.*

Buying a house in the early 90s was something of a problem. Private property laws were changing. Meskhetian Turks' ability to buy houses was compromised by a link between one's residence and registration required of all citizens living in a particular region. Therefore, buying a house was not just a private, individual matter between a buyer and a seller, but also a public matter of migration control. In the 90s, when inter-regional migration increased, registration became a strategy to control a ethnic character of a region's residents and, as authorities argued, a matter of security (see chapter 3 and 4).

The tightening of state regulations in the matters of residence control (and the state's inability to direct massive population movements that affected much of the European part of Russia in the early 90s) could not prevent Meskhetian Turks from moving into the region and paying money for houses. However, the state was able to prevent Meskhetian Turks from registering these transactions and obtaining residence permits. Many deals carried out in the early 90s were done informally. Once money was paid by a buyer, a seller would draft a letter indicating that he or she was giving a house as a gift ("darstvennaya"). The state could not interfere with a more private concept of a gift, although legal aspects of these transactions came to be questioned later, when the Meskhetian Turks began to leave for the United States.

> *S: after we bought the house, we moved in. But it was so small, and one room even had soil floor. So we had to rebuild everything because it wasn't good for children to live in a place like this. We started rebuilding – one room after another. It was a long project, because we were doing everything ourselves. Then we got our son married. I wanted the house to be finished by the wedding day. But unfortunately, it never got done. As you can see, we added a room on the side, new roof, expanded space in the attic. I planned the attic to be my office. We wanted to update the kitchen, to buy a new stove. I wanted to do "euro-style" repairs. I wanted to put up crown molding, tiles near the stove. I still do. But I don't think we have the money right now.*

Efforts to build a house according to the "European" standards, a term that was introduced in the 90s to designate high-class renovations using brand-new materials, were not unique to the Meskhetian Turks. Many people wanted to improve their dwellings according to "international" or "European" standards. But lack of money and time (S. was extremely busy and hardly had time to focus on repairs) introduced modifications to the completion of repairs. Also, work on the house beyond a level of basic necessity was hard to carry out because of fears that their house might be taken away as well. "You

want to fix it… And yet, every night when you go to sleep you don't know whether somebody might come and take it all away. I cannot put my heart into this house even though I know that I need to get work done," – S. explained to me his predicament during a late night conversation. Half completed repairs were not unique to S' house. Many houses that I visited in the course of my stay in the village were undergoing some sort of repairs/renovations. While the scale of building projects varied from house to house, pride in one's residence as well as complaints about difficulties of completing those projects defined attitudes among house owners. The desire to create a comfortable living space ("Just like those Beverly Hills mansions!" – one informant jokingly described his vision for a 5 room-house where a family of 8 lived) were at odds with limited financial resources and overall uncertainty. The unpredictability of legal regulations of house ownership for those informants whose citizenship situation was unresolved also prevented many from investing heavily in their houses.

A cautious investment in houses in Krasnodar was frugal as selling properties prior to departure for the US turned out to be complicated for many Meskhetian Turks. The village was full of "For Sale" signs, which did not always succeed in attracting customers, and many Meskhetian Turks had to abandon their houses just like the Zhushkunov family, described in the introductory vignette. Mariam, in anticipation of their departure decided to take on a more proactive approach. Thus, she invited Surayo, a woman known for her special powers. Surayo arrived on a clear Wednesday morning and asked everybody to leave the house. She walked around all the rooms reading Quran.

Road-side Bazaars: taking the private out into public.

As the relocation process was sweeping through more and more villages, road size bazaars were becoming a regular fixture of village life. Preparing to leave for the

United States, the Meskhetian Turks were sorting through their belongings trying to decide what they might need in a new land and what had to stay behind. “How could one fit one’s life in the 70kg that we are allowed? What do I leave behind – my mother’s rugs or the kazans we brought with us from Uzbekistan? What do I take?” – Narmina asked rhetorically when we discussed preparations for leaving for the States. Household items that could not be taken to the US, were sold at the road side bazaars that spontaneously sprang up along major highways. Carpets, minderler, pots and pans, mattresses and occasional furniture lined the roadside houses. “I have 3 kazans – a huge, 20 liter one, that I brought all the way from Uzbekistan. We used that one for our daughter’s wedding. The kazan is good, do you see how thick it is? It will retain heat very well – good plov will come out!” – Nazgul proudly displayed a huge wok-like pot the aluminum interior of which was clean and sparkling. “But the locals are not buying – they are waiting for us to leave and give it to them just like that! That’s why we are standing by the road side, those who are driving through might stop and buy our things” – she explained the reason for the long lines of material possessions displayed beside the highway. Without even pausing to take a breath, she continued - “You know, I am thinking of buying a pasta machine… I saw one at the market last weekend… Do they sell pasta machines in the US?” Pasta machines became one of the most popular purchases among Meskhetian Turks (right after a stash of medications and photo albums) during those pre-departure days. A heavy duty pasta machine weighted 5-6 pounds, and given laments of many informants about difficulties of fitting their lives into airline luggage quotas, a decision to purchase a heavy item might seem surprising. Yet, given how popular this purchase was among women, one can conclude that it was more than just an irrational decision. “I will

be able to make fancy pasta, pelmeni, manti – what have you, - right after we arrive to the new place. I will not need to wait for anyone or even go to the store," – N. explained to me reasons for this unusual purchase.

Conclusions.

In her analysis of Meskhetian Turks in Azerbaijan, Ray concluded that they 'do not proclaim a collectivity that is distinctly nationalist and their sense of homeland is often not laden with naturalistic, biological and moral imageries,' (Ray 2000: 400). To her informants, 'home is a safe, everyday lived experience that should not be bound exclusively to one place' (ibid: 402). The same is true about my research as well; the only exception being that this conclusion can be extended to the past as well as applied to the present. I show that in their memories of the domestic sphere, Meskhetian Turks incorporate the Soviet period as a legitimate source of individual and group identity (cf. Taylor 1989).

Kaiser argues that "the importance of homeland, both in formation of national self-consciousness and as the place where international relations are played out, has rarely served as a focus of research in political geography" (Kaiser 1994: 5). Meskhetian Turks are a group that has experienced a displacement 3 times over the course of the last 60 years. The necessity of survival, a powerful ideology of internationalism developed during the Soviet period and socio-demographic characteristics of the group meant that Georgia, Uzbekistan and Russia were perceived as a place of identity and belonging in their own right (cf. Carsten 1995). Meskhetian Turks' case extends Kaiser's thought and Ray's acute observation by posing an important caveat – not only the importance of homeland, but also the importance of home as a place of belonging on a micro level, a

place of family, is no less important than being a member of a society and contributes to one's sense of identification.

In my review of private memories of the past and informants' ruminations about the present, I show that those memories are symbolic yet tangible. The past is expressed through memories of houses and dinnerware sets, bread making and dowry. Political events did not invalidate these memories; on the contrary, specifics of the Soviet regime and its aftermath are perceived through those implicit memories and turned into a part of one's private history (Stewart 2004). Thus, I show that life in the Soviet Union, a country where the public had subsumed the private, is nevertheless discussed in categories that constitute very personal and private memories.

The cataclysms of social transformations in the early 90s destroyed many of the Meskhetian Turks' material possessions. Yet, it was their efforts to recreate and to reclaim new houses in their new country that animate their stories about this period. Uncertainty of the present influences the way people interact with the material world. On the one hand, the material helps to combat the uncertainty (buying pasta maker before leaving). But on the other, high uncertainty prevents people from getting too attached to their material possessions (people cannot repair houses). However, if we examine the relationship between people and things, one can see that in the context of high uncertainty the public is taken over by the private. The private lives of people – with their material possessions, - are far more important than political recognition of a group (the privatization of public life is an aspect of social life that characterizes much of post-Soviet life in Russia and Meskhetian Turks share that with the rest of the population).

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the public became even more uncertain – not only people but the state itself did not know what to do, what to call themselves and where to move. Private property was lost as refugees were leaving. Yet, some aspects of the private remained with them (they were able to pack). Similarly, the permanent population was losing their private property while inflation was taking away their savings. Changes in labor markets were eliminating jobs, and the opening of borders took away certainty of consumption by creating new wants and desires. The new direction of social development implied that the private was indeed becoming the primary rhetoric of the new state (even Yeltsin's dictum about the right of nations to demand as much sovereignty as they want can be interpreted as a new take on the private-public debate; self-determination became a private matter of a nation and not a public decision of central authorities). Greater focus on the private led to an inversion of public life. In the early 90s, when a search for food was as much an issue for individuals as a search for an appropriate model of social development for the country as a whole, the boundaries of the public and the private were drawn and redrawn. However, as time went by, and a promise of public rights gave away, people turned more inward, focusing on a private world of consumption, family and their own bodies. Memories of the past also became private. The stability of the Soviet period is remembered through certainty of the material and the social that defined the world at that time. The loss of family, friends, and neighbors, as well as loss of private property and belongings, came to symbolize dissolution of the Soviet Union thereby making historical events part of one's private, personal memories. Nostalgia over things long gone explains the lack of negative feelings towards the past among the Meskhetian Turks

(and, perhaps, many other people who lived under the Soviet regime and found themselves struggle during the post-Soviet transformations).

CHAPTER 6. *Gelin Kaçırma*: Performing Identity among Meskhetian Turks.

I heard about *gelin kaçırma* fairly early in the fieldwork, when I was trying to organize native informants to conduct a general survey of the community. Two younger daughters, ages 16 and 20, spent most of their time at home and were fairly idle (there is not much to do in a village during winter). However, when I approached them with the suggestion and a promise of good pay, I was politely refused. Initially, the women did not explain reasons for their rejection, but when I pressed a bit more, the older of the women, Fatima, explained that they are concerned about bride kidnapping. Fatima told me that unmarried girls are not let out of the house by themselves. Even if they want to visit relatives, they need to be accompanied by somebody older.

As I continued living with the family and got to know their daily routine, I learnt that the "house arrest" was not as strict as Fatima initially described it. Fatima and Aygul would go out to buy bird food or visit a tailor almost every day. At times, they would even run errands alone. Yet, visiting relatives was indeed a more ceremonious affair that required younger women to be chaperoned. Thus, the idea of a survey carried out by young women could not be accomplished. But a conversation about *gelin kaçırma* remained in my mind making me wonder what this practice meant to men and women in the community and inspiring me to inquire what precisely it entailed.

Marriage by capture or bride kidnapping exists in a number of cultures all over the world. Prevalent in the Caucasus region, it was also practiced in Central Asia (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in particular (Kleinbach and Salimjanova 2007)). Thus, Meskhetian Turks' tradition never contradicted practices accepted in areas where they

were living prior to and after the deportation[73]. Given the centrality of marriage celebrations to community life, analysis of *gelin kaçırma* as a marked, extra-ordinary type of marital union, offers a perspective on normative aspects of marriage and kinship (cf. Bourdieu 1980: 179-180).

According to Bates' functionalist explanation of this phenomenon among the Yörük of Southeastern Turkey (1974), marriage by capture serves a number of social functions. It adjusts a marriage system to realities of individual choice; resolves disputes in cases of multiple contenders for a bride; mitigates effects of high expense incurred by a groom's family for bride price. Finally, in a system tightly knit through social networks and explicit regulations of marriage market, bride kidnapping "shakes up" a society by dispersing affinal relationships that could otherwise be much more concentrated. In this chapter, I am not analyzing functions of *gelin kaçırma* (some of which most likely confirm to Bates' observations). Instead, I examine this phenomenon in the context of social processes taking place within the Meskhetian Turks' community and the larger society. I show that cases of bride abduction confirm importance of kin, illuminate differences of gendered behavior in marriage and reaffirm ethnic identity. At the same time, accounts of *gelin kaçırma* highlight effects of social inequality on status of individual members (cf. Kuper 1999).

Despite developments in kinship theory, recent studies of bride kidnapping in the region focus on violations of human rights and problematize issues of women's declining status employing a concept of individual human rights (Grant 2009; Werner 2004). I follow a different approach as I examine cases of *gelin kaçırma* within a wider context of

[73] After Meskhetian Turks' arrival to Krasnodarskiy Krai, the situation changed as then reported cases of bride kidnapping were interpreted as an ethnic difference and fueled anti-Meskhetian Turkish sentiments.

a symbolic syntax of relatedness of traditional marriages and a socio-moral framework that shapes informants' expectations and behaviors in matters of marriage and kin relations (Herzfeld 1985: 25-26). I show that instances of *gelin kaçırma* are incorporated into the social fabric of the Meskhetian Turks' community and show an influence of wider social relations between Meskhetian Turks and other ethnic groups (particularly, Russians).

Through analysis of *gelin kaçırma* as a controversial but nevertheless culturally recognized form of contracting a marriage, I make three arguments. First, kinship is constituted through performance. Rituals in a formal marriage arrangement not only manifest the good will of all parties involved, but also symbolically legitimize a marriage. Unions contracted through *gelin kaçırma* lack this legitimacy with implications for subsequent relationships among kin. In this section, I analyze kinship as an act of becoming (and staying) related by drawing attention to its ceremonial aspects (cf. Sertel 1971). This argument contributes to the studies of kinship that examined relatedness in terms of being and doing (Bourdieu 1980).Second, kinship as a performance enacts a particular type of identity. As an internal identity within a community, kinship is enacted via a range of roles and practices reflecting ethical categories (good daughter/bad daughter, good son/bad son, good parent/bad parent etc.). Instances of *gelin kaçırma* provide examples of bad roles thereby disciplining other community members and preventing the practice from gaining a wider acceptance. Building on the argument about marriage as a performance of a particular type of identity, I highlight ethical aspects of performing relatedness. Third, kinship also provides a basis for an inter-group identity as it offers community members a template for "our", "cultural", or "ethnic" behavior (cf.

Ilcan 1999). Family relations are contrasted with relations of Meskhetian Turks' Russian neighbors thereby confirming group cohesion through notions of appropriate behavior and identity. Kinship in this case performs signification of sameness and difference and ensures social reproduction of an ethnic group.

Kinship is not just a calculated matrix of social relations or a utilitarian function of communal work, but reflects matters of affect (Borneman 1999), represents socially specific ethics (Fabion 1999) and serves as a strategy of both inclusion and exclusivism (Youngblood 1999). By analyzing the micro-politics of kinship, this chapter complements a discussion of macro-level transformations of ethnicity, citizenship and migration presented in previous chapters. The chapter is organized in the following way: the first section, on kinship as performance, describes rules of arranging a marriage and introduces details of *gelin kaçırma* by illustrating a general discussion with a case study of kidnapped bride. The second section, on the disciplining of identity, presents a discussion of normative bases of kinship roles in disciplining narratives. The last section draws connections between changes to the Meskhetian Turks as a group in the last 15 years and changing patterns of social relations in the larger society.

Gelin Kaçırma and Kinship as Performance.

A young girl in a heavy traditional dress is shown to a room full of guests. Her head is covered with *yüz örti*, a heavy scarf over *katha*, a small red headdress decorated with golden disks, usually passed down from generation to generation. *Yüz örti* conceals her eyes and face. She has never been to this house before, and she cannot see where she is taken, but her *yenge*, a woman who assists a bride in the first days after marriage (preferably, a godfather's wife), is there to guide her in. The bride slowly raises and then

lowers her right arm, then her left arm in *temen almaya*, a gesture signifying respect to her new family. The groom's sister ties a small sum of money into a corner of *yüz örti*, and only after that can the scarf be removed. To do so, one of groom's friends takes out two knives and striking them menacingly together asks an audience in a formulaic statement whether a bride's tongue or head should be cut off. With the audience mercifully cheering for her tongue, he finally unveils the bride's face for everyone to see. A loud chatter about the bride's appearance is heard around the room as most people there have not had a chance to see the bride. She's taken inside the house to be changed into a rented "European" wedding dress to attend *toy*, a celebration marking her final transfer to her groom's family.

A bride's entrance into her new home symbolizes some of the basic tenets of marriage – she is a stranger unknown to most people present in the room. Her subservient role is confirmed by a vow of silence suggested in a threat of cutting off her tongue[74]. Groom's family provides her attire as now his family will take a responsibility for the new member; the bride will have the least amount of power in the household. *Temen almaya*, a gesture of respect, will mark her status as a bride for a long period of time. Accompanied by a relative stranger, she is no longer a member of her natal household (none of whom are present at this celebration). She has to accept her new role as *gelin*, a bride.

[74] Indeed, a bride will not be able to directly speak to most of her in-laws. Malika, a woman in her 50s, describes her experiences as a young bride: "I was a young bride. Cleaning, cooking, arranging. I tried to be a good wife. My brother in law was at home and he was bored. He wanted to speak to me, but I could not talk to him. So, he tried to ask me questions, I kept on brushing the floor and kept silent. He tried to make jokes. I kept silent. Then, he picked up my one year old son by his legs, raised him up and threatened: "Speak to me, *gelin*, or I will drop". I knew that he was joking and he would never do anything of the kind. So, I kept silent. I was a good bride".

Traditional Meskhetian Turks' wedding is a beautiful chain of performances, full of complex symbolism that marks a union between two families and results in a transfer of a bride from her natal household to that of her future husband. A wedding (both the celebration and the preceding process of negotiations) as an act of establishing marriage is not just a rite of passage. It is an act of conclusively constituting social relations and publicly affirming mutual commitment of the parties involved (Lambek 2011: 3-4). Practice theory (Bourdieu 1977) powerfully explained how kinship is constituted on a daily basis through acts of sharing food (Carsten 1995) and money (Metzo 2006), carrying out household chores (White 2004), visiting, receiving inheritance (Hertzfeld 1980), eating and playing (Weismantel 1995), etc. Important as daily routines are in maintaining kin and providing a basis for a proper understanding of the full complexity of social relations, alone they are insufficient to ensure social reproduction. Rituals are necessary to intentionally and irreversibly establish social connections (Kertzer 1988). Cases of *gelin kaçırma* confirm that even though marriage through bride kidnapping is an accepted social practice, lack of proper rituals that marks marriages contracted through *gelin kaçırma* affects interaction among affines and influences marriage outcomes.

Like many other Central Asian and Caucasian cultures, Meskhetian Turks prefer arranged marriages that are organized by groom's and bride's parents. A marriage joins more than individuals and creates a link between households and larger extended families. In most cases, a choice of a spouse is based on a family's reputation and to a lesser extent on reported moral character of a bride or a groom and of their siblings. Financial standing is not as important in spousal selection (Tomlinson 2004: 160-164). The reputation of one's kuv (more on this in Chapter 1) is important as an indication of

the reputation of an extended family and might influence parents' decision about desirability of a marriage partner.

Potential spouses are frequently identified through kinship networks. Even though there is a prohibition on marriage between close relatives ("close" is defined as equivalent to 7 generations), spouses are preferred from one's kin. The elder relatives play a significant role in match making and can even supersede parental plans for their children. Thus, an old and respectable relative approaching bride's parents with an offer of marriage on behalf of a groom is hard to reject. Rejections do occur between very distant or unrelated families. And it is in those cases that bride kidnapping can most frequently happen as a way to overcome parental refusal.

Brides rarely have a say in a selection of a spouse. Even though they can officially decline, most of the time it is the parents' decision that determines their fate. To a certain degree, a groom has greater agency in choosing a spouse, but by and large even he only sees a bride one or two times and mostly makes his decision based on reported moral characteristics, reputation of a bride's family and her personal physical attractiveness. Weddings are popular events for identifying brides as it is a major opportunity for men and women to observe each other. Parents of young daughters are usually extremely concerned about letting their daughters attend weddings of distant relatives for fears of potential bride abductions (more on this in the next sections).

Once groom's representatives receive a positive answer from a bride's father (or bride's father's representatives), they confirm the decision through a ceremony "*ali alah, ali verah*" that ritualistically replicates a process of giving and receiving a bride. Then both parties are served a sweet drink called *sherbet* (or sweet water) and gifts are

exchanged. Only men are present at the initial stages of negotiations. Women are invited to participate in drinking of *sherbet* that is considered an official end to an engagement. A marriage is officiated at a *nikah* ceremony after which a bride is described as *nisandi* or 'betrothed' (Tomlinson 2002: 167). *Toy,* or a wedding celebration, concludes a bride's transfer to her new family.

Neither a bride, nor a groom is present at a *sherbet* or *nikah*. Even their parents do not have to be present as a decision about the union is made by their senior relatives who represent them. This process confirms that a marriage joins more than just two individuals or two nuclear families but is a matter of larger families coming together. Just as a bride cannot go against wishes of her parents, her parents cannot object to matrimonial plans of a respected senior relative who initiates a marriage proposal. Thus, seniority supersedes parental authority and plays a role in establishing new marital unions.

Gelin kaçırma denotes a wide spectrum of unions ranging from actual abductions to consensual elopements. In this chapter, I mostly focus on abductions as those cases were mentioned more frequently and played a more important role in discussions of normative bases of marriage. *Gelin kaçırma* confirms and redefines a process of marriage customary among the Meskhetian Turks. Just like in marriages arranged by parents or community elders, a bride and a groom might not know each other well. Even though it might seem at first that *gelin kaçırma* is an act of individual (especially male) rebellion of will against an imposition of a community, involvement of elders is crucial in consequent negotiations when two families need to come together and resolve the conflict. However,

even though social connections are mended after abduction takes place, parental involvement is minimized in cases of family discord.

The rules of kidnapping were explained to me during a wedding. Kidnappings can happen either with or without a woman's consent (and even without her prior knowledge; although, my informants questioned whether a woman could be that ignorant). Usually, a man gets together with few of his close friends and waits for a woman to leave her house alone. Then, friends approach and lure her to a car where the "groom" is waiting. Their goal is to drive the woman away before any of her relatives realize what's going on and to keep her with the groom's family for at least a full day (and up to 3 days[75]). Unlike in a case of a regular marriage proposal, the elder relatives are not involved with marriage arrangement at this stage. However, they do interfere shortly after abduction took place. If the woman's relatives manage to find her before the day's end, her reputation could be spared and she could be returned to her parental household. However, if she spends a night under her captor's roof, she will be considered unmarriageable by anybody else as her virtue would be tarnished. Potential violence on behalf of a kidnapped bride's relatives is constrained by the fact that the affair is regarded as deviant behavior and all direct participants are morally suspect. This encourages the girl's kinsmen not to become closely involved in any direct action against the groom's family, as they would do in other cases of personal assault (cf. Bates, 1974: 280). Following the abduction, groom's elder relatives send a delegation to a bride's family to straighten things out and to arrange a bride wealth (that is usually considerably smaller than in a case of a regular marriage). Even though marriage cannot be refused at this stage, propriety is important as it

[75] A requirement of 3 days could be related to a general notion that a guest residing in a house is only treated as a guest during the first 3 days; after that a guest becomes a pseudo-family member and is expected to contribute to household chores/expenses.

establishes relations between the two families, a process important to Meskhetian Turks who value kin networks (Tomlinson 2004: 162). At this stage, *gelin kaçırma* and traditional marriages follow a very similar course of events. Negotiations between two families establish social connections that are meant to last a lifetime. Families exchange necessary gifts (even though the amount of gifts is smaller than in cases of a traditional wedding). Even though *nikah* is mandatory just as it is for an ordinary marriage, *toy*, a wedding celebration hosted by a groom's family is cancelled in most cases. In theory, once formalities between the two families are resolved, *gelin kaçırma* does not carry stigma with it (even though it might be invoked during marriage negotiations of a kidnapped bride's younger sisters). Yet, as a case of Nazli, an abducted bride, demonstrates that even years after the abduction, interaction between affinal kin bears influence of the way the marriage was contracted.

Gelin Kaçırma: Nazli (A Case Study). A primer on bride kidnapping was helpful when I learned that Nazli, the elder daughter in the family where I was staying, was kidnapped 10 years earlier. Contemplating a divorce and currently residing with her parents, Nazli was shy at first to talk about her marriage. But as she got to know me better, she became more comfortable discussing her personal life. During several interactions she told me that she had no idea what was going on when she was bride-kidnapped.

> *I did not know him. Of course, he is from the same village, so I saw him before but we never spoke. So, when I was kidnapped, it was a huge surprise. I was shocked, did not know what to do. But now? Now, I love him. Well, I took care of him when he broke his leg, I nursed him back to health. It is all his mother – she is the one who never wanted our relationship and instigates him against me.*

At the time of kidnapping, Nazli was 19 and her parents were contemplating several candidates as perspective husbands. As the eldest of 5 daughters, Nazli was to be

married well in order to ensure good marriages for her sisters. In the follow up conversations, Nazli revealed that she and her future husband not only saw each other but communicated at the market as well. Few interactions never resulted in any extended time spent together but did lead to a bit of flirtation. Nazli confessed that she knew her future husband liked her but hoped that he would send his male relatives to ask her father for her hand in marriage. It is not clear whether Nazli willingly entered a car when she was approached by her husband's friends, but it is obvious that she wanted to get married to him. Nazli did not have a "proper" wedding. The families decided to formalize the union without an extensive celebration. This remained a cause of grief for Nazli who remarked that she would have liked a proper celebration.

During our conversations Nazli complained that her mother-in-law was hostile towards her. Originally, she set her eyes on a different bride for her son, but he decided to take matter in his own hands and simply brought Nazli to their house one day. As an elder son, he does not have a responsibility of caring for his mother and hence was able to move out of the household. Yet, the strained relationship between Nazli and her mother-in-law never improved, and even birth of Nazli's children did not change the situation. "She <the mother-in-law> never forgets how we got married and always instigates him against me… She wants our divorce, I know it… And he listens to his mother" – she confided one day.

In theory, after a kidnapped bride enters her new home, she does not bear stigma and is fully accepted by her new family. Women in the groom's household greet and begin persuading her to consent to marriage. Even though a bride's family does not have information about the kidnapping, a groom's family is much better informed about the

plan. Women play a role in this process as they are gaining an additional help in the household, and thus it is important to establish an amicable relationship with a young bride from the beginning. However, the reality was slightly different. Plans of impending kidnapping were not always shared with all household members (and women in particular). According to Nazli, her mother-in-law was unpleasantly surprised with her son's plan. Even though she supported him in his decision, she never warmed up to her daughter in law.

According to Nazli, her husband Rustam was a "player" (igrok) – he gambled, liked to risk his life and thought little about others. Due to his behavior he was injured a number of times, one of which was so serious that it required a prolonged stay in a hospital and a follow up physical rehabilitation. Nazli nursed him back to health while working at a local market and taking care of their son. Yet, after getting better, her husband did not change his ways and could not support his family financially. Meanwhile relationship with his mother who disapproved of her son's wife became even worse and a family could no longer stay in that house. Nazli decided to return back to her parents' house.

While a relationship between Nazli and her husband was never acknowledged as a divorce but a separation, Nazli contemplated more serious actions to severe her relationship with her spouse. She was concerned that her husband will prevent her from going to the US because he did not want to immigrate and wanted to stay with his mother. Divorce in this case was necessary to ensure that Nazli would be able to take kids with her (even though Nazli's children were registered as born out of wedlock, during an application to IOM, she filled out documents jointly with her husband thereby solidifying

their marital relationship officially). Her parents did not complain too much about her staying in the house and took care of her children willingly. During interventionist meetings undertaken by Rustam's brothers, Nazli's parents invariably took their daughter's side, represented her interests and protected her desire to stay in the parental house. But after the meetings, they pressured her to reconsider her attitude and to take steps towards reconciliation (although the one dependent on Rustam's more conscientious behavior). Mariam, Nazli's mother, explained to me that they did not feel they could make serious demands in this case because the marriage was not properly arranged. "She was kidnapped, so now we cannot do anything. She has to return to that house and they should try to patch things up. I can only hope he takes better care of her and the children. He never gives any money, always comes empty handed. I did not like that family from the start" – she complained.

Nazli's story shows that regardless of how a marriage was contracted, a parental household remains the only one where a woman can return in case of marital problems. And even though parents accept their daughter without much protestation, in case of a marriage-by-capture they exert more pressure trying to reconcile their daughter with her husband. In this case, parents bear less responsibility for a choice of a spouse and given their compromised position, do not feel being able to interfere; on the other hand, given damage to family reputation incurred by the fact of abduction, they feel compelled to encourage their daughter to return to her husband regardless of the relationship between them.

The case of Nazli and the general discussion of *gelin kaçırma* confirm that the way a marriage is arranged is important for a formal social recognition of a marital union.

A formal display of a bride at a wedding *toy* not only signifies a change in a woman's status but also creates a particular type of relatives out of (relative) strangers[76]. Their behavior, responsibilities and the extent of their influence on the new family is determined by specifics of a contracted union.

Gelin Kaçırma and Roles within Community.

The phenomenon of bride kidnapping existed among the Meskhetian Turks prior to and during the Soviet period. By comparing narratives about bride kidnapping among the older generation born in Georgia and Uzbeksitan, one can see how notions of community specific roles and norms changed over time. In this section I examine how narratives about *gelin kaçırma* create templates for good and bad roles of kin categories. This discussion furthers the discussion presented in the previous section and presents a marriage as not only a performance, but a performance of ethically specific role(s)[77].

Answering my question about her mother's marriage, 53-year old Mariam mentioned that she was kidnapped by her first husband when she was 15.

> *She thought they were playing… But then they carried her away – she did not realize it at first. When she realized what was happening, she was screaming and crying. But they took her anyway. When they brought her to the groom's house, she was still crying and was saying: 'My grandmother made sour milk, I want to go home'. But she had to stay. She did not even have menstruation at that time.*

Mariam's mother had a child when she was 18. A year later her husband died, and after leaving her son with the mother-in-law, Mariam's mother returned to her parental household (headed by her brother after their father's death). Later, she remarried and had more children. Mariam explained that bride kidnapping was not uncommon at that time.

[76] To further prove this point, it would be important to analyze interaction among the immediate kin of a couple in a union arranged as a result of *gelin kacirma* that was followed by properly sanctioned wedding celebration.

[77] Ethics of kinship is usually discussed in the context of adoption of new technologies (transplants) and/or reproduction (cf. Clarke 2007; Finkler 2001; Kaufman et al. 2006)

"There were no wedding celebrations. They <men> just took women, families agreed among themselves, and that was it" – she explained.

According to older informants, back in the 50s, *gelin kaçırma* happened with the permission of elders. During the decade following the WWII, lack of financial resources and strict regimentation of life in special status settlements where Meskhetian Turks resided precluded large scale wedding celebrations from happening. Functioning of social networks was problematic at the time because Meskhetian Turks' mobility was restricted, and hence they could not maintain kin relations the way they used to back in Georgia. Until mid-1950s few large scale celebrations took place. During a period of about 10 years cultural traditions associated with important social events (weddings, circumcisions, etc.) were hard to follow (Kuznetsov 2007: 164-165). In part, this could explain why Meskhetian Turks exhibit Uzbek or Kyrgyz wedding customs and traditions – during that period, many customs and traditions native to Meskhetian Turks were forgotten. This could also explain why bride kidnapping was favored as a strategy of arranging marriages as it did not require extensive celebration. Marriage by capture allowed families to either avoid wedding ceremonies or to restrict the scale of celebrations and minimized wedding expenses. However, implicit blessing of family elders was still required making one wonder about an extent to which these abductions were consensual (in as much as permission of parents was required):

> *Back in the day, young people <were> more attentive, more polite. Even when young men kidnapped brides, they asked for their parents' permission. My aunt <was> kidnapped, my cousin <was> kidnapped. It happened frequently… No, families arranged things afterwards…*

76- year old Hanuma disapprovingly shook her head lamenting loss of morals among modern youths. While it is hard to disentangle nostalgia over the times long gone from a

cultural change that affected a practice of bride kidnapping, it seems clear that this tradition has been carried on among the Meskhetian Turks for many years and was known even prior to their arrival to Central Asia[78]. Given prevalence of bride kidnapping during those early years (and impossibility of larger scale celebrations after deportation), it seemed to be accepted as a norm and did not cause communal objections.

Contemporary stories of bride abduction featured far more complicated rhetoric about appropriate behavior in marriage matters. Quotes bellow illustrate complexity of issues involving parents, brides and grooms who reflect on *gelin kaçırma* using notions of normative behavior. For instance, Nazli's parents felt constrained in their ability to interfere with their daughter's marital problems given the way she entered a marital union. Even though she's been married for 10 years and was a mother to 2 wonderful sons, the fact that she was kidnapped still affected recognition of her position, and consequently that of her parents, in the ethical matrix of social relations. Mariam, Nazli's mother provided another perspective on her daughter's marriage. Mariam blamed her husband for her first daughter's unsuccessful marriage.

> *At that time, he was away for some business in Nalchik. We did not even have the money – but he just took what we had and left. He did not even tell anyone. I simply returned home and he was gone. I was told that he left for business. And then, later that day, Seyar came and said that his sister was kidnapped. – What would have been different had Ravshan been around? – He would have went and found her. I went to my brothers in law. But one said that he is busy, the other came up with another excuse and nobody wanted to go search for her. I did not even know who kidnapped her – what nationality he was, where he was from, who he was. I knew nothing. So, it's her father's fault that Nazli is not happy.*

[78] In Georgia, a tradition of bride kidnapping was practiced among both the Meskhetian Turks and the Georgians. Recent Human Rights Watch reports indicate an increase in bride kidnappings in the last 20 years (REF). Also, see a BBC article about a case of bride kidnapping in the Samsikhe-Javakheti area, a region previously inhabited by MESKHETIAN TURKS and now populated by Georgians and Armenians (http://www.iwpr.net/?p=crs&s=f&o=321627&apc_state=henh)

Mariam's narration illustrates that marriage can indeed happen without previous consent from the bride's side. Also, such marriage could be avoided if a kidnapped woman is found and brought back sufficiently early. However, given a complexity of the process, extended relatives are far less likely to be involved in recovering a kidnapped bride. In most cases, the blame for bride kidnapping falls with the bride and/or her immediate family and does not affect a reputation of an extended family. For Mariam (and other parents in the community) avoiding *gelin kaçırma* and protecting a reputation of their daughters was of primary importance and confirmed one's sense of being a good parent who fulfills his/her obligations.

Mariam's complaints about her husband's failure to resolve *gelin kaçırma* of his daughter invokes rhetoric about good/bad parents' duties that I heard from Meskhetian Turkish parents of young daughters: "We want to set it right. A groom should be from a good kuv, good family, with good reputation. I don't want to hear any stories later. We are Bogali. I don't even want to hear about Honali… No, it is not good to find a groom from among close relatives. If you have an argument later, then how will you resolve it? It is better to keep distance, but not too much…-" Gulpasha shared her views on finding an appropriate husband for her daughter Gulnara.

Gulpasha agreed that *gelin kaçırma* was a threat that they kept in mind. When asked why *gelin kaçırma* might be a problem, she laughed: "I watch the girls like a hawk. Nobody sneaks in past me. Let them try. We get many suitors. They come, drink tea, and talk about news. We know what they want, but we have to find the right family. So, we say 'no' for now". Razia, a mother of 3 whose eldest daughter was already married provided her perspective: "Community is all we have… That's all I can give my

daughters today. I know my relatives – if I tell you their names, you will fill up your notebook. I want to find a good family for my daughters, good reputation. I don't want them to be abducted. Then, who knows who takes them? No, I have to find a good family, good groom". Family reputation, kuv, geographical proximity, and (to a lesser degree) education and income play a role in parents' decision of choosing a groom. As the following quote manifests, groom's persistence in asking for a hand in marriage can also play a role: "Gulnara was so beautiful at that wedding. She wore a red dress and the camera was on her all the time. One could probably see more of her than of the bride. So, Yusef's relatives saw her in that video and showed it to Yusef. And he fell for her and said: 'I want her as a bride, need to talk to her parents'" – Gulnara's sister Gulbahor explained. – "But then our father did not like the groom. They were from another village, far away. We didn't know them well. But then we were also afraid that they might kidnap her – they liked her so much and were so insistent. So, father agreed in the end". 30-year old Murat mirrored Gulbahor's sentiments: "No, abduction is never the right way to establish a relationship. One needs to show respect, to ask once, twice… many times. That's the only way to start a married life, to get a wife". Thus, even though *gelin kaçırma* could be seen as a manifestation of a man's romantic feelings, it also shows his inability to follow the prescribed norms of respect and recognition of the elders' power. *Gelin kaçırma* is an acceptable but not an ideal strategy of establishing a family and extending social connection.

For parents, social networks that were established via prescriptions of a traditionally arranged marriage were an assurance of their children's future wellbeing and potential happiness. Marriage arrangement was a process of fulfilling parental roles as

good guardians. For grooms, following a traditional route of finding a wife was a way to confirm their respect of their parents and community elders. Romantic feelings featured more prominently in stories of grooms' pursuit of a bride. Yet, cautious condemnation of a *gelin kaçırma* practice showed that male valor of bride capture could not outweigh social costs of compromising social networks. Similarly, for brides, traditionally arranged marriages signified models of being a good daughter and a proper wife.

Bride kidnapping was not just a threat that influenced specifics of daily interaction between genders in this community rigidly stratified by age and gender. It was also a popular topic for discussion among young girls and women when they get together for a chat[79]. A number of times I witnessed such conversations conducted over tea and cookies during long winter afternoons. Discussions of bride kidnappings were both tantalizing yet disciplining as most frequently such a conversation would end with women agreeing that a girl's proper behavior could prevent this course of events.

Zakiya, a sixteen year old sister of Fatima, came for a visit in February 2005. Her arrival revitalized conversations as she brought news of distant relatives and friends and was also happy to learn of news that had already lost novelty for my host family. Conversations about weddings, births and engagements slowly drifted towards a topic of bride kidnapping. Zakiya lowered her voice in an effort to prevent Mariam from overhearing her and started her talk with a preface that today there are many more bride abductions happening.

> *- One has to be very careful. You need to behave properly, not to show a boy that you might like him. Who knows what he might think? I am very careful about that. But in our village, just few months ago, there was a guy. He liked a girl but could not propose to her because her elder sister was not married yet. So, he abducted*

[79] It might have been a popular topic for conversation among young men as well. However, given lack of comparable access to men, I cannot conclude about an extent of interest this topic could have.

her and they got married… Who was it? Polat… Fatima, do you remember him? <He is> a neighbor to Aygul's second cousin from his mother's side… And a girl – you don't know her. But she was pretty.

A conversation moved on to Aygul's marriage and her consecutive difficulties of getting pregnant. Yet, it did not drift too far off the topic, as Zakiya had more to share with the group. Once the topic of pregnancy was exhausted, she continued:

- Oh, and then there was another case. A girl was abducted by a guy whom she did not like. There was another guy who liked her and whom she also liked. He tried to fight for her to prevent the abduction, but could not do anything. She was kept for 3 days before her uncles found her and brought back home. Even though she was "dishonored" by the fact of abduction, the boy who was in love with her agreed to marry her and now they are living happily… No, this happened in another village, not in ours. Azefa told me about it – she knew the bride's cousin.

In an attempt to show that Zakiya is not the only one who knows interesting stories, Fatima chimed in with her own story of a bride kidnapping:

I heard another story - a girl and a boy liked each other, they decided to run away. They did not have sex – they just spent a day together. The girl was returned to her parents who scolded her and tried to prevent her from marrying the boy. The girl said that something <i.e., sex> has happened between the two of them – so, they had to get married. And they did and lived happily.

Zakiya, apparently familiar with that story, nodded her head in agreement. Stories of bride abduction were equally interesting to both married and unmarried women as they added drama to a marriage process that is normally controlled by the older generation. A disruption to a preferred course of spouse selection and marriage negotiation, consensual abductions allow for a certain degree of individual choice. It is notable that most of the abduction stories end with an idea that a kidnapped bride and a groom lived happily ever after. One can agree with Bates (1974) that bride kidnapping serves a function of attuning existing structures of marriage arrangement with changing realities of spouse selection and notions of individual love and affection disseminated in

popular culture. Yet, the rules of arranged marriages and recognition of the power of the elders in marriage matters as well as a threat of non-consensual abduction remain as strong as ever (as it was confirmed by both Zakiya and her sister in their disapproval of a general idea of kidnapped brides' behavior).

Even though "gossip" about bride kidnapping was sometimes framed in terms of "romantic love", Nazli's story shows that gender inequality marks this phenomenon given that women's permission to be kidnapped is not necessary; their complacency is presumed by both kidnappers and their relatives. As our conversation continued, both Zakiya and Fatima agreed that they would have never agreed to run away or to be abducted (it was easier for Fatima who was already married; but for Zakiya who wasn't married or engaged a normative statement like that was also a matter of maintaining her reputation).

Discussions about *gelin kaçırma* should be compared with discussions of traditional marriage as well. When talking about their future, unmarried women never questioned a fact that one day they would leave their natal household and move in with their future husband family. Given abstract nature of these conversations, women rarely showed enthusiasm about those plans. They knew that marriage signified a profound change in their social status. Young brides transform from being daughters to being daughters-in-law, a status that requires a considerable amount of physical work, social subservience to their new parents and older household members. Malika, an engaged bride, grudgingly complained: "Well, I will be living in this strange place with a strange family. I don't know them, don't know the groom… Why should I look forward to it?" Zakiya, following up on her narratives of bride abduction, elaborated with her

expectations of marriage: “I will try to be a good *gelin*. I know that my parents will find a good husband for me. He will be kind, quiet, will treat me nicely and will have several brothers. It is good to have sisters-in-law in the house”.

Conversations about *gelin kaçırma* reinforce existing notions of proper gendered behavior. Although such stories contain an apparent conflict between a violation of norms of behavior and dreams of “happily ever after”, loss of respect and honor befalling a family (and more specifically a bride in question) become a strong deterrent against a wider popularity of this practice. Even more importantly, these stories confirm importance of a community. As parents select a spouse for their daughters, they are creating new connections and are trying to protect their daughters by integrating them properly thereby fulfilling their roles as good parents and members of the community. As Nazli’s story shows, not only issues of divorce in cases of *gelin kaçırma* become complicated. Failure to fulfill parental obligations of finding an appropriate suitor and monitoring a daughter influences one’s ability to exert parental authority later in the course of marriage. In case of marital problems, a bride cannot blame anyone else but herself (or her husband). Although she can still turn to her immediate family, their involvement is far more limited. Stories of bride kidnapping spice up idle afternoon conversations; yet, they also raise concerns over family honor and a bride reputation, good and bad qualities of self and others as kin members, i.e., characteristics that define an individual’s position within a matrix of social power hierarchy, and instruct as much as they entertain.

***Gelin Kacirma* in a Wider Social Context.**

In this section I examine narratives that link marriage strategies and outcomes with belonging to a particular group and exhibit influence of a wider social context on

processes of social reproduction. Morality comprises codes of rules that establish right and wrong conduct, what must and must not be done. A study of community specific notions of morality involves assessment of a relationship of self to those codes and rules, depending on their applicability and relevance (cf. Foucault 2003). Thus, a study of culturally specific corpus of ethics offers a perspective on a relationship between an individual and a group as well as between a wider society and a particular group. Discussions of right/wrong, good and bad roles discussed in the previous section need to be complemented with an analysis of a relationship between Meskhetian Turks and the wider society as it influences specifics of daily lives. In this section I show that local experiences of kinship have been affected by state politics, migration history, understandings of inequality and difference (Holy 1996: 172-173; Peletz 1995; Vergin 1985). A brief historical overview offers a perspective on the effects of state policies on a prevalence of this practice and clarifies notions of ethnic group and identity.

In the previous section, narratives from older women indicate that for a period of time, the practice of *gelin kaçırma* compensated for a lack of celebrations and was used as a socially acceptable mechanism of contracting a marriage. It is not perfectly clear the extent to which *gelin kaçırma* reflected covert negotiations among relatives and compensated for restrictions of special status settlements. However, by the 60s and 70s, the Soviet state began to regulate this sphere of social relations more, and bride kidnapping was considered a crime that was punishable by a considerable prison sentence. State's concerted efforts to eliminate this practice nearly eradicated it in much of Central Asia. According to most accounts, in the years following the World War II, reported instances of bride kidnapping decreased considerably. Women could receive

assistance from local Women's councils, Comrades' courts, the Communist Youth League as well as party officials (Grant 2008:689; Werner 2004: 60-62). The state intervention targeted bride kidnapping along with a number of other practices (child betrothals, arranged marriages, etc.) that violated individual rights of women by limiting freedom of choice. It is hard to estimate the extent to which the practice disappeared. Werner shows that despite largely successful policies of supporting women's rights, the practice of bride abductions still existed (2004: 65-71). Massell (1974) argues that frequently kidnappings were not reported (for instance, in cases when an abductor proved his honesty by marrying an abducted woman, or if an abducted woman refused to file a report). Following Massell's data, one could argue that cases of misrepresentation of reality in the developed Soviet state could influence available statistical data on bride kidnapping (undoubtedly, such a practice would have been at odds with ideals of the developed Socialist state). Also, as Werner shows through her interviews, decline in the numbers of bride abductions could reflect changing realities of gender relations and women's position in society (cf. Snajdr 2005). Thus, by the 1970s, bride kidnapping turned into a practice of consensual elopement disguised as kidnapping (Werner 2004: 61). At that time, the rate of arranged marriages also declined reflecting changing notions of people's expectations of the state and individual rights (Werner 2004: 83). Yet, in the early 90s, in much of Central Asia reports of bride kidnapping re-appeared indicating a revival of patriarchal norms, worsening economic conditions and increasing gap in the relationships between genders as well as between the state and its subjects (Snajdr 2007). Some of these processes one could observe among Meskhetian Turks in Krasnodarskiy Krai as well. Below, I will show correlations between *gelin kaçırma* and changing rates

of education attainment, declining age at marriage, changing notions of state protection and maintenance of ethnic identity.

Education. Bride kidnappings were directly linked with changing patterns of education attainment among girls. During the last 15 years of their residence in Russia, predicaments of citizenship status (detailed in Chapter 4) precluded Meskhetian Turks from entering institutions of higher education. Previously, in the 70s and 80s, the general level of education among Meskhetian Turks was not high, but it was on the rise (Kuznetsov 2007: 64). During my research, of 30 men and women ages 40-55 (those who received education in the 70-80s), twenty four had education beyond secondary (mostly as a specialized technical training). Seven women had specialized degrees (primarily in education and medicine). All informants remarked that education was extremely important to them and they were hoping that their children would get a chance to continue studying further. Even though these numbers are by no means representative, when placed in the context of overall changes that took place in the USSR since WWII, they could indicate that Meskhetian Turks along with the rest of the country experienced significant improvements in levels of education; women's position also changed and some of them were able to go beyond "home and hearth" paradigm. But starting in the 90s, the situation changed dramatically. Twelve informants who were 10-14 at the time of their relocation and who started high school in Russia nearly uniformly remarked that they did not feel inspired to study. They knew that they would not be able to pursue education beyond high school, and thus 8 of them dropped out prior to completing their studies. The four that completed high school bitterly mentioned that they could not find any use for their education. It is notable that women who dropped out of high school

were not married off immediately, but stayed at home for a few years helping their parents with chores. Abduction was mentioned as one factor that influenced their decision. "When you go to school, you are alone and on your own. Also, that's where others can see you. So, a girl needs to watch her reputation, behave appropriately and be very careful," – Aygul explained when asked about reasons for dropping out of high school in 1995.

Discrimination at school was another factor that precluded girls from completing their studies. Several schools implemented special segregated classes that separated Turks from Russians. "Turkish" classes followed a different curriculum and were meant to introduce students with lower proficiency of Russian. Human rights activists widely criticized this undertaking as discriminatory (Osipov 2002). Students and parents alike were dissatisfied with education options available to them. "Our teacher told us: 'why do you need to study? You will get married or work at a market. You don't need to study any more'. So, I lost interest. I was a good student, I only got '4' and '5's in Uzbekistan. But once we came here I knew there was nothing for me in it" – Aygul continued. She was not kidnapped but a threat of kidnapping was real and prompted her parents to arrange a marriage for her fairly soon after she completed the 9th grade and stopped going to school.

Age at marriage. Overall social changes that negatively impacted the position of Meskhetian Turks in Russia also affected age at marriage for both men and women. Thus, older informants (born in 60-70s) replied that education was extremely important for men and often marriage would be delayed to complete one's studies. Women were usually married during their 2nd or 3rd year in a college or a university in case they continued their

education. In that case, they usually delayed child bearing until the completion of most of their requirements (usually by the 5th year of college). But even women who only completed high school were married a year or two after completing their studies. Thus, one can see a general increase in the age at marriage. However, in the 90s the situation changed dramatically for both men[80] and women. Even though legally, women can marry after the age of 18 (or 16 in extra-ordinary circumstances and with a permission of their parents), marriages take place as early as 15. Fatima, a 20 year old mother of 2, reported that she received marriage proposals since she was 14. Insistence of match makers prompted her parents to consider marriage proposals seriously out of fear that abduction might take place if they prolong the process of spousal selection too much. Lack of outside options in a form of continued education creates additional incentives for parents to find a "good match" for their daughters. Thus, not long after Fatima turned 16 she was married and moved to her husband's house[81]. Marriage was the only option that the larger society left for Meskhetian Turkish women. While it is true, that in a Meskhetian Turkish culture, a woman's status and value are largely defined by her position in the kin networks (Tomlinson 2004: 160-168), lack of alternatives defined marriage – either arranged by match makers or through kidnapping, - as the only available trajectory. Both men and women (as parents and as potential spouses) remarked that there were no reasons to delay marriage for girls as it was in their interests to establish a proper family. The same was true for men as well, but a rationale for arranging marriages for men was

[80] For men, age at marriage also decreased even if less significantly than for women. Thus, grooms at the weddings that I attended were usually under 25. In interviews, both men and women remarked that they tried to marry their sons as soon as possible because they were concerned about them getting into fights in clubs over Russian women.

[81] Fatima mentioned that later her father regretted marrying her off at such an early age. She was overwhelmed with the amount of housework that she had to do as one and only bride of the household and two pregnancies that followed one after another.

slightly different – an earlier marriage could settle a young man down, help him avoid potential conflicts at discothèques and bars and would ensure that elders in the family had their say in a spouse selection process (a marriage by capture would be avoided).

State Protection. The issue of bride abduction also reflects the existing specifics in the relationship between the state and Meskhetian Turks as its non-subjects. When discussing cases of bride kidnapping, all informants disregarded an option of reporting to the police about these violations of law. For Meskhetian Turkish parents, a loss of a daughter to kidnapping was a matter of personal grief that needed to be resolved by families without state involvement. The state did not have a role to play in this matter, and authorities were never reported about those cases. Instead, community elders were usually called on by both parties to resolve the issue and to help establish proper relationships between them. Due to Meskhetian Turks' lack of citizenship, it was pointless to address authorities regardless of the way a marriage was established because marriage would not have been legally registered. A family resorted to local methods of resolving the situation rather than seeking protection of the law. Thus, lack of citizenship exacerbated violations of women's rights. Meskhetian Turks as a group were disenfranchised by the state, but Meskhetian Turkish women carried a double burden because lack of legal protection aggravates lack of social support that many women face in the post-Soviet space (Michaels 1998; Zhurzhenko 2001). Authorities' withdrawal from regulating the sphere of marriage normalized the practice of bride kidnapping in the eyes of Meskhetian Turkish men as they did not face legal consequences as a result of their actions. Women also perceived bride kidnapping as being within a realm of legal norm, but the norm that they nevertheless preferred to avoid.

Ethnic identity. During my fieldwork, I encountered at least 10 other stories of bride abduction. Conversations with informants about those cases as well as interviews with several abducted women raised a number of important factors that need to be considered in order to understand significance of this practice among the Meskhetian Turks. Cases of *gelin kaçırma* confirm ethnic boundaries. A threat of abduction could only come from another Meskhetian Turkish suitor and would always result in a marriage. Interaction with men of other ethnic groups (at school or discotheques) could compromise a woman's reputation but would never result in abduction. Thus, narratives about bride kidnapping mostly referred to in-group identity.

When speaking about marriage relations and kinship norms, informants frequently drew comparisons with other ethnic groups. 19-year old Aygul' made this clear: "Our men respect us. Yes, they can have strong feelings. They can kidnap if parents disagree. But they're men. Look at Russians" – she disapprovingly gestured towards a window from which one could see a neighbor Lena on a walk with a 3-month old daughter in a stroller. "She is only 22 and she is on her third husband. She has 3 kids, but men don't stay with her. Our men never do this, they respect families, <and> they have morals". When narrating her own story of kidnapping, Nazli elaborated on this aspect. "Our marriage was kind of like love marriage… Like in movies,-" she explained. A metaphor "like in movies" implied that Nazli and her husband only had few glimpses of each other prior to abduction but yet at least one of them experienced profound feelings sufficient to inspire a kidnapping plan. When I asked her whether her relationship with the husband was similar to romantic love that Russians consider important for their marriages, she laughed. "Yes, he loved me. And I love him. But I chose to love him after marriage.

These Russian women – they don't care. They throw themselves on a first man who comes by. No, their love is different". Confirming notions of a demure, shy bride, Nazli (who was anything but demure or shy) emphasized a difference between her and Russian women. Her answer shows that rhetoric about romantic love and family relationship has a different meaning depending on context and receives a culturally specific clarification[82] (cf. Maggi 2006). Despite social ambivalence regarding ethical aspects of *gelin kaçırma*, in a context of inter-ethnic comparisons, even bride kidnapping was interpreted as a marker of ethnic boundaries and a signifier of a different (higher) moral value.

Traditional marriages were also perceived as basis for ethnic identity. In the context of social uncertainty that characterized Meskhetian Turks' lives over their 15-year residence in Krasnodarskiy Krai, kin networks proved crucial for everyday survival and for preservation of the ethnic group. 54-year old Rasul elaborated on this point: "We stay together. We know our kin <rodstvenniki>. That's how we survived before and that's how we survive now. We survived the deportation. We survived evacuation. But today we are afraid. Today I know only 50 of my relatives. My father used to know 150.

[82] Divorce was also used as a category of ethnic differentiation. Divorce rates are very low among Meskhetian Turks and on the first day of my fieldwork, I was told: "In our culture it is not accepted… A divorce rate is less than 1%". Yet, as I continued to live in the village, more and more cases of divorce were mentioned during casual conversations. As it turned out, divorce was not as infrequent as my informants initially presented it to be. Cases of divorce among Meskhetian Turks confirm importance of an extended family. Just as a marital union cannot be arranged haphazardly, on strength of individual passion alone, it cannot be dissolved in a haste manner either. Given the legal situation of Meskhetian Turks, Russian civil courts do not interfere in matters of divorce. In cases where a wife and a husband have citizenship and their union was legally registered, they follow through with legal procedures of marriage dissolution. However, the majority of reported divorce cases were resolved without interaction with official state institutions. Due to a lack of Islamic structures in Krasnodarskiy Krai communities (mosques, courts, etc.), divorce rarely becomes a reason for formal communal intervention. Only close relatives deem it necessary to interfere and try to remedy the situation. At times, the elders who initially arranged a marriage might also give a try at reconciliation. But by and large, divorce remains a more private matter (if compared to an initial spouse search process and marriage). It becomes an even more private matter in case of marriages established as a result of kidnapping.

How many will my children be able to name when they move to the United States? Only if we stay together, if we know our kin, can our group survive. Only then".

Conclusions.

A tradition of *gelin kaçırma* has had a long history among Meskhetian Turks. Even though it is not favored as a way of establishing a marital union, the practice has been accepted as an alternative to the norm. It is hard to estimate whether instances of *gelin kaçırma* increased over the last period due to predicaments of Meskhetian Turks' legal status that precludes any statistical data. Regardless of their frequency, instances of *gelin kaçırma* affect social relations indirectly by disciplining brides and grooms, parents and community elders who confirm notions of socially appropriate behavior in their discussions of this practice. Analysis of *gelin kaçırma* shows significance of social recognition of a marital union for consecutive negotiations among affines.

In this study of *gelin kaçırma*, I shift analytical focus away from brides (who normatively play a minor role in the entire process of marriage negotiation) to parents and community elders. Marriage matters – whether in a form of an arranged union or as *gelin kaçırma*, - are first and foremost community matters. Group reproduction requires involvement of an entire community. Instances of *gelin kaçırma* are condoned from this point of view as they interfere with social cohesion. Even though marriages contracted through bride kidnapping are recognized as legitimate and do not lead to profound repercussions for either a bride or a groom or their immediate family, *gelin kaçırma* infringes on rights of parents and limits their ability to select social connections. In the context of increased social uncertainty, arranged marriages become a preferred strategy of parents to confirm their status as good guardians by protecting their children and ensuring their proper integration in the community. A case study of Nazli's abduction and

consecutive family troubles shows that in cases of *gelin kaçırma* parental involvement is limited compared to traditionally arranged marriages. Thus, I argue, kinship categories also encompass ethical notions of propriety, good life and desirable relationships among relatives.

By drawing connections between *gelin kaçırma* and the environment of social uncertainty in which Meskhetian Turks had existed over the 15 years of their residence in KRasnodarskiy Krai, I show that kinship emerges as both an element of ethnic identity and a strategy of group preservation. The practice of *gelin kaçırma* problematizes a connection between notions of modernity and individual feelings of affection by showing that a concept of "romantic love" is culturally and socially specific. In the context of social tensions, marriage strategies become a way to preserve and signify group unity thereby taking a private matter into a realm of public identification.

CHAPTER 7. New Land, Different Kind of Uncertainty: Meskhetian Turks in the USA.

Illimshon carefully stages a picture he wants me to take of him and his family. "You stand here, yes. And Gulbahor <his wife> – you come over here. Don't fudge, your dress is fine. And your hair is fine too. Boys, - he's now addressing his 7 and 9-year old sons. – You come and stand by my side. And now you can take a picture. Make sure you capture this. I want everybody to see it," - he proudly takes out his newly received driving license and puts it out half covering one of the boys' face. Illimshon, a 35 year old construction worker, arrived to Lancaster, PA, from Krasnodar, Russia half a year ago. A picture of him displaying his new driving license is meant for relatives back at home. "Now I have rights <prava>. Driving license (rights)! Let everybody see it. There is nothing to be afraid – yes, everything is different here. People, water, flour. Everything. But I have rights and I will use them,"- he proclaims addressing his imaginary audience back in Krasnodar and emphasizing a pun on a concept of rights. In Russian, the same word is used to denote one's civil or political rights or freedoms and an identification document that allows one to drive a car. In this case, Illimshon is contrasting lack of rights (prava) back in Russia with ease of receiving prava or a driving license and having a proper legal status in the USA.

In this chapter I provide a general overview of a wide range of processes that were beginning to take place among MTs in the USA. As such, fieldwork in the USA served as a natural social experiment testing some observations examined in previous chapters. In Russia, primordial ethnicity, a concept that was developed during the Soviet period and continued to exert influence after the fall of the USSR affected identification among Meskhetian Turks and in mass media (as presented in Chapter 2). In the US,

where ethnicity plays a far less important role, this category lost its significance in defining a group position within social hierarchy. Instead, categories of race with which my informants were previously unfamiliar emerge as a novel form of social categorization. Native to Meskhetian Turks, categories of family and adulthood are contrasted with categories employed by relocation agencies. I show that despite differences in categorization, a conflict between cultural categories never significantly constraints people's sense of their rights and freedoms (in contrast to the way it happened in Russia).

A description of Meskhetian Turks' sense of motherland and belonging continues a discussion introduced in Chapter 3 (Effective Strategies of Migration Management) in which I examined restrictive policies that influenced geographical displacement of this group over the last half a century. My informants' passionate narratives about connections with places of residence and their perceptions of themselves in the US add to an understanding of a complex history of this group. Generational differences in attachment to a particular location problematize a concept of historical motherland and question unequivocal references to Georgia as an ultimate destination for Meskhetian Turks (cf. Malkki 2005).

Finally, an overview of social networks that are tying Meskhetian Turks with Russian and Turkic-speaking communities in the US provides a nice test to outlandish claims of Krasnodar "social scientists" whose accusations of "closed communities" and "civilizational differences" (Savva 2002), discussed in Chapters 2 (Primordialism) and 3 (Effective Strategies of Migration Management) provided theoretical foundations for discriminatory practices of Krasnodar state officials. In maintaining social networks,

Meskhetian Turks rely on their rich cultural background that connects them with a wide range of people. This section also highlights potential transformations in Meskhetian Turks' sense of their group identity as they build their future in the new country.

Overall, the chapter that emerged as a serendipitous, yet logical conclusion to my work in Krasnodar furthers a discussion of uncertainty. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Meskhetian Turks found themselves grappling with uncertainty of changing social, political, economic and cultural contexts. Yet, they could rely on their knowledge of Soviet realities that provided common grounds for them and other citizens of the former Soviet Union and allowed them to navigate an emerging socio-cultural terrain of independent Russia. Yet, the shared background proved insufficient to create certainty in an atmosphere of rising nationalism and economic crises. In the USA, where, as Illimshon pointed out, everything including water and flour was different, uncertainty attained a different meaning. In a context where everything was unfamiliar, certainty of status and rights created a solid basis on which the group could build their life in the new country.

Methodology

The main challenge of the study in the U.S. was to devise a strategy that would allow me to capture a complex nature of the relocation process and to understand cultural specifics of an emerging Meskhetian Turkish community in the U.S. while accounting for migrants' euphoria during an initial period of adaptation. To resolve these challenges, I employed a wide array of methods. Newspaper monitoring, interviews with refugee case-workers and in-depth interviews with Meskhetian Turks provided the basis for this investigation. Due to time constraints of a multi-site study, I decided that four short term studies (each 1 week long, 40 interviews in total) would help me gain a better

understanding of the processual nature of the relocation project. Two studies in December 2004 in Lancaster, PA and Philadelphia, PA were followed by two short term studies in the same locations in May 2005 and January 206 and were referenced with another study in San Diego, CA in August and October 2005 conducted by Steve Swerdlow (Koriouchkina and Swerdlow 2007). In the periods between short term studies, I maintained close contact with communities via telephone. By so doing, I was able to build and develop rapport with informants, which furthered ensured quality and validity of data obtained during field site visits. Given that I had previously worked in the Krasnodar region, I was able to build my study in the US on connections established prior to my informants' relocation to the US. I drew heavily on my fieldwork experiences to provide context to the specifics of the resettlement process as seen from the Russian as well as institutional angles.

Two communities were chosen for the study. Two sites in Pennsylvania were the first to host Meskhetian Turks in the U.S.: Lancaster, a small town of 30,000 in rural Pennsylvania, contrasted with the vibrant cosmopolitan megalopolis of Philadelphia. Family networks connected communities in these two sites and offered me an opportunity to observe intra-state relations among Meskhetian Turks. As the Meskhetian Turks in Pennsylvania were the first to resettle in the United States, they quickly envisioned themselves as occupying a leadership role vis-à-vis those that were to follow.

Cultural Categories: Ethnicity, Race, Family.

Ethnicity. Resettlement to the United States allowed Meskhetian Turks to freely select an ethnonym for themselves for the first time in their history[83]. As I show in Chapter 2

[83] It is important to emphasize here that the United States' defined individual eligibility for participation in the resettlement project on the basis of proof of one's ethnic identification. By so doing, the resettlement

(Primordialism) and Chapter 4 (On Citizenship), during the Soviet period the state enforced its right to categorize its citizenry. Thus, due to specifics of Soviet ethnic engineering in Georgia and Uzbekistan, in censuses and legal documents Turks were classified as Azerbaijanis, Georgians, Uzbeks and even Kavkaztsy or "people of the Caucasus". Informants remarked that it took some civil courage and certain persistence for one to be able to record a nationality/ethnicity "Turk" in one's passport back in the 40s-70s. The term "Meskhetian Turks" came into wide use after the Turks fled Uzbekistan. The majority of social scientists and a leading Meskhetian Turkish political organization "Vatan" accepted the term "Meskhetian Turks" as a category that allows one to differentiate this group from other Turkic groups in Turkey and in Russia and links this group with a particular territory in Georgia. Xenophobic discourses in the Krasnodar mass media created an additional level of meaning by painting a starkly negative image of "Meskhetian Turks" as violators of civil order in the region[84].

If one examines a colloquial use of self-identification among Meskhetian Turks, one can see that most frequently people refer to themselves as simply "Turks". In the United States, when Americans ask them to explain more specifically who they are, our informants pointed out a place of their previous residence, i.e., Russia, as a part of their explanation: "We are Turks. But we are Russian or Soviet Turks. That's how we explained it back in Krasnodar and that's how we continue to explain it today (Navruz, 26, Philadelphia, PA). Varied degrees of attachment to Georgia and vastly different

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project seems to have enforced the use of a category "Meskhetian Turks". However, upon arrival to the United States, informants remarked that they rarely encounter references to their ethnicity. As an unmarked category, ethnicity in the US plays far lesser role than it used to in Russia. The discussion that follows centers mostly on Meskhetian Turks' daily experiences with this category in the US.

[84] Elisaveta Koriouchkina, "Meskhetian Turks and the Regime of Citizenship in Russia", a paper presented at the 10th ASN convention in NY, April 2005

attitudes towards resettlement (discussed in the next section) help explain why a connection between a particular area in Georgia and an ethnonym for this group might be gradually losing its significance. It is possible to hypothesize that while the term "Meskhetian Turks" will continue to remain the main denomination that social scientists use to define this group, a practice of unrestrained self-identification will eventually wipe out the use of this category among the Meskhetian Turks living in the United States.

The resettlement to the United States exposed Meskhetian Turks to a new society characterized not only with a different set of norms, traditions and customs but also with a vastly different ethnic composition. Among Meskhetian Turks, an interesting process of differentiating themselves from other ethnic groups in the United States takes place. Increased contacts with Turks from Turkey in the United States sharpened the Meskhetian Turks' sense of difference between them and the "Turkish" Turks. Even though many of the Meskhetian Turks watched Turkish television via satellite antennas even prior to their arrival to the United States and had relatives residing in Turkey, their actual knowledge of Turkish life style and traditions was fairly limited. After their arrival to the US, contacts with Turkish communities exposed them to many aspects of the Turkish culture. Our informants pointed out that some aspects of that culture remain "exotic" to them. After a Turkish wedding in New York, Salema described her impressions this way:

> *Well, it was in a restaurant. They served regular restaurant food – nothing ethnic [natsionalnogo]. They played their music. It was ok though not as good as our music. Very few people danced. No, it was boring – we have a lot more fun during our weddings. Food, music, dresses – everything is just so different (Salema, 45, Lancaster, PA).*

It is important to point out that later in the conversation Salema mentioned that the wedding was taking place in a Turkish restaurant. Thus, her remarks that there was no

ethnic food served at the wedding are reflective of her perception of what the ethnic food is. In the end, it is reflective of differences in ethnic identification. Salema's rhetoric that "their" wedding was not like "our" wedding was meant to emphasize a difference between them, Turks, and us, Meskhetian Turks. Individual Meskhetian Turks frequently remarked that Turks from Turkey are quite different from them. However, it is important to point an opposite trend here as well. For a younger generation that engages in a more active contact with host populations, these differences seem far less significant. Only time will tell what form of identification will emerge among the Meskhetian Turks. Perhaps, strong connections with Turkish communities will lead to an enlargement of the sense of their ethnic community. It is also possible that like many other migrants from the former Soviet Union, the Meskhetian Turks will find themselves classified as "Russians" on the basis of one of their languages that they speak.

Race. Life in the United States brought the Meskhetian Turks in contact with a radically different system of social classification – racial categories. When applying for jobs, filling out questionnaires or surveys, the Meskhetian Turks encounter a necessity to identify themselves with categories that were not intuitively clear to them. Surayo, a 25 year old woman, reflected on her experiences of filling out a job application:

> *Well, when I got to the point of indicating my race, I ticked off a box that said "Black". When my boss saw it, she was surprised. She said, 'what are you doing? You are white, Caucasian'. I corrected my answer. But I was no less surprised. Back in Krasnodar, we were referred to as "blacks". And now we turned into "whites". It was unbelievable (Surayo, 18, Lancaster, PA).*

Despite its somewhat apocryphal character, Surayo's story juxtaposes categorization of an "everyday racism" in Krasnodar with American racial categories. Even though the Meskhetial Turkish understanding of racial classification is largely limited, the very idea

that they are no longer labeled with a category that has highly negative connotations attains significance as an additional sign of social acceptance.

Residence in Lancaster, PA introduced Meskhetian Turks to a group of a fundamentally different life style, the Amish. At first, the Amish presence was perceived as just a sign of a strikingly different life in the US. But with time, the Turks began to focus on specific social phenomena and interpret them. As one of the informants remarked:

> *Amish… They are very hard working – they work in the fields. They bring their produce to the market and then they do not pay attention to their stands because they trust their customers. They are kind of like Hemshins… - How so? – Well, they are also strange in a way… (Ilimshan, 38, Lancaster, PA)*

This rhetoric illustrates how an informant tried to solve a problem of radical ethnic difference by translating a term for an ethnic group into a more familiar one by substituting the "Amish" with "Hemshins", a name of a group the Turks encountered back in Uzbekistan and Russia. A phenomenon of diglossia, or use of different languages depending on social context, is not unusual for Meskhetian Turks. Multilingual from early childhood, they frequently switch between languages and find equivalents from other languages that they speak. Thus, they translate their Turkish names into Russian, substitute the Turkish terminology of kinship with the Russian equivalents to make sure their interlocutors understand. In this case, the process is reversed as the Turks translate cultural strangeness into their own terms to make sure they themselves can understand and accept their neighbours' radically different looks and behaviour.

One also witnesses a phenomenon of diglossia in the Meskhetian Turks' "translation" of the word "Mexican". Jokingly, many informants pointed out, "In Russia, we used to be Meskhetian Turks. Now we move to the States and we'll become Mexican

Turks" (Navruz, 27, Varenikovskaya Village, Russia). Even as a joke, this statement reflects the Meskhetian Turks' understanding of their position in a social hierarchy. Understanding of ethnicity based social inequality in the United States was largely intuitive among the Turks. As such, the rhetoric above is less reflective of their actual grasp of the situation in the United States than it is indicative of deep-seated fears that they would find themselves in a situation similar to the one they left in Krasnodar, and turn into an ethnic underclass whose upward mobility is largely constrained.

Family. Even though the refugee resettlement project aimed to preserve family ties, to facilitate social networks at places of relocation, and to use these networks to aid recent arrivals, sometimes practical constraints and misunderstandings interfered with the Meskhetian Turkish concepts of kinship. The following two cases help to illustrate this point. Faisilya, an unmarried 24 year old woman, was the first of her family to arrive to the US. Her parents and two of her brothers were detained in Russia due to document processing and medical issues. Thus, she traveled alone. In her own words,

> *I was sent to Buffalo,[NY]. I did not know anybody there. There were 3 other families that traveled to Buffalo as well. But I did not know them before coming to the states. Also, they were placed far away. I was completely on my own – no friends, no relatives, nobody! And a case-worker did not speak a word of Russian. And I did not speak a word of English. I learnt German at school, you know. So, I was not sure what to do next. Then, my uncle called – it was so good to finally be able to speak to a relative in the states. He said that I could come and live with them – now that their boys are at a boarding school, they have space in their apartment. One of my uncle's sons called and spoke with the case-worker and explained the situation to her. The case-worker and my sponsor agreed that it would be a much better option for me to be together with my family. So, they bought me a bus ticket and in about 10 hours I was in Philadelphia.*

The experience of resettlement to the United States has revealed that the Meskhetian Turks' cultural definition of concepts such as "family" and "adulthood" is radically different from the American legal definitions of those terms. Legal definitions

of family and adulthood (i.e., etic categories of relocation agencies) contradicted emic categories of family and belonging among the Meskhetian Turks. For example, while an 18 year old person is considered legally adult in the US, the same is not true in the Meskhetian Turkish culture. For a Turkish woman, it is not age but rather marital status as a sign of formal adulthood that determines a place of residence. To a lesser degree, the same holds true for a Turkish man as well. Elder sons move out to establish households of their own after marriage. The youngest son stays together with his parents even after marriage and takes responsibility for them in old age. Thus, until a new family is formed, children stay with their parents regardless of their age. However, for relocation agencies, a formal definition of legal age was needed for resettlement. The relocation agency considered Faisilya an independent young woman who could start life on her own anywhere in the states. However, as an unmarried woman, Faisilya could not directly approach other families of Meskhetian Turks who were also sent to Buffalo. Since she did not know them personally (i.e., they did not share any kinship ties with her and were not close friends of the family – which, in most cases, still implies kinship ties), she did not feel comfortable about approaching them for help and advice. Faisilya felt much more secure residing with her relatives even though it required switching to another refugee agency and making a tiring 10-hour long journey from upstate New York to Pennsylvania

Interviews in both Lancaster and Philadelphia confirmed that such strategies of community building take place fairly frequently. Though they have been in the United States for less than 18 months and the overall resettlement has been slower than originally anticipated, the Meskhetian Turks have already started creating bases for new communities. Community convergence, i.e., a process by which relatives and close

neighbors move to other places after their initial placement in, is already under way. In the end, such convergence is likely to lead to the rise of tightly knit communities. Kinship ties, patrylines and specifics of Georgian origins (küv) will serve as centripetal forces that serve as a basis for these communities. Of course, it is far too early to speculate on the extent of this process and the specific direction it will ultimately take. However, as the story of Akh. family resettlement below shows, interference from the refugee resettlement agencies is one of the key factors during the initial phase of this process.

In December 2005, Azim Akh.'s family, a total of 13 people, arrived in New York. They were scheduled to continue their journey on to Phoenix, AZ, and Portland, OR. However, refugee services representatives did not meet them at the airport. Disoriented in the new country, Azim decided to phone Tiyenshon S., their relative and a leader of the MeskhetianTurkish community in the States,. S. came to New York, picked them up and brought them to Lancaster. PRIME, an Ecumenical organization providing refugees with orientation and initial support in Lancaster, PA, accepted the new arrivals. However, the State Department, responsible for assigning the Meskhetian Turks to various communities, did not approve. While Akh. family were ultimately allowed to stay in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, subsequent families that were scheduled to resettle there, were reassigned to Baltimore, Maryland. Not realizing that Baltimore, though in a different state, was actually closer to Lancaster and Philadelphia, than Erie, many families were concerned and requested they be sent to Erie instead. They were afraid that by going to another state, they would experience difficulties in communicating with their relatives. In the end, they preferred to stay in Pennsylvania. "It is better if most, if not all relatives remain within one state," Illimshan who just returned from a 6-hour drive from

Eerie to Lancaster remarked. These decisions are driven by their past experiences: vivid memories of predicaments at crossing administrative boundaries between Krasnodar and Rostov, and frequent roadside document checks within Krasnodar krai.

Social Networks.

Social networks shaped by complex interaction between patrilineal and matrilineal kin as well as specifics of village associations (küv) play a very important role in the life of Meskhetian Turkish communities. As Tomlinson notes, the idiom of kinship in the Meskhetian communities penetrates deeply and shapes a multitude of social connections. An individual social standing is determined first and foremost on the basis of relatedness[85].

The refugee relocation program pays close attention to the Meskhetian family structure. Thus, social networks were important in determining a new location for refugees. The International Organization for MIgration (IOM) asked applicants to identify those families they would prefer to maintain ties with when relocating to the United States. In the majority of cases, people cross-referenced relatives they would prefer to remain close to after their move to a new place. In Lancaster and Philadelphia, such an 'anchor relative' was 'Tiyenshon Svonidze," – Laura Stammberger, a Lancaster refugee case-worker, explained. Figure 1 indicates that in the course of relocation even large families were able to stay together.

In the case of Afaz A., four of his adult sons and their families (18 individuals in total) were sent to San Diego, CA together. Connections between brothers, their wives and children formed an immediate circle of social networks the A. family were able to rely on in their daily experiences in a new country. As an added plus, the refugee agency

[85] Tomlinson, K. "Meskhetian Turks: PhD Thesis", University College of London, 2002, pp.120-122

was able to arrange housing for them within one apartment building of a development project in San Diego, CA. The fact that 5 nuclear families could reside closely together reminded our informants of residential arrangements back in Krasnodar and aided in the process of their integration. The A. family was relocated to San Diego together with Zh. family. The A. and Zh. families are related through marriage. Even though the patrilineal, patrilocal connections are considered more important among the Meskhetian Turks, specifics of practical relations and residence introduce modifications to the normative social structure. Thus, the fact that the A. family and the Zh. family originated from the same küv (both families trace their origins back to a village of Chela in Samtskhe-Javakheti (Meskhetia)), were related through marriage and interacted closely back in Krasnodar influenced their request to remain close together.

In personal interviews and occasional conversations in Krasnodar prior to relocation, many Turks expressed concerns that their families would be separated upon arrival in the States. The Turks feared that separation could also lead to the loss of their identity and cohesiveness as a group. These concerns are legitimate; local resettlement agencies have varied capacities to sponsor refugees. Despite efforts to preserve immediate family ties, many extended families found themselves in various locations in the US. "It is impossible to send everybody together to one place. So, the relocation agencies have to evaluate a number of factors; how many people, how many other relatives are there, where, etc.," Laura Stammberger, a relocation officer from a refugee bureau in Lancaster, PA, pointed out in an interview.

Before their arrival in the United States, the T. family headed by Sarvar resided in a village of Varennikovskaya of Krasnodar Krai. Even though some of their relatives

were living elsewhere, in and outside of Russia, the majority of Sarvar's patrilineal relatives, i.e., families of Sarvar's brothers, were all staying in one village. The families interacted on a daily basis and that served as an important network of support. Sarvar, his wife Mulkia and four of their six children were assigned to Phoenix, AZ. Sarvar's sister Maria, her children and their families as well as families of Sarvar's other nephews and nieces were sent to other states – California, Illinois and Washington. Also, due to a voluntary nature of the resettlement project, not all the Meskhetian Turks decided to move from Krasnodar Krai to the US. Two of Sarvar's brothers opted to remain in Varennikovskaya. One of Sarvar's daughter and her husband lived in Rostov and were not eligible to participate in the program. In subsequent interviews, informants emphasized a striking change in their residential arrangement. "I used to be able to cross the road and Nadira was there. Uncle Sarvar's house was just two blocks down the street," – Zamira, a wife of Sarvar's nephew, said. – "Now all we have left is occasional phone calls. It feels really strange."

Internal differentiation of the group continues to play a role in the new country as well. As the section on social networks illustrates, family connections are extremely Even though relocation to the United States disrupted many family ties and led to a greater sense of isolation upon arrival to a completely new country, differences between families and kuvs that played a role in Krasnodar Krai continued to define interaction between families after resettlement. Thus, in San Diego, families originally from Varenikovskaya and Kholmskaya villages in Krasnodar region of Russia interacted very little with each other. Leyla Zh. said about 'newcomers' from Varennikovskaya: "We've invited them to come over for tea but they never want to. There is something strange about that whole

group of families. They are not like us." Instead, both families relied more on connections with their neighbors and friends acquired through language courses rather than establish contacts with each other.

Refugee agencies are also instrumental in establishing connections between refugees and the host populations. One model of resettlement involves finding individual sponsors. Backgrounds of people who volunteer for sponsorship are varied. Some people chose to help out refugees because they themselves have been through this experience in the past. Sometimes, even recent refugees agree to sponsor their relatives. In other cases, civil commitment, and/or individual generosity motivate people. However, as Laura, the PRIME case-worker elaborated on this: "It is difficult to find sponsors. Well, we ask around. And sometimes a lot of people say that they are interested. With Tiyenshon, my friends Nancy and Mel, whose daughter has been to Turkey, said [that] they would be interested. And they also got one of the tables for Tiyenshon family. And they also got them a vacuum cleaner. But then they looked at it and said they could not do it. But other families were coming and I had to find sponsors. It's been a really tough year for me".

For refugees, these contacts play an extremely important role. In most cases, volunteer sponsors are the first extended interactions and exposure Meskhetian Turks have with Americans. Tiyenshon S. summarized just how crucial the sponsors are in setting the tone for the Meskhetian Turks' opinions of Americans. "I never expected that everything would be so positive. I didn't expect that I would be able to adapt so quickly. What really made a difference was the fact that so many people have helped us since we arrived here, giving us advice, and any assistance that we asked for. We didn't even have to ask. We were so used to people in Russia saying to us, why aren't you speaking the

right language, or why don't you look the right way.' But here complete strangers come to our door and ask, what can we do for you? How can we help you?" During the first short term study in December 2004, 5 months after Turkish families arrived to Lancaster, Tiyenshon and his family shared their impressions of a dinner they had at a volunteers' house. For them, hospitality of a volunteer family served as an important sign that they were welcome in this new country and can establish a relationship, even despite the obvious language difficulties.

Importance of sponsors and other English-speaking contacts becomes particularly clear if one compares the social networks among the Meskhetian Turks in Lancaster, PA, with those in San Diego, CA. In Lancaster, a refugee resettlement agency, PRIME, devoted a considerable amount of energy towards finding individual volunteers. While an extent of volunteers' help varied, excerpts from interviews above clearly show that Meskhetian Turks highly appreciated their involvement. In San Diego, CA, on the other hand, a resettlement agency allocated far less resources towards identifying volunteers. Several Meskhetian Turks in San Diego remarked that they felt largely isolated from the rest of the population and had to rely on their own means for establishing social contacts in this new community.

Aside from volunteers, language classes frequently organized by local churches serve as another source of social networks for new arrivals. The classes are targeted specifically at non-English speakers and are attended by a wide variety of refugees - Cuban, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Ukrainian, Uzbek, Russian, etc. The Meskhetian Turks' experience in language classes are representative of a larger circle of social networks they have found among their new friends, acquaintances, neighbors, and co-workers in

America. Many informants remarked that they never expected to find such a high degree of diversity in these relationships. If the Meskhetian Turks were surrounded by Russians, Armenians, Greeks, Azerbaijanis and other former Soviet peoples in Krasnodar, in the US they have neighbors and friends who are Latino, Iranian, Ukrainian, Indian, Asian-American, Arab, Jewish, etc. According to Zhianshian S., "It's like the whole world is concentrated here, and everyone wishes each other well."

In their individual efforts to create social networks in a new country, Meskhetian Turks have capitalized on their larger identity as Soviets and the Russian language. They have been able to easily establish connections with other immigrants from the former Soviet Union. The similarity in the everyday problems Russian-speaking and Meskhetian Turk refugees face brings them closer together. Additionally, similar food habits and a common cultural vocabulary strengthen these links. Thus, the Turks frequently shop at Russian stores. Borzhomi and pickled tomatoes, brynza (payneer) and sunflower seeds, herring and fruit preserves, Russian videos, DVDs and computer games form the basis that connects the Turks with the "Soviet" community in the U.S. In Philadelphia, where the Soviet community is much larger than in Lancaster and San Diego, it is much easier for Meskhetian Turks to branch out and establish connections on the basis of the shared Russian language. In the end, social networks and the very availability of the shared "Soviet" cultural space, furnishes refugees with a greater sense of belonging. "It is kind of similar to Krasnodar," one informant remarked: "You can go to a store and people greet you in Russian. Even if you ask a person on a street, there is a chance somebody would be able to answer you in Russian. It makes life much easier." (Zeinap, 25, Philadelphia).

Connections between the Meskhetian Turkish refugees and migrants from the former Soviet Union play an important role in marriage strategies that the Meskhetian Turks follow in the US. Thus, the first wedding in the newly established Meskhetian Turkish community in Lancaster took place on March 5th, 2005. The bride Surayo, a daughter of Tyanshon S., married Sabir, a Meskhetian Turkish immigrant from Uzbekistan who arrived to the US 5 years earlier on a student visa. Prior to Surayo's arrival to the US, neither the bride's family nor the groom's family knew about each other. Their first acquaintance and a decision to join in marriage their children happened after relocation to the US. This small episode shows that even though a population of Meskhetian Turks who arrived to the US prior to the resettlement project was fairly small, connections between the Meskhetian Turkish refugees and the Meskhetian Turkish conventional migrants emerged quickly.

The romantic story of Malik, a Meskhetian Turk from Lancaster, PA, and Nuriyan, a single ethnic Kumyk from San Diego, CA, illustrates the extent of social networks that tie Meskhetian Turks with other migrants across the US. Shortly after his arrival to Pennsylvania in the summer of 2004, Malik, a man in his 50s, lost his wife to cancer. After a period of mourning, in fall 2005, Malik opened himself up to the idea of finding a new life partner. However, the traditional solution – meeting a Meskhetian Turkish widow in a similar position – was not possible given the small size of the US-based Meskhetian community. Therefore, Malik's friends in Philadelphia, also immigrants from Russia, inquired among their acquaintances and extended social network. Malik's friends eventually called Marina, a Jew, who immigrated to the United States over 15 years ago. Marina suggested that Malik meet with her roommate and

friend of many years, Nuriyan, from Makhachkala, Daghestan. Although Nuriyan had never really met a Meskhetian Turk, she had heard that their language was similar to hers. "Kumyk is a Turkic-based language and so I knew we would be able to speak with each other in our native tongues. And besides, he was Caucasian and so am I – just slightly different areas of the Caucasus." Malik and Nuriyan eventually met and liked each other. Their friendship and an upcoming marriage are a striking example of how social networks respond and adjust to their new surroundings (Koriouchkina and Swerdlow 2007).

The stories of these two marriages show two different strategies of establishing and securing social networks. For Tyanshon, whose daughter was young, it was important to find a Meskhetian Turkish suitor. Intermarriages with other ethnic groups are generally looked down upon. A search for a suitable spouse encouraged Tyanshon and his family to look carefully among few Meskhetian Turks who have previously resided in the US. Given the example of Sabir and Surayo's marriage, it is also possible to hypothesize that in the near future, marriage strategies would tie Meskhetian Turks to other Meskhetian Turkish communities outside of the US (in Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Russia in particular). An example of Malik and Nuriyan's union shows that older generations might opt for a different strategy. Given that Malik is "old" by Meskhetian Turkish standards and as a widower is not considered a desirable marriage partner, he had more liberty to search for a spouse outside of his ethnic group. Similarity of personal backgrounds and shared experiences as migrants in a new country will help older Meskhetian Turks establish unions with people of other ethnicities.

In their efforts to forge new social networks, the Turks employ both their Soviet/Rossiyskiy and Turkish identities as well as Russian and Turkish languages. While the former connects them with a much larger group of Soviet immigrants, the latter provides them with contacts within a smaller but no less vibrant Turkish community in the US. The Turkish community Centre contacted the Turks shortly after their arrival in the country. Their material assistance was fairly limited. However, the community extended their social commitment within the limits possible. Thus, for Ramadan-bayram, they arranged transportation to a mosque in New York for a prayer and a celebratory dinner. Participation in the most important holiday of the year together with the Turkish community confirmed to the Meskhetian Turks that they can not only openly practice their religion without fears of being stigmatized or prosecuted, but that they are also a part of an even larger community (Umma). The Turkish community also offered space in their community centre to host the first Meskhetian wedding to take place in the States. Meskhetian Turks also attend language classes offered by the Turkish community centre.

Interaction between the Meskhetian Turks and the Turks from Turkey also takes place within less formal setting. Courtesy visits extend into stronger relations and even friendship and are followed by invitations to weddings. As in the case with the Russian-speaking immigrants, language plays an important role in facilitating these contacts. Religion strengthens these connections further.

One notable example of the Meskhetian Turks' integration into the Turkish community is their inclusion in annual Turkish parade which took place on May 21st in New York. A recent interview revealed the extent to which many Meskhetian Turks already view themselves a part of the larger Turkish community. When asked if the

parade was only for the Meskhetian Turks, Samet Lomidze answered: "No, it's for all Turks. We're all going to try and be there."

Home, Homeland, and Belonging.

A discussion of the Meskhetian Turks' conceptions of home and homeland falls under a more general rubric of identity. Their perception of themselves is frequently presented as rhetoric about one's current and past belonging. Memories of the past often invoked discussions about homeland and attachment to specific places. The Meskhetian Turks' history of repeated forced displacement over the course of the past 60 years explains the complexity of Meskhetian Turkish discourses on home, homeland and belonging.

Attitudes towards one's motherland vary considerably among the Meskhetian Turks by generation, individual political agenda and past experiences. Within the community of Meskhetian Turks, there exist various opinions and individual attitudes towards the complex question of one's belonging. Understanding the heterogeneity of these voices allows one to deconstruct the multifaceted concept of "home" and "homeland". Excerpts from three interviews below give an example of generational variation in attitudes towards the idea of a 'motherland'.

> *Every day, before I go to sleep, I close my eyes and I see it – I see my village where I was born and grew up. I was 14 when we were deported. So, I remember everything very well. I remember my parents, my grandparents, our house. Every night I close my eyes and I can see it – my heart longs to go to them and yet I cannot. It is in my heart – my memories are in my heart… When a person loses a handkerchief, he is upset. We lost our motherland… Of course, our hearts ache and cry… (Mulkia,75 y.o., Lancaster, PA)*

Poetic in her sadness, Mulkia, 75 year old mother of five sons, could not hold her tears back as she reminisced about Georgia. To her, after years spent in exile, Georgia remains a place she refers to as her motherland. More than just a geographic location, it holds

intense memories of her parents and her childhood. It is interesting to compare Mulkia's discourse about motherland with the emotional remark of the 15-year old Rasul:

> *If only I could close my eyes and find myself back on my street in Kholmskaya… With all of my friends around. I had a lot of friends on my street – we used to hang out every day. If only I could close my eyes… No, I would have only gone for one day – just to see everybody. I would have come back. But if only I could go there for one day (Rasul, 15, Philadelphia, PA).*

During interviews, young adults and teenagers frequently expressed desire to go back for "just one day" to their village. For them, Georgia and Uzbekistan are simply distant memories of their parents. Their memories of childhood, family, and social life lie within Krasnodar. Like Mulkia, Rasul discussed his perception of Krasnodar in terms of things which were important to him – the people and his home.

Those who were born in Uzbekistan reminisced about their lives more cautiously. Their memories were marred by the history of direct physical and threat and violence they endured from the oppressive regime. Few people expressed a wish to go back to Uzbekistan, but because many strong memories were created there, they still consider it their motherland. According to Nasredin:

> *I grew up, received my education, and got married all in Namangan. I am over 40 years old now. My formative and most interesting years were spent there, so my homeland in principle should be there. But I know, in any case, that I won't ever be able to live there. If Krasnodar Krai is unstable, Uzbekistan is now a hundred times worse…even in the 70s and 80s a shift was taking place, and minorities gradually couldn't get prestigious jobs.*

Contrasting these views of "homeland", Nasredin's discussion of Uzbekistan was markedly more reserved than the emotional and nostalgic reminiscences of Mulkia and Rasul. Generational differences among the Meskhetian Turks help account for the diversity of opinions about the idea of a homeland, and explain varying attitudes toward repatriation to Georgia. Younger and middle-aged Meskhetians (35-55 years old) came of age during exile in Uzbekistan and hold very different ideas about their identities. Their

perception of homeland is one of perpetual exile, and Meskhetia is simply a memory recounted to them by their parents. Sadritdin remarked on the abstract sense of loss he associates with Meskhetia:

> *My parents would speak of their village, Chela, almost everyday when we were growing up. Would I like to see Meskhetia? Sure, I've always wanted to know what it looks like. But if you ask me would I move there, my answer would be not in a million years! What do I need Georgia for? It's not my homeland (Sadritdin, 48, San Diego, CA).*

While he holds feelings towards Meskhetia, since he has never lived there, he doesn't consider it his homeland. In contrast, Uzbekistan and Krasnodar are areas where this generation of Meskhetian Turks has lived, and their recounts of these countries are more directly nostalgic. When talking about these countries, Meskhetian Turks comment that after they left, their previously inhabited regions which prospered while they were there have fallen into disarray.

> *When we were in Uzbekistan, we worked hard to turn those lands into flourishing gardens. We made sure that our villages, our collective farms were the best. We paved roads and brought gas and running water to our villages. What happened after we left? Villages were abandoned or Uzbeks took over our houses. But even when other people moved into our villages, there was no one to take care of gardens and villages. All the gardens are gone now. Everything is in the state of disrepair. Everything is falling apart (Akhmet, 55, Varenikovskaya, Russia).*

Time and again, this rhetoric was repeated both in Krasnodar and in the US. Images of gardens that fell into a state of disrepair were one of the strongest visual pictures described. Frequently, in this same discussion of abandoned gardens, the Meskhetian Turks linked their exile from Uzbekistan with the overall economic decline of that country. Upon their arrival to the US, the Meskhetian Turks repeated similar assertions about Krasnodar krai, Russia:

> *The situation is already turning for the worse in Russia. Kholmskaya is not what it used to be. There are fewer people at the market. It is no longer vibrant. No, it is changing for the worse in Krasnodar after we left (Makrshon, 58, Lancaster, PA).*

Concerned with the state of Krasnodar krai economy and labour market after the Meskhetian Turks' resettlement, Makrshon later mentioned that he left Kholmskaya only 2 months ago. Yet, his discussion about a village in Krasnodar closely matches rhetoric about Uzbekistan. One can suggest that the attitudes underlying these discourses are defensive and compensatory ones. It is comforting for one to think that after their own lives were destroyed, their belongings and property were abandoned, the perpetrators were punished. Life in those areas changed for the worse. Such feelings help the Meskhetian Turks focus more on their current situation and their present place of residence rather than to continue ruminating over the places they were forced to leave. Even these few examples offer support to a proposition that Meskhetian Turks hold a fairly pragmatic view of motherland[86] that is concerned less with a particular geographical area than with the current safety of their families.

Poor grasp of the English language and a scarce knowledge of American culture make the Meskhetian Turks wary of their attitudes towards this new country. While their political leaders might be more vocal about positive aspects of life in the US, for the rest of the Meskhetian Turks, the stark contrast of the life in the new country to life in Krasnodar will take some getting used to. "We'll try to become Americans. But for now, we cannot say that we are Americans. All we can do is try to blend in,"- Bakhodyr, a 37 years old Turk residing in Philadelphia, remarked during an interview.

Despite the popularity of Western culture and the positive image of the United States portrayed by the mass media, older Meskhetian Turks were originally

[86] Tomlynson, "Coping as Kin: Responses to Suffering Amongs Displaced Meskhetian Turks in Post-Soviet Krasnodar, Russian Federation", PhD dissertation, College University of London, May 2002; Aydingun A., Creating, Recreating and Redefining Ethnic Identity: Ahiska/Meskhetian Turks in Soviet and Post-Soviet Contexts; *Central Asian Survey* 21(2): 185-197

apprehensive about moving to a new country and their ability to be successful there. To compensate for this uncertainty and to leave open the possibility of moving back to Kranodar, one Meskhetian Turkish leader sent a letter to Governor Tkachev requesting he grant citizenship to all Meskhetian Turks regardless of whether they leave or stay in Krasnodar. "We are leaving the door open. Our move is only temporary. One day we will be back," he[87] wrote. Many Meskhetian Turks shared these fears. "You pack 70 kilos, hop on a plane and then you have to begin from scratch. And if you fail, you know that you cannot come back, and there is nothing to fall back on to," said an older woman during a visit to Varenikovskaya. Repeatedly, people inquired whether moving to America would be the right choice and whether it would change their lives for the better. Some spoke of it as "the third deportation" or "sürgün." The idea that family ties would be irrevocably ruptured invoked memories of the exodus from Uzbekistan and exacerbated the uncertainty of losing these connections forever.

During field visits, Meskhetian Turks frequently transferred their sense of instability in Krasnodar onto their future lives in America. Many questioned why the United States was embarking on such a step, fearing they would become something akin to indentured servants or slaves. However, many of these fears disappeared once they arrived in the United States. Informants proudly remarked on how quickly they were able to obtain all the necessary documents. Within the first few months a majority were able to obtain a driver's license. "Now I have my driver's license. I do not need to carry a passport or any other documents. I have nothing to fear" (Ilimshan, 38, Lancaster PA) – proper identification documents and the very ease with which these papers were obtained symbolized to our informants that they are indeed welcome in the new country.

[87] The name of informant is omitted in order to preserve his anonymity.

A contrast between the initial concerns and the reality of their situation in the US frequently gave rise to semi-euphoric discourses that are generally representative of the first phase of adaptation to a new country. Nonetheless, even when accounting for cultural euphoria, interviews in several communities across the US showed that the Meskhetian Turks are on their way towards achieving a sense of confidence and social stability that they have never experienced before. Perhaps nothing better can summarize the optimism about the future than the words of a new American Meskhetian Turk herself, who said: "Our lives have changed radically in a sense that we have begun to live without constant fear and disturbances of life in Krasnodar. There we always lived in fear that maybe they'd kick us out that day, maybe the next day, or the day after that. 15 years we lived in that condition. But here I have the same rights as the President of the United States. Everyone is the same. Here in America I finally feel like a free person, and I love it." Starting new life in a new country, building a community and establishing a good base for their children are the immediate goals of refugees. A sense of belonging will only come later. Social stability and feelings of safety will aid them in this process.

Conclusion

From the onset, the Meskhetian Turkish resettlement project generated a considerable amount of controversy. Influenced by painful memories of past deportations, some Meskhetian Turks expected only the worst from the resettlement to the US. Many people in Russia, Turkey, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan were openly envious of Meskhetian Turks in the Krasnodar region for being given a chance to start a new life in a prosperous Western country. Widely spread fears, envy, as well as negative attitudes towards both US geopolitical strategies and Russian domestic policies gave rise to multiple rumours surrounding the resettlement. Obscuring the actual goals of the US

program, several Russian media outlets as well as Turkish and Azerbaijani organizations have stirred great concerns about the resettlement of Meskhetian Turks to the United States by presenting it as a "compulsory immigration". A press release from a Meskhetian Turkish organization in Turkey warned[88]:

> Ahiska Turks have been informed that they will be provided with residence and a job from the date they are resettled to the USA, where they must renew their residence permits every 6 months…*Ahiska Turk families will be allocated lands by American officials to plant cotton and tobacco and will definitely be prohibited to work in fields other than farming [emphasis added – LK]*.

Other rumours asserted that Meskhetian Turks would be forced to abandon their traditions, language and culture, and their families would be separated. Upon entering the US, they would be prohibited from communicating with friends and relatives they left behind in Russia.

A detailed study of the emerging Meskhetian Turkish communities in the US forcefully disproves these rumours and alleviates many concerns that arise largely due to limited information the general public has about the resettlement project. Nothing, however, can better challenge the rumours surrounding the resettlement project than words of Meskhetian Turks themselves. Time and again, informants contrasted their experiences in the US with life in Russia:

> *I lived in Krasnodar for fifteen long years. I would go outside and get stopped and asked for my documents. The moment a police officer would see my skin colour, he would become aggressive, and act as if I was a monster. But here you are protected, defended, and this makes all the difference. Here everything is available. Here if you work hard and stay within the law, everything is in your hands. But over there, nothing is in your hands (Aybek L., AGE, Philadelphia).*

While this chapter details many difficulties encountered by the refugees in their new country, it seems obvious that the resettlement has changed the lives of the Krasnodar

[88] Serious grammatical errors from the original text have been corrected for the benefit and convenience of the reader.

Meskhetian Turks for the better. A sense of personal safety, individual freedoms and possibilities for upward social mobility are the foundations for a new chapter in Meskhetian Turkish history.

Chapter 8: Concluding Remarks.

The anthropological community in Russia has been in turmoil over the last few years. In 2004, a prominent specialist in the field of nationalism and ethnic studies, Nikolai Girenko was killed by a nationalist extremist group. In June 2007, Valery Tishkov, a leading specialist in the field of ethnicity and head of the Institute of Ethnography and Anthropology in Moscow, was accused of being a US spy (Koriouchkina 2007). In the fall 2010, pro-fascist extremist groups organized massive meetings of protest and picked fights targeting non-Slavic populations of Moscow. In February 2011, President Medvedev attended a conference dedicated to a search for a unifying national identity that could combat growing influence of ethnic extremism in the Russian society. Through all these events, notions of ethnicity, a role of ethnic categorization in everyday life and politics, and a power of the state to enforce a particular version of social categorization come to the forefront. The story of Meskhetian Turks presented in this dissertation offers a framework of analysis of these horrific but not completely unexpected events of the last 7 years.

Overview of Meskhetian Turks' history in their engagement with the Soviet and post-Soviet state shows that ethnicity is not losing significance over time. Constructed in complex interplay between social theorists, state officials and populations, ethnicity in a form of "popular primordialism" emerges as a powerful explanation to group destiny and a justification for state actions towards a group. The story of Meskhetian Turks illustrates tensions between two paradigms of defining ethnicity. On the one hand, the story of shifting identifications between the Georgian and the Turkish camps (and later, between Turkish and Soviet immigrants in the USA) provides an evidence of changing accents and priorities in one's search for belonging and a place of final residence. Their story

offers a perfect illustration to constructivist theories of ethnicity emphasizing shifts in ethnic identification. On the other hand, the case of the Meskhetian Turks shows that the state is far from losing its grip on its subjects, and categories of group membership do not wane, but are clarified and enforced through both actions of people and of the state. Through the 90s, ethnicity retains its position as a meaningful category of interaction between the state, non-state actors (ex. the IOM) and people, thereby receiving additional significance and certainty. Interethnic clashes in the 2000s emerge as a direct consequence of a concept of primordial ethnicity that was developed during the Soviet period and that served as a basis for state functioning during the Soviet period and retained its analytical position during the post-Soviet period as well.

The story of Mekshetian Turks also highlights a complexity of a state involvement in a sphere of regulating interethnic relations. During the Soviet period the state not only appropriated a particular vision of ethnicity but also had the power to maintain a particular status quo between ethnic groups. In the post-Soviet period, the state formally withdraws from the sphere of regulating interethnic relations. First, a formal indication of "ethnicity" is removed from passports. Then, in line with neoliberal developments, the state denounces "ethnicity" in its dealing with its subjects (Mironov 2003). Yet, popular categories of Primordialism retain their grip on popular imagination (and also influence informal practices of the state – ex. Meskhetian Turks' de facto denials of citizenship). Insufficient attention to issues of interethnic communication prompts President Medvedev to call for a search for national ideology, a project that was dropped during President Yeltsin's term many years ago.

The story of Meskhetian Turks problematizes the state role in regulations of the sphere of ethnicity. Given a blurred distinction between spheres of public and private, civil society and the state, categories (like ethnicity in this case) of public life continue to exert influence on the state functioning even if they are not explicitly defined in legislation. Thus, a withdrawal from the sphere of interethnic relations does not solve the problem of having to deal with interethnic issues inherited from the Soviet past (especially if notions of ethnicity are enforced in other areas of state functioning through notions of group rights, ethnic minorities, etc.).

Discussions about definitions of ethnicity and ethnic groups are not just epistemic follies of academics but define and influence the way the state interacts with its subjects in turn influencing a range of theories that are recognized as legitimate by the state. This discussion resonates with recent debates among US anthropologists regarding a role of Cultural Anthropology as a science or as an interpretive medium of educating the public. The story of Meskhetian Turks shows that the question itself is culturally specific as it points at a role of anthropology in a project of governing and in the state's reliance on particular categories in its interaction with its subjects. In the West, where Anthropology has received absolution for its experiences as a "handmaiden" to colonial regimes and it use in strategies of indirect government, this question will receive a different answer than in Russia where ethnographers are state employees and state agenda plays a role in defining academic research. Accusations against Tishkov emphasized corrupting influences of Western theorizing. This rhetoric against a social scientist, who was a state employee, point at a role that ethnographers and anthropologists play in Russia, where social sciences have been closely integrated with state structures.

In tracing complex relationships between Soviet and Post-Soviet state authorities and Meskhetian Turks in chapters 2 ("Primordialism") and 3 ("Migration"), I show that attention to historical processes is important in order to fully understand predicaments of the contemporary situation in Russia. Even though the Soviet Union disappeared over two decades ago, its heritage still affects specifics of life in contemporary Russia. This conclusion is hardly surprising given that a large proportion of people that I interviewed – both representatives of the state and Meskhetian Turks, - came of age in the Soviet Union. In a sense, my informants were the Soviet Union as they produced and reproduced its cultural categories, followed and transgressed its rules and regulations, identified with or rejected its ideology.

Kramer (2003) argues that even though the Soviet Union fell apart as a regime, it could have survived as a state. In a similar argument, McAuley points out that in a sense the Soviet Union has persisted given continuity of personnel in public offices (1999). Discussions about migration management and notions of ethnicity presented in this thesis highlight a need to further develop an integrated framework for a study of the state that would flash out changes and continuities on a level of state management. Transformations that happened in Russia in the early 90s were truly revolutionary. Yet, a reversal of changes in the last decade calls for a need to closer examine "transition" models suggested in literature on this topic (as discussed in Chapter 1).

One question that emerges out of recent studies of Russia is "why hasn't new ideology appeared?" Also, recent revival of Soviet nostalgia and strengthening of the authoritarian state, prompt one to inquire more into the limits of social change that

occurred in Russia. Kullberg (1994) argues that the appearance of new ideologies in the former Soviet Union is a measure of how fundamental change has been. Following Geertz' proposition, she emphasizes that ideologies have historically arisen as a consequence of a complete destruction or disintegration of institutions and the orthodox belief systems associated with them. Institutional collapse engenders social strain and destroys belief systems, thus provoking 'conceptual confusion' about the nature of the social order. Such conditions are highly favorable for the formulation of new ideologies. Indeed, it seems that such conditions demand the birth of ideologies: ideologies provide new cognitive maps for society and may thus assist in the recreation of order. Yet, researchers have noted a peculiar lack of new ideologies in Russia. One could argue that this was indeed the case given tenacity of the Soviet state institutional structures currently still in place.

An analysis of Meskhetian Turks' struggles to acquire citizenship reveals a considerable continuity between the Soviet and the post-Soviet periods. Notions of social entitlement, collective behavior and territorial identity play a considerable role in the interpretation and implementation of legislature. The Soviet Union disappeared, yet its legacy continues to exert influence and define people's lives. The political inertia of the majority of the Russian population is puzzling. Yet, if one were to use insights from the case of Meskhetian Turks' interaction with the state, it is possible that the lack of political engagement is due to a general perception of what political involvement means and who can and should participate in the political life of the country. I suggest that notions of collective belonging instilled during the Soviet period defined their attitudes about and expectations of the state. One was not to interact with the state directly and as an

individual, but as a member of a collective and through appointed leaders. The same is also true of state officials who, despite their allegiance to neoliberal principles, continued to deal with Meskhetian Turks as a definite group.

A review of citizenship regulations in the case of Meskhetian Turks offers a perspective on such phenomena as regional identity. Verdery argues that adjustment of citizenship provisions came as a result of an ultimately transnational process that brought along dissolution of the Soviet bloc (1998). Indeed, democratization is a global phenomenon and the desire to join democratic world was strong enough to knock down the iron curtain of existential differences that separated the Soviet and the capitalist worlds. Paradoxically, once a process of change was underway, transformations that affected former Socialist countries displayed very local, nationalizing tendencies that picked up on the previously existing patterns of group membership, while at the same time integrated some aspects of the newly emerging neo-liberal ethos. An analysis of the exclusion of Meskhetian Turks from membership in the Russian Federations uncovers strong concepts of regional belonging and identity that emerged and received formal recognition in the 90s. Territorial limitations on citizenship practiced during the Soviet period in a form of propiska/registration received a new meaning as now this instrument of control over population movements and composition was used to define regional boundaries and ensure the particular identity of the region's residents vis-à-vis the newcomers.

Analysis of changes in migration management, citizenship legislation, and international negotiations about the Meskhetian Turkish case show that despite persistence of certain Soviet practices, the state has experienced profound changes. At the

end of the Soviet period, there could no longer be a unified plan of state development. Georgia was able to refuse receiving Meskhetian Turks and later stalled negotiations about their fate. Central Soviet authorities could not enforce resettlement of refugees to any designated areas. After the fall of the USSR, regions were striving to gain greater independence from the central authorities. The story of Meskhetian Turks' struggles over a status in Krasnodarskiy Krai shows that the regional state administration asked for and was able to implement its own laws that often contradicted federal level legislation. But if power hierarchy could no longer tie the center with the periphery as it did in the totalitarian state, within regions, traditions of Soviet population management remained strong. Thus, my review highlights continuities and disjunctions in changes that affected the state and its subjects following radical transformations of the Soviet state. Similarly, the story of Meskhetian Turks is unique. Yet, it also offers a perspective on wider processes that take place elsewhere in Russia. Meskhetian Turks have left the region to build their lives in the new country. Yet, the problems that their case identified remain important and continue to play a role in the interaction between the Russian state and other ethnic groups who find themselves grappling with issues of ethnic Primordialism, individual-vs.-group rights, questions of freedom and security.

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