

The Geopolitics of Ethnic Relations in Russia: ethnic Russian and non-ethnic Russian citizens in Stavropol'skii krai

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Abstract

Ethnic relations are an important feature of contemporary Russia. This is especially true in the North Caucasus where ongoing insecurity combined with a depressed economy has led to growing Russian nationalism, xenophobia, and fears over immigration. In Stavropol'skii krai, the only ethnic Russian dominated territory in the North Caucasus Federal District, the situation is especially acute. In this thesis I investigate how the geopolitics of ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai, as part of the wider North Caucasus situation, impact on the everyday life of citizens in Stavropol'. I do this through employing an eclectic methodology, including both qualitative and quantitative techniques.

Through four research papers, I explore how the built urban environment, through the politics of naming place (for example, street names and monuments), has become a space through which ethnic identity can be (re)produced and contested. I show how ethnic relations are (re)presented and performed in Stavropol' through the *Den' kraya* celebration, a performance that is based on a Soviet-era idealised framing of ethnic relations, and one which is open to challenge. I explore how in summer 2007 ethnic relations turned violent as ethnic Russian and non-ethnic Russian citizens rioted, and I attempt to explain the geopolitics surrounding this. Finally, I show how everyday ethnic relations have turned increasingly violent in Stavropol' since 1991, drawing on reports from non-governmental organisations and independent researchers. I situate this research within the context of the changing ethnic geography of the krai since 1991. Together, this research represents a geopolitics of ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been written had I not moved to the University of Oxford in the autumn of 2007. Enrolling on the DPhil course I had an idea of what facet of Political Geography I wanted to ‘specialise’ in (had everything gone to the original plan then this would have been a very different thesis). The result is a synthesis not just of published and unpublished works cited in reference, but also of innumerable conversations on the subject of Political Geography, past, present, and future. It is the result of chance encounters and intellectual discussions, taking in several countries, and spanning at least three continents. It is also the result of a scattered spatial journey through various educational institutions which started at Russells Hall Primary School, Dudley, in 1991 and has taken me (so far) to Kingswinford, Stourbridge, Plymouth, Birmingham, Oxford, and Stavropol’. Nobody is more surprised than I am at the path that I have trodden.

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Notes

In transliterating names from the Russian, I have followed the convention of the BGN/PCGN system. I have used “zh” to denote “ж”, “z” to denote “з”, “i” to denote “и” and “ии”, “kh” to denote “х”, “sh” to denote “ш”, “shch” and denote “щ”, “” to denote “ъ” and “ь”, “y” to denote “ы”, “yu” to denote “ю”, “e” to denote “э”, and “ya” to denote “я”. Original spelling is retained in quotations.

Chapter 1. Introduction: Ethno-nationalism, territory and geopolitics in the North Caucasus

1.1 Introduction

On 19 January 2010, President Medvedev divided up the Southern Federal District (SFD) to create the North Caucasus Federal District (NCFD), appointing Alexander Khloponin as its envoy (Medvedev 2010a). This process of geo-graphing [*earth writing*] represented the latest in a long series of attempts by Russia to control the most restless of its regions, the North Caucasus.

Khloponin's appointment was notable for a number of reasons. Khloponin was jointly appointed 'Presidential Representative to the North Caucasian Federal District' and 'Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation', a "unique" situation, according to Medvedev, of one person combining such two positions (Ibid.). The NCFD became the eighth federal district since 2000, when then-President Vladimir Putin signed a decree "On the Envoys of the President of the Russian Federation in Federal Districts" (Decree No. 849, 13 May 2000) and the country was divided into seven districts each headed by a presidential envoy. This was not the first attempt by a Russian state to create a 'North Caucasus krai'. Rather, at the end of the Tsarist period a large part of the territory of the current North Caucasus republics, with the exception of central and southern Dagestan and Karacheavo-Cherkessia, formed one 'unit' (Kavkazskii Uzel 2010). In 1929, Joseph Stalin created a 'North Caucasus krai', which for five years existed "in those borders in which the new federal district has been created" (Ibid.). And then, in May 2000, Vladimir Putin sketched out a North Caucasus Federal District, which was to be one of

eight such institutions designed to build the power *vertikal* and help increase Moscow's control over the country, but which was cancelled before it could be institutionalized (Markedonov 2010a). Perhaps most notable though, was Medvedev's decision to centre the NCFD on Pyatigorsk: a tangible, if unnecessary, reminder that the North Caucasus is composed not solely of the autonomous republics, but also includes Stavropol'skii krai – an ethnic-Russian dominated territory. And it is in Stavropol'skii krai that this thesis is located (see, Figure 1).

In the summer of 2007, a series of 'ethnic riots' focused Russian domestic attention on Stavropol'skii krai (see, Chesnokov 2007). Hitherto largely peaceful inter-ethnic relations turned bloody as, during the course of six weeks of rioting, three people were killed and many more injured. These 'ethnic riots', Shlapentokh (2007) wrote, were "similar to those of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century pre-revolutionary Russia, where social-national conflicts were enmeshed in waves of pogrom-type violence and common crime". Connected, at least in the popular imagination, with the ethnic riots in Kondopoga, Karelia in 2005, some commentators suggested that ethno-nationalist sentiments were rising -- the result of the "twisted rise of Western modernity with Russian nationalism as its manifestation" (Ibid.) -- and held important consequences for Russian politics and society, particularly in the North Caucasus.

Two years later, in the summer of 2009, Stavropol'skii krai was again receiving national attention. It was in Stavropol' that President Medvedev spoke on the "terrorist and extremist threat" facing Russia, in response to the car-bomb explosion in Nazran (Ingushetia), which killed 25 people and injured up to 250 more (Medvedev 2009a). The attack, which came only months after Russia had formally declared an end to its

Counter-Terrorist Operations (*Kontrterroristicheskaya operatsiya* -- KTO) in neighbouring Chechnya, contradicted Kremlin claims that insurgency and terrorist elements had been eliminated in the region.

A year later, on 26 May 2010, a terrorist bomb attack (which killed seven people and injured more than 40 others) outside the House of Culture and Sport in Stavropol' again focussed Russian national attention on Stavropol'skii krai.

Figure 1. An administrative map of the Caucasus



The North Caucasus republics are at the centre of political discourse and debate in Russia and are implicated (proximately or otherwise) in the gravest of national crises which Russia has faced since the end of the Soviet Union, including the two Chechen

Wars (1994-6, 1999-2000), the Nord-Ost Theatre Siege (2002), Moscow Metro bombing (February 2004), Beslan School Hostage Siege (September 2004) and the more recent Moscow Metro bombings (March 2010). Such is the importance of the region to political elites that Dmitri Medvedev devoted much of his 2009 ‘Annual Address to the Federal Assembly’ to what he considered Russia’s “most serious, domestic political problem, the situation in the North Caucasus” [*samoi serieznoi, na moi vzglyad, vnutripoliticheskoi problem nashei strani – situatsii na Severnom Kavkaze*] (Medvedev 2009b). In his speech, Medvedev explained that Russia would “engage in an uncompromising struggle against international terrorism”, promising to “destroy the gunmen” who commit “terrorist crimes”. Despite this, violence has continued. And, on 8 January 2010, Medvedev ordered FSB director Alexander Bortnikov to “regularly” and “systematically” kill insurgents in the region (Medvedev 2010b).

This was not the first time that the North Caucasus had been associated with ‘international terrorism’. Rather, for much of the last decade the North Caucasus has been bound up with the indiscriminate geographies of the ‘War on Terror’. At the same time, the years since the end of the Soviet Union have seen the North Caucasus written (uncritically) into global space as the object of multiple and intersecting geopolitical discourses, such as Samuel Huntington’s *Clash of Civilisations* (1996) and Edward Lucas’s *New Cold War* (2008). Unlike Huntington’s ‘Clash’ thesis, which was based on the First Chechen War (and waged in an effort to maintain Russia’s ‘territorial integrity’), Lucas’s ‘New Cold War’ narrative builds on the Second Chechen War, which was framed, from its off-set, by Vladimir Putin as nothing less than an attack on civilised order by barbarians utterly alien to civilisation (see, Russell 2007). Putin’s generalised ‘barbarians’ had no right to be spared, as Russia would, in Putin’s own

words, “waste them even in the shithouse” (*i v sortire zamochim*)¹. Looking back, this sort of language should could as no surprise, as Putin had taken an extreme stance on Chechnya, seeing in it the possibility to guarantee his election as the President of what he called the “new Russia” (Putin 2000a). In an interview with *Paris Match* in summer 2000, Putin spoke of:

“an arc of instability extending from the Philippines to Kosovo ... [in which] ... Europe should be grateful to us and offer its appreciation for our fight against terrorism even if we are, unfortunately, waging it on our own” (Putin 2000b).

Chechnya was the key member of the ‘arc’, in which Putin drew links between the activities of Islamic militants in the Philippines (the abduction of two Belgian journalists in July 1999 by the ‘Abu Sayyaf Group’ – held captive for five days and then released unharmed and without ransom – clearly alarmed Putin), the apartment bombings in Buynaksk, Moscow, and Volgograd in September 1999 by Chechen militants (for a dissident analysis see, Felshtinsky and Litvinenko 2007), and NATO intervention in Kosovo. The period and place of Putin’s ‘instability’ seem generalised: what Sidaway (2001; 2003; 2008) might call ‘banal geopolitics’. Nevertheless, Putin’s speech was picked up on by Western leaders in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on ‘9/11’ 2001, and his assertions of an ‘Islamic threat’ were given increasing credence. The aggressive rhetoric and military aggressions of the US and UK-led ‘War on Terror’ served only to validate Putin’s particular script for

¹ Through numerous repetitions and reformulations, this prison jargon has acquired an extraordinary density of meaning in addition to the infernal threat it originally carried. For an overview of the various meanings contained in the phrase, see Camus (2006).

world geopolitics, in which Russia was fighting forces menacing modern civilisation itself in the North Caucasus².

Owing to Putin's framing of the Second Chechen War as part of the 'War on Terror', but also because Chechnya has been the focal point of much of the conflict and violence in the North Caucasus in the post-Soviet period, in the current debate on the North Caucasus the region is largely understood through Chechnya (and, more recently, Dagestan and Ingushetia). This has stifled academic inquiry and 'Chechenised' regional knowledge. Just as macro-level discourse reduces the geographic specificity and place-based particularity of the North Caucasus to the confrontational script of the two Chechen Wars (in much the same way as Cold War discourse depluralised and homogenised global space), so too does designating the whole North Caucasus region as being typified by Chechnya risk determining its character in a definitive and totalizing manner; imposing a closure upon events, situations, and peoples. This is also a serious flaw in existing literature on the region.

Rather than focus on Chechnya like much existing literature, this thesis instead explores Stavropol'skii krai and can be seen as an entrance point to the wider region. It is positioned within recent studies – for example, the monographs of Coene (2009) and de

² According to Mairbek Vatchagaev, writing for the *Jamestown Foundation's* 'Eurasian Daily Monitor' in October 2010, no connection has ever been established between Chechen militants and al-Qaeda. No Chechen has been proved to have fought in Afghanistan, Iraq, or any other al-Qaeda 'hot spot'. When the creation of the Caucasus Emirate as a Muslim state was announced in September 2007 -- based on militant resistance in the North Caucasus -- its leaders portrayed the new entity as both novel and eternal. The fact that they did not declare themselves as a constituent of some party or organization, including al-Qaeda, showed that the Caucasus Emirate was an exclusively local entity having no external linkages for coordinating its activities. When Chechen leaders were killed, al-Qaeda did not make any statements. "Time has convincingly shown that Chechnya has no role to play in al-Qaeda's global game", Vatchagev writes, "A mythical Chechen link thus suited many. For the Russians, this was an opportunity to create in the eyes of the world community the negative image of Chechens as partners of international terrorists". See, Vatchagev (2010).

Waal (2010) – in providing a timely account of contemporary dynamics in the region. Critical geographical research can help highlight ethnic identities, interethnic relations, practices of ethnic identification, forms of ethnic conflict, distributions of ethnic violence, and the making of ethnic places and spaces. In doing so, such work explores (rather than assumes) the importance of ethnicity in everyday life, and can contribute to a better understanding of the ethnic situation in Stavropol'skii krai, and the wider North Caucasus.

In the preface to their special edition of *Eurasian Geography and Economics* on the post-Soviet Caucasus, O'Loughlin, Witmer, Dickinson, Thorwardson, and Holland (2007: 129) ended their introduction with the comment:

“We hope that this project will stimulate further work on a region that unfortunately suffers from a (media-driven) perception as remote and dangerous”

This thesis can, in part, be seen as answering this plea.

1.2 Research Outline

In this thesis I present new empirical insights on ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai and relate these to wider issues surrounding power and place in contemporary Russia. I investigate how the geopolitics of ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai, as part of the situation in the wider North Caucasus, impact on the everyday lives of citizens in the krai. These geopolitics include relations between Stavropol'skii krai and the North Caucasus republics, military interventions and conflicts (both historical and

contemporary), and the memorialisation and securitisation of the North Caucasian landscape. They also include competing visions of Stavropol'skii krai and the North Caucasus in post-Soviet Russian state apparatus, and the role that ethno-demography plays in Russian state territorial integrity.

I approach this study through my own fieldwork conducted over the course of two years between 2008 and 2009 in Stavropol'skii krai and Moscow. Together my research is bound together with a shared interest in:

- 1) How ethnicity is written into geopolitics, and how geopolitics can illuminate understandings of how ethnicity is inscribed into everyday life in Russia.
- 2) The understandings, actions, and motivations of citizens as they actively define contemporary ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai, and as they cope with wider geopolitical events, both spatially and temporally.
- 3) How the 'spaces' of Stavropol'skii krai are created by, and partially determine, ethnic relations.

This research is situated within Political Geography, although it draws on and contributes to a Critical Border Studies, Ethnic Conflict Studies, and Russian Area Studies. I use the case study of Stavropol'skii krai as a way to engage with a number of theoretical, methodological and empirical debates in the growing literature on the North Caucasus, and a number of theoretical and disciplinary debates within human geography, particularly political geography and regional geography.

I start by exploring ethnicity in Russia, pointing to the central role played by the Soviet nationalities policy in preserving ethnic identities in post-Soviet Russia. I then discuss the changing demography of the Russian Federation since 1991, paying particular attention to the ethnic structure of Russia's population. I then move on to discuss the ethnic geography of Stavropol'skii krai at all spatial scales, from krai to raion to intra-city and rural periphery, including analysis of municipal raions where data are available. In particular, I focus on the impacts on the krai of nearby conflicts in the North Caucasus republics and highlight the changing ethnic geography of rural raions in eastern Stavropol'skii krai and migration patterns in western Stavropol'skii krai. In considering these two distinct geographic scales -- national and krai -- I do not mean to suggest that they are a binary and should be viewed as such. Rather, demographic processes operate both at and between the national and krai scales. Based on fieldwork conducted in Moscow and Stavropol' *gorod* (city), I then explore the localised geopolitics of ethnic relations, arguing that ethnicity is inscribed through a variety of forms (or representations), including the urban built environment and yearly parades, and that understanding how these representations are 'read' by citizens reveals much about power and place in contemporary Russia. While other markers of identity are important in the context of economic stagnation and the recentralisation of political power in Russia (the so-called *vertikal*), ethnicity is increasingly important in daily life. I then move on to consider the ethnic riots in Stavropol' in summer 2007, when ethnic Russians clashed with ethnic Caucasians (primarily Chechens). I suggest that a number of discourses are important in explaining these events, many of which speak directly to political geography's core concerns of power and place. I contextualise these

observations within a longer-term study of ethno-nationalist conflict Russia since 1991, drawing on data collected by EAWARN (a Moscow-based think-tank which undertakes ethno-political monitoring of post-Soviet states for the purpose of conflict prevention and management) and the SOVA Centre (a Moscow-based human rights NGO and think-tank which conducts sociological research on the development of nationalism and racism in Russia). I supplement these data with evidence from interviews conducted in Stavropol'skii krai. Throughout this thesis, my argument is underpinned by use of Russian academic, media, and political sources, and researcher observations.

In the remainder of this chapter, I explain the background to the situation in Stavropol'skii krai, and then outline the structure of this thesis.

1.3 The Caucasus

The name Caucasus is the Latinised form of the Greek word *Kaukasos*, but its origin is highly debated and “there is no clear-cut definition for what constitutes the Caucasus” (Coene 2010: 3) (see also, Akkueva 2008). This means that the term ‘Caucasus’ is often used ambiguously, particularly in geography and politics. Although the boundaries of the Caucasus are well defined on the east and west by the Black Sea and Caspian Sea, the north and south limits -- along which the Caucasus is traditionally divided -- are not. As O’Loughlin et al. (2007: 127) explain, while the full extent of the three states of the Caucasus (Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia) are usually included on the south, the northern boundary lies somewhere in the vast stretches of southern Russia, among “the sun-baked hills, brownish-green and violet in the distance, with their quiet shadowy tones, the plain with the misty distance and, flung above them, the sky” (Chekhov, The

Steppe, p. 3). In a political-administrative sense, the North Caucasus usually comprises the seven autonomous republics (Adygea, Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, and North Ossetia-Alania), as well as Stavropol'skii krai, Krasnodarskii krai, and Rostov Oblast'.

In this thesis I focus solely on the North Caucasus, that area of the Caucasus within the Russian Federation. In doing this, I do not reject the notion that there are intense links across the Caucasus, particularly in political and human terms. Indeed, the work of local scholars (for example, Radvanyi and Muduyev 2007) has illuminated links between the Transcaucasus (*Zakavkazie*) and the North Caucasus (*Severnii Kavkaz*). While Coene (2010: 1), for example, writes that the "North and South Caucasus, which are often perceived as separate regions ... should be considered as one single entity", there are compelling reasons why I chose to focus solely on Stavropol'skii krai in the North Caucasus in this thesis, not least because of time constraints and practical difficulties.

The North Caucasus is usually divided between the plains and mountains (see, Figure 2). The plains are a continuation of the great plains of Russia: the steppes of the rivers Don and Volga. The western part of the North Caucasus plains contains the Kuban-Azov plain (south of the River Kuban), and the Taman peninsula. The Stavropol' plateau in the centre of the plains rise above these lowlands to a height of up to 831m. South of the Stavropol' plateau, in the region of Mineral'nye Vody, are seventeen laccoliths, created by ancient volcanic eruptions (of up to 1,400m), such as Bashtau and Mashuk. South-east of the Stavropol' plateau lies the Terek-Sunzha plateau, which is composed of the Terek ridge (up to 664m) and the Sunzha ridge (up to 926m). The eastern part of the North Caucasus plains consists of the Terek-Kuma plain, which in

itself is the south-western part of the North Caucasus lowlands. Its altitude varies from a maximum of 100m in the west to below sea level at the Caspian Sea coast.

The Caucasus Mountains stretch over a length of 1, 500km from north-west to south-east. The western part of the Caucasus Mountains starts as low hills close to the Taman peninsula at the estuary of the Kuban River, and extends over high hills to Mount Elbrus. The highest peak in this western Caucasus is Mount Dombay-Ulgen (4,046m). The central part of the Caucasus stretches from Mount Elbrus -- the highest peak in the Caucasus (a western peak of 5,642m and an eastern one of 5,621m) and situated on the border between Kabardino-Balkaria and Karacheavo-Cherkessia -- to Mount Kazbek (5,033m), on the border between North Ossetia-Alania and South Ossetia (and famous for the Greek legend of Prometheus). The eastern part of the Caucasus runs from Mount Kazbek to the Absheron peninsula. It is not as high as the central Caucasus, but still counts over thirty peaks of more than 4, 000m, including Tebulosmta (4,493m) and Bazardyuzu (4,466m) as the two highest.

Figure 2. Land cover map of the Caucasus with digital elevations



Source: O'Loughlin et al. (2007: 133)

Demographically, as O'Loughlin et al. (2007) note, the narrow coastal zones of the North Caucasus are relatively heavily populated, with numerous large cities (for example, Makhachkala on the east and Sochi to the west) visible on Figure 2. Physically, forested slopes at high elevations (and glaciers at the highest) contrast with the grassland steppes to the north. The division of the North Caucasus into a mountainous south (composed of the autonomous republics) and a steppe north (composed of the Stavropol'skii krai, Krasnodarskii krai, and Rostov Oblast') is also clearly visible in Figure 2.

This divide between the mountains and the steppe of the North Caucasus is reflected in the ethnic geography of the region. While Cornell (2001: 20) notes that the ethnic map

of the Caucasus “is a study in its own right, and it is difficult to draw a comprehensive outline in a concise manner”, here I briefly offer an outline of the ethnic map. Figure 3 (below) shows an ethnic map of the Caucasus, which Bullough (2010: 5) describes as looking “like an oil stain on a puddle”. It presents raion-level data from the 2002 All-Russian Census (Goskomstat Rossii 2004) and shows ethnic pluralities of each raion, defined as a threshold of 40% in one group (as defined by the Russian Federation’s public administration categories of ethnicity). In the majority of cases the plurality is also the majority, particularly in the Russian-dominated steppe regions. However, in lowland Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and southern and eastern Stavropol’skii krai many raions do not have a dominant group. According to O’Loughlin et al. (2007: 129), only 9 of approximately 150 raions in the North Caucasus do not have an ethnic plurality.

Figure 3. Ethnic pluralities in the Caucasus



Source: O'Loughlin et al. (2007: 134)

While Figure 3 indicates the locations of 20 nationalities, there are both greater complexities and more similarities not visible on that map, particularly in southern and eastern Stavropol'skii krai (as I discuss in Chapter 4).

1.4 History of Stavropol'skii krai³

To facilitate an understanding of the contemporary situation in Stavropol'skii krai it must be set within its historical context. The North Caucasus has attracted the usually predatory interests of foreign peoples since the Ionian Greeks started to establish colonies along the Black Sea in the first half of the first millennium BC. Greeks were

³ Much of the information contained in this section is from Krugov (2001).

followed by Romans, Persians, Arabs, Seljuk Turks, Mongols, Ottoman Turks, Persians again and lastly Russians.

Stavropol' *gorod* (city) was formed in 1777 following the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774 as a fortress and military encampment. This occurred nearly two hundred years after the first phase of Russia's expansion towards the North Caucasus, which began in 1556, when the Russian army annexed Astrakhan, and ended in 1604, when the Muscovite army was defeated by Dagestani forces supported by the Ottoman Empire (see, Barrett 1995)⁴. The Kuchuk-Kainardzhiyskiy peace treaty (1774), which signalled the end of the Russo-Turkish War, decreed that a new border was to be established from the mouth of the river Terek to Mozdok and further north-west to the fortress of St. Dmitri (now Rostov-na-Donu) and Azov. The responsibility for building this border was given to Prince Grigory Potemkin who recommended to Catherine the Great (Catherine II) that Russia should construct 10 military installations (fortresses) from Azov to Mozdok. Potemkin's plan was approved, and on the 24 April 1777 Catherine the Great issued an order to build the Azov-Mozdok line. Stavropol' was one of these installations. Cossacks from the Volga and Don played an integral role in the formation of Stavropol', building the fortress itself and serving in its garrisons. Construction of the wooden fortress began on 22 October 1777, on the right flank of the Azov-Mozdok line to protect Russian settlements from the Highlanders in the mountainous Caucasus, and was finished in early 1778. The Stavropol' fortress, which was placed under the administration of Astrakhan Oblast', was a five-cornered strong hold fortified with artillery, covering 10 hectares. The Cossacks who had earlier constructed the fortress

⁴ See Shaw (1991) for an account of settlement and landholding patterns on Russia's expanding southern frontier in the early seventeenth century, and Shaw (1977) for an analysis of the urbanism and economic development in the same pre-industrial context.

settled in and around Stavropol' with a mission to defend the expanding borders of the Russian Empire. In 1779, the fortress was (unsuccessfully) attacked by Highlanders.

At the same time, Russian military advances (led primarily by Cossacks) into the Caucasus Mountains led to parts of Dagestan, Ingushetia and Chechen being 'incorporated' into the Russian Empire. This provoked the first attempt at organising North Caucasian insurgence by Sheikh Mansur, a Chechen, in 1784. North Caucasian resistance was strong, but social and linguistic difference hampered Caucasian ability to oppose Russian forces. This disunity was eventually overcome during the *ghazawat* (holy war), which was declared between 1824-95, when unification along religious lines was initiated by Imam Qazi Mohammed and, later, Imam Shamil, both ethnic Avars. The Caucasians offered, what Matveeva (1999: 5) calls, "the most ferocious resistance to Russian advances and were decimated as a result". Only the fall of Circassia in 1864, five years after the capitulation of Imam Shamil in Dagestan, marked the end of the Caucasian War⁵.

In 1785, Catherine II created the Viceroy of the Caucasus, consisting of Astrakhan Oblast' and Caucasus Oblast', centred on Ekaterinograde (now the village Ekaterinogradskaya in Kabardino-Balkaria). The same year, in 1785, Stavropol' had city-status conferred upon it. In 1790, the Caucasus Oblast' was abolished and its lands became part of Astrakhan Oblast'. In 1802, Alexander I created the Caucasus

⁵ In his book *The Captive and the Gift: Cultural Histories of Sovereignty in Russia and the Caucasus*, Grant (2009) notes that there has been much recent debate amongst historians about the exact duration of the 'Caucasian War'. Questions such as "Did the Caucasian War start in 1801, when Georgian rulers first pledged loyalty to the Russian Empire, or in 1817, when the policies of Ermolov came into play? Did it end in 1859, with the capture of Caucasus rebel leader Imam Shamil, or in 1864, with the more decisive Russian military victories over the remaining rebel forces?", Grant argues, reveal a concept of sovereignty which "understands conquest to be finite and the question of sovereignty to be closed" (pg. xvi). Likewise, he notes, "to ask whether the conquest of the Caucasus was somehow right or wrong ... leaves unquestioned the nature and status of sovereign logics themselves" (Ibid.).

Guberniya, centring the region on Georgievsk. This Guberniya occupied a similar territory to contemporary Stavropol'skii krai. In 1809, Alexander I invited 50 Armenian families to settle by the fortress, in order to encourage trade in the region. Between 1809 and 1811, the earthen and wooden constructions of the fortress were replaced by stone defensive barracks. At the same time, a *stanitsa* (a large Cossack village) of the Khopersky Cossack regiment began to develop to the east of the fortress. In the centre of this stanitsa there was a square, which is now the site of the main market (*Nizhnii ribnok*) in Stavropol' *gorod*.

Stavropol's strategic location at the centre of the Caucasus aided the Russian Empire's conquest of the region. The construction of the Azov-Mozdok line strained relations between Russia and Turkey, and the Tsarist government began to reinforce the newly established borders and to develop peaceful relations with the Circassians, who lived behind the Kuban River, and other Caucasian peoples. The military authorities of the Caucasus, eager to establish economic relations with Caucasian peoples and to promote the exchange and selling of goods, promoted Stavropol' as a regional centre of trade. Thus, a little under six years after the construction of the fortress Stavropol' had become one of the centres of economic relations with Caucasian peoples, the centre of transit trade, the main 'gate' of Russia in the Caucasus.

In 1816, General Alexei Petrovich Ermolov, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Imperial Forces in the Caucasus, centred Russian military forces in the Caucasus on Stavropol'. Wood (2007: 20) writes, "Russian policy [in the North Caucasus] was personified by General Aleksei [sic] Ermolov". Ermolov once vowed:

“No worthy officer will die under my watch without revenge ... Rebel villages will be torn up and burned, gardens and vineyards will be cut to the root, and many years may pass before the traitors evolve to a primitive state. Extreme poverty will be their punishment” (quoted in Grant 2009: 48)

It was from Stavropol’ that Ermolov directed such policies, which included punitive raids on mountain villages, collective punishment, deforestation, forced mass deportations, and the settlement of Cossacks on lands vacated by Chechens. Ermolov once remarked, “I desire that the terror of my name should guard our frontiers with more potential than chains or fortresses, that my word should be for the natives a law more inevitable than death” (quoted in Russell 2007: 31). His view of the Chechens was particularly dismissive. He thought of them as the “most evil of all the bandits who attack the [Caucasian] Line” and suggested that “Chechnya can be rightly called the nest of all bandits” (quoted in Mikaberidze 2005: 288). In 1818, he wrote to Tsar Alexander I commenting that he “would find no peace whilst a single Chechen remained alive” (quoted in Bennisen 1999: 536).

By the time Ermolov left his post in the Caucasus in 1827, the political landscape of the North Caucasus was vastly different to that when he was appointed: King notes how, “Through Ermolov’s efforts, Russia’s possessions in the [North] Caucasus moved from being part of a pre-modern imperial order toward becoming, for better or worse, part of a fitfully modern one” (King 2008: 45). Under Ermolov’s influence, the importance of Stavropol’ increased in the administrative and economic spheres: in 1843, an Episcoposal see of the Russian Orthodox Church was established in Stavropol’, and in 1847, the Caucasus Oblast’ (which had, in 1822, been renamed from the Caucasus Guberniya) was renamed Stavropol’ Oblast’, and Stavropol’ became the administrative centre of the oblast. In 1860, with the Caucasian War waning, the Kuban and Terskaya Cossack

provinces were established out of Stavropol' Oblast' within the borders of contemporary Krasnodarskii krai⁶. As a result of this process, the political, military, and economic importance of Stavropol' was greatly reduced. This tendency was aggravated by the building of the Rostov-Vladikavkaz Railway (in 1872), to which Stavropol' was only connected in 1897.

During the Russian Civil War, Stavropol' changed hands several times. In the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution, Soviet power was established in Stavropol' Province on 1 January 1918, and on 5 July 1918 Stavropol' Province was included in the North Caucasus Republic. However, Stavropol' was occupied by the Volunteer Army of General Anton Denikin on 21 July 1918 and was only recaptured by the Red Army on 29 January 1920. In 1924, the centralising Soviet government created the North Caucasus krai, and Stavropol' was converted into an *okrug* (district) of the krai. On 1934, the North Caucasus krai was divided into the Azov-Black Sea krai and the North Caucasus krai. Stavropol' okrug remained in the North Caucasus krai, which was centred on Pyatigorsk. On 5 May 1935, on the 15th anniversary of the liberation of Stavropol' from Denikin's White Russians, Stavropol' was renamed Voroshilovsk, after Kliment Voroshilov. In 1936, the North Caucasus krai was reorganised and separated from Stavropol'skii krai which was, in turn, renamed Ordzhonikidzevskii krai and centred on Stavropol'. In 1941, Ordzhonikidzevskii krai was renamed Stavropol'skii krai. The Great Patriotic War (1941-5) took a heavy toll on the city: Stavropol' was

⁶ When the Russo-Caucasian War came to an end in 1864 with the surrender of the north-west Caucasian peoples (Chechnya and Dagestan had been defeated in 1859 when their Avar leader, Shamil, surrendered), the Tsarist authorities gave their mountaineer opponents a choice: be resettled in the Kuban plain, where they could be prevented from again taking up arms, or remove themselves to Ottoman lands, where they could live with Islamic co-religionists. Many North Caucasian peoples left, so that today whole villages speaking a variety of North Caucasian languages are found dotted all over the Near East (especially Turkey), Circassians and Chechens also having sizeable representation in Jordan. See Hewitt (1995) and Bullough (2010).

occupied by German forces between 3 August 1942 and 21 January 1943. In 1943, the city returned to its former name of Stavropol’.

In 1944, the Balkar, Chechen, Ingush, and Karachai populations of the North Caucasus were accused of collaboration with the German army and were exiled to Central Asia and Siberia⁷. The territories of the deported peoples were dissolved; Checheno-Ingushetia ASSR (Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic) ceased to exist between 1944 and 1958. In place of Checheno-Ingushetia ASSR, Grozny Oblast’ appeared, and Kizlyar okrug and Naurskii raion were transferred from Stavropol’skii krai to the new oblast’. In 1957, during the ‘de-Stalinisation’ period under Nikita Khrushchev, the Chechen-Ingush ASSR replaced Grozny Oblast’. Kizlyar okrug remained in the Dagestan ASSR, whilst Shelkovskii raion was transferred from Stavropol’skii krai to the Chechen-Ingush ASSR. At the same time, the north-eastern part of Stavropol’skii krai was transferred to the newly created Kalmykia Autonomous Oblast’ (which became an ASSR in 1958). These borders, which were determined in 1957, remained in place until 1991 and were inherited by post-Soviet Russia.

The borders of Stavropol’skii krai were codified in the first post-Soviet Russian Constitution, adopted in 1993, and were the same as those determined in 1957. Today, Stavropol’skii krai is divided into 26 *raions* (districts), each with its own administrative centre. The capital of Stavropol’skii krai is Stavropol’ *gorod* (city), which is a separate administrative unit within Shpakovskii raion, in the west of the krai (see, Figure 4).

⁷ Most were resettled in Kazakhstan, while the local party elite, who assisted in organising the deportation of their own peoples, were sent to Kyrgyzstan to avoid reprisals.

Figure 4. Administrative Map of Stavropol'skii krai



Source: Belozarov, Panin and Chikhichin 2008: 14

1.5 What's in a Name? A note on terminology

As the preceding two sections attest, North Caucasian localities, like all places, are part of a scalar geopolitics that links them to regional, national, and global dynamics. From

the shifting territorial governmentalities of empire (Russian) to twentieth-century territorial reconfigurations and post-Soviet ‘transition’, North Caucasian localities have long been contested. For this reason, I now define the various terms that I use throughout this thesis in relation to the North Caucasus:

‘North Caucasus’: The region which includes the mountainous republics of Adygea, Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and North Ossetia-Alania, and the territories of Stavropol’skii krai, Krasnodarskii krai, and Rostov Oblast’ on the plains.

‘North Caucasus republics’: The autonomous republics of Adygea, Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and North Ossetia-Alania. With the exception of North Ossetia-Alania (Orthodox Christian), all of the republics are Muslim.

‘North Caucasus Federal District’: Created on 19 January 2010, the NCFD is composed of the North Caucasus republics (with the exception of Adygea) and Stavropol’skii krai.

Although often (incorrectly) used interchangeably, these terms are necessary to understand the North Caucasus region.

1.6 Stavropol' *gorod*

In this thesis I write primarily about Stavropol'skii *gorod* (city), the administrative capital of Stavropol'skii krai, as a means to understand ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai. While I explain the rural/urban, capital/city, town/village divide in Stavropol'skii krai in Chapter 4, it is important to note here why I concentrated on Stavropol' *gorod*.

Stavropol' *gorod* is the cosmopolitan capital city of Stavropol'skii krai and both krai and city authorities are located there. The State Duma of Stavropol'skii krai (led by V.A. Kovalenko), the Gubernator of Stavropol'skii krai (V.V. Gaevskii), Stavropol' City Duma (led by E.G. Lutsenko), and the Administration of Stavropol' city (led by Major N.I. Paltsev) are the main policy forming authorities, and, with the exception of the Gubernator of Stavropol'skii krai, each has a Committee or Advisory Board for interethnic relations. As well as these authorities, the principle krai archives and main library collections are housed in the M.J. Lermontov Library in Stavropol' *gorod*. Further, the main campus of Stavropol' State University (SGU), with whom I was affiliated with during the duration of my fieldwork, is in Stavropol' *gorod*. A number of academics at SGU, primarily in the Institute of Geography, are experts on interethnic relations and advise krai and city authorities on interethnic relations. Since the objective of this thesis was to develop an idea of the state of ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai, Stavropol' *gorod* was an appropriate place in which to conduct research. Practically, my research methodology also made Stavropol' *gorod* a particularly suitable place for conducting research (see Chapter 3 Methodology). For example, where conducting interviews are concerned, basing my research in Stavropol' *gorod*

meant that I could readily access and interview various representatives of the *krai* and *gorod* authorities. These individuals could provide informed answers and could direct me to other people who could answer specific questions (who themselves were often based in Stavropol' *gorod*). At the same time, being based in Stavropol' *gorod* meant that there was a large population from which I could interview people to see to what extent the, on the whole, measured views of *krai* and city authorities were internalised. I did this through conducting a number of other interviews in Stavropol' with a range of Russian citizens.

While Stavropol' *gorod* was suited as a location to conduct my fieldwork for this thesis, there was the option, of course, to widen the focus of my fieldwork to encompass the rural periphery of Stavropol'skii *krai*: areas which have traditionally been dominated by the red/brown (communist/nationalist) alliance. However, logistical and practical constraints, and safety concerns, meant that this was not possible.

1.7 Outline of thesis.

While this thesis has the same appearance and function as a 'traditional' thesis, it is structured in the 'four papers' model. This means that the empirical chapters (5-8) that constitute the substantive part of the thesis are also individual papers that have been submitted to peer-reviewed academic journals. While one result of this is that there is repetition of contextual and background material in each chapter (which is necessary for journal readers), the main advantage is that it allowed me to structure my work thus that it reflected the changing realities of my 'on the ground' research in Stavropol'skii *krai*. The memorialisation of the Stavropol' *gorod* landscape is dealt with in Chapter 5, the

Den' kraya parade in Chapter 6, the Stavropol' riots of 2007 in Chapter 7, and 'everyday' forms of conflict, discrimination, and violence in Chapter 8. These chapters are bound together by common themes and interests, which I draw together in Chapter 9. A 'traditional' thesis, in which the empirical chapters are read together in a coherent and linear narrative, could not have dealt as productively with the material.

In Chapter 2, I build upon and develop recent empirical literatures in political geography and regional geography to enrich and vivify understandings of the North Caucasus. In the first third of this chapter, I review theoretical literatures that have shaped my conceptual research framework, namely approaches to geopolitics and ethnicity / nationalism. Building on the work of Bassin (2009), I also explain the emergence, in recent years, of *etnopolitika* (ethnopolitics) as a distinct form of *geopolitika* (geopolitics) in Russia. In the second third, I review the empirical literature relevant to my case study of ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai. In doing this, I draw on Anglo-American sources (and Russian literature in conversation with Anglo-American debates) to critique existing literature on the North Caucasus, dislodging and problematising the dominant geopolitical narratives which see the region as characterised by Chechnya. While not reflecting doubt about the value of existing lines of inquiry, in the final third I return to theory to suggest a number of literatures that relate to my research 'questions' and in combination provide the framework for the empirical work in later chapters. Together, these literatures move forward epistemological practice and critical engagement with the region, and provide a tool to inform the reconceptualisation of the North Caucasus.

Given that this thesis is a political geographic exploration of ethnic relations in Russia, Chapter 3 attempts to answer the questions: How can ethnic relations be studied? And what methodology is appropriate for its study? This chapter offers an outline of the research methodology that I employed in Stavropol'skii krai. I weave a discussion of research ethics into this description of the research process as a means to present the research process and the results that I have arrived at through my interpretation as transparently as possible. This Chapter refers back to my critique of existing scholarship (in Chapter 2) to explain how my study attempts to overcome the flaws I identified in existing works.

Chapter 4 explores ethnicity in Russia, pointing to the central role played by the Soviet nationalities policy in preserving ethnic identities in post-Soviet Russia. I then discuss the changing demography of the Russian Federation since 1991, paying particular attention to the ethnic structure of Russia's population. I then move on to discuss the ethnic geography of Stavropol'skii krai at all spatial scales, from krai to raion to intra-city and rural periphery, including analysis of municipal raions where data are available. In particular, I focus on the impacts on the krai of nearby conflicts in the North Caucasus republics and highlight the changing ethnic geography of rural raions in eastern Stavropol'skii krai and migration patterns in western Stavropol'skii krai. I end the chapter by examining ethnic minority legislation in Stavropol'skii krai. This last section (4.6 Ethnic Minority Legislation in Stavropol'skii krai) is based on a book chapter I authored entitled 'Mapping Ethnic Relations: cartography and conflict management in the North Caucasus', which is forthcoming in *'Mapping Conflict and Peace in Eurasia'* (edited by Aurobinda Mahapatra, New York/New Delhi: Lancers). Ultimately, this chapter serves as an introduction to the four substantive chapters that

follow: each of which explores the everyday geopolitics of ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai.

Chapters 5 through 7 focus on forms and representations of ethnic relations. While Chapters 5 and 6 explore non-violent representations of ethnicity, focussing on urban memorialisation and public parades, Chapter 7 examines the violent side of ethnicity through considering the events of summer 2007. These three chapters provide a way to explore 'everyday' forms of ethnicity. The 'everyday' scale has been the focus of increasing attention in human geography over recent years and, as I outline in Chapter 2, this focus has special significance and applicability for the North Caucasus where existing studies have been remote and disembodied. These three chapters also connect to wider discussions surrounding issues of power, space and identity in contemporary Russia.

Chapter 5, a paper submitted to *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, explores the contested nature of memorialisation, arguing that the symbolic landscape of Stavropol' plays an important role in the cultural and political system of the multi-ethnic region. Using the example of a statue of General Alexei Ermolov, a close reading of this landscape reveals ethno-national tensions over differing interpretations of the life and history of the person upon which the statue is based. The landscape is both an arena through which Russian national political identity is communicated with people and produced and reproduced, and an arena through which differing Russian citizens compete with each other for authority on historical narratives that operate at and between a number of scales. Chapter 6, a paper submitted to *Political Geography*, examines the role played by the *Den' kraya* ('krai Day') celebration in the construction

of ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai. On the basis of fieldwork carried out in the city over two different periods, I present unique and original qualitative data, as well as critical engagement with contemporary Russian academic and press sources. Starting from a discussion of Stavropol' and its ethnic geography, I examine the ways in which ethnicity is enacted and enforced in Stavropol', arguing that regional events such as *Den' kraya* are grounded not on what ethnic relations are like, but on what they 'ought' to be like, presenting an idealised form of reality. I uncover the 'exceptional banality' of ethno-nationalist parades in the North Caucasus, which seek to re-script ethnic relations toward a predetermined 'ideal' of Soviet-era harmony. Chapter 7, a paper published in *Geopolitics* (Foxall 2010), explores the events of summer of 2007 when the geopolitics of Russo-North Caucasian relations were once again manifest in violent conflict. During the course of six-weeks of rioting between ethnic Russian (russkii) and non-ethnic Russian (rossiiskii) citizens, three students were killed (one Chechen and two Russians) and pogroms were conducted widely. This chapter addresses these events through a focus on the nature and politics of the riots and those involved. I argue that a range of tensions came together to form a localised geopolitics, and that this contributes to an understanding of why these events took place. Ultimately, the riots are important as an event that reveals much about the complexity of power, space, and identity in contemporary Russia.

Chapter 8, a paper submitted to *Europe-Asia Studies*, embeds this study within the context of the violent geographies of ethnic relations Stavropol'skii krai and Russia more broadly. It presents data collected primarily by EAWARN (a Moscow-based think-tank which undertakes ethno-political monitoring of post-Soviet states for the purpose of conflict prevention and conflict management) and the SOVA Centre (a

Moscow-based human rights think-tank that conducts sociological research on the development of nationalism and racism in contemporary Russia), as well as by various other NGO's, including Amnesty International, Memorial, and Human Rights Watch. According to the SOVA Centre, 71 people were killed and at least 333 were injured in racist and neo-Nazi attacks in 2009 in Russia. Although a decline on 2008 (when 109 people were killed and at least 486 injured), the figure remains worryingly high. I argue that these people, as well as many others who are not included in these statistics, are victims of Russia's violent geographies of ethnic relations. At the same time, others are drawn into these geographies through being affected by ethnic conflict and violence, a process that turns them into 'quasi-victims'.

The final chapter of the thesis, Chapter 9, concludes the study and attempts to answer the question "Where does all this take us?". While the intention of this thesis is to fashion an analysis of ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai, the implications of this study are much wider and speak to questions about the contemporary North Caucasus and the future of the Russian state. I draw together conclusions from the four empirical studies to write a critical political geography of the ethnic relations of everyday life in Stavropol'skii krai.

Chapter 2. Political Geography, Regional Studies, and the North Caucasus: Theorising Everyday Ethnic Relations

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the academic literatures that have informed this thesis. In doing so, it seeks to build upon and develop the intersection between political geography and regional studies (about which prominent political geographers have had much to say over recent years) and use these empirical literatures to enrich and vivify understandings of the North Caucasus.

In the first section of this chapter, I review theoretical literatures that have shaped my conceptual research framework, namely approaches to geopolitics and ethnicity / nationalism. In the second section, I review the empirical literature relevant to my case study of ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai. In doing this, I draw on Anglo-American sources (and Russian literature in conversation with Anglo-American debates) to critique existing literature on the North Caucasus, dislodging and problematising the dominant Anglo-American geopolitical narratives which see the region as characterised by Chechnya. While not reflecting doubt about the value of existing lines of inquiry, in the final section I return to theory to suggest a number of literatures that relate to my research 'questions' and in combination provide the framework for the empirical work in later chapters. Together, these literatures move forward epistemological practice and critical engagement with the region, and provide a tool to inform the reconceptualisation of the North Caucasus. In particular, I discuss some of the literature associated with 'landscape', which in Chapter 5 will help understand how the spaces of Stavropol'

influence ethnic relations. Next, I examine Alexei Yurchak's writings on parades in the late Socialist period, showing how, in Chapter 6, this helps to theorise contemporary ethnic parades in Stavropol'skii krai. I then discuss Valeri Tishkov's writings on ethnicity, nationalism, and conflict in and after the Soviet Union, and Donald Horowitz's ideas of the 'Deadly Ethnic Riot'. In Chapter 7, a fusion of Tishkov's and Horowitz's ideas help me to theorise the 'ethnic' riots in Stavropol' in 2007. Finally, in Chapter 8 I discuss Barry Buzan's writings on security and Michel Foucault's writings on discipline and prisons to explore how individuals experience the violent geographies of ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai. Together, these diverse approaches contribute to a wider discussion on geopolitics as lived experience, which is drawn together and elaborated in the concluding chapter.

2.2 Geopolitics

"Geopolitics as an academic discipline has come of age...", Newman (2004 in Murphy, A. 2004: 626) wrote in the introductory essay to a special edition of *Progress in Human Geography* dedicated to the study of Geopolitics, "... again". Highlighting that it is possible to hold conferences at which the writings of Friedrich Ratzel and Halford Mackinder can be analysed without automatically associating them with German *Geopolitik*, Newman (in Murphy 2004) emphasised that publications on 'geopolitics' abound and are found in Political Science, International Relations, and other disciplines. Despite this, the diversity of publications is overwhelming (Mamadouh 1998) and there seems to be little agreement on a definition of 'what' geopolitics is. Nevertheless, the term 'geopolitics' is generally accepted to refer to the geographical impacts of political

processes and practices on territories and people. In developing my analyses I have drawn on recent ‘critical’ approaches to geopolitics.

As Agnew and Corbridge (1995) explain, conventional geopolitical analysis, prominent during the Cold War-era, was seen as the study of spatial and political phenomena. Its main emphasis was on the primacy of power as part of a wider attempt to understand the causes of rise and fall of state power in international relations (Tsygankov 1996) and made use of the work of Mackinder (and others) to reconceptualise power into new discursive space. The most important of which was the three-fold division of the world between the US, the USSR, and the ‘Third World’. The ‘real’ identity of places was determined not by their geography, but by their place in the abstracted geography of the Cold War. Cold War-era geopolitics – which was a decidedly state-centric enterprise in the sense that the nation state-level was paramount (Dodds 2000) – thus explicitly read conflicts with apparent local roots as local manifestations of the super-ordinate global one (Agnew and Corbridge 1995). As Agnew (1998) explained in his book *Geopolitics: Re-Visioning World Politics*, geopolitics was based on the belief, formed in part by modernism, which held that it was possible to view the world in its totality. This reflected the belief – critically exposed by Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* (1978) – that the observer possessed the necessary intellectual and conceptual framework for visualising the world as an external and independent ‘object’.

The fracturing of the geo-strategic balances of the Cold War during the late 1980s, together with the dominant ideological discourses that had legitimated them, led to the ‘re-emergence’ of geopolitics as an academic discipline. Rather than a ‘re-emergence’, Bassin (in Murphy, A. 2004) argues that geopolitics has passed through a process of

‘rethinking’, offering “not a resurrection but a radical recasting of the spirit and purpose of geopolitics” (Ibid.: 620). Although the precise contours of geopolitics’ ‘re-emergence’ (Bassin and Aksenov 2006), ‘renaissance’ (Bassin in Murphy, A. 2004), ‘rethinking’ (Bassin in Murphy, A. 2004), ‘revival’ (Hepple 1986) or ‘consolidation’ (Flint 2002) is much debated, there is general agreement that the paradigms that characterised geopolitics in its classical (pre-1945) and Cold War phases have been rejected as “mummified remains” (Ó Tuathail and Dalby 1998: 2). In their place, a new ‘critical’ perspective has emerged, led by writers such as Ó Tuathail and Agnew (1992), Dalby (1991), and Ó Tuathail (1996a; 1996b), inspired by the work of Michel Foucault and Edward Said (amongst others) and a postmodern concern for the construction and reconstruction of meaning in discourse.

‘Critical geopolitics’ holds that geopolitical knowledges are always partial and situated, emerge from particular subject positions, and operate through discourses, representations and practises (Agnew and Corbridge 1995: 48). Thus, ‘critical’ geopolitics is devoted to the study “of how geographical space is represented and signified by political agents as a part of a larger project of accruing, managing and aggrandizing power” (Bassin 2004: 621). Within this perspective, geopolitics’ traditional concern with the nation-state has been relinquished.

Feminist critics of geopolitics argue, however, that critical geopolitics has continued the traditional blindness to the “mundane and everyday” (Dowler and Sharp 2001: 168) so prominent in earlier geopolitical works (see also, Sharp 2000; Sparke 2000). In this context, Hyndman (2004: 309) writes that “embodied epistemologies [and] ontologically committed, partial perspectives” are needed to overcome this ‘blindness’.

An example of such a perspective is the work of the journalist Maggie O’Kane, whose dispatches for *The Guardian* newspaper from the war in Bosnia (1992-1995) detailed the impacts of violence on people’s everyday lives and challenged the international community to intervene (Ó Tuathail 1996a: 220-1; Ó Tuathail 1996b). Further, feminists argue that locating geopolitics in place and practice connects “international representation to the geographies of everyday life; to understand the ways in which the nation and the international are reproduced in the mundane practices we take for granted” (Dowler and Sharp 2001: 171-2). Methodologically, Megoran (2006: 637) argues that techniques such as interview and ethnographic methods can be used in conjunction to “map [the] striking discrepancies between elite and popular political geographical imaginations”.

Such a way of thinking about how geopolitics are ‘lived’ and ‘embodied’ in everyday life guided my approach to the study of ethnic relations in Stavropol’skii krai.

At the same time of the emergence of ‘critical geopolitics’, there has been a rise of ‘neoclassical geopolitics’ (see, Bassin 2007 and Megoran 2010). Although I do not make use of this concept in this thesis, it is important to acknowledge its existence, as it holds special importance for Russia. Much like critical geopolitics, this dimension emerged out of the *fin de siècle* that so convincingly debunked post-Cold War “blockbuster visions of global space” (Ó Tuathail and Dalby 1998: 1). However, this dimension represents much more of a genuine ‘renaissance’, in the sense that it involves an explicit return to the original conceptual categories of geopolitics. Typical of this are Samuel Huntington’s *Clash of Civilisations* (twice presented: 1993; 1996), Thomas Barnett’s “gap” (2004), Edward Lucas’s *New Cold War* (2009) and Robert Kaplan’s

The revenge of geography (2009). Such work, Megoran (2010) writes in his analysis of Everett Dolman's *Astropolitik* (2002), "is a powerful reminder to political geographers of the need to take neoclassical geopolitics seriously".

2.2.1 Geopolitika⁸

As has been noted elsewhere (Ionin 1999; Ingram 2001; Bassin and Aksenov 2006), there has been a marked growth of interest in geopolitics in post-Soviet Russia. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, geopolitics (in a 'neoclassical' sense) was seen as providing the answers to many of the questions that the post-Soviet period has posed about Russia's political situation, its historical identity, and its national destiny. In the academic sphere, university courses devoted to the subject have proliferated across the country, new chairs and institutes of geopolitics have been established, a small library of academic and non-academic articles and books have been published (for example, Kolossov and Mironenko 2001; Gadzhiev 2001; Kolossov 2002), and a 'Centre for Geopolitical Research' was created in 1993 at the Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences⁹. In turn, the military establishment accords geopolitics a prominent place in its journals and on the syllabi of its officer academies. Within the political sphere, the Russian State Duma has established a permanent 'Committee for Geopolitical Analysis' [*Komitet po voprosam geopolitiki*]¹⁰.

The popularity of *geopolitika*, Bassin and Aksenov (2006) suggest, is due to a variety of factors, most of which relate to the sense of national dislocation and crisis brought on

⁸ This section draws heavily on the work of Bassin and Aksenov (2006).

⁹ See, <http://geopolitic.igras.ru/>

¹⁰ See, www.duma.gov.ru/search/kmpage/84200017/ii/sng/130397zk.htm

by the break-up of the USSR (Smith, G. 1999). The redrawing of the nation's boundaries, for example, has produced a 'Russian' nation-state entity that has no historical precedent, and this is compounded by the loss of its global status as a *derzhava* (superpower). For much of Russia's history, and certainly since the early eighteenth century, a secure sense of national identity and historical destiny was for many Russians intimately connected to their country's potency as a military and political power (Smith, G. 1999). These concerns (together with many others) come together to provide the driving force for much of the engagement with geopolitics in post-Soviet Russia.

Post-Soviet geopolitics is still primarily concerned with the nation-state, and this state-centric bias has given rise to a new tendency in geopolitical discourse which sets itself apart by identifying ethnicity as the most important geopolitical factor of all. Its adherents call this new field *etnogeopolitika*, or ethno-geopolitics.

2.2.2 *Etnopolitika*¹¹

Positioned at the nexus between ethnicity and politics, *ethnopolitika* (ethno-politics) considers "the ethnic aspects of the interaction of the political subject and geographical space" (Amburtsev n.d.; see also Mukharyamov 2004: 98) and represents a challenge to *geopolitika* in contemporary Russia (Bassin 2009). While geopolitics has long recognised and incorporated ethnicity as an important factor influencing politics, it has "always fumbled with ethnicity" and found it "an awkward factor to assimilate into its own framework" (Ibid.: 132). This is because geopolitics has traditionally been

¹¹ This section draws heavily on the work of Bassin (2006).

primarily concerned with political power in the political state. Understood thus, ethnicity was significant but only in terms of its potential as a state-forming force. *Ethnopolitika*, by contrast, places ethnicity at the centre of the geopolitical gaze.

Ethno-geopolitics is based on an essentialist view of ethnicity and sees ethnic identity as a clearly-defined and objective personal and social reality. Ethnicity is a necessary part of the persona of each human individual, and *etnosy* – i.e., the groups that form on the basis of ethnic affinities – are permanent. *Etnoses* are a natural entity and each has an organic attachment to its own native region or homeland, identified by ethno-geopoliticians variously as its *Lebensraum* (*zhiznennoye prostranstvo*) or its “ethnic space” (*etnicheskoye prostranstvo*). It is this territorial factor above all that renders the *etnos* significant geopolitically. Yet, ethno-geopoliticians draw a clear distinction between ethnic and political space, observing that, “The absolute ‘overlay’ (*nalozheniye*) of political space onto ethnic space is not possible (*ne mozhet byt'*), by virtue of the concrete historical conditions of ethnic existence” (Zhade 2006: 120).

On the basis of this, ethno-geopolitics calls for the formal recognition of ethnonational groupings on their respective ethnic spaces as “geopolitical subjects” that have their own particular interests and can operate with certain autonomy in world politics (Modestov 1998; Mukharyamov 2004: 98). “As a component part of geopolitics, ethno-geopolitics directs its attention to the behaviour of *etnosy* rather than nations [i.e. politically sovereign nation-states], and instead of international relations studies poly-ethnic spaces” (Smirnov n.d.). The practical need for this bias comes from geopolitics’ traditional primary concern with political statehood and territorial sovereignty at the

expense of all other factors (Titenko 2005); an approach that can no longer capture the shifting realities of the post–Cold War and post-Soviet worlds.

At an early point in his paper on *Ethnopolitika*, Bassin (2009: 131) highlighted the need for detailed and comprehensive studies of the “volatile ethno-demographic situation” in many parts of Russia that “provides abundant opportunities for future [ethnic] conflict”. Nowhere is this truer than in Stavropol’skii krai in the North Caucasus.

2.3 Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Soviet Union

While the importance of geographical space to the constitution of nationhood is universally recognised, one of the many legacies of the Soviet Union is the Soviet theory and practice of *natsional’nyi vopros* (the ‘nationality question’) and *korenizatsiia* (indigenisation). Motyl (1987), amongst others, has argued that the theoretical discourse of ‘ethnicity’ and ‘the nationality question’ was overlapping to the extent that many commentators, for example Suny (2001) and Snadjr (2007), have considered the issues one and the same. However, as Shafer’s (1980: 176) remarks on nationalism make clear, the situation in practice was much more complex:

“We know a great deal about nationalism. We do not know a great deal about nationalism. Both statements are true. Though we have much more to learn than we have learned, we do ... know enough to have some idea -- at least, inkling -- of our ignorance”.

The Soviet Union not only ‘created’ its own economic, ideological, and political system, but also defined ethnicity within its territory. Building on Joseph Stalin’s pamphlet *Marxism and the National Question* (1913), it undertook a process of *geo-*

graphing (earth writing) whereby it created nations and nationalities following criteria and purposes that were its own, and in conformity with these it charted out territories ('nations' and 'republics') and borders. The Soviets thus created a host of ethnic problems that they proved incapable of dealing with in the final years of the USSR, and left as their legacy to their successors (see, Kaiser 1994).

During the Soviet period, 'Soviet' identity took precedence over ethnic or national identity – the official ideology postulated that peoples of difference nationalities would draw together (*sblizhenie*) and finally merge (*slianie*) into a single meta-ethnos – the Soviet people (*homo Soveticus*). Despite this, ethnicity was an integral part of the everyday life of the Soviet citizen. In his book *The Neo-Stalinist State: Class, Ethnicity and Consensus in Soviet Society*, Zaslavsky (1994) explains that the Soviet authorities created "almost impassable boundaries between nationalities" (Ibid.: 92). Through the system of internal passports instituted in 1932, ethnic identity became institutionalised and established "rigid boundaries between ethnic groups" (Ibid.: 93). While citizens were, according to the original rules in force during the 1930s, able to choose freely their own nationality when the passport was issued, later changing one's nationality (as recorded in the internal passport) was prohibited¹². Highlighting his point, Zaslavsky gives the example of:

"... an Armenian family that has always lived in Moscow, and has lost all language and other links with its own ethnic group [and] could be described as a case of changed ethnic identity. Yet on their internal passports these citizens

¹² This important political act now commands attention by scholars. However, it passed largely unnoticed at the time. For example, Edward Allworth, in his otherwise excellent book *Nationality Group Survival in Multi-Ethnic States* (1977), does not even mention the passport system among the main group support factors bearing on the nationality question. See, Allworth (1977: 3-10).

remain Armenians, and their children will be able to register and be treated only as Armenians in all important aspects of life – admission to university, employment, draft, housing, travel abroad, etc. – in conformity with the ‘quota’ allotted to Armenians at any given time. This fact is never forgotten by the concerned parties and by those in their immediate environment” (Ibid.: 94).

In this context, it is perhaps unsurprising that questions of ethnic identification and ethnic relations have moved to the very centre of political and geopolitical discourse in post-Soviet Russia (Bassin 2007)¹³. As such, ethnicity, or the process of ‘writing ethnicity’, during the Soviet period is an important aspect of this thesis and rightly commands attention. However, a glance at the copious literature on ethnicity and nationalism in Russia suggests that these processes are difficult to study well. This is not least because of ‘ethnicity’ itself is a notoriously difficult concept to define.

In the West, influential scholars have attempted to define ‘the nation’ or ethnicity (Hobsbawm 1983; Gellner 1983; Anderson 1991; Billig 1995; Smith, A.D. 1999). These definitions fall into three approaches to ethnicity: primordialism; instrumentalism; and constructivism. The term ‘primordialism’ was defined by Shils (1957), and further developed by Geertz (1973: 259), as:

“By primordial attachment is meant one that stems from the ‘givens’ – or, more precisely, as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed ‘givens’ – of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom

¹³ Russia is by no means unique as ethnicity has become somewhat of a global phenomenon since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

and so on, are seen to have an ineffable and at times overpowering coerciveness in and of themselves...”

As the above quote suggests, primordialists ascribe fundamental social importance to ethnicity *qua* ethnicity. They argue that ethnicity is both real and existing, which originates from the ‘natural’ division of people based on characteristics such as language, memory, history, and culture. In other words, ethnicity is a ‘given’ and “basic group identity consists of the ready-made set of endowments and identifications which every individual shares with others from the moment of birth by the chance of the family into which he is born at that given time in that given place” (Isaacs 1975: 31)¹⁴. As such, some primordialists, such as Horowitz (1985: 57), believe that ethnic groups “think in terms of family resemblances”. For primordialists, conflict arises from these ‘natural’ divisions and ‘ancient hatreds’. However, while primordialism contributes to the understanding of the intensity and longevity of an ethnic conflict, it cannot fully explain the spatiality and temporality of why some conflicts break out and others do not.

In contrast to primordialism, instrumentalism views ethnicity as completely fluid and changeable. It came to prominence in the 1960s and 1970s in the United States, and sought to explain the formation of ethnic ghettos as the result of the actions of community leaders “who used their cultural groups as sites of mass mobilization and as constituencies in their competition for power and resources, because they found them more effective than social classes” (Smith 2001: 55). Thus, instrumentalists believe that ethnicity is politicised by elites and used as an instrument for political gain and other

¹⁴ In addition, Isaacs (1975: 32) argues, “the baby acquires a name, a individual name, a family name, a group name. He acquires the history and origins of the group into which he is born. The group’s culture-past automatically endows him, amongst other things, with his nationality or condition of national, or tribal affiliation, his language, religion, and value system -- the inherited clusters of mores, ethics, aesthetics that come out of the geography or topography of the birthplace itself, all shaping the outlook and way of life upon which the new individual enters from his first day”.

interests. As Cornell and Hartmann (1998: 59) explain, “[e]thnicity and race are viewed as instrumental identities, organized as means to particular ends”. While instrumentalism explores the creation of identities within political and economic structures within society, it ignores cultural, psychological and other factors that lead to violent conflict.

In turn, constructivists believe that ethnicity is created by social interactions and, unlike primordialism, do not view ethnicity as conflict-generating *per se*. Quite to the contrary, they believe that ‘ethnicity’ itself is invented (or ‘constructed’) and it is wider social phenomena (such as relationships between agents, structures, and institutions) that lead to ethnic conflicts. This is reflected in Benedict Anderson’s concept of the ‘imagined community’. Theoretically, constructivism is weak on the exact ‘cause’ of ethnic conflict.

While some authors, Azar (1990), Gurr (1993) and Milanova (2003) for example, problematise ‘ethnicity’ *per se*, arguing that it is the realisation of a sense of injustice based on collectively recognised individual victimisation, it is widely accepted that ‘ethnicity’ is real. Indeed, Brubaker (1994: 3) argues that while nations are understood as ‘real entities’ and their existence is taken for granted, exactly *how* they exist and how they *came* to exist is much disputed. This has been the subject of intense debate between sociologists and political scientists (Chinn and Kaiser 1996). Rather than engage with these critiques, it is more important here to note how these theories have been applied to Russia (Kaiser 1994). With the collapse of the Soviet Union along ethno-national lines, Tishkov (1997) argues that primordialism ceased to be a marginal and purely theoretical approach. When, throughout the late 1980s and 1990s, the term

‘ethnos’ became central to intellectual and political debates, it did so with explicit nationalist connotations. As Tishkov (1997: 7) explained, “Many aspects of ethnos theory... were made part of painful public displays, led to conflict-generating political exercises and, finally, violent manifestations of ethnic entrepreneurs... all leaders and proponents of ethno-nationalism used these [ethnos] categories and logic very extensively in their language”. Powerful critiques of this standpoint by scholars drawing upon poststructuralist theory have undermined these formulations, stressing instead the role of Soviet and post-Soviet authorities in designating and manipulating national categories.

This study side-steps these politicised debates by asking not whether contemporary North Caucasian nations are ancient entities or modern creations, but what the use of ‘ethnicity’ can reveal about the political landscape of contemporary Stavropol’skii krai.

Much scholarly work in the post-Soviet years has been devoted to investigating the various sources of ethnic conflict in the post-Soviet space (Blank 1994; Brubaker and Laitan 1998; Snadjr 2007) and how these conflicts are played out (Foroughi 2002; Alexseev 2006). This study addresses a predicament that has arisen in the study of ethnic conflict in the North Caucasus. Any such study of nationalism and ethnicity necessarily takes place in the context of the inter-communal violence in the region during the late two decades of the twentieth century, particularly in the former Checheno-Ingushetia ASSR in the early 1990s (for a brief overview of these incidents, see Soldatov 1996: 209-226) and in Chechnya (1994-6 and 1999-2002). While these conflicts have been widely discussed, the absence of prolonged violent conflict in ethnically diverse regions as Stavropol’skii krai has been largely ignored. Yet, as

Dawson (1997) argued, it is precisely these cases that can provide insight into the conditions under which ethnic tensions may be mitigated or defused.

2.4 ‘Regional Studies’: North Caucasus in Human and Political Geography

Political geography remains a strong and vibrant element of contemporary human geography (Agnew, Mitchell, and Toal 2003). Yet, what is perhaps most striking about the current state of political geography, when compared to the sub-discipline at the beginning of the 20th century, is the “lack of any systematic regional approach to the ‘world political map’” (Toal 2003: 653). The reasons for this, as Toal notes, are “understandable, for ‘regional studies’ in political geography in the past meant banal regional description and a lack of commitment to systematic social theory and explanation” (Ibid.: 654). From the point of view of ‘regional studies’, Golubchikov (2007: 70) notes that:

“post-Soviet studies often fail to adequately engage with external theoretical debate. This partly reflects the tradition of the geographical division between theory-driven studies focused on the West and area-based studies focused on other parts of the world, including developmental studies engaged with ‘the third world’, and (post)socialist studies engaged with ‘the second world’.”

Despite this theoretical impasse, events in the post-Soviet period have, perhaps not unsurprisingly, stimulated interest from political geography in the North Caucasus. In recent years, a small number of Anglo-American political geographers have taken up the challenge of studying the region, largely working with local scholars: trying to understand and interpret regional affairs (Venida, Belozarov and Gustafson 2007; O’Loughlin, Panin and Witmer 2007; O’Loughlin, Kolossov and Radvanyi 2007;

O'Loughlin, Toal and Kolossov 2008; Kolossov and O'Loughlin 2008; O'Loughlin and Wittmer 2011; Foxall 2010), contemporary events (Ó Tuathail 2009a; Foxall 2009), and outline how they 'fit' globally (O'Loughlin, Ó Tuathail and Kolossov 2004a). These ideas of power and place, space and scale fit well into political geography's traditional concerns and interests in international relations and geopolitics.

This work has come at a time when prominent political geographers have called for a renewed interest in regional studies and 'other' (non Euro-Atlantic) regions. Toal's (earlier quoted) paper on 'regional studies' in political geography suggested "It may be time to re-think the commitment to the systematic and global and re-assert the importance of regional geographical knowledge, especially in the light of contemporary geopolitics" (Toal 2003: 654). Toal went on to argue that "Political geographers [need] to re-assert the importance of 'thick' regional geographical knowledge in the face of 'thin' universal theorising about world affairs" (Ibid.: 655.). More recently, Murphy and O'Loughlin (2009: 245) have pointed to "strengthening regional research and training" as "one of the most important tasks facing the discipline of geography today". These calls appear to challenge Bonnett's (2003: 56) earlier criticism that "academic geography's unwillingness to engage, challenge and re-imagine the 'global' ... [has] created the conditions for the representation ... and the study of 'other societies' as ... politically suspect".

Despite this, in political geography few researchers have attempted to understand other regions in a 'thick' sense, and fewer still have considered different scales of analysis (particularly the 'everyday') in this context. Of course, there are notable exceptions within geographical literature. Megoran (2005), for example, has shown how

geopolitical strategies are circulated and consumed at the local level within Uzbekistan, and identified how people's response to geopolitical discourses are embodied, blurring the distinction between the political/national and the personal/everyday. Ramadan (2008; 2009) has demonstrated how Palestinians (living in refugee camps in Lebanon) understand and negotiate regional geopolitics in their everyday lives, relating these understandings and negotiations to local/regional/global affairs. McConnell's (2009) work draws on ethnographic research to weave both local and global sites into her discussion of the workings of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in northern India. And Jeffrey (2008) has explored what is meant by 'being European' in contemporary Bosnia through critically examining how nationalist politicians have deployed European rhetoric in order to legitimate claims to political resources and establish respect. Elsewhere, in their volume *Everyday life in Central Asia*, Sahadeo and Zanca (2007) consider various aspects of everyday life in Central Asia through the mutual geographical construction of phenomena with communities; gender; performance and encounters; nation, state, and society in the everyday; and religion. Nevertheless, these examples are exceptions and in many ways what is most notable about contemporary geographical scholarship, including from within political geography, is the lack of reference to the 'everyday' scale of geographical analysis. Pain and Smith (2008: 2), in particular, are critical of "the extent to which the everyday – the feelings, experiences, practices, and actions of people outside of the realm of formal politics – has become so invisible to the flurry of interest in globalised [geopolitics]". This is particularly true in the North Caucasus. In the following sections I document this, demonstrating the scaling of existing literature. I will return to the developing literature on the 'everyday' scale of analysis later.

Events such as the Budyennovsk hospital crisis (June 1995), Two Chechen Wars (1994-6 and 2000-2), Stavropol' train bombing (December 2003), Moscow Metro bombing (February 2004), Beslan School Hostage Siege (September 2004), the terrorist attack against the city of Nal'chik (October 2005), the Stavropol' riots (May-June 2007), insurgency and terrorist attacks in Dagestan and Ingushetia (since 2008), the Moscow Metro bombings (March 2010), and the Stavropol' bombing (May 2010) suggest that studies of the North Caucasus should not be marginalized within Anglophone political geography. At the same time, my earlier discussion of ethno-geopolitics drew attention to Bassin's (2009: 131) call for detailed and comprehensive studies of the "volatile ethno-demographic situation" in many parts of Russia which "provides abundant opportunities for future [ethnic] conflict". It is my intention that this thesis joins with Toal's call to re-assert the importance of 'thick' regional geographical knowledge (2003: 655) and provides new perspectives on debates surrounding ethnic relations and geopolitics in Stavropol'.

2.5 North Caucasus in Contemporary Geographical Scholarship

If the number of book titles over the last decade is anything to go by, the North Caucasus is in fashion (e.g., Dunlop 1998; Lieven 1999; Matveeva 1999; Gall and de Waal 2000; Zelkina 2000; Evangelista 2002; Jerslid 2003; Sakwa 2005; Smith 2006; Hughes 2007a; Russell 2007; Wood 2007; King 2008; Ware and Kisriev 2009). That this level of analytical interest exists in this geopolitical "backwater" (Mendelson 2009) at this particular time is not coincidental, but relates to a series of contemporary events. Most obviously, the Two Chechen Wars and terrorist attacks in Russia have sparked interest in the politics of the North Caucasus. Other global (or at least deterritorialised)

issues have also figured highly in the public imagination and on policy agendas. So too did the Russo-Georgia conflict of August 2008 help focus world (or at least Euro-Atlantic) attention on the wider Caucasus region.

In most Anglo-American post-Soviet literature Chechnya is presented as being synonymous with the North Caucasus (e.g., Bennigsen Broxup 1992; Hill 1995; Macfarland 1995; Trepavlov and Sakharov 1999; Matveeva 2000; Dunlop and Menon 2006; Sagramoso 2007; Tishkov 2008). While these literatures have generated important insights, particularly the more critical and 'everyday' accounts of the Chechen Wars often from journalists who worked in the region¹⁵ (e.g., Gall and de Waal 2000; Goltz 2003; Politkovskaya 2003; Seierstand 2008), the majority compress regional time and space into a singularity. To designate the whole North Caucasus region as being typified by Chechnya risks determining its character in a definitive and totalizing manner; imposing a closure upon events, situations, and peoples. The geographic specificity and place-based particularity of the North Caucasus is reduced to the terms of the confrontational script of the two Chechen Wars in much the same way as Cold War discourse depluralised and homogenised global space. Most of this literature sets up the global/geopolitical and the local/everyday in a binary relationship, and to engage in this critique may inevitably seem to reinforce the same spatial geometry.

¹⁵ One of the best attempts to chronicle the Second Chechen War, is the documentary *Voina Babitskogo [Babitsky's War]*, directed by Paul Yule. It follows the journalist Andrei Babitsky (Radio Liberty / Radio Free Europe) who, at the outset of the Russian winter siege of Grozny in December 1999, travelled into Grozny to report on conditions there. Babitsky disappeared on 15 January 2000. He was handed to Chechen militants by Russian soldiers (in exchange for several Russian soldiers held captive by them) on 3 February. At the time of writing, *Babitsky's War* was available on 'Google videos' at <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-1906528962464714934#>

In what follows I begin by critiquing existing Anglo-American scholarship on the North Caucasus, what I call 'North Caucasian geopolitics'. I suggest that existing literatures tend to (re)present the North Caucasus as being characterised by Chechnya, analyse the region remotely, and lack grounding. Next, I outline the impacts of this, drawing on examples from both academic and political spheres to suggest that this has obscured the extent to which 'other' parts of the North Caucasus have been viewed and researched.

2.5.1 North Caucasian Geopolitics

Following work in critical geopolitics (see, Toal 1996), and assuming a critical stance to understanding the region, by 'North Caucasian geopolitics' I mean the meta-narrative through which the North Caucasus is written into global space as the object of multiple and intersecting geopolitical discourses in Euro-Atlantic literature (see, Campbell 1998). These discourses imagine and inscribe the region as a particular locus of danger to the wider world and evolved in response to the changing geopolitics of the region, not least the two Chechen Wars. There are two ways through which I consider this meta-narrative. The first, more often implicit than worked through, is that the North Caucasus is produced and circulates on a global scale; this has become prominent within much recent political analysis of the region, including work in political geography. The second is that these explanations and processes tend to be prioritized and discussed as though they apply to everyone all of the time. In this section, I want to examine these two propositions in more detail.

Scaled History of the North Caucasus

The years since the end of the Soviet Union have seen a steady widening of the scale at which analysis of events in the North Caucasus has taken place. Initial accounts of the North Caucasus were based on the First Chechen War (1994-96) and presented an essentialised view of the region, where attributes are temporally fixed and constituted through a pre-existing tendency towards interethnic antagonism and conflict (Treismann 1996; Halbach 1995; Luneev 1995; Macfarlane 1995; Murray 1994; Topilin 1992). Later interpretations, based on the Second Chechen War, focus on great power politics: Russian neo-imperial designs or a power struggle between a 'resurgent' Russia and the growing global ambitions of the US (often under the shadow of struggle for the control of Caspian hydrocarbon resources). At the same time, North Caucasian localities were written uncritically into global space in Francis Fukuyama's *End of History* thesis and Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilisations* as well as, post 2001, being incorporated into the overarching discourse of the 'War on/of Terror'. More recently, Edward Lucas's *New Cold War* narrative has been rolled out to describe Russo- Euro-Atlantic relations in the aftermath of the Russo-Georgian conflict of August 2008. Each of these is a powerful hierarchical discourse that frames localised events in global terms.

In the early 1990s, with the collapse of the Soviet Union still fresh in the mind, scholars were unprepared to grasp the extent of change in the North Caucasus and lacked the necessary tools (historical, conceptual and theoretical) for understanding the region. As Cheterian (2008: 20) explains: "Outside the narrow circle of a few linguists and historians, few knew much about the contemporary conditions of ... the [North] Caucasus". As a result, explanations of the events in the North Caucasus could only be drawn from limited sources. The most convenient sources in many cases were history books, looking at the 'region' (primarily Chechnya, but also Dagestan) in the 19th

century and inevitably suggesting similarities between current and past conflicts. Thus, the conflicts in the early post-Soviet period were seen as the reactivation of old woes, the continuity of ‘ancient’ confrontations. These interpretations, which hinge on primordial explanations of conflict over territory, overlooked complex localised geopolitics and recent histories.

At the same time, there was a more general shift of attention following the end of the Cold War, whereby formerly marginal conflicts in the then-Third World came to the centre of attention (Narin 1995; Lake and Rothschild 1998). So called ‘ethnic conflicts’ were the prism through which conflicts were seen “from the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa to the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia” (Cheterian 2008: 21). Much of political science literature produced in the 1990s ignored the events of the preceding decade and looked at the new context as events in themselves, entirely divorced from what had gone before them (Birgersson 2002; Hill 1995; Kaplan 1996, 1993; Jalali and Lipset 1992). In the 1990s, most studies of post-Soviet nationalism paid too little attention to the context of the collapse of the Soviet Union, and proposed nationalism as the *primary* cause of this collapse, to conclude that ethnic conflicts are the logical results of the clashes between different rising nationalist projects (for example, Zürcher 2007; Wolff 2006; Hunter 2006; Beissinger 2002; Alker, Gurr and Rupesinghe 2001; Cornell 2001; Lake and Rothchild 1998). Of those literatures that took a more nuanced approach, anthropological accounts are perhaps the most noteworthy (for example, those of Derlugian 1993 and 2005). More broadly, in academic literature on ‘ethnic conflict’ the North Caucasus is curiously absent (Horowitz 2001 and 1985; Stavenhagen 1996; Gurr and Harff 1994; Väyryen 1994).

The second-wave of interpretations looking at the North Caucasus started to gain in importance from 1993, and continues to dominate much of the literature today (Asmus 2010; Degoyev and Ibragimov 2006; Tsygankov 2006; Trenin, Malashenko and Lieven 2004; Cornell 2001; Broxur 1996). These interpretations, which centre on an understanding of the North Caucasus as the scene of great-power rivalry, can be explained by changing circumstances in both Moscow and the Caucasus. In December 1991 the Soviet Union was no more, and regional conflicts in the Caucasus entered a new stage. On the military level, the withdrawal of the Soviet factor left local antagonists face to face, leading to full-scale military confrontation in the region (particularly the South Caucasus). On the political level, the conflicts were no longer internal tensions of a single state (the Soviet Union), but were transformed into conflicts across international borders. Russian military intervention in the conflicts across the newly established international borders together with the unexpected outcome of the conflicts – where the military forces of Azerbaijan and Georgia were defeated by smaller territorial entities such as Karabakh and South Ossetia – led to a new set of interpretations focussing on Russian geopolitical designs (Trenin, Malashenko and Lieven 2004; Cornell 2001; Chapman 2000).

The following brief historical caricature seeks to capture the scaling of the North Caucasus in the post-Soviet period, though not all of the intricacies of academic analysis of the region. Between 1991 and 1995 there were very few, indeed if any, accounts of the political geography of the North Caucasus. Those few tended to be concerned with the geopolitics of language (see, Smith 1991; Bridges 1995) and were from within area studies. By 1996, the First Chechen War was firmly at the fore of academic interest, with much empirical analysis at the international scale (see, Kuzio

1995), and with limited analysis of the impact of the Chechen War more broadly, for example on education (Allakhverdov 1995). At the same time, feminist and other structuralist critiques which became significant in the Social Sciences, diverting attention from individuals and environments towards the underlying social and political structures of geopolitical relations, as well as mapping in rich detail the texture of geopolitics in everyday lives (Valentine 1989; Crawford et al. 1990; Stanko 1990; Pain 1991), were not applied to the North Caucasus. Rather, critiques of the First Chechen War were concerned with the national scale or the legal basis of the War (Abdullaev and Saradzhyan 2006), rather than on those ‘hidden’ impacts of warfare. Through the late 1990s and early 2000s, interest on the ‘regional’ geopolitics of the First Chechen War (Ware and Kisriev 1997, 2000; Sharafutdinova 2000; Menon 2001) remained popular. Yet, attention was also directed on the impacts of the War on the notions of ‘sovereignty’ (Lapidus 1998; Luke and Toal 1998) and ‘secessionism’ (Abdollahian and Kugler 1997; Frombgen 1999; Hughes 2001; Bowker 2004). With the beginning of the Second Chechen War in 1999, analyses of the war as discursive – as a powerful political tool used by the Russian elites to meet certain ends (Brudny 1997; Chapman 2000; Lansky 2000) – gained ground, becoming more prominent (Lieven 2000). So too did humanitarian accounts of the Chechen Wars (Fredholm 2000; Kovaacs 2000; Shulman 2001; Mendelson 2006). In the early years of the twenty-first century, the North Caucasus has become increasingly entwined with so-called ‘global’ processes, not least terrorism (Aron 2003; Herd 2000; Hahn 2005; Kramer 2005; Dunlop and Menon 2006; Kolossov and Toal 2007; Moore 2007; Sagrarnoso 2007; Hahn 2008; Ó Tuathail 2009a; Russell 2009) and attempts to include the region in the global economy (Bradshaw 2001; O’Loughlin, Kolossov and Radvanyi 2007). Few critical accounts at

this time took time to understand the socio-cultural (Chesnov 1996) or historic (Halbach 2000; Gakayev 1999: 1997; Lieven 1998) grounding of the Chechen War.

'Globalised' North Caucasus

Since 2001, the North Caucasus has been increasingly seen at the international scale (Souleimanov and Ditych 2008), although there are different phases and perspectives in this literature. In academic and public discourses, the North Caucasus has become primarily focussed on issues of international reach, such as terrorism and war, rather than on local everyday lives, bodies and places like other geographical regions (Megoran 2006: 2007; Sahadeo and Zanca 2007; Ramadan 2008). In accounts of the geopolitics of the North Caucasus, the region is drawn into governance and conflict (Holland 2004; Hayo and Kutan 2005). It is the transnational dimensions of the North Caucasus that are important here: in this narrative, the North Caucasus is produced and imagined rapidly and connectedly from one site in the world to another, directed and channelled by political and religious agendas. Within this, how these (differing) agendas have affected Russo-Western relations has been the subject of limited concern (Fawn 2002; Kennedy-Pipe and Welch 2005; Russell 2006). The transmission between spaces and scales is often attributed to the mass media (Malinkina and McLeod 2000; Simons 2006; Snetkov 2007; Russell 2007), with certain geopolitically proximate events, such as terrorist attacks, receiving disproportionate ongoing attention (Ó Tuathail 2009a). Increasingly, this applies to issues ranging from panics about immigration flows (Sammut 2001; Petrov 2002; Riazantsev 2003; Holland 2004; O'Loughlin, Panin and Wittmer 2007; O'Loughlin, Kolossov and Radvanyi 2007) to global Islamic jihad (Aron

2003; Williams 2003; Hahn 2005 and 2008; Moore 2008), though the core theme has been war (O'Loughlin, Ó Tuathail and Kolossov 2004b; Hughes 2007b; Russell 2009).

The suggestion that the Second Chechen War was part of the global 'War on/of Terror' drew much attention (Lapidus 2002; Aron 2003; Kennedy-Pipe and Welch 2005), most of it largely critical (Peter and Wagner 2001; Russell 2002a; Baev 2003; Cornell 2003; Blank 2003; Baev 2004; Galeotti 2004; O'Loughlin, Ó Tuathail and Kolossov 2004a and 2004b; Rigi 2004; Ware 2005; Dunlop 2006). Throughout the 2000s, analysis has been made of both Chechen Wars as 'immoral' (Khalilov 2003; Coppieters 2003), as has analysis of the conflicts as examples of 'New Wars' (Shearman and Sussex 2005; Kaldor 2007). At the same time, attention has been directed at the qualitative difference between the legitimating of the First and the Second Wars, illustrating that the Chechen nation has, over time, become securitised not as 'freedom fighters', 'insurgents' or 'bandits' (Layton 1995; Russell 2007), but as 'terrorists' (Speckhard and Ahkmedova 2006), whose cause was no-longer national liberation, but the unleashing of a global Islamic jihad (Henkin 2006; Moore 2007). Animating what might be thought of as an 'existential crisis', this 'labelling' appeared to pose a direct challenge to the Russian image of Chechen nationalism as parochial and traditional, and instead offered an alternative vision of an international Chechnya accommodated both within Russia and within the nation-state system (Hughes 2007b). Rather than labelling actors within an already established national space, this instead offered an anti-topological vision, one where Chechen solidarity does not rely on a particular fixed identity but rather a shared militaristic tactic (Williams 2003 and 2004). Russell (2002b), in particular, has shown how Russian perceptions of Chechens have become 'globalised' throughout the post-Soviet period.

So too has work has explored the framing of the North Caucasus as part of a pan-Islamic project, enrolling the powerful imagery and vocabulary of a decisive break from Russia through the creation of an Emirate (Lehmann 1997; Yemelianova 2000 and 2001; Lanskoy 2002; Zelkina 2002; Aron 2003; Wilhelmsen 2005; Walker 2005; Gammer 2005; Tishkov 2005). Work has also focused on the geopolitics of Islam (Akhmadov, Bowers and Doss 2001) and Islamic Fundamentalism (Hahn 2008; Russell 2009). Few authors, Giuliano (2003) and Hahn (2005) being notable exceptions, have explicitly questioned the impact of Islamic Fundamentalism in Chechnya on the rest of the North Caucasus region. The North Caucasus has also been used in a comparative sense, drawing parallels with other 'post-conflict' zones, in particular Kosovo (Sukhar 2007) and Bosnia-Herzegovina (Bakke, Cao, O'Loughlin and Ward 2009).

2.5.2 Critique: North Caucasian Geopolitics

Together, the above body of literature on the North Caucasus is important in its analysis of geopolitics and regional relations. It is also important to point out its layering: it is multidisciplinary, there is diversity in its approaches to theory and empirical evidence, and so it does not constitute a unified canon of work. The critique of this literature below does not reflect doubt about the value of these lines of inquiry. Instead, my aim is to highlight some of the unintentional consequences of works that take this literature for granted, and the political imperative for considering those 'others' who are not included in this scholarship.

North Caucasus 'as' Chechnya

Much of the existing Anglo-American literature on the North Caucasus is framed around conflict in the region, although what it is primarily concerned with is Chechnya. There are two senses in which these discourses can be considered ‘Chechenised’. The first sense is through the sheer number of books, articles, and reports that have been published on or about Chechnya. Certainly, in the years since the end of the Soviet Union Chechnya has acted as a focus point for North Caucasian imaginaries. The second, more often implicit than worked through, is that in this literature Chechnya is presented as being omnipresent and little if any comment is made about the region (and its peoples) more widely outside of grand theorising about the potential ‘spread’ of conflict (Lieven 1998 is one exception to this).

Firstly, the implicit notion that Chechnya *is* the North Caucasus is present in much academic work. This has obscured the extent to which ‘other’ parts of the North Caucasus have been viewed and researched. Kazenin (2009) makes a similar point in his book *‘Tikhie’ Konflikt na Severnom Kavkaze [‘Quiet’ Conflicts in the North Caucasus]* when he explains that in post-Soviet Russia the North Caucasus has been conceived of as being “Chechnya and its neighbours”, a perspective that has simultaneously limited attention to, and understanding of, other regions in the North Caucasus. While O’Loughlin, Ó Tuathail and Kolossov (2004b) have extensively explored Russian public opinion on the North Caucasus region, Markedonov (2009) has written that, given the federal attention directed towards Chechnya in the post-Soviet period, many Russian citizens associate the North Caucasus with violence and instability and, in turn, link this to Chechnya. This has the effect in reifying scale away from the regional and to the individual (in this case, the individual Republic within the Russian Federation). As

Agnew (2009) has discussed elsewhere, the use of the ‘North Caucasus’ geographical analogy for ‘Chechnya’ is profoundly illustrative of the process of geographical naming and place blaming, conjuring a particular vision of (atavistic and primordial) conflict as akin to that associated with ‘North Caucasus’.

The second sense in which geopolitical discourses of the North Caucasus are ‘Chechenised’ is that the vast majority of Anglo-American work cited so far examines Chechnya and the Chechen Wars and makes proposals about the entire region being ‘in danger’ with little or no reference to the feelings, perceptions, views, subjectivities or bodies of those supposed to be fearful, or explaining how this ‘danger’ travels or migrates between places and people. An early example of this is the work of Hill (1995) – the title of her study, in its symbolism, is clear enough *Russia’s Tinderbox: Conflict in the North Caucasus* – who argues that the North Caucasus is a region where conflict in one republic “has the potential to spark a regional conflagration that will spread beyond its borders” (pg. viii). The notion of a ‘clear and present danger’ is also present in later works. Writing in 2001, Menon (2001: 583) suggested that: “The dogged anti-Russian nationalism evident in Chechnya does not exist among others in the North Caucasus (who tend to view the Chechens with more than a little ambivalence), but the region is explosive”. Menon later goes on to explain that, “Chechnya’s instability could infect Stavropol and Krasnodar” (Menon 2001: 583), although it is not clear what is being *infected* or how this *infection* is carried. Use of such medical imagery has been the subject of much critique. Gregory (2004) and Bialasiewicz and Elden (2006), for example, suggest that the medical-military metaphor implication of a ‘cancer’ that must be exterminated before it ‘spreads’ or ‘infects’ is indicative for it marks many popular descriptions of the contemporary terrorist threat. This narrative is also present in the

political sphere: speaking at the Kabardino-Balkarian branch of the FSB in Nalchik on 27 February 2010, President Medvedev noted that “problems of radicalism, extremism, and armed underground networks that have *spread like a cancer* [*raspolzlos’, kak rakovaya opukhol’*] across the North Caucasus [emphasis added]” (Medvedev 2010c).

Masculinity and Conflict

As is typical with conflict scenarios, analyses of the North Caucasus are ordered by power geometries and attend little to gender: discourses of the North Caucasus operate through the ideas of Masculinity and Conflict, concentrating on the Chechen Wars and, more recently, terrorism and Islamic Fundamentalism. In the vast majority of work cited so far, there is an unspoken privilege of these geopolitics. We know from other contexts that particular events are always named, known, privileged and spatialised in certain ways by the powerful, and that this marginalises people. Few of those writing about conflicts in the North Caucasus have considered conflict at different scales. Fewer still, have considered conflict in its ‘everyday’ dimensions. This scale of analysis is often ignored and left unexplored, written over by large scale strategic geopolitical theorising. Yet, the utility of such theorising, as Tishkov (2004: 9) has observed, is questionable as in the North Caucasus “big theories fall short”. The same lack of reference to empirical social research across much of human geography has been noted elsewhere by Pain (2009). One exception to this is the (extra)ordinary experiences of ‘everyday’ soldiers involved in the Chechen Wars which have been made public with a small number of (often autobiographical) books (e.g., Babchenko 2006). While these accounts have opened up a valuable field for study, they have simultaneously closed off the opportunity for ‘others’ to fall under the geopolitical gaze. As Vendina, Belozarov and

Gustafson (2007: 178) noted in their study on Chechnya, “most attention has been focused on the military campaigns and the impacts of rampant violence, but very little attention has been paid to the non-military dimensions of these devastating wars, both within Chechnya and beyond”. Of course there are exceptions to this, for example, the attention directed toward Chechen female ‘Black Widow’ suicide bombers (Moore 2005; Russell 2007) and the great number of books which have appeared surrounding the Beslan School Hostage Siege (e.g., Giduck 2005; Phillips 2008), which centre the experience and emotion of women and children, respectively.

As they are currently presented, the subjects who matter most in the North Caucasus are Men in the Russian military services, faced with fighting war in Chechnya. Thus, pressing but often unspoken issues are: What were the ‘everyday’ impacts of the war(s)? What role did women play in the war(s)? And what are the wider spatialities of this conflict? The suggestion that analyses of war are overly Masculine is a long standing concern of feminist geopolitics (Hyndman 2004) and has been taken up in the North Caucasus by Struckman (2006) and Murphy (2010). Writing on the gendered aspects of the Second Chechen War, Struckman (2006), for example, has highlighted the need for de-gendered and re-scaled analysis. Exploring the phenomenon of the ‘female suicide bomber’, Struckman notes whilst “men’s participation is rarely questioned or explained ... women are dubbed ‘black widows’, and their motivation to participate is explained as vengeance for the deaths of husbands, father, brothers, or sons” (Struckman 2006: 338) (Murphy, P. 2004; Reuter 2004). Recently, Tishkov (2005: xviii) has noted how the Second Chechen War “destroys human lives and health far beyond the battlefield [sic]”, but he does not go on to explore this beyond a limited analysis of the impact of the War on family life (2005: 151-63). Six years ago,

Hyndman (2004: 318) noted, “Geopolitics has [sic] become increasingly accountable to the security of women’s bodies”. Yet in the North Caucasus, this ‘accountability’ has seemingly been explored by NGO’s (for example, Memorial and Amnesty International) rather than academics.

Discourses of ‘war’ and ‘conflict’ are typical of other regions in post-Soviet space. As Megoran (2004) has pointed out in an earlier critique, despite their relatively smooth transition from being constituent members of the USSR to becoming sovereign states in 1991, the idea that Central Asian states are dangerous places has been a common theme in the scholarly literature for much of the last two decades. Through in-depth ethnographic research, Megoran demonstrated that this belligerently stereotyped representation betrays a geographical ignorance that is more revealing of the fears and fantasies of outsiders than it is of the complex cultural and geopolitical nexus that is modern Central Asia (Megoran 2000). Further, Megoran (2006) has shown how ‘everyday violence’ is experienced, negotiated and re-imagined in Uzbekistan/Kyrgyzstan through individual identity. Ideas about “rampant violence” (Vendina, Belozerov and Gustafson 2007: 178) in the North Caucasus, then, should be contested along similar lines; existing studies do little to challenge the assumption that war is the most notable form of conflict. This is something that Humanitarian NGO’s (e.g., Memorial) and a minority of journalists (e.g., Seierstad 2008; Politkovskaya 2003; Bennett 2001) have taken up.

I have argued so far that understandings of the North Caucasus primarily view the region as typified by Chechnya, and are produced and circulated at the global and national scale. I now go on to sketch an alternative research agenda for the North

Caucasus and, in doing so, draw on four literatures. The aim of each is to focus attention on *how* the North Caucasus is researched and, in particular, I highlight the role that critical scholarship can play in illuminating everyday geopolitics. In supporting my argument, I draw upon several existing bodies of literature that form a frame for analysing the global/geopolitical and the local/everyday. These are: readings of landscape as ‘political’; critical writings on parades and ‘ethnic’ events; Horowitz’s concept of the ‘Deadly Ethnic Riot’ (2001) together with writings on ethnicity, nationalism and conflict in the Soviet Union; and, a fusion of Buzan’s writings on security and Foucault’s writings on discipline. Their connections to this thesis are explained below. Suffice it to say that little of the work reviewed above has drawn on (or acknowledged) this literature.

2.6 Landscape as Political

The urban built environment is an important medium through which ethnic identity is communicated and (re)produced in the Stavropol’ landscape. Within geography, the challenge of producing narratives of landscape has been registered in a range of topics, most of which centred on memory: for example, nationalism and wars of independence (e.g., Dabrowski 2004; Foote 2003; Confino and Fritzsche 2002; Johnson 1995, 1994); the First and Second World Wars (e.g., Muzaini and Yeoh 2005a, 2005b; Till 2005; Beaumont 2004; Muller 2002; Ashplant, Dawson and Roper 2001); the Holocaust (Hornstein and Jacobwitz 2003; Marcuse 2001; Van Pelt and Dwork 1996); post-Soviet Europe (Rev 2005; Light 2004; Forrest and Johnson 2002; Foote, Toth and Arvey 2000; Azaryahu 1997); and some civil and ethnic conflicts together with other acts of violence

(Ashworth and Hartmann 2005; Alderman and Dwyer 2004; Lennon and Foley 2000; Leitner and Kang 1999)¹⁶.

Of all of these approaches, I find studies on the commemoration (monumentalisation) of great leaders (and martyrs) to be especially useful in analysing the Stavropol' landscape. As such, this topic provides the theoretical hook for Chapter 5. The approach which I draw from asks important questions of the landscape: what messages it contains; how those messages are communicated; how they are read; and, how the landscape fits into a wider cultural / political system. While this idea of landscape-as-political has been critiqued as "a limiting perspectival expression of social constructivism" that "framed, fixed and rendered inert all that ought to be most lively" (Lorimer 2005: 84-85), the idea of landscape as a medium through which political messages are communicated is a valuable perspective for my study of the Stavropol' landscape. I have focused my analysis in Chapter 5 on micro-scale processes and practices of communication and contestation in a dynamic landscape.

In Russia, the specific context of monumentalisation is heavily influenced by the legacy of the USSR. The cults of Lenin and Stalin are well known, but recent research has increased understanding by exploring controversies surrounding the statue of Felix Dzerzinsky in Moscow's Lubyanka Square (Forest and Johnson 2002) and elsewhere (Forest, Johnson and Till 2004). In their work on key Soviet monuments and memorials in Moscow in the 1990s, Forest and Johnson (2002: 528) write that "Monuments, memorials, museums, and place names have traditionally played a central role in defining Russian national identity", suggesting that "control over symbolic public

¹⁶ For an overview of this work, see Foote and Azaryahu (2007).

spaces is exceptionally important in Russian politics”. Following this, Forest, Johnson and Till (2004: 371) note that “many Russian elites and publics would not only prefer to forget the injustices of the past, but to symbolically restore their perpetrators to a place of honour”. As Bilig’s (1995) famous argument goes, monuments (as well as other physical images, for example, buildings and scenes) encountered in everyday life are important as they constitute a ‘banal’ form of nationalism. Within human geography, Johnson (2004), in particular, has addressed the ways in which identity at the *popular* level and *everyday* scale is constructed, maintained or challenged, emphasising that:

“the role of public sculpture and monumental architecture in framing the geographies of everyday life and in anchoring our collective social memory cannot be underestimated” (Johnson 2004: 316).

Duncan (1990: 22) has written that memory and representation of the past is “an important political resource”, while Johnson (2004: 318) explains that “re-membling the past – the putting together of its constituent parts into a single, coherent narrative – has been profoundly significant for the emergence of a popular nationalist identity”. This is not unique, Agnew argues (2004: 233), as “[t]ying the nation to territory has often involved identifying a prototypical landscape as representative of the collective identity”. Subsequently, Forest and Johnson (2002: 530) propose that, “The glorification of selected Tsarist-era sites reflects the desire of many nationalistic politicians to co-opt and redefine post-Soviet Russian national identity by appealing to deeply held beliefs about Russia’s unique and important spiritual and cultural heritage”, arguing that these sites often “emphasize the ‘best’ of Russia’s ethnic and imperial past”.

Yet, Forest and Johnson's (Ibid.) emphasis on the role of monuments in the post-Soviet Russian nation-building process is at odds with most literature on nationalism, which has overlooked the central role of cities and the 'urban' in facilitating nation and state building, and in maintaining national consciousness and identity (Yiftchal and Yacobi 2003). Critical writings on cities share an understanding that they are by and large the most elaborate and advanced form of modernity, modernization projects, politics, and progress as perceived by the enlightenment project (Harvey 1989). However, cities, particularly in conditions of modernity and postmodernity, Luz (2008: 1040) writes, "are fast becoming sites of extreme inequality and contestations between those who have and those who have not", which can be seen in increasing instances of interethnic violence and discrimination. In this context Sibley (1996) articulates well the contradictions between national xenophobia and the exigencies of capitalist developments:

"The built environment is ... implicated in the construction of otherness and deviancy. Pure space exposes difference and facilitates the policing of boundaries ... This xenophobia is based ... on a purified national identity; (it) sits uneasily with economic flows and cultural fusions, which are generated by global capitalism. The myth of cultural homogeneity is needed to sustain the nation-state ... It is convenient to have an alien other hovering on the margins" (pages 86, 107, 108).

The Stavropol' landscape plays a significant role in interethnic life and ethnic relations. It is both an arena through which Russian national political identity is communicated with people and produced and reproduced, and an arena through which differing Russian citizens compete with each other for authority on local, regional and national history. These efforts function as one of a range of power practices visible in contemporary Russia, but ordinary people's divergent and critical readings of the

landscapes message can shed light on the workings and failures of these processes. As I explore in Chapter 5, the Stavropol' landscape is intensely geopolitical, an assemblage of symbols and spaces that attempt to produce and reproduce politicised identities centred around one geopolitical demand: to write / right Russian history.

2.7 Yurchak and Parades

It is to Alexei Yurchak's writings on post-Soviet parades that I now turn. Yurchak's writings provide a lens through which I critically analyse the annual *Denya Stavropol'skogo Kraya* (Days of Stavropol'skii krai) parade. Yurchak's writings have influenced anthropologists and those interested in cultural and linguistic studies, but his work is yet to be picked up by geographers in any meaningful way. His ideas direct attention toward analysis of how ideologies are projected on and work through language, and what methods of discourse analysis social scientists can use to unpack their discursive power, as well as wider cultural shifts brought forth by the collapse of the Soviet ideology.

In his book *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More* (subtitled *The Last Soviet Generation*), Yurchak explores the paradoxes of state socialism within the Soviet Union. Soviet socialism, he argues, was based on paradoxes that were revealed by the peculiar experience of state collapse. To the people who lived in that system, the collapse seemed both completely unexpected and, at the same time, completely unsurprising. At the moment of the collapse it became clear that Soviet life had always been viewed through characteristics which, although appearing to be mutually exclusive, were, in fact, mutually constitutive: what Yurchak calls "Binary Socialism"

(2005: 4). A constitutive part of the phenomena, Yurchak argues, is the way that during the late Soviet period the form of ideological representations -- speeches, ritualised practices, slogans, posters, monuments, and urban visual propaganda -- became “increasingly normalised, ubiquitous and predictable” (2005: 6). These representations no longer had to be read literally to work as elements of the hegemonic representation.

This change in the functioning of Soviet ideology was reflected in how Soviet citizens participated in ideological rituals and event. Yurchak (pg. 15) writes:

“... it was well known that during the period from 1960s to the 1980s, the overwhelming majority of Soviet people participated in May Day and Revolution Day parades in Soviet cities. The apotheosis of such parades in the cities was the walk across the central square in front of the city’s party leaders, who stood on a high platform and waved to the marching masses. People cheered as official slogans blared from the loudspeakers, and the thundering roar of these hundreds of thousands of voices sounded impressive and unanimous. According to Soviet newspapers at the time, these massive events “convincingly demonstrate[d] the unbreakable union of the party and people ...” (*Pravda* May 2, 1981). In practice, however, most people in the parades paid little attention to the slogans, and many were not aware who exactly was depicted on the Politburo portraits they carried”

For example, Victory Day (May) and November 7 (Anniversary of the October Revolution) parades, were seen as both obligatory duties and appealing celebrations. With their massive scale, parades were a powerful machinery for the cultural production of public *svoi* (us/ours), creating temporary collectivities of friends and strangers who marched together through the streets, carried the same portraits and slogans shouted ‘hurray’ in response to the same appeals blaring from loudspeakers, and publicly displayed the same celebratory mood. “Participating in these events”, Yurchak (2005: 121) argues, “reproduced the collectivity of belonging that was enabled by these slogans and portraits but no longer bound by their literal sense”.

In an attempt to draw a more nuanced understanding of everyday life in the Soviet Union, Yurchak draws on the work of John Austin, in particular his ‘Introducing Speech Act Theory’ (1999). Austin’s work has been influential in the analysis of various forms of ritualised practice that are not necessarily linguistic and in the analysis of how aspects of subjectivity may be produced in such practice. For example, Judith Butler (1990; 1993) focuses on the ritualised repetition of embodied norms as performative acts – acts that do not simply refer to an a priori existing “pure body” but shape that body as sexed, raced, classed and so forth. Drawing on critical readings of Austin by Jacques Derrida (1977) and Pierre Bourdieu (1991), and the work of Butler (1993), Hollywood (2003) proposes to broaden the discussion of the performative to various ‘ritualised acts’ that are repeated in different contexts and whose meanings are neither completely known in advance nor determined by the participants’ intention. Bell further points out that through the repetition of ritualised actions in different contexts, bodies are produced and produce themselves as “ritualised agents ... who have an intrinsic knowledge of these schemes embedded ... in their sense of reality, and in their understanding of how to act in ways that both maintain and qualify the complex micro-relations of power” (Bell 1992: 121).

This thesis is not a case study of the applicability of Yurchak’s work on Soviet-era parades, and a wholesale incorporation of the ideas of Austin, Butler, Derrida, and Hollywood is not necessary for my argument here. Rather, these ideas about the ‘meaning’ of parades, the ‘experience’ of parades, the ‘meaning attached’ to parades, and the ‘lived experience’ of parades, are useful in helping me interrogate the role of *Den’ kraya* in ethnic relations in Stavropol’. I turn to these issues in Chapter 6.

2.8 Ethnic Conflict, Ethnic Violence, and the ‘Deadly Ethnic Riot’

While ethnicity has been a driving force behind many of the inter- and intra- state wars around the world, and is implicated in wars in both the North Caucasus and South Caucasus¹⁷, much literature on ethnic conflict tends to avoid localised factors in explaining ethnic conflict, preferring instead to formulate universal models and theories (for example, Horowitz 1985; Laitin 1998; Horowitz 2001)¹⁸. Two recent exceptions to this are the work of Gorenburg (2001) and Toft (2003). In his study of popular support for nationalism in Russia’s ethnic republics, Gorenburg (2001: 73) notes how:

“... scholars who study nationalism usually assume that support for nationalism among members of a particular ethnic group is either randomly distributed (Laitin) or identical for all members of the group (Horowitz). Both assumptions are implausible.”

To set his work apart from those that he critiques, Gorenburg focuses on localised factors to analyse ethno-nationalism in Bashkortostan, Chuvashia, Khakassia and Tatarstan. Toft (2003), for her part, argues in favour of the recognition of the ‘local’ in studies of ethnic violence. In *The Geography of Ethnic Violence*, Toft (2003) shows how issues such as localised ethnic group settlement patterns, socially constructed identities, and charismatic leaders can lead rational individuals to escalate a dispute to violence, even when doing so is not ultimately in their own interests. While Toft’s

¹⁷ For an analysis of the ethno-national situation in the Caucasus in the period up to the early 1980s, see Wixman (1982).

¹⁸ While many scholars accept that the definition of an ethnic group may be expanded to include additional features and explanations, depending on local contexts (Yinger 1994; Smith 1991), few are explicit in accounting for localised factors. In contrast to these dominant accounts, numerous anthropological studies stress that ethnicity should be defined and understood within the contexts of each particular case under investigation.

research is otherwise notable for exploring empirical case studies that are difficult to explain using existing theoretical approaches alone, her biggest contribution to existing literature is to argue for the role of ‘geography’ in studies of ethnicity.

Applied to Russia, primordialism is the most influential approach to ethnicity, with the majority of Soviet and post-Soviet research on ethnic studies and history drawing extensively from primordialist theory. Tishkov (1997:1) wrote that, “The Russian social science tradition, especially with respect to interpreting ethnicity, is heavily dominated by the primordial approach” (see Gumilev 1990 and Bromley 1973; 1981; 1987). As I explained earlier, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of *ethnopolitika*, primordialism became a tool for application in the quest for new (post-Soviet) identities as well as being annexed for the purposes of nationalist political discourse. Writing on the efforts of the Yakuts to establish their “own scientific interdisciplinary approach to ethno-geneses of the people of Sakha [Yakuts’], as opposed to the ‘old superpower [Soviet-era] ethnography’”, Vinokurova (1994: 27) argued:

“... the Yakuts are a very young ethnos formed from the Mongol- and Turko-linguistic components and, probably, influenced by the Samoyed indigenous population of Siberia and the North. According to [Lev] Gumilev’s theory, this energetic potential of ethnos lasts for approximately 1200-1500 years. At that point, ethnos becomes a component of a continuous network of ethnic varieties of humanity ... Even hypothetically, it is a pity to feel that you belong to a disappearing ethnos.”

As the example of Yakuts suggests, localised explanations were used in primordialist explanations of ethnicity. Such explanations influenced the way ethnicity has been interpreted in post-Soviet scholarship and, in turn, has shaped group identities and

impacted on the localised construction of political ideologies. In turn, this construction of ideology feeds, both directly and indirectly, into Horowitz's concept of the 'Deadly Ethnic Riot' (2001). In the process of nation-building in the early post-Soviet period, national elites and the so-called 'intelligentsia' played an important part in transforming and "driving the process of history-writing, thereby striving to find a consensus on their nations' past as a basis for national mobilization" (Minasyan 2009: 10). Often, ethnicity was utilised as an instrument to mobilize the masses and, in certain circumstances, led to ethnic riots. In this regard, Cheterian (2008: 80) has observed the continuity rather than change in politicising history-writing in and after the Soviet Union:

"The role of historians was not limited to developing a version of history in which the role of the nations they represented had a dominant role and that of neighbouring nations was diminished. Nor was it limited to preparing politicised and clashing versions of the past in the work context created by Soviet policies. In the early years of mass politics, at the height of perestroika and glasnost, they played a direct role in articulating political positions and demands, addressed initially to the Soviet leadership in Moscow, based on the specific vision of history their profession has developed in the previous years. Those demands rotated around the idea of territorial exchanges and the upgrading or downgrading of the political status of certain regions, and in particular that of autonomous republics and regions. The politicized work of historians fitted well with the Soviet tradition whereby historians prepared studies that directly reflected official ideology, or tried to justify it. Thus the role historians played in the period of Soviet collapse can be seen as a continuation of, and not a break with, the Soviet legacy. In the late 1980s many historians ceased to be historians and entered the arena of political struggle, by providing the ideology of mass mobilization."

In his book *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*, Horowitz (2001) defined ethnic riots as intense, sudden, but not necessarily wholly unplanned, lethal attacks on the civilian members of one ethnic group by civilian members of another ethnic group, with the victims chosen because of their ethnicity. While producing a large number of deaths, such riots are not only characterised by killing but also typically result in the creation of significant

numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons, and, in turn, the creation of ethnically homogenous territories. Those individuals who participate in the rioting, according to Horowitz, imagine themselves to be engaged in heroic acts of self-defence against life and death threats, such as long-term demographic change that threatens to alter the ethnic composition of the local population. As such, several aspects of deadly ethnic riots require a focus on the dynamics of crowd behaviour:

- The scale and explosiveness of such riots, and their seemingly disproportionate character in relation to the events that tend to precipitate them.
- Their brutality and viciousness.
- Their ability to attract participants, despite the apparent benefits of “free-riding” for individuals who may hate members of another group but have the option to let others do the killing for them. Despite the option of “free-riding,” there is much voluntary, authentic participation in such riots.
- The mixture of impulsive and instrumental factors that produce deadly ethnic riots. Such riots usually represent a mixture of passion and calculation on the part of those who participate in them.

A synthesis of the writings of Tishkov (1997), Gorenburg (2001), Horowitz (2001), and Toft (2003) is relevant to my work not simply for their focus on ethnic conflict, and in the case of Tishkov and Gorenburg for their regional focus, but also because they help me formulate important questions about the situation in Stavropol'skii krai during the ‘ethnic riots’ in summer 2007. Were the ‘ethnic riots’ a deliberate and planned operation? Were they an isolated incident or part of the wider context in Russia surrounding the growth of ethno-nationalist conflict and violence? How do the

ideological constructions behind Russian nationhood, the demographic anxieties and security concerns Tishkov (1997) outlines help us to understand ‘ethnic conflict’ in Stavropol’skii krai? How does the behaviour of the rioters ‘fit’ within Horowitz’s (1985) theory?

2.9 Victims, quasi-victims, and Russia’s violent geographies of ethnic relations

Several authors in international relations, political science and (more recently) economics have proposed explanations for the salience of ethnicity in politics and/or social conflict. Some examples include Hardin (1995), Fearon and Laitin (2000), Chandra (2003), and Glaeser (2005). I do not attempt a review of this literature here. Rather, it is enough to recognise that this literature is commonly divided two-fold between primordialist and instrumentalist interpretations. These works are divided along an understanding of violence as either as an elemental, primordial eruption of anger, or as a political strategy.

Rather than focus on the underlying motives and origins of ethnic violence, recent work on ethnic violence has critically explored the relationship between conflict and violence. Wolff (2006), for example, notes that while ethnic conflict can result in violence, it does not always. When it does not result in violence, it is more common to use terms such as ‘ethnic tension’, ‘ethnic dispute’, and ‘ethnic unease’. While “not every ethnic conflict is characterised by violence”, Wolff (2006: 3) writes, “inter-ethnic violence is always a sign of underlying conflict”. At the same time, Brubaker and Laitin (1998: 425) argue that while violence does not spontaneously erupt between otherwise peacefully ethnic groups, “ethnicity is not the ultimate, irreducible source of violent conflict in such

cases”. That these works recognise that conflict can also be non-violent is important. These works also recognise that where conflict between ethnic groups is apparent, ethnicity *per se* is not always the source of that conflict. That much of the existing literature on ethnic conflict, ethnic violence, and violent ethnic conflict, dwells on the relationship between conflict and violence suggests that it is not a frivolous distinction, rather it is worthy of attention.

To theorise critically the relationship between conflict and violence, I turn to work on security. As proposed by Buzan (1983) and later finessed by feminist (and other) critiques of security discourses, the language of security should not be taken for granted. Rather, its meaning can be broadened away from violence, to focus on personal, social, economic and other aspects of being and feeling *secure* from violence, hate, disease, poverty and exploitation. In this fashion, ethnic conflict is not constrained solely to acts of violence. Rather, its spatialities go much further and encompass perceptions of violence, reflecting how such violence affects people, their thoughts and behaviour. Violence can have a *disciplining* affect on people: from the choices they make about where to go in urban/rural areas (particular places are associated with ‘danger’, for example poorly lit alley ways), what time of the day/night to conduct their business (night-time is often thought of as being more dangerous than daytime), and how to dress (the choice of footwear is an obvious example, as it is easier to run from danger in trainers than flip-flops or high-heels). Such *discipline*, as Michel Foucault (1987) argued in relation to prisons, spreads its tentacles through the whole of society to create a vast complex. “Discipline”, Foucault (1987: 141) wrote, “proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space”. In Russia, this distribution translates into the violent geographies of ethnic relations.

Within Russia, ethnic-motivated violence is a crime punishable by prison¹⁹. However, perceptions or fear of ethnic-motivated violence have no place in law. This is at odds with international law, where the definition of a refugee, as codified under the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951)²⁰, recognises a person as a refugee who:

“... to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, *owing to such fear*, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country [emphasis added].”

Thus, in Russia, people who experience perceptions or fear of ethnic-motivated violence are, in a sense, quasi-victims; located at the interface between the direct power over the body exercised by physical (or verbal) violence in contemporary Russia and the more diffuse power of fear of violence (and conflict).

A fusion of Buzan’s and Foucault’s writings is relevant to my work, and not solely because my application of their work to Stavropol’skii krai is novel. Rather, it helps me

¹⁹ In a series of revisions to its criminal code since 2002, Russia amended its anti-extremist legislation (which covers ethnic-motivated violence). In 2002, the ‘Federal Law on Combating Extremist Activity’ was introduced, which defined extremist activity tautologically as ‘extremism’, in conjunction with tough punishments for such activity. Central to the new law was the concept of the ‘hate crime’ contained in Article 63 of the Criminal Code; defined as a criminal offence motivated by “racial, ethnic or religious hatred or animosity”. The authorities claimed that the new legislation was necessary to combat fascism (as well as other manifestations of racism and ultra-nationalism). In 2007, the definition of the ‘hate crime’ was reformulated in the Criminal Code to include “political, ideological, as well as hatred or animosity against a certain social group”. Despite this, no substantial progress has been made in suppressing ‘extremist’ activity and on the occasions when ‘extremism’ has been effectively suppressed, the pre-existing Criminal Code provisions (rather than those on ‘combating extremist activity’) have been applied. More worryingly, the first cases of the enforcement of anti-extremist legislation imposed unlawful restrictions on civil rights and liberties. See, <http://xeno.sova-center.ru/6BA2468/6BB4208/AC00A73>

²⁰ The concept of a refugee was expanded by the Convention’s 1967 Protocol and by regional conventions in Africa and Latin America to include persons who had fled war or other violence in their home country.

formulate important questions about how Russia's quasi-victims experience the violent geographies of ethnic relations. What is the distribution of ethnic-motivated crime in Russia? How prevalent is ethnic conflict and discrimination? What form does this conflict and discrimination take? How do conflict and discrimination feed into and exacerbate experiences of ethnic violence?

2.10 Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to make clear the relationship between political geography and area studies. In doing so, I have argued for the development of a research agenda for the North Caucasus which moves 'beyond Chechnya' as one tool to understand and respond to calls for a 'renewed' interest in regional geography. Identifying major limitations in the dominant Euro-Atlantic geopolitical discourses of the North Caucasus, I have examined how a 'Chechenised' narrative is (re)produced and manifest in recent work by geographers and others writing about the region. We know relatively little about the geopolitical reality of the post-Soviet North Caucasus outside of Chechnya, or how this reality has changed over time and space. Notwithstanding that, important insights can be gained from four bodies of existing literature elsewhere: seminology and the reading of landscapes; Yurchak's writings on parades; (critical) studies of ethnic conflict; and writings on security and discipline. These four fields provide a frame for a new research agenda: an agenda for gaining a fuller sense of the places and geopolitics of the North Caucasus, with particular lessons for dismantling scale and rethinking the relations of the global/geopolitical to the local/everyday.

In writing my critical geopolitics account of ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai, I have found each of these literatures to be useful in different ways. Literature on landscape semiology helps understand how the spaces and landscapes of Stavropol' influence the production and reproduction of ethnic relations. Questions of 'performances' and the writings of Jacques Derrida and Judith Butler on 'performativities', which link to Alexei Yurchak's work on parades, help me to understand how ethnic relations are enacted and performed (and resisted) in the *Den' kraya* parade. Work on ethnic conflict and the 'deadly ethnic riot' points to how the 2007 riots in Stavropol' can be theorised. Finally, a fusion of the writings of Barry Buzan and Michel Foucault allow me, in Chapter 8, to discuss how individuals experience the violent geographies of ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai.

In the next Chapter I discuss the methodology that I employed in my study, building on my above critique of existing literature. I weave into this a discussion of logistical and practical considerations of conducting research in post-Soviet Russia. My research in the North Caucasus renders the political underpinnings of the nature of fieldwork very obvious. At the same time, political negotiation underpins most (if not all) experiences of fieldwork – even if that is seldom so evident as in Russia. Yet, the choice to foreground the 'political' in discussions of fieldwork I make in the next Chapter is rarely made elsewhere in human geography, rather it often becomes hidden (unintentionally or otherwise) behind methodological and theoretical concerns.

Chapter 3. Methodology

This thesis is a political geographic exploration of ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai, Russia. But how can ethnic relations be studied? And what methodology is appropriate for its study? This chapter offers both an outline of and justification for the research methodology that I employed in Stavropol'skii krai. Earlier studies of the North Caucasus, I argued in Chapter 2, are about Chechnya and the Chechen Wars, whilst existing studies of ethnic relations are disembodied and remote. Writers of political geography, meanwhile, have been criticised for neglecting ethnographic research techniques (Megoran 2006), as well as focusing too heavily on the pronouncements of elite practitioners of statecraft (e.g. Ó Tuathail 1996a) and discursive analysis of geopolitical texts (for example, media texts and foreign policy texts). A methodology, I argued in Chapter 2, which is *situated* and *localised* can help move forward epistemological practice and critical engagement with the North Caucasus, and provide a tool to inform the reconceptualisation of the region.

In many ways, a methodology that makes use of a range of techniques (including, interviewing, focus groups, content analysis of various texts, and researcher observations) can help fill the conceptual void I outlined in Chapter 2. It is able to provide a detailed and embodied description of ethnic relations within a given locality and devotes attention to the 'everyday'. What is more, using researcher observations can help foster "the kind of reflexivity about scientific knowledge production that is still mostly absent in critical geopolitics research" (Müller 2009: 69).

This chapter offers a methodological discussion of the techniques I employed for data collection. I now discuss each in turn so as to provide a background to the ‘messiness’ of the real world from which I gathered my data. Inevitably, however, much of this ‘messiness’ gets ‘written away’ in establishing an academic ‘reconstructed logic’ (Silverman 1985: 4). Just as Crang and Cook (2007) emphasise that, “As much as the researcher is embedded in ... multiple contexts, so are the subjects of her/his research. People experience and act in the world at multiple points, times and places and, strung together throughout their/our life courses, these experiences and actions form difference biographies and self-identities” (pg. 9), so too do these same ‘multiple contexts’ of the subject influence the data which he/she collects and thus the information that becomes encoded as ‘knowledge’ (Madge 1993: 295). To be sure, discussions of methodology are inseparable from the field setting in which research takes place.

3.1 Affiliation

During my time in the North Caucasus, I was affiliated to Stavropol’ State University (*Stavropol’skii Gosudarstvennii Universitet* – SGU). SGU is one of the most dynamic universities in Russia and is regularly ranked amongst the ‘Top 50’ universities nationally²¹. SGU was founded according to the enactment of the Government of Russian Federation No. 189, dated 28 February 1996, on the site of Stavropol’ State Pedagogical University and a branch of the Moscow State Law Academy.

²¹ In so far as such rankings can be usefully employed, see <http://www.4icu.org/ru/> or http://www.webometrics.info/top100_europe.asp?country=ru

3.2 Research Process

In a guest editorial in the *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* on ‘The Practices of Fieldwork’, Corbridge and Mawdsley (2003: 145) wrote:

“How are people getting their boots dirty these days, and what lessons might these accounts hold for other fieldworkers?”

The material for this study was collected between 2007 and 2010, with the major research taking place in October 2008, July and August 2009, and November 2009. In providing a brief overview of that period to illustrate how I went about ‘getting the boots dirty’, I heed Stanley and Wise’s criticism of the presentation of research projects as orderly and coherent, with mistakes written out (Stanley and Wise 1993: 150-3).

In October 2008, I first visited Stavropol’ State University (SGU), focussing my study on ‘ethnic relations’ (broadly conceived). During this period at SGU I worked closely with Prof. Vitali Semenovich Belozerov, basing myself in and around the University, talking to students, lecturers and other staff (for example, security staff and workers in the many canteens). I learnt much from Vitali Semenovich, and made use of his extensive contacts for setting up meetings and conducting interviews. Much of this research was structured around recent political developments, for example the Russo-Georgian Conflict. I was, at this time, planning to write an editorial for *Political Geography* journal on this topic and these many conversations influenced my thoughts (see, Foxall 2010). At the same time, the recent appointment of Dmitri Medvedev as Vladimir Putin’s successor as Russian President (in May 2008) provided the context in

which to discuss Putin's legacy in the region, particularly the situation in Chechnya and terrorist attacks in the wider North Caucasus.

I returned to Stavropol' in early July 2009, after three weeks spent in Moscow, and remained there until late-August. I used my time primarily to conduct interviews and focus groups. I also travelled around the region, seeing how ethnic groups lived and interacted in daily life. Much of this work followed the series of riots which had taken place in Stavropol'skii krai both in 2009 and the two years beforehand. My third, and final, research trip was in November 2009 when I visited Moscow for two weeks.

3.3 Studying Ethnicity

As Megoran (2002 and 2007) notes, the question of how to study 'ethnicity' poses important methodological and epistemological dilemmas. In his book *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*, Eriksen (1993: 161) wrote, "The choice of an analytical perspective or 'research hypothesis' is not an innocent act. If one goes out to look for ethnicity, one will 'find' it and thereby contribute to constructing it". As Eriksen (1993: 16) also highlights, studying ethnic relations can also be a self-fulfilling prophecy (see also, Megoran 2007; Tishkov 1999: 2007b):

"In a sense, ethnicity is created by the analyst when he or she goes out into the world and poses questions about ethnicity. Had one instead been concerned with gender, one would doubtless have found aspects of gender instead of ethnicity."

Eriksen's problematic has two impacts. Epistemologically, the way that research on ethnicity is conducted can determine the results that are discovered. Methodologically,

research that directly asks people about ethnicity can lead to misleading results as people may overplay or underplay the ‘importance’ of ethnicity for any number of reasons.

Drawing on the work of Megoran (2007), I addressed Eriksen’s dilemma by researching ‘ethnic relations’ through the prism of (geo)political events that were not explicitly ‘ethnic’. In none of the interviews or focus-group meetings that I held did I ask any questions relating to ethnicity (except for the purpose of basic self identification in the introductory phase). Rather, by structuring discussions around political events (for example, the Chechen Wars, local terrorist attacks, and the Russo-Georgian conflict of August 2008), I allowed ethnicity to emerge as an issue (if this were the case). I believe that this enabled me to avoid the dangers that Eriksen (1993) outlined, whilst constructing an account of the meaning and importance of ethnicity in understanding ‘everyday’ relations in Stavropol’.

3.4 Data Collection: Methodology

My research generated five main data sources. Firstly, the substantial part of my research consisted of *interviewing* individuals in Stavropol’skii krai who offered their assessment of the state of contemporary ethnic relations in the region. The recordings of these totalled over 40 hours. The second substantial part of my research consists of *focus groups* with a range of people in Stavropol’skii krai. These recordings totalled over 4 hours. The third part of my research was content analysis of English and Russian academic, media and policy sources. The fourth part of my research consisted of statistical data presented in the 2002 Russian Census, local statistics from the

‘*Statisticheskoe Upravlenie*’ (Statistics Directorate) in Stavropol’, and reports published by ‘EAWARN’ (‘*Set’ etnologicheskogo monitoring i rannego preduprezhdeniya konfliktov* -- The Network of Ethnological Monitoring and Early Warning for the Prevention of Conflicts’) and the SOVA Centre (a Moscow-based NGO concerned with human rights). Finally, my field diary, observations and materials, for example, photographs and leaflets, which I collected *in situ* constitute my fifth data collection technique. While each technique constitutes an important data source in its own right, each complements and gives context to the others. The following sub-sections now describe each, in turn, in greater detail and explain how and why these data were collected and processed. Following the example of Müller (2009), throughout the discussion I try to relate the theoretical treatment of research methodology to practical issues which arose during the research process.

Much like Tishkov (2007b: 9), who writes that “in a highly interdependent and increasingly sophisticated international community of policymakers, *scholarly theories can create (or destroy) reality* [emphasis added]”, I consider that many of the weaknesses of existing studies of ethnicity in the North Caucasus arise from scholars using a lone methodological approach. The use of an eclectic methodology, such as that which I employed in this study, is commonly called ‘triangulation’ in social science literature. Schutt (1996: 355) identifies two types of triangulation. The first is supplementary, where qualitative data are used to make quantitative research better. This, however, has the problem that qualitative and quantitative data may contradict each other. The second is complementary, where an investigation employs both qualitative and quantitative methods. My decision to use a complementary methodology was guided by a belief, as I argued in Chapter 2, that there are compelling practical

reasons to do so. Not least, because it would not be valid to draw conclusions from the opinions of just a few interviewees. By interviewing a large number of people, I attempted to corroborate key stories, claims and opinions from one interview to the next. So too did my other data sources, namely the mass media and governmental and non-governmental reports, allow me to corroborate stories and claims (I discuss this topic much further in Section 3.5).

One of the features of undertaking research in provincial Russia, Pallot and Nefedova (2007: 14) wrote, is that:

“... when it comes to collecting data in the field the strict requirements of scientific social enquiry have to be thrown out of the window ... The changes that have taken place in Russia since 1991 have opened up areas of research that previously were not possible and inhibitions in provincial Russia about talking to outsiders (whether foreigners or from the Moscow Academy of Sciences) have been replaced by a willingness to share data and recount experiences in a way that is no longer possible in the West where access to information is protected. Perhaps because the rules for sharing information are not yet systemised across Russia, independent researchers are subject to the whims of local administrators and, in particular, to their degree of preparedness to help access statistical data and for introductions and permissions.”

I was fortunate to meet with enthusiastic and helpful responses throughout my research in Stavropol'skii krai, and only on one occasion did I have to cancel my research because of obstruction by the local authority (which was re-arranged for a later date).

Interviews

As Crang and Cook (2007: 60) write, interviews are the primary means through which researchers “attempt to get to grips with the contexts and contents of different people's

everyday social, cultural, political and economic lives” (see also, Mason 2002: 64-83). The main purpose of my interviews was to get access to information that would otherwise not be available and to do so in a relatively systematic way. I employed a semi-structured approach, which occupies a ‘middle ground’ between in-depth, open-ended interviews and the standardised structured interview typical of opinion polls and surveys (which is the technique used by much of the existing research carried out in the North Caucasus). This approach, however, became increasingly ‘blurred’ as the research process progressed. For instance, some interviews with individuals became group interviews because other people were (unexpectedly) present and joined in with the conversation. Such an event is likely to occur “if an interview is arranged in the right time and place” (Crang and Cook 2007: 61).

I held 60 semi-structured interviews: 50 in Stavropol’ and 10 in Moscow (for a full list of my interviews see, Appendix 1: List of Interviews). Approximately one-third were conducted in English, one-third in Russian and one-third with a translator (this provided its own methodological dilemma, discussed below). The interviews in Stavropol’ were conducted in October 2008 and June, July and August 2009, while those in Moscow were conducted in June and November 2009. In Stavropol’, in initially choosing interviewees Prof. Vitali Semenovich Belozerov (Institute of Geography) of Stavropol’ State University acted as the primary ‘gatekeeper’, while as the research process progressed I became increasingly ‘self reliant’ as I built up my own network of contacts. In the majority of cases where Vitali Semenovich acted as the ‘gatekeeper’ he either gave me contact details for individuals whom I then contacted myself or, often with certain individuals (for instance, local politicians), contacted the individual concerned and arranged the interview for me. In Moscow, I found that both Vitali Semenovich’s

name and my time spent in Stavropol' were useful entry points both in approaching an individual to ask for an interview and in the introductory stages of the interview itself.

In Stavropol, just under half (22) of my interviews were with students from Stavropol' State University (8) or elder friends (6) or relatives (8) of students whom I knew or had previously spoken to. As for part of my time in Stavropol' I lectured (in the Institute of Geography) and helped teach English (in the Department of Foreign Languages) at the University, I had many opportunities to meet with and speak to prospective 'interviewees'. I then selected those with whom I had the best rapport and those who I thought would talk most openly with me (often the same individuals). I employed a 'qualitative' sampling strategy and was thus careful to be unbiased (as best I could) to age and gender in selecting these individuals. I also conducted roughly the same number of interviews (15) with representatives of Stavropol' State Duma, the majority of whom (10) are members of the '*Komitet Stavropol'skogo Kraya po delam natsional'nostei i kazachestva*' (Stavropol'skii krai Committee for the affairs of Nationalities and Cossacks), and a smaller number (5) with representatives of Stavropol' City authorities (2) and representatives of the '*Konsul'tativnii Sovet po voprosam natsional'no-etnicheskikh otnoshenii pri administratsii goroda Stavropol'ya*' (Advisory Board for Questions of National-Ethnic Relations under the Administration of Stavropol' City) (3). The remainder of my interviews (10) were conducted with people who were retired (6) or unemployed (4). In Moscow, the aim of my interviews (10) was to explore policy decisions with 'elite respondents'. Overall, 35 of my interviewees were male and 25 were female.

Since the objective of this thesis was to develop an idea of the state of ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai, in my interviews in Stavropol' with representatives of the krai and city authorities (20), as well as those in Moscow (10) with academics and policymakers, I interviewed people who could provide informed answers and who could direct me to other people who could answer specific questions. These 'elite respondents' included academics, politicians, policymakers, political commentators, and other opinion formers. These interviews had a dual purpose in that the interviewee was both informed and offered an informed opinion. This allowed me to excavate the opinion formers' range of opinions, and to see to what extent their, on the whole, measured views are internalised by the population through the interviews (32) which I conducted in Stavropol' with students, friends and relatives of students, the retired and unemployed. A secondary aim of these interviews was to gauge the everyday opinions of citizens in Stavropol' about ethnic relations. In all interviews, I explained the purpose of the interview, emphasised its voluntary nature, and that personal details would not be revealed.

The location of an interview is an important, although often overlooked, part of the interview process. Crang and Cook (2007: 10) write that, "researcher should consider how the contexts in which research encounters take place", going on to explain that certain 'contexts' can "provoke memories and insights into the world views and self-conceptions of differently positioned people" (Ibid.). For the most part, I interviewed individuals either at their place of work or at their home. Where this was not possible, I asked the individual to suggest somewhere we could meet. Some of my interviewees equated my association with Oxford University with privilege and wealth and often apologised for the location and type of dwelling in which they lived. This meant that

some interviews were conducted ‘outside’ with all the associated logistical problems (for instance, ‘background’ noise in recording the interview), in public parks or on streets. On the occasions when I did conduct interviews in individuals’ homes, I was aware of specific Russian etiquettes governing the homestead: for instance, not shaking hands until I had passed through the doorway of the home, removing my shoes before entering the home (*pereobuvanie*), and the insistence that I eat (and drink) with the individual (or individual’s family) after the interview was completed. At the same time, interviewees were keen not to commit to interviews too far in the future, with many insisting that I contacted them on the day which I wanted to hold the interview. This made for a research process whereby I would often have several interviews one day and none the next.

On average, interviews lasted for around 1 hour 7 minutes (67 minutes). The longest interview I conducted lasted for 2 hours 19 minutes, and the shortest interview for 18 minutes. The questions that I asked were generally well understood by interviewees and where this was not the case I circumscribed the issue at hand and rephrased the question. On the occasions when confusion occurred more than once, I rephrased the question in the interview guide for future interviews.

Of the 60 interviews that I conducted, I recorded all of them using a Digital Recorder. I translated all of the interviews into English except where translation erased meaning differences, particularly with Russian words imbued with a culturally specific meaning that cannot be adequately expressed in English (see ‘Of Translation’ below). Taking into account the material and the way I wanted to analyse the data, I chose a simple, less

time-consuming transcription method that focussed on content and ignores the extra-verbal characteristics of speech.

Focus Groups

Bedford and Burgess (2001: 121) describe a focus group as “a one-off meeting of between four and eight individuals who are brought together to discuss a particular topic chosen by the researcher(s) who moderate or structure the discussion” (see also, Goss and Leinbach 1996). Epistemologically, Kitzinger and Barbour (1999: 5) argue that focus groups are highly appropriate tools to explore how narratives are exchanged and operate within a given cultural context as participants are more likely to talk in locally-relevant ways, making them more sensitive to local (*emic*²²) categories of knowledge, rather than outside (*etic*²³) categories of knowledge.

The aim of the focus groups was to explore in detail the responses of some people, whose experiences may have much in common with those of other people. Indeed, as Merton, Fiske and Kendall (1956: 3) note, the original purpose of focus-groups was to explore in detail an issue with people “known to have been involved in a particular situation”. I ran five focus groups, employing ‘qualitative sampling’ in order to select groups of people who reflected my research interests. For each of my focus-groups, I used an existing contact as a ‘gatekeeper’: a key individual who helped me recruit others, who in turn then asked friends or relatives along. Groups (of Russian citizens living in Stavropol’) were composed on average of 4.5 people. One group was

²² An ‘emic’ account is a description of behaviour or a belief in terms meaningful (consciously or unconsciously) to the actor; that is, an emic account comes from a person within the culture being studied.

²³ An ‘etic’ account is a description of a behaviour or belief by an observer, in terms that can be applied to other cultures.

composed of students, one group was composed of representatives from Stavropol' State Duma, one group was composed of middle-aged men employed at SGU, another was composed of middle-aged women employed at SGU, one group was made up of pensioners, and one group of unemployed men who were friends of contacts. I arranged my focus groups so as to ensure that I was sensitive to age, gender, and the socioeconomic hierarchy in Stavropol'. In all cases, group members knew each other, facilitating a more free-flowing discussion. Groups were moderated by myself in English and Russian, and by a translator in Russian and English.

Although the locations of the focus groups varied, they all took place in my second (more substantive) visit to Stavropol' in July and August 2009. I ran groups in a variety of different venues: university classrooms, canteens, and friends' homes. I recorded focus groups with a Digital Recorder and translated them into English except where translation erased meaning differences (see 'Of Translation' below).

Following an initial opportunity for questions, I structured the conversation around a series of newspaper articles relating to ethnic relations in Stavropol'. As Bryman (2008: 475) notes, focus-groups are particularly useful at exploring 'audience reception' of media. One of the articles highlighted Governor Chernogorov's statement in June 2007 in the aftermath of ethnic rioting that there was 'no ethnic problem' in Stavropol'. The second was a cartoon from the Russian newspaper *Argument i Fakti* ('Arguments and Facts'), depicting a picture of the mountainous Caucasus surrounded by a wall similar to that of Moscow's Kremlin. Over imposed on the 'Caucasus' was a picture of the Dagestani rebel Shamil, and on the Kremlin-style wall read the words 'Rossiskaya Federatsiya' (Russian Federation). Under the accompanying headline, 'Surround with

Care and Severely Control’, the article claimed that the North Caucasus was a region outside of Moscow’s control (see, Figure 5 below).

Figure 5. Surround with Care and Severely Control, *Argumenty i Fakty*, Number 30 (1499), 22 – 28 July 2009. Author’s own copy.



Finally, I showed an article entitled ‘*Stavropol’e: plavil’nii kotel ili oboronitel’nii val?*’ [‘Stavropol’: melting pot or boiling shaft?'] from the journal ‘Politkom.ru’, which argued that over recent years Stavropol’ had shifted from a ‘melting pot’ of ethnicities to a ‘boiling shaft’ where ethnic conflict had become widespread (see, Markedonov 2008). These pictures and headlines proved conducive to initiating discussion, as they graphically represented important topical issues. Much like Meinhof, Armbruster and

Rollo (2002) and Megoran (2007), I found pictures to be a very useful in initiating the sharing of narratives (Meinhof et al 2002: 7-8).

As Bryman (2008) notes, while many of the ethical issues surrounding the use of focus groups are similar to those with other social science methods, focus groups offer new perspectives on these issues. For example, ‘informed consent’ may be compromised by the use of a ‘gatekeeper’ to ‘snowball’ other participants. Likewise, it may not be possible for a researcher to guarantee anonymity to participants: whilst the researcher may not divulge information personally, other participants may do so.

Content analysis of English and Russian media and academic sources

Berelson (1952: 18) defines content analysis as “a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication”. It is used by social scientists to investigate the context of texts in order to discover how particular issues are presented. In undertaking content analysis, I first selected those texts that I wanted to analyse. For this study, Stavropol’s normally eight-page long, high profile daily newspaper *Stavropol’skaya Pravda* (‘Stavropol’ Truth’) was used. First published in 1917, *Stavropol’skaya Pravda* has a circulation of 20, 135 papers (on 1/1/2008) that exceeds the collective circulations of all other daily newspaper in the region. Being the official publication of the region, it reports information on all major government activities and new laws passed, as well as carrying comprehensive texts of political speeches, particularly those by the governor of the krai. This gives *Stavropol’skaya Pravda* a ‘validity’ that no other newspaper has and makes it one of the best means of understanding the messages the regional government wants the people to

receive. Although television news is a more popular medium, this generally carries the same line as *Stavropol'skaya Pravda*, and logistically it was easier for me to access and analyse newspapers. I analysed every article since 2007 that referred to ethnic relations, ethnic conflict, and nationality questions. For this, I used a set of the papers held at the M. J. Lermontov Regional Library on Lenin Square in central Stavropol'. As *Stavropol'skaya Pravda* does not print on Sunday or Monday (or occasionally Thursday), this means that material is derived from around 600 papers. For more recent newspapers, I accessed the newspaper website (<http://www.stpravda.ru/>) and used the on-line 'search' (*poisk*) function. I also skim read two smaller city-wide newspapers in Stavropol', these are *Otkritaya - Dlya vsekh i kazhdogo* (Open - For all and everyone) and *Vechernii Stavropol'* (Stavropol' Evening) for the same period. This I also did in the Lermontov Library in Stavropol' on a visit just before I finished field-based research in August 2009. Similarly, I used the 'search' functions on the newspapers' websites for more recent articles.

Statistical Data

Statistical data, gathered from the All-Russian Census 2002 as well as local statistics collected from the '*Statisticheskoe Upravlenie*' (Statistics Directorate) in Stavropol' are used throughout the thesis for purely descriptive means. As Heleniak (2003) notes, the 2002 Russian Census (as with all of those in the post-Soviet space) was conducted under vastly different economic and social conditions than the last Soviet-era census in 1989. Soviet-era censuses were carried out in a state that exercised wide-ranging control over its population, and compliance with the census was mandatory. Crime was low and people had little to fear from enumerators coming to their houses or apartments to

conduct the census. Since 1989 however, distrust in the state has increased and crime has risen considerably in Russia, so that ordinary citizens now are apprehensive about allowing census takers into their homes. And such apprehension is well founded. During the 2002 census, there were numerous reports of census takers being harassed and allegations that enumerators filled out forms themselves or gathered data on households from administrative records. As a result, many disregard the count as flawed (see, Shpak 2002). At the same time, however, there is no census in any country in the world that is a completely true and accurate representation of the number and composition of the population as of the census date. The true test, Heleniak (2003) suggests, is whether the census is sufficiently close to what had been expected, so that the census count produces plausible results that are useful for social and economic policy making (see, Myers 2002). The publication of more complete results and subsequent demographic analysis suggest that the 2002 Russian census has passed this test.

A second source of statistical data I use is that collected by 'The Network of Ethnological Monitoring and Early Warning for the Prevention of Conflicts' ('EAWARN')²⁴. EAWARN (a self-chosen acronym) is a joint project of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology (IEA), Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), and Conflict Management Group (CMG), based in Boston, Massachusetts, and funded by the Carnegie Corporation in New York and the RAS. Created in 1993 by Prof. Valerii Tishkov, the goal of EAWARN is to undertake ethno-political monitoring of post-Soviet states, particularly regions within Russia with a multiethnic population and

²⁴ EAWARN was described as "a unique epistemological community" by the U.S. communication studies expert, Kirsten Foot who, in 1999, defended her PhD dissertation on EAWARN under the title 'Writing conflict: An activity theory analysis of the development of the Network for Ethnopolitical Monitoring and Early Warning' at the University of California, San Diego.

complex ethno-political situations, for the purpose of conflict prevention and conflict management. Importantly for this thesis, Stavropol'skii krai is included in this monitoring. EAWARN includes approximately 30 highly qualified local experts (researchers, journalists, practitioners and others) from the CIS and Baltic states, the majority of whom have doctoral degrees from Soviet institutions. Since 1994, EAWARN has published a bi-monthly bulletin (*Byulleten'*) and special reports available to international academic audience and political institutions, national and regional power structures of the Russian Federation and of other states, NGOs, experts and practitioners. Since 1995 meanwhile, EAWARN has provided regular reports on the issues of forced migration and refugees with partial support of the Open Society Institute. In 1999, EAWARN was given recognition by the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation for its work. The information is produced by EAWARN is stored in the computerised 'Data-Bank on Ethnicity and Conflict' at IEA. For my study, I was given full access to this Russian-language data-bank. This amounted to nearly 200 pages of reports on the ethno-political situation in Stavropol'skii krai. These are data that are not available via the EAWARN website, <http://www.eawarn.ru>.

A third source of statistical data I use is that collected by the *SOVA Centre*. *Sova Centre* is an human rights NGO and think tank based in Moscow. Formed in 2002, SOVA conducts sociological research on the development of nationalism and racism in contemporary Russia. SOVA produces regular reports and recommendations regarding ethnic conflict, hate crimes, racist violence and other manifestations of nationalism that are widely used and cited by OSCE, Amnesty International, Pulitzer Centre on Crisis Reporting, and other human rights and political organisations. These reports are freely available from its website, <http://sova-center.ru/>.

Observations of the researcher

Researcher observation is a qualitative method not too dissimilar to participant observation that is associated with ethnography (Müller 2009). At its most basic, Mason (2002: 89) suggests that the purpose of researcher observation is “to witness or experience what is going on in a setting” and requires researchers to make careful, objective notes about what they see in the ‘field’, recording all accounts and observations. Informal conversation and interaction with members of the study population are also important components of the method. Inherently, of course, researcher observation involves certain ethical and logistical dilemmas, not least: How much should the researcher disclose about what he/she is doing and to whom? (see, Mason 2002: 99-101).

Building on the work of Jordan (2002) and Temple and Young (2004), Crang and Cook (2007: 26) argue that researcher observation ideally complements interviews as it helps “in an understanding of the way language is tied to local realities, to literary forms and to changing identities”. Given that most research inherently involves informal researcher observation, for example, through waiting to meet people, they suggest that “all that may be necessary [to employ researcher observation] is to keep a participant observation style research diary detailing relevant conversations, observations and so on which take place ‘off the record’” (Ibid.). As Adler and Adler (1994: 377-8) suggest:

“What differentiates the observations of social scientists from those of everyday actors is the former’s systematic and purposive nature. Social science researchers study their surroundings regularly and repeatedly, with a curiosity

spurred by theoretical questions about the nature of human action, interaction, and society.”

For my research, I employed researcher observation in a wider sense, keeping a diary of my daily activities and making notes of everything that I thought could, at a later date, be useful. I did not process my notes in any meaningful way. This is because the handwritten notes, scribbles and other notations seemed to serve better purposes than the type-written pages of a word-processed document.

3.5 Positionalities

While I have already placed myself within the research process (see Section 3.2), it is also necessary to do the same with my research participants as they, like myself, were positioned within particular political and social networks. As Cook and Crang (1995: 11) note, how people construct and make sense of the world, and render its events ‘true’ in their own terms, reveals much about how their lives “are embroiled in larger social, cultural, economic and political processes”.

With most (if not all) qualitative methods, there is potential for misrepresentation and exploitation in the research process (Valentine 2005: 114). In this context, Kovats-Bernat (2002: 214) writes that researchers should reconfigure how ‘we’ perceive ‘our’ relationship with our informants, accepting a “humbly pragmatic role in our field relations”. I made particular efforts to recognise the differential power relations through which the interviewer exploits the knowledge of the interviewee, and I aimed to renegotiate these power relations by giving interviewees some control over the research context (e.g., the ‘where’, ‘when’ and ‘who’ of the research process) and content (I

made it clear to my participants that they were free to ask their own questions, refuse my questions on particular topics, and to withdraw any comments at any stage). In this sense, I applied a 'localised research ethic' and, in this sense, resurrected Bourgois's (1990) concern that as 'we' develop trusting relationships with 'our' interviewees, thereby contributing to dissolving the barriers between insider and outsider. At the same time, of course, I explained the purposes of my research to all participants and all were free to refuse to be interviewed or to end the interview at any stage. So too did I explain that their anonymity would be maintained in the final thesis and all publications from it. Since much of the interview translation was done in the UK, it was not possible to offer all interview participants the transcripts of their interviews. However, all participants were free to read my notes or listen back to the recordings of their interviews, but very few chose to do so.

3.6 Of Translation

An increasing number of geographers conduct research in foreign languages. Yet, in spite of the fact that the representation of research still largely taking place in English, there is a paucity of literature on translation (as the final part of the completed research process) and lesser still on the use of translators (as an integral part of the ongoing research process). Where the former is concerned, Sidaway et al (2004: 1046) highlight the importance of "be[ing] attendant to the translations, heterogeneity and hybridity of concepts across and within languages", while Helms et al (2005: 246) point to "aspects of linguistic inclusion and exclusion" in translation. Crang and Cook (2007: 25), meanwhile, argue that translation produces "hybrid, in-between forms of cultural understanding in which choices have been made about whether and how to hide and/or

highlight the failures of fit between one language and another”. A more recent paper on the ‘act of translation’ (Müller 2007), however, points to overlapping concerns between ‘translation’ and ‘translating’. Müller problematises the act of translation as both political and highly subjective, arguing that (critical) translation should grapple not only with the semantic issues of translation but also with the institutionalization of a naturalized meaning hegemony. This involves teasing out the political and practical exclusions of translation as well as addressing the agency of the translating geographer.

Translation is an essential everyday problem of multi-lingual geographical research. As such, the question of whether to use a translator in conducting research poses important methodological dilemmas. While space does not permit a full discussion of these, the foremost concern is that what the translator has translated is actually ‘true’. However, the transfer of cultural meanings, embedded in linguistic expressions, from one language to another can only ever be partial and never total (Catford 1965). This is because of the problem of ‘equivalence’ (the replacement of text in a source language by text of a target language equivalent in meaning). This problem is most pressing when the meaning of a word in the source language is much richer than it can be conveyed by the corresponding word in the target language (see, Müller 2007). For this reason, in those interviews where I used a translator I made sure that the translator did not speak at the same time that either the interviewee or I was speaking. This meant that in transcribing the interview I could undertake my own translation and overcome the problem (where it occurred) of incorrect or inaccurate translation. In ‘writing up’, I have kept with Russian words for which it is difficult to find an English ‘equivalent’. I used the same translator in all interviews where translation was needed. The benefits of this

are numerous, not least the development of rapport and familiarisation of interview techniques that this allows.

3.7 Methods of Data Analysis

Interpretation and analysis of data is an individual enterprise that differs for contexts and, Schiellerup (2008) points out, not only goes on in dedicated moments of focussed data interpretation. As was the case with my own research, some of the most revealing moments came away from dedicated periods of ‘research’. This is not unusual as Müller (2009: 87) records similar experiences in his research.

Rather than a smooth, linear progression, this thesis developed in leaps and bounds that are not reflected in the proposed structure. This retrospective logical framing all but ignores, for example, that the decision to explore ethnic parades through the writings of Alexei Yurchak (2005) was not an *a priori* decision but emerged after the collection of data. This also applies to the present methods and structure of data analysis, which developed inductively after I had repeatedly read through the material that I had collected and tried to make sense of it all. In my case, therefore, theory and methods of data analysis followed the empirical part of the research process.

Transcripts, Observations and Notes

As I noted above, all interviews were translated into English. I coded transcripts (interview, focus group, media and academic sources) and my researcher observations into general categories by marking transcripts with different coloured pens. I did this in

a series of *MS Word* documents. The categories into which I sorted data included, ‘facts and figures’, ‘conflict’, ‘politics’, ‘demography’, ‘economy’, ‘chat’, and ‘everyday interaction’. These themes were ones that emerged in the course of my reading and re-reading of these sources, both in Stavropol’ but particularly after returning to Oxford, and were informed also by my research methods, theoretical ideas and empirical interests. During the data collection I had already begun to keep marginal notes in my field notebook, as well as ideas that I wanted to explore, which I expanded during this coding process. These notes served as the basis for a second round of coding, during which I used more specific codes, such as ‘Chechnya’, ‘Putin’, ‘statues’, or ‘parades’. This approach follows the ‘analytical hierarchy’ of Spencer et al. (2003: 213-7) who note that analysis should begin with data management, before proceeding to descriptive accounts and then to explanatory accounts.

Whilst another researcher might have come up with alternative categories or otherwise grouped the data differently, it is necessary to abstract for the purpose of analysis. I have attempted to be sensitive to (but critical about) the different viewpoints of my research participants, setting them within a wider empirical context in order to produce an everyday political geography account of ethnic relations in Stavropol’skii krai that is both academically worthwhile and faithful to those to whom those experiences belong. As is the nature of all research, however, I have not been able to reproduce all of the information that I collected: and it goes without saying that this is purely due to the limits of time and space. Nevertheless, I believe that the themes I have identified in my research have allowed me to develop an understanding of the importance of ‘ethnicity’ in everyday life in Stavropol’skii krai.

Statistics

Statistical data are used throughout this thesis largely for descriptive means and to complement other sources of data. In this respect, I undertook no analysis of these data. Rather, I simply selected particular data and presented it according to purpose. For the most part, this meant re-presenting population statistics in tables.

3.8 Reflections

This chapter concludes with a brief reflection on (a) the difficulties of conducting research in an area of conflict and instability and (b) my reliance on qualitative methods.

Working in a zone of conflict and insecurity was challenging, and the issue of terrorism and question of safety (never far from discussions surrounding the North Caucasus) were central issues while I was conducting research. Originally I planned to spend several months living in Stavropol'skii krai, conducting research at a 'natural pace'. However, owing to issues surrounding gaining 'access to the field', this was simply not possible. Thus, the three trips that I took (one to Stavropol'skii krai, one to Stavropol'skii krai and Moscow, and one to Moscow) were necessarily intensive, with several interviews usually each day.

More than once during my fieldwork, I was asked whether I felt safe living and travelling within the region. There is an explicit assumption in Russia that any Westerner in the North Caucasus is a spy or government agent. During my fieldwork, I

was frequently asked this question (Belousov et al [2007] and Golubchikov [2007] noted this same experience). Certain methodological choices (which were largely forced on me) added to this air of suspicion. For instance, in conducting interviews some research participants made it clear that they would only talk to me if the meeting took place in a space which was both busy and noisy, aware that being seen with me might somehow lead to problems for them with friends, relatives and/or local (or national) authorities (for other methodological issues, see Goode 2009). And it was a sign of the paranoia surrounding one meeting that, upon meeting my interviewee, we both immediately took the batteries out of our mobile phones. We had both clearly heard the rumours that the FSB can use a phone as a listening device even if it is switched off (this experience is also recalled by Bullough 2010: 416). While these practices contradict Glazer's (1970) 'don't act like a spy' dictum, there is a more profound ambiguity than Glazer recognises in the similarity between seeking not to stand out and conducting espionage. While I have considerable sympathy with such reservations, there are compelling arguments of researchers (see, for example, Kovats-Bernat 2002) who were driven to adopting a pragmatic mix of practices by various considerations (for example, ensuring the safety of research participants) (Belousov et al 2007).

While I am critical, as I explained in Chapter 2, of attempts at aggregating citizens' opinions on ethnic relations (for example, Gerber and Mendelson 2006; Kolossov and O'Loughlin 2008; Bakke, Cao, O'Loughlin and Ward 2009; O'Loughlin and O'Tuathail 2009), I do think that there is potential for such quantitative methods to make a contribution to understanding everyday relations in Stavropol'skii krai. Indeed, I was originally open to the possibility of organising a large-scale questionnaire of ethnic relations, which I would have followed up with interviews and focus-groups. However,

the logistics of organising large-scale quantitative surveys in my several short fieldwork trips (which were forced upon me due the reasons discussed above) precluded such methods. Despite this, I believe that the qualitative methods I employed were appropriate for allowing me to explore the meaning of ethnicity in everyday life.

Chapter 4. Ethnic Geography in Stavropol'skii krai

Having established the theoretical parameters of this thesis in Chapter 2 and discussed my methodology in Chapter 3, this chapter examines the geographer's traditional explanatory variables – the time and space of ethnic groups in Stavropol'skii krai.

I begin this chapter by exploring ethnicity in Russia, pointing to the central role played by the Soviet nationalities policy in preserving ethnic identities in post-Soviet Russia. I then discuss the changing demography of the Russian Federation since 1991, paying particular attention to the ethnic structure of Russia's population. I then move on to discuss the ethnic geography of Stavropol'skii krai at all spatial scales, from krai to raion to intra-city and rural periphery, including analysis of municipal raions where data are available. In particular, I focus on the impacts on the krai of nearby conflicts in the North Caucasus republics and highlight the changing ethnic geography of rural raions in eastern Stavropol'skii krai and migration patterns in western Stavropol'skii krai. In considering these two distinct geographic scales -- national and krai -- I do not mean to suggest that they are a binary and should be viewed as such. Rather, demographic processes operate both at and between the national and krai scales. I end the chapter by examining ethnic minority legislation in Stavropol'skii krai. This section (4.6 Ethnic Minority Legislation in Stavropol'skii krai) is based on a book chapter I authored entitled 'Mapping Ethnic Relations: cartography and conflict management in the North Caucasus', which is forthcoming in *'Mapping Conflict and Peace in Eurasia'* (ed. Aurobinda Mahapatra). Ultimately, this chapter serves as an introduction to the four substantive chapters that follow: each of which explores the everyday geopolitics of ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai.

The North Caucasus is one of the most diverse and dynamic ethno-demographic regions in Russia. A variety of factors has contributed to specific and localised population geography. First, is the geopolitical position of the region as a ‘borderland’ between Russia and the south Caucasus states, with all the ethno-demographic complexity that such a position would involve. Second, is the region’s position as a southern outpost of Russia, which provides access to the Black Sea, Caspian Sea, and south Caucasus states.

The ethnic geography of the North Caucasus can be explained by a number of factors: the human geography of the region whereby many nations of people live in close vicinity, regional differences in economic specialisation; and, the physical geography of the region which contrasts the high mountains of the Caucasus with the flat plains of Russia. This has led to the emergence of a boundary between ‘forest’ and ‘steppe’ (see, Pallot and Nefedova 2007). For many centuries the North Caucasus has also been a zone of contact between two major religious – Orthodox Christianity and Islam – as is visible in Huntington’s (1999; 1996) ‘Clash of Civilisations’ thesis.

4.1 Ethnicity in Russia

Soviet nationality policy did much to preserve ethnic identities in Russia (see, Dixon 1990), even though these were supposed to be transcended by a higher ‘Soviet’ identity: as Smith (1990: 4) explains, Soviet nationalities policy envisaged the *sbliizhenie* (‘coming together’) and eventual *sliianie* (‘merger’) of different nationalities. Soviet authorities interpreted the very notion of ‘nationalism’ as a bourgeois ideology, which led to a negative interpretation of it as a “subversive movement” that threatened the

development of a 'Soviet' identity (Yaz'kova 2006: 274). Introduced in 1932, the system of internal passports -- the bureaucratic procedure by which ethnicity was determined -- imposed a nationality on every Soviet citizen: what Zaslavsky (1994: 92) calls the "famous 'fifth point' of Soviet questionnaires and internal passports". In the 1930s, Soviet citizens were free to choose their own nationality when the passport was issued through an oral declaration. However, only a limited number of people chose to change their nationality at that time. Zaslavsky (Ibid.) suggests that this was for three reasons. Firstly, the Soviet regime opposed any kind of nationalism during the first years of its existence. Secondly, it was impossible to predict the role later played by 'nationalism' in the Soviet system. Finally, the recording of nationality did not have any historical precedent, since during the Tsarist period internal passports registered religion rather than nationality. From the 1940s onwards, changing the nationality as recorded in one's passport was prohibited, and the nationality of a child from then on was determined by the recorded nationality of its parents. It was precisely this passport system, Zaslavsky (1994: 93) wrote, "which established rigid boundaries between ethnic group" and which was inherited by the post-Soviet states, including Russia. When the USSR collapsed it did so along ethnic lines, and the post-Soviet Russian government was forced to accept ethno-territorialism as an organising principle of the new federal state (Smith, G. 1990; 1999).

In post-Soviet Russia issues of identity have been at the forefront of discussions about the nature of citizenship, and heightened ethnic awareness has led to a period of what Pallot and Nefedova (2007: 134) call "ethnic sorting", understood as a process of gathering in of ethnic minorities to the national republics, particularly the North Caucasus republics, which has, in some cases, been imitated at lower spatial scales;

Moscow and St Petersburg, for example, have begun to see the emergence of distinct ethnic as well as social quarters. In rural districts ethnic sorting has also been taking place, especially in those parts of the country where inter-ethnic relations have historically been difficult. This is particularly the case in the eastern raions of Stavropol'skii krai, where aggressive 'nationalism' on the part of Cossacks is directed against non-ethnic Russians, especially, but not exclusively, from the North Caucasus. Deepening awareness of ethnic difference has led to increasing territorial segregation, especially between ethnic Russians and non-ethnic Russians, with the former concentrating in core settlements and the latter confined to peripheral villages or pre-existing ethnic enclaves.

4.2 Russian Demographic Decline

“We are now facing the serious threat of turning into a decaying population”²⁵

Though currently in fourth place, it is estimated that by the middle of the twenty-first century Russia will rank eighteenth in the world by population size²⁶. In 2009 the Russian population was 144.9 million, compared with 148.7 million in 1993 (Goskomstat Rossii 2009: 25). This decrease of 3.8 million (1993-2009) was more severe than during the civil war period (1917-20), when the population lost 2.7 million people (Goskomstat Rossii 1999: 54). Although Russia's protracted period of depopulation, which affects almost all of the country's regions and ethnic entities, is by no means a new phenomenon, no other major country in the world has witnessed a similar trend. Writing on this topic, Rybakovskii (2006: 6) notes that, “The uniqueness

²⁵ Putin quoted in Zaks (2001).

²⁶ See, Vishnevsky (2004).

of Russia is that it has turned out to be an ‘outsider’ among the countries of Europe as Russia’s society has proved to be unprepared to take in that directionality of demographic dynamics”. The figures presented in Table 1 reflect the forecasts presented in a UN report on the development of the Russian Federation’s population potential, published in 2003.

Table 1: Population Projections for Russia in 2050 (millions)

Year	Average Forecast	80 % Forecast*	95 % Forecast*
1950	102	102	102
1975	134	134	134
2000	146	146	146
2025	124	118-130	111-137
2050	98	86-111	71-127

* percentages express the reliability of the forecast

Source: Vishnevskiy, A, Andreev, E., and Treivish, A. (2003) *Perspektivy razvitiya Rossii. Rol’ demograficheskogo faktora*, Moscow: 24 taken from Shlapentokh, V. (2005) ‘Russia’s Demographic Decline and the Public Reaction’, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 57 (7): 957

The Russian political elite is concerned that its declining population will reduce the country’s economic development. It is also worried that its territory is disproportionately occupied. At present, 60% of Russia’s population live in just 10% of its territory (see, Table 2). As a result of post-Soviet out-migration from the northern and eastern regions, the disproportionate population density has deepened. Based on the 2002 Russian Census, the Southern Federal District²⁷, the smallest federal territory in

²⁷ The Southern Federal District (SFD), together with the six other original Federal Districts, was created in May 2000 as part of Vladimir Putin’s centralisation of power in Russia through his *vertical*. The SFD was originally composed of 13 federal subjects, including the seven North Caucasus republics (Adygea, Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Kalmykia, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and North Ossetia-Alania), Astrakhan Oblast’, Krasnodar krai, Rostov Oblast’, Stavropol’skii krai, and Volgograd Oblast’. As I explained in Chapter 1, in January 2010 the SFD was divided up to create an eighth Federal District, the North Caucasus Federal District (NCFD). The SFD is now composed of the Republic of

the Russian Federation, had the second highest average population density. According to Russian analysts, DaVanzo, Oliker and Grammich (2003: 24), a country with such a “small population, disproportionate to its territory, will face difficulties preserving its status as a world power, and consequently in defending its national interests and its periphery”.

Table 2: Population distribution in Russia’s federal districts (approximate values)

	Territory (thousands of km²)	%age of Total Territory	%age of Total Population	Average Population density
Russia	17075.4	100.00	100.00	8.5
Central FD	630	3.81	25.40	56.7
Northwestern FD	1677.9	9.83	9.90	8.5
Southern FD	589.2	3.45	15.20	37.0
Volga FD	1038.0	6.08	21.90	30.6
Urals FD	1788.9	10.48	8.60	7.0
Siberian FD	5144.8	29.95	14.20	4.0
Far Eastern FD	6215.9	36.40	4.80	1.1

Notes ‘FD’ refers to Federal District

Source: <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/map/okrug.html>

Although the decline of birth rates is a global trend, it is particularly acute in Russia (Shlapentokh 2005). In no developed country was the fall in birth rate as acute as in Russia between 1990 and 1995. During this period the birth rate dropped by 31%, compared with 11% in US and 4% Japan. In 2000, Russia had the lowest birth of any developed country in the world. According to the 2002 Census, the Russian birth rate (1.32) was well below the minimum level (2.15) for maintaining a stable population,

Adygea, Astrakhan Oblast’, the Republics of Kalmykia, Krasnodar krai, Rostov Oblast’, and Volgograd Oblast’. Its capital is Rostov-on-Don, in Rostov Oblast’. The remaining members of the original SFD now compose the NCFD: the Republics of Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and North Ossetia-Alania, and Stavropol’skii krai.

which means, in the words of a Russian demographer, “an accelerating depopulation” (Perevedentsev 2004a).

At the same time that its birth rate is decreasing, Russia’s death rate is increasing. The decline of mortality with the rise of life expectancy, Shlapentokh (2005: 955) argues “is almost an iron statistical law for the absolute majority of countries in the world, including the poorest nations”. Nevertheless, the Russian death rate, 16.4 per 1,000 in 2003 and 15.7 in 2004, is higher than in any developed country in the world. The life expectancy of men is perhaps the most alarming of all of Russia’s “abysmal” (Ibid.: 956) demographics indicators. In 2003, their life expectancy of 58 years was lower than in Tajikistan or Turkmenistan. No other country in the world has a greater difference between the life expectancy of men and women (12.8 years in 2003) than Russia (US Census Bureau 2003).

When Russia’s low birth rate and high death rate combined with others, for instance the traditionally small size of Russian families and high rates of abortion, Russian population decline shows no signs of stopping.

4.3 Ethnic Structure of Russian Population

The Russian Federation is a multiethnic and multi-confessional state, as guaranteed by Articles 3 and 14 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation²⁸, and its federal constituents include 21 national republics among others subjects. According to the 2002

²⁸ Article 3 states “The bearer of sovereignty and the only source of power in the Russian Federation shall be its *multinational* people [emphasis added]”, and Article 14 states “The Russian Federation is a secular state. No religion may be established as a state or obligatory one”.

Census, 166 nations (and a further 26 ethnic groups within nations²⁹) live within Russia. The nations differ considerably in terms of their size (ranging from the Russian nation, with more than 100 million people to certain nations of the Far North, each numbering no more than several hundred people), their political and legal status (autochthonous, immigrant), and their level of development and distribution throughout the country's territory (compact vs. dispersed populations). Due to these differences, it is inevitable that the demographic processes occurring within different nations show different dynamics.

Compared to the situation in the 1980s, the ethnic composition of Russia's population has not changed materially (see, Table 3). Ethnic Russians remain the largest nationality and dominate the remaining nations of the federation. The second largest nation, the Tatars, is more than twenty times smaller than the Russians, and among the remaining ethnic groups only three others number more than one million people: Chechens (1,361 million), Chuvash (1,637 million), and Bashkir (1,674 million). Given such deep disproportions in population size, it will take decades for the demographic trends to affect materially Russia's ethnic composition. However, the general tendency is clear: the proportion of ethnic Russians is decreasing. In the 1959 census, they accounted for 83.3% of the RSFSR's population, in 1979 82.6%, in 1989 81.5%, and in 2002 79.8% of the state's population.

²⁹ For example, the Germans include a separate group of Mennonite Germans, and the Tatars include separate groups of Siberian Tatars and the so-called Kreshchens, i.e. Christianised Tatars.

Table 3: Major nationalities of the Russian Federation (numbering more than 400,000 people) according to censuses between 1926 and 2002 (in thousands)

Nationalities							
Year	1929	1939	1959	1970	1979	1989	2002
Total	100,626	108,262	117,534	130,079	137,410	147,022	145,164
Armenians	195	205	256	299	365	532	1130
Avars	178	236	250	362	438	544	757
Azeris	28	43	71	96	152	336	621
Bashkir	712	825	954	1181	1291	1345	1674
Belarusians	638	452	844	964	1052	1206	815
Buryat	237	221	252	313	350	417	445
Chechens	318	400	261	572	712	712	1361
Chuvash	1115	1346	1436	1637	1690	1774	1637
Dargins	126	152	153	224	280	353	510
Germans	806	811	820	762	791	842	597
Ingush	72	91	56	137	166	215	412
Kabardin	140	161	201	277	319	386	520
Kazakh	3852	356	382	478	518	636	655
Kumyks	95	110	133	187	226	277	423
Lezgins	93	100	114	170	203	257	412
Mari	428	476	498	581	600	644	605
Mordvin	1335	1375	1211	1177	1111	1073	845
Ossetians	157	196	248	313	352	402	515
Russians	74,072	89,740	97,864	107,748	113,522	119,866	115,869
Tatars	3241	3683	4074	4755	5006	5522	5593
Udmurts	514	600	616	678	686	715	637
Ukrainians	7873	3204	3359	3346	3658	4363	2943
Yakut	241	242	233	295	327	380	444

Source: Russian Federal Service of State Statistics, www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus_nation.php

The percentage of Russians in the Russian Federation has remained higher than birth and death rates would suggest. This is mainly due to processes of migration and assimilation. When the USSR collapsed in 1991, over 25 million ethnic Russians found themselves outside of the Russian state. Gradually, however, they began to return to Russia, usually on their own account, but also because of pro-return policies by Russian authorities. As the dominant nation of all the post-Soviet states in terms of size and development level, Russia benefited most from the natural assimilation processes. This

might explain the shrinking of national minorities from 1989 to 2002 (see, Table 3). According to the 2002 census, ethnic Russians were a majority in 74 out of the 89 federal constituents. Between the last two censuses, their percentage increased in 40 constituents, but interestingly, it decreased in up to 16 of the 21 national republics.

Amongst the non-ethnic Russian population of Russia, the Islamic nationalities of the North Caucasus, including Chechens, Ingush, Avars, Dargins, and Lezgins, report the highest natural increase. While some scholars (see, Tishkov and Stepanov 2004) have questioned the reliability of these figures, there is no doubt that as a result of the differences in rates of natural increase or decrease, as well as migration processes, ethnic Russians are gradually retreating from some of the areas they had colonised. This applies to Siberia and the Far East, as well as the North Caucasus (see, Table 4 below). In 16 national republics, the percentages of titular nationalities in the total population have increased. In the North Caucasus, for example, the titular population of North Ossetia increased by 9.7%. The percentage of Chechens in Chechnya has increased even more, but is as a result of the two Chechen Wars. According to the 2002 census, titular nationalities constitute a majority in nine out of the 21 national republics: including all the North Caucasus republics, with the exception of Adygea, which is an enclave in Krasnodar krai.

Table 4: Titular nationalities in their republics, 1989 and 2002

Republic		Titular Nationalities			
		Titular nationality in republic's pop. %		% of titular nation living in republic	
		2002	1989	2002	1989
Chechen-Ingushetia	Total	94.9	70.7		
	Chechen	71.1	57.8	82.9	81.7
	Ingush	23.2	12.9	88.1	76.1
Dagestan	Total	86.6	80.2		
	Avar	29.4	27.5	93.1	91.2
	Dargin	16.5	15.6	83.4	79.4
	Kumyk	14.2	12.9	86.6	83.6
	Lezgin	13.1	11.3	81.8	79.4
	Lak	5.4	5.1	89.3	86.3
	Tuvan	77.0	64.3	96.7	96.3
Chuvashi	Chuvash	67.7	67.8	54.3	51.1
Kabardino-Balkaria	Total	67.0	57.6		
	Kabardin	55.3	48.2	95.9	94.2
	Balkar	11.6	9.4	96.8	90.4
North Ossetia	Ossetia	62.7	53.0	86.5	83.2
Kalmykia	Kalmyk	53.3	45.4	89.6	88.2
Tatarstan	Tatar	52.9	48.5	36.0	32.0
Karachaevo-Cherkessia	Total	49.8	40.9		
	Cherkess	11.3	9.7	81.9	79.3
	Karachae	38.5	31.2	88.0	86.1
Yakutia	Yakut	45.5	33.4	97.4	96.1
Mari-El	Mari	42.9	43.3	51.7	50.4
Altai	Altai	32.7	31.0	92.5	85.2
Mordovia	Mordvin	31.9	32.5	33.7	29.2
Bashkortostan	Bashkir	29.8	21.9	73.0	64.2
Udmurtia	Udmurt	29.3	30.9	72.3	69.5
Buryatia	Buryat	27.8	24.0	61.3	59.8
Komi	Komi	25.2	23.3	87.4	86.7
Adygea	Adyghe	24.2	22.1	84.1	77.7
Khakassia	Khakas	12.0	11.1	86.5	80.1
Karelia	Karelian	9.2	10.0	70.3	63.2

Note: At present, Chechnya and Ingushetia are two separate republics within the Russian Federation; however, for methodological reasons figures for the former Autonomous Republic of Checheno-Ingushetia are presented in this table.

Source: www.socpol.ru/atlas/overviews/settlement/index.shtml

While ethnic Russians still constitute the majority population in Russia, their proportion is steadily decreasing. All indexes (natural increase, the ethnic composition of migration flows) imply that this trend will continue at an ever-faster rate. At present, the ethnic republics of the North Caucasus are the most expansive in demographic terms. Indeed, one of the principles underlying demographic transformations, according to the 'Concept of the Demographic Policy of the Russian Federation for the period into 2025' (adopted in October 2007), involves taking into consideration regional characteristics (Orlov 2009a). For this reason, it is to the North Caucasus that I now turn.

4.4 Demography in the North Caucasus

According to the 2002 Census, the population of the North Caucasus Federal District was 8.9 million people, of which 2.9 million (33.45%) were ethnic Russians. The uneven geography of the ethnic Russian population is stark, with the ethnic Russian population in the NCFD varying from 81.6% in Stavropol'skii krai to 1.2% in Ingushetia.

In his study of North Caucasus demography, Riazantsev (2003) divided the region into two distinct zones. The first zone consists of an 'archipelago' characterised by relative demographic wellbeing and by gradual decline in the rate of natural increase. It included the republics of Dagestan, Ingushetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria. Although the rate of natural increase has been declining in those areas, it nevertheless remained positive until recently as the birth rate has remained more than twice as high as that in the country as a whole. In the opinion of Magomedov (1998: 149), the persistence of a relatively high birth rate in these regions is due to "the traditions of certain peoples".

The second zone consisted of regions that were ‘depressed’ in terms of demography; the tendency for indicators of natural increase to go down is steadily strengthening. The zone is gradually “coming apart at the seams” (Riazantsev 2003: 32) and at present it encompasses six regions of the North Caucasus -- Adygea, Chechnya, Krasnodar krai, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, North Ossetia, and Stavropol’skii krai. Natural increase is declining most intensely in Krasnodar krai, Stavropol’skii krai and Adygeia (see, Table 5 below). Although not the sole factor, Smirnov (2005) explains this decrease as a result of an ‘exodus’ from the region of ethnic Russians.

Table 5: Birth Rate (B), Mortality Rate (M) and Natural Increase (NI) in the Regions of the North Caucasus, per 1000 inhabitants

Region	1991			1997			2000		
	B	M	NI	B	M	NI	B	M	NI
Russian Federation	12.1	11.4	0.7	8.6	13.8	-5.2	8.7	15.3	-6.6
North Caucasus	15.3	11.4	3.9	10.8	12.9	-2.1	10	13	-3
Stavropol’skii krai	13.7	11.6	2.1	9.6	13.1	-3.5	9.2	13.8	-4.6
Krasnodar krai	12.4	13.6	-1.2	8.9	14.5	-5.6	9.1	15.4	-6.3
Kabardino-Balkaria	19.1	9	10.1	12.7	10.1	2.6	11.5	11	0.5
North Ossetia	16.4	10	6.4	11.7	12.6	-0.9	10.6	12.7	-2.1
Dagestan	25.4	6.4	19	19.8	7.5	12.3	17.6	7.4	10.2
Karacheavo-Cherkessia	16.7	8.7	8	11.4	10.6	0.8	10.6	11.3	-0.7
Adygea	13.4	13.4	0	9.8	14	-4.2	9	14.9	-5.9
Ingushetia	-	-	-	-	-	-	17.2	4.3	12.9

Source: Riazantsev (2003: 32) Table 1

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the two Chechen Wars to everyday life in Chechnya (and the wider North Caucasus), and the same is true about its effects on the demographic situation. The combat operations and armed conflicts in the post-Soviet years account, by and large, for the increased death rate in the North Caucasus.

These include the conflict between Ossetia and Ingushetia, which took the lives of several hundred individuals in 1992 (see, O’Loughlin, Toal and Kolossov 2008). In addition, the First Chechen War of 1994-96, according to estimates, cost the lives of more than 86,000 people. Over 200,000 ethnic Russians left Chechnya (Tsvetkov 2006), mainly fleeing to Stavropol’skii krai and Krasnodar krai, while between 400,000 and 600,000 non-ethnic Russians are thought to have been displaced in the First Chechen War. While some of these people were able to return home or resettle, the Second Chechen War displaced an additional 350,000 since 1999 (Cherkasov, 2004; Holland, 2004)³⁰.

An important feature of the contemporary demographic situation in the North Caucasus is its ethnic character. As mentioned above, during the post-Soviet migrations of the 1990s, millions of people moved to their titular lands. Owing to the forced deportations of the 1940s and 1950s as well as other factors, this process was particularly marked in the North Caucasus republics. As O’Loughlin, Panin and Wittmer (2007: 254) explain, “the natural population decrease of ethnic Russians contrasts dramatically with the high natural increase of the Caucasian peoples”. Because migration into Stavropol’skii krai has been ethnic-specific in nature, the result has been the increased internal differentiation of a population already divided by ethnicity.

³⁰ The Russian government has been sharply criticized for the way it has handled the Internally Displaced People (IDP) situation. Since 2004, it has shut down IDP camps in Ingushetia, claiming that the situation in Chechnya has been normalized and that the displaced can now return to their homes (see, Holland 2004).

4.5 Stavropol'skii krai

According to data from the *Demograficheskie Ezhegodnik Rossii 2009*, the population of Stavropol'skii krai in 2009 was 2,707,159. This represents an increase from 2,735,139 in 2002 when the most recent All-Russia Census was conducted, and a decrease from 2,825,349 in 1989 when the last Soviet Census was conducted (see, Table 6). However, such a statement masks important changes: while the population decreased for eight years between 2000 and 2007, the population has increased over the last three years. Although formerly the most populous region in the North Caucasus, rapid population growth in Dagestan in recent years has probably now relegated Stavropol'skii krai to second place (Belozarov and Panin 2003; 2006).

Table 6: Population of Stavropol'skii krai, 1990-2009

Year	Population (000's)
2009	2707
2008	2705
2007	2701
2006	2710
2005	2718
2004	2726
2003	2733
2002	2735
2001	2741
2000	2741
1995	2664
1990	2478
1989	2825

Source: *Demograficheskie Ezhegodnik Rossii 2009*, pg. 29 (for years, 2005-2009) and *Demograficheskie Ezhegodnik Rossii 2006*, pg. 26 (for years 1990-2005)

Data from the *Demograficheskie Ezhegodnik Rossii 2009*, although the most up-to-date available, are not disaggregated by ethnicity. Therefore, data from the 2002 Census are the most recent on the ethnic composition of the population. According to the 2002 Census, the 2,735,139 population of Stavropol'skii krai was 81.6% ethnic Russian. The 2002 Census recorded 33 ethnic groups of more than two thousand people each, making Stavropol'skii krai one of the most ethnically diverse territories in Russia (see, Table 7 below). Citizens identified themselves as belonging to more than 140 different ethnic groups, see below:

Table 7: Ethnic Composition of Stavropol'skii krai Population, 2002 Census

Population	Ethnicity	% of Total Population
2, 231, 759	Russian	81.6
149, 249	Armenian	5.46
45, 892	Ukrainian	1.68
40, 218	Dargin	1.47
34, 078	Greek	1.25
20, 680	Nogai	0.76
19, 094	Roma	0.67
15, 146	Karachai	0.55
15, 069	Azeri	0.55
13, 937	Turkmen	0.51
13, 208	Chechen	0.50
12, 988	Tatar	0.50
8, 047	German	0.28
7, 772	Ossetian	0.26
7, 484	Turk	0.26
5, 744	Kumyk	0.22
3, 902	Kazakh	0.20
3, 300	Abazin	0.17

Note: 0.26% of citizens declined to state their nationality on the census questionnaire.

Compared with the 1989 Census, the ethnic Russian population in Stavropol'skii krai increased by almost 320,000 people by 2002 (see, Table 8). When considered in the

context of the decrease of ethnic Russians at the national scale over the same period by almost four million people (from 119,866,000 people in 1989 to 115,869,000 in 2002), the situation in Stavropol'skii krai appears stable. Within Stavropol'skii krai, the Armenian population more than doubled, the Roma (Gypsy) and Azeri populations almost doubled, and the Dargin population increased almost by a third over the same period. At the same time, the Turk population increased by 461%. While the Karachai population fell from 142,659 people to 15,146 people between 1989 and 2002, this can be explained by the out-migration of the Karachai to their titular republic, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, in the early post-Soviet period. Similarly, the dramatic decrease in the Abazin population from 30,380 people to 3,300 is due to the out-migration of Abazin's to Abazina, which became part of Karachaevo-Cherkessia in 1991. Meanwhile, the populations of other ethnic groups in Stavropol'skii krai maintained relatively stable between 1989 and 2002.

Table 8: Ethnic Structure of the Stavropol'skii krai population, 1989 and 2002 Census

Ethnicity	1989 Population	2002 Population
Total Population	2, 825, 349	2,735,139
Russian	2, 199, 999	2, 231, 759
Armenian	72, 530	149, 249
Ukrainian	69, 189	45, 892
Dargin	32, 740	40, 218
Greek	28, 458	34, 078
Nogai	28, 562	20, 680
Roma	13, 113	19, 094
Karachai	142, 659	15, 146
Azeri	9, 450	15, 069
Turkmen	11, 337	13, 937
Chechen	14, 988	13, 208
Tatar	12, 951	12, 988
German	13, 245	8, 047
Ossetian	9, 242	7, 772
Turk	1, 623	7, 484
Kumyk	6, 096	5, 744
Kazakh	2, 301	3, 902
Abazin	30, 380	3, 300

Source: http://demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus_nac_89.php

According to data from the local *Stat-Upravlenie* (Statistics Office), in 2007 the majority (56.9%) of the krai population lived in urban areas – 1,531,139 people – compared with 43.1% in rural areas – 1,172,002 people. This represented an increase on those numbers recorded in the 2002 Census, when 55.8% lived in urban areas, and indicates a process of urbanisation in Stavropol'skii krai. On the whole, however, this compares unfavourably with the rest of Russia, which had a 73% urban population in 2002.

Stavropol'skii krai is composed of 26 raions (districts). Each raion has an urban centre, which is categorised either as a city or urban area. Together, there are 19 cities and 9 urban areas, as well as 741 rural settlements. Of the 19 cities, 10 have an administrative

importance which means, where data are concerned, that they are classed separately to the raion in which they are located. These cities are: Stavropol' (the krai capital); Budennovsk; Essentuki; Georgievsk; Kislovodsk; Lermontov; Mineral'nie Vodi; Nevinnomissk; Pyatigorsk; and Zheleznovodsk. This categorisation is reflected in the analysis which follows.

Of Stavropol'skii krai's 26 raions, 16 are entirely rural and, according to the local statistics office, did not have an urban population in 2007 (see, Table 9).

Table 9: Population of Stavropol'skii krai in 2007, by raion and city, and urban vs. rural share

	Total Population	Location of population	
		Urban Areas	Rural Areas
<i>Raion</i>			
Aleksandrovskii raion	49, 485	-	49, 485
Andropovskii raion	34, 941	-	34, 941
Apanasenovskii raion	34, 669	-	34, 669
Arzgirskii raion	27, 115	-	27, 115
Blagodarnenskii raion	63, 857	33, 165	30, 692
Budennovskii raion	51, 912	-	51, 912
Georgievskii raion	90, 961	-	90, 961
Grachevskii raion	35, 840	-	35, 840
Izobil'nenskii raion	99, 856	58, 548	41, 308
Ipatovskii raion	65, 949	28, 031	37, 918
Kirovskii raion	66, 500	22, 993	43, 507
Kochubeevskii raion	77, 472	-	77, 472
Krasnogvardeiskii raion	40, 187	-	40, 187
Kurskii raion	51, 528	-	51, 528
Levokumskii raion	42, 115	-	42, 115
Mineralovodskii raion	45, 601	-	45, 601
Neftekumskii raion	68, 925	34, 260	34, 665
Novoaleksandrovskii raion	64, 441	26, 517	37, 924
Novoselitskii raion	25, 622	-	25, 622
Petrovskii raion	79, 605	39, 453	40, 152
Predgornii raion	106, 065	-	106, 065
Sovetskii raion	70, 924	40, 336	30, 588
Stepnovskii raion	22, 677	-	22, 677
Trunovksii raion	34, 519	-	34, 519
Turkmenskii raion	26, 512	-	26, 512
Shpakovskii raion	111, 419	60, 722	50, 697
<i>City</i>			
Stavropol' gorod	361, 896	361, 696	200
Budennovsk gorod	65, 357	65, 357	-
Essentuki gorod	81, 354	81, 354	-
Georgievsk gorod	69, 276	69, 276	-
Kislovodsk gorod	134, 607	128, 880	5, 727
Lermontov gorod	24, 419	22, 357	2, 062
Mineral'nie Vodi gorod	89, 569	82, 806	6, 763
Nevinnomissk gorod	129, 157	129, 157	-
Pyatigorsk gorod	206, 268	193, 690	12, 578

Zheleznovodsk gorod	52, 541	52, 541	-
TOTAL	2, 703, 141	1, 531, 139	1, 172, 002

Source: 'Otsenka chislennosti postoyannogo naseleniya po gorodam, vnutrigorodiskim raionam, posyeltkam gorodskogo tipa i raionam Stavropol'skogo kraya v srednem za 2007 god' [An assessment of the resident population in cities, intercity areas, settlements of city type and areas of Stavropol'skii krai on average for 2007], Local Statistics Office, Stavropol'

4.5.1. Migration

While such statistics accurately describe the situation at krai level, there are a number of demographic processes occurring within Stavropol'skii krai that are important in understanding ethnic relations in the region. At the same time, it is important to note that many of the processes visible in Stavropol'skii krai also affect Krasnodar krai and Rostov Oblast'. In the last twenty years of Soviet years of Soviet rule, Pallot and Nefedova (2007: 148) write, the number of people from Dagestan (principally Dargins and Avars) and Chechens increased by five to six times in Stavropol'skii krai and Krasnodar krai, and by three to five times on the Volga. This process of migration can be explained by the availability of land in Stavropol'skii krai compared to the North Caucasus republics. The raions on the borders with Kalmykia and Dagestan are sparsely populated, with sheep- and cattle- herding the major agricultural activity (see, Pallot and Nefedova 2007). To the northwest, large farms (formerly *kolkhozy*), dominate in the black (*chernozem*) soils (Riazantsev 2003). Here, the transition from the Soviet agricultural model has been difficult, marked by a declining rural population due to out-migration from rural communities. As a result, Stavropol'skii krai as a lower than average population density of 7 people per km² (in 2007), compared with 8.5 people per

km² for Russia and 52.3 people per km² for the North Caucasus Federal District, according to the 2002 Russian Census.

More recently, O'Loughlin, Panin and Witmer (2007: 250) suggest that, because of its location on the edge of the zone of geopolitical tension, "Stavropol Kray's population geography is directly affected by terrorist attacks on its cities, by the militarisation of its landscape, by the forward basing of Russian federal police and military, and by periodic damage to key elements of its infrastructure (railroads, oil pipelines)".

Settlement and Migration, 1970 - 2008

So as to understand the region, I now draw primarily on the research of O'Loughlin, Panin and Wittmer (2007) to explain the ethnic dimensions of settlement and migration in Stavropol'skii krai since 1970, before undertaking my own analysis of the ethnic structure of each of Stavropol'skii krai's 26 raions.

The 1970s were characterized by significant in-migration into Stavropol'skii krai, with almost 79% directed toward urban areas. Stavropol' *gorod*, as the capital of the krai, attracted the largest numbers of migrants arriving for education and employment opportunities. Nevinnomissk in the southwest (amongst other places) was important as a destination for migrants due to new industrial growth (see, Masliyev 2006), and the spa cities of Kavkaz Mineral'nie Vody (Caucasus Mineral Waters) -- Mineral'nie Vody, Pyatigorsk, and Kislovodsk -- offered employment opportunities for would-be migrants. Soviet administrative regulations, however, limited residential registration and artificially reduced in-migration. No cities in the krai recorded a population loss due to

net out-migration during this period (Belozerov et al., 1993). At the same time, rural areas recorded a different migration pattern, with highest rates of out-migration occurring in raions of north-eastern (Apanasenkovskii, Arzgirskii), central (Petrovskii), and north-western Stavropol'skii krai (Krasnogvardeyskii).

During the 1980s, the overall number of in-migrants fell by 15.6% relative to the preceding decade, although the number moving to rural areas increased by 38% between 1979 and 1989. This reflected, in part, migration by people displaced by the 1988 earthquake in Armenia and by new conflicts between Azerbaijan and Armenia, including over Nagorno-Karabakh (Riazantsev 1999; Rowland 2007). The majority of cities, particularly Stavropol' and Nevinnomyssk, also registered migration growth.

By the late 1980s, and especially in the 1990s, in-migration to the krai was driven by the forced movement of population from the North Caucasus republics. During the final years of the Soviet Union, new migration routes were established and new migration processes were solidified under the influence of the mutually reinforcing factors of political change, economic liberalization, military conflict, and the deterioration of inter-ethnic relations (Zayonchkovskaya 2000). By 1994, net in-migration had increased by 29.3% relative to 1989, and just over half of all cities in Stavropol'skii krai recorded positive migration balances.

In the late 1990s, for the first time since World War II, most large cities in Stavropol'skii krai lost population as they proved increasingly unattractive to migrants during the significant economic and social upheaval associated with post-Soviet transition. Conversely, smaller cities showed higher rates of in-migration, reflecting

lower increases in the price of housing than those in larger cities. Smaller cities in western Stavropol'skii krai registered the highest rates of in-migration as migrants fled the multi-ethnic raions near geopolitical instability in Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, and North Ossetia.

At the same time, during the second half of the 1990s the krai's net-migration was only slightly positive. The internal geography of migration also shifted, with marked zones of out-migration in rural raions of the south-east (Kurskii, Stepnovskii), east (Levokumskii, Neftekumskii), northeast (Arzgirskii, Turkmenskii, Apanasenkovskii), and north-west (Krasnogvardeyskii, Ipatovskii, Novoaleksandrovskii). More recently (2005), large cities such as Stavropol' and the cities of the Mineral'nie Vodi region (Kislovodsk, Yessentuki, Pyatigorsk) once again have experienced increasing levels of net in-migration, returning to the pattern of the 1960s (see, Belozarov 1997).

In 2008, Stavropol'skii krai recorded a positive net migration balance (3,589 people), with 25,828 in-migrants versus 22,239 out-migrants. Of the in-migrants, 15,125 migrated to urban areas and 10,703 to rural areas. And of the out-migrants, 11,808 migrated from urban areas and 10,431 from rural. Perhaps expectedly, Stavropol' *gorod* saw the highest 'turn-over' of people, with 3,624 in-migrants and 2,713 out-migrants. The internal geography of migration in 2008 was different to that which was visible in the late 1990s, with raions of out-migration in the east (Neftekumskii), north-west (Ipatovskii, Izobel'nenskii, Petrovskii, Shpakovskii), and south-west (Georgievskii, Kochubeevskii, Predgornii).

Overall, the period 1970-2008 saw a reduction of the rural population of Stavropol'skii krai, a trend that is visible in other parts of rural Russia (Ioffe and Nefedova 1997, 2000, 2004; Pallot 1990; Pallot and Moran 2000), while cities have seen a flow, then ebb, and now again a flow of in-migrants. Although the dominant trend is away from state-supported agriculture toward post-Soviet economic liberalisation, Stavropol'skii krai also exhibits some special migration features by virtue of its location adjacent to the North Caucasus republics. These features are reflected in the ethnic character of contemporary migration.

Ethnic Structure of Migration and Settlement, 1989-2008

Within the North Caucasus republics, rapid population growth and outmigration are well-established processes. Within the republics, the natural population decrease of ethnic Russians contrasts with the high natural increase of the Caucasian peoples. Because migration has tended to be ethnic-specific in character, and to specific areas of Stavropol'skii krai, it has resulted in increasing internal differentiation. For ethnic Russians, in-migration barely exceeded out-migration, in contrast to groups exhibiting high rates of net in-migration into the krai, most notably Armenians (27.7 in-migrants per 1000 population) and Ukrainians (20.7). The highest coefficients of out-migration from Stavropol'skii krai during the early 1990s were registered by the Chechens (35.8 per 1000), followed by the Dargins (30.2).

After a five-year period of net migration loss in the late 1990s (1995-2000), positive net migration prevailed in Stavropol'skii krai during the subsequent half decade (2001-2005). O'Loughlin, Panin and Wittmer (2007: 254) note that the most salient current

characteristics of ethnic migration in Stavropol'skii krai are: (1) low net in-migration of Russians and other Slavic peoples; (2) high in-migration of Armenians; (3) renewed out-migration of Chechens after nearly a decade (1996–2004) of in-migration coinciding roughly with the first and second Chechen wars; and (4) continued net in-migration of the Dargins. Reflecting Russians' low rates of net in-migration and natural increase, O'Loughlin, Panin and Wittmer (2007) argue that a trend of "de-Russification" is noticeable; ethnic Russian now constitute 81.6% of the total krai population as compared to 84% in 1989 and 88% in 1979.

Analysis of the ethnic structure of migration in the krai over the past decade indicates that the most important groups are Russians, Armenians, Dargins, Nogais, and Chechens. These groups merit more detailed analysis at the raion level. I complete the following section with an analysis of the Cossack community in Stavropol'skii krai.

Russians

Geopolitical instability in the wider Caucasus region has led to the outflow of ethnic Russians both from the nation-state of the South Caucasus (Armenian, Azerbaijan, and Georgia) and from the republics of the North Caucasus (especially Chechnya). As noted above, while Russians have traditionally been the dominant in-migrating group into Stavropol'skii krai, accounting for 60.7% of all in-migrants in the mid-1990s and 72.5% in 2001, this flow has weakened considerably in the late-1990s and early-2000s owing not only to the effects of military actions in the First and Second Chechen Wars, but also the fact that many of those most capable of migrating from the North Caucasus republics and south Caucasus states had already done so.

As noted by Belozеров (2005), the destinations of Russian in-migrants to Stavropol'skii krai have changed during the post-Soviet period. In the early 1990s, 60% of Russian migrants went to rural areas but, more recently, Russian in-migrants have moved to towns and cities in proportion to their size and economic attractiveness. Among the cities receiving the greatest numbers of Russian in-migrants were Stavropol', Budennovsk, and Mineral'nie Vodi. Rural raions with high rates of Russian in-migrants included Aleksandrovskii, Blagodarnenskii, Georgiyevskii, Ipatovskii, Kirovskii, Kochubeyevskii, Mineralovodskii, Sovetskii, and Shpakovskii.

In summary, 85% of Stavropol'skii krai's raions reported net in-migration of Russians over the period 1989-2008. Those that did not included a tier of four raions along the krai's eastern border -- Kurskii, Levokumskii, Neftekumskii, and Arzgirskii -- reflecting a combination of poor economic prospects (these are the most marginal agricultural areas in the krai) and an incipient process of ethnic segregation that had gained momentum by the 1990s (Kolossoy, Galkina and Grindatch 2001). Over the same period, the raions registering the highest rates of out-migration by Russians were Turkemenskii, Neftekumskii, Levokumskii and Arzgirskii, all in the east.

*Armenians*³¹

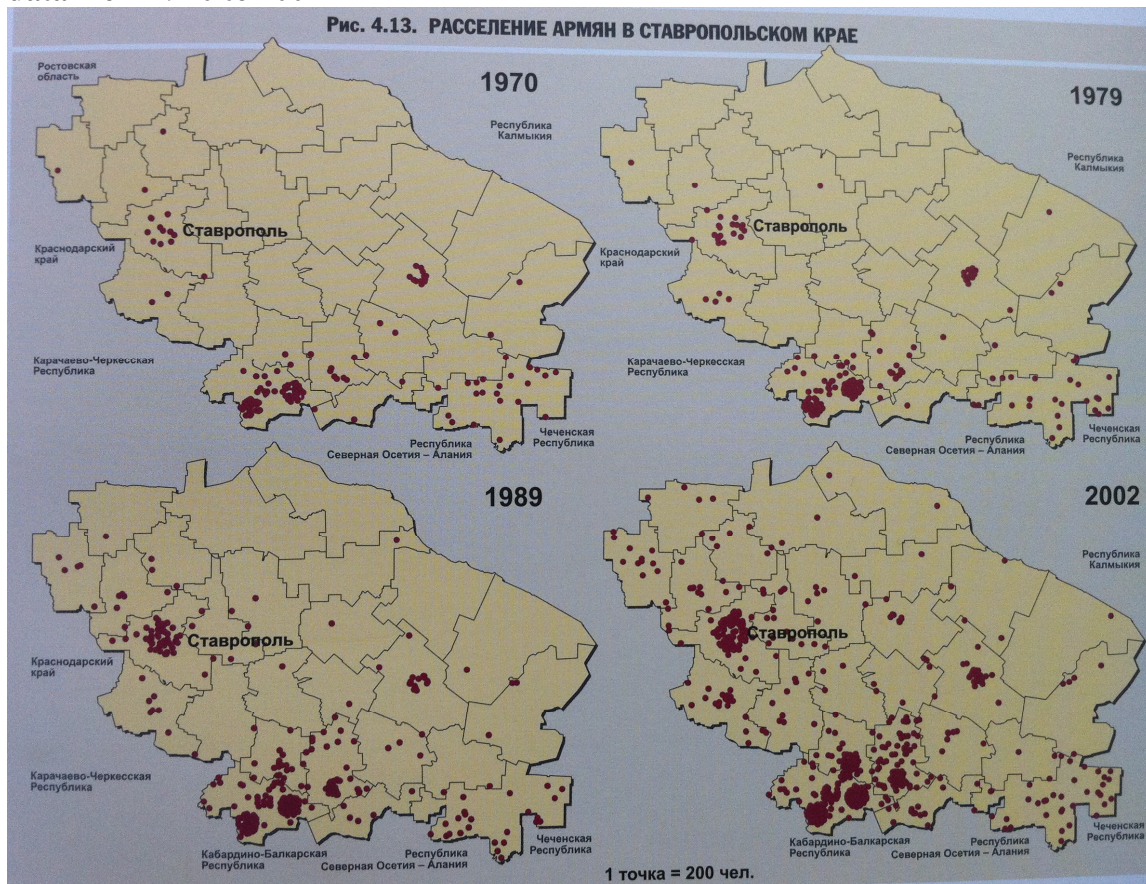
After Russians, Armenians are the second largest ethnic group in Stavropol'skii krai. Between 1989 and 2002, their population more than doubled from 70,171 to 149,249 (see, Table 8). According to the 2002 Russian census, Armenians comprised 149, 249

³¹ For a history of the Armenina population in Stavropol' *gorod*, see Obanesov (2005).

people, or 5.5% of the population of the krai, accounting for 13.2% of all Armenian residents in Russia.

The present spatial distribution of the Armenian population is a fairly recent phenomenon (see, Figure 6).

Figure 6. Distribution of Armenian Population in Stavropol'skii krai, by census data from 1970 to 2002



Source: Belozеров, Panin and Chikhichin 2008: 98

Although Armenians have resided in Stavropol'skii krai (mostly in cities) for over 200 years, they were concentrated until at least 1979 in the south-western area of the krai

(Belozerov and Ganeyeva 1997). In 1979, 85% of Armenians in the krai resided in three main locations -- Mineral'nie Vodi, Budennovsk, and Kurskii raion (Belozerov 2005). Since then, accelerated immigration of Armenians occurred as a result of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and related political unrest, as well as the massive Armenian earthquake in 1988 (see, Rowland 1997). During the period 1989-2005, the Armenian population increased in 88% of Stavropol'skii krai's raions, with only Turkemenskii, Levokumskii, and Apanasenskivskii raions along the eastern borders with Dagestan and Kalmykia, and Novoselitskii raion in the centre of the krai recording net Armenian out-migration. As a result, by 1989 the share of the Armenian population residing in the three main centres of traditional settlement (Mineral'nie Vodi, Budennovsk, and in Kurskii raion) had dropped to 79% (Belozerov 2005). In 2002, 75.8% of Armenians within Stavropol'skii krai resided in the three centres of Mineral'nie Vodi (58.7%), Budennovsk (4.5%), and in Kurskii raion (5%).

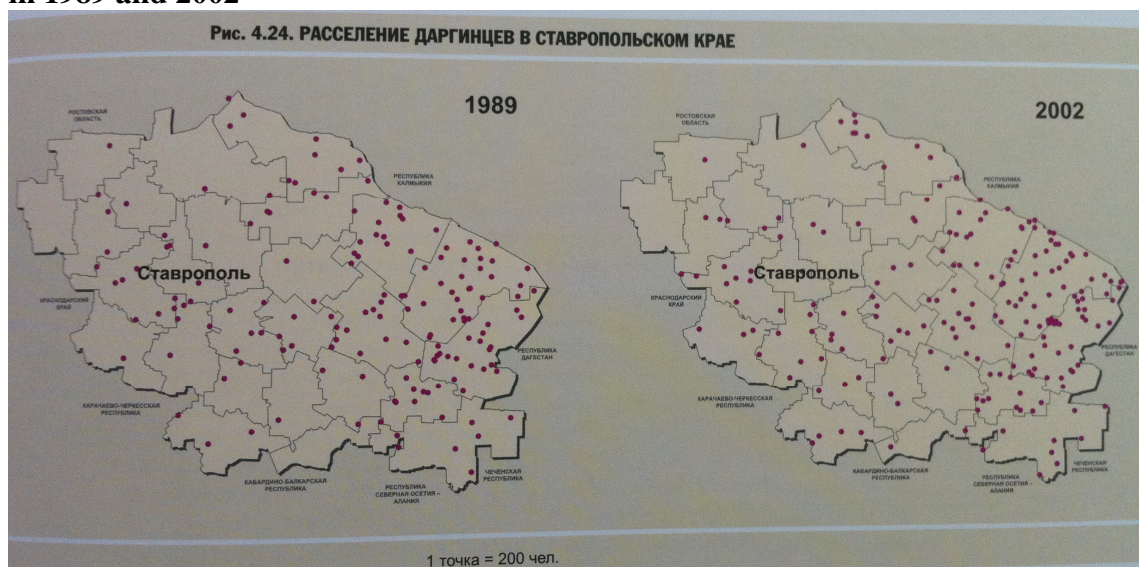
Dargins and Chechens

Census data indicate an acceleration in the population growth of ethnic North Caucasian peoples in Stavropol'skii krai. The number of Dargins in the krai, for example, increased from 16,000 (0.8% of the krai population) in 1970 to 32,400 (1.3% of the krai population) in 1989 and 40,200 (1.5% of the krai population) in 2002. The Dargin diaspora in the krai is one of the largest in Russia, and according to the 1979 census, more than 40% of Dargins who lived outside the Republic of Dagestan resided in Stavropol'skii krai (Belozerov 2000).

As might be expected, Dargin in-migrants initially clustered near the Dagestani border in the eastern part of the krai, in Levokumskii, Neftekumskii, and Arzgirskii raions. As Pallot and Nefedova (2007: 145-6) suggest, Dargins came to settle in these raions as they are one location where the Soviet Ministry of Agriculture constructed livestock (primarily, sheep and cattle) outstations attached to collective farms in the 1970s. As the ethnic Russian rural population migrated away from the peripheral eastern raions of the krai, and as the sheep numbers increased, the demand for labour in this non-prestigious activity was increasingly met by Dagestani, Chechen, and Karachay immigrant herdsmen (Pallot and Nefedova 2007; Belozerov 2000). By the 1989 census, Dargins constituted the majority in 24 villages and Chechens in 23 villages. Not only did Chechens and Dargins move into traditionally Russian-dominated regions, but they also settled in territories inhabited by other minorities, such the Nogai and Turkmen, who also specialized in stock breeding. This immigration led to a kind of economic competition that assumed an ethnic character, especially in Turkmenskii and Neftekumskii raions.

Since the mid-1990s, rural Caucasian immigrants have also begun to move to towns to seek employment in the shadow economy. Beginning in the 1980s, the Dargin population increased and began to diffuse to the north and west as a result of the worsening geopolitical situation in the North Caucasus republics and deteriorating economic options and political events in Dagestan (see, Figure 7). However, high levels of Dargin out-migration from Stavropol'skii krai prevailed during the 1990s from the areas of recently expanded settlement, and by 2005 the pattern of migration had reverted to traditional form: although Dargin numbers are still increasing in the eastern raions and large cities of Stavropol'skii krai, they are decreasing in the western rural areas.

Figure 7. Distribution of Dargin Population in Stavropol'skii krai, by census data in 1989 and 2002



Source: Belozеров, Panin and Chikhichin 2008: 107

Chechens provide a somewhat different history in Stavropol'skii krai. In the 1960s, more Chechens departed their republic for Rostov Oblast' than for Stavropol'skii krai, where they concentrated in Kurskii Raion on the Chechen border. In the 1970s, Chechen immigrants tended to settle in a ring of rural raions surrounding Stavropol' city (Belozеров 2000). At the time of the 1989 Census, Chechens lived primarily in Kurskii, Stepnovskii, and Neftekumskii raions, in the south-east of the krai (see, Figure 8). Currently, more Chechens currently live in Stavropol'skii than any other federal subject in Russia with the exceptions of Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan. In 2002, there were 13, 000 Chechens in Stavropol'skii krai, or 7% of the Chechens living outside of Chechnya within Russia, residing primarily in Kurskii raion, and Neftekumskii raion, with significant smaller numbers in Andropovskii raion, Stepnovskii raion, and Shpakovskii raion.

Figure 8. Distribution of Chechen Population in Stavropol'skii krai, by census data in 1989 and 2002



Source: Belozеров, Panin and Chikhichin 2008: 118

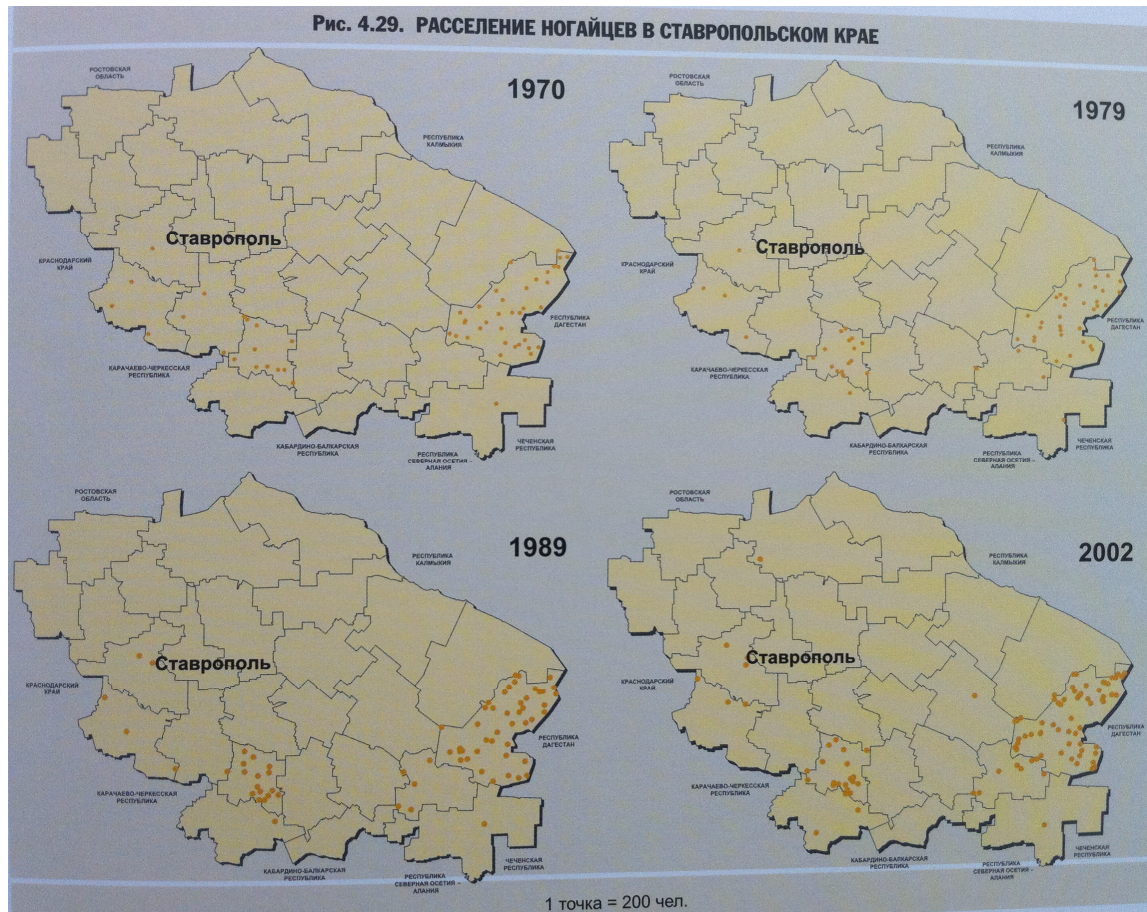
Nogai

According to the 2002 Census, more than 91, 000 Nogai live in Russia, with 23% residing in Stavropol'skii krai. In the krai, Nogai only compose more than 6% of population in three raions. A significant minority of the Nogai (roughly one-third of the total) resides in the eastern raions of Stavropol'skii krai, especially in Neftekumskii raion, but also Stepnovksii raion, where they predominate in 10 villages in this sparsely settled region (see, Figure 9). A third minor concentration can be seen in the Mineral'nie Vody area where, as in the eastern regions, they are almost exclusively a rural people³².

³² Outside of Dagestan and Stavropol'skii krai, Nogai constitute a plurality of the population in northern part of Karachaevo-Cherkessia.

Unlike the Chechens and Dargins, the distribution of the Nogai has been stable, and population increase has resulted from the growth in numbers in existing settlements.

Figure 9. Distribution of Nogai Population in Stavropol'skii krai, by census data from 1970 to 2002



Source: Belozarov, Panin and Chikhichin 2008: 113

Cossacks

Cossacks have been on the territory of Stavropol'skii krai since the sixteenth century, when Russia agreed the 'voluntary incorporation' of three of the current-day North Caucasus republics -- Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and Adygea -- into its expanding Empire (see, O'Rourke 2007). Markedonov (2010b) writes that the

contemporary Cossack movement in the North Caucasus is best described as ‘neo-Cossack’ as these Cossacks are in effect Russian nationalists and are more hostile to the non-ethnic Russian nationalities of the North Caucasus than the Cossacks who moved south into the region in the 18th and 19th centuries. This neo-Cossack movement emerged in the early 1990s, as “a reaction to the growth of ethnic nationalism in the North Caucasus republics under conditions of the crisis and disintegration of the USSR” (Markedonov 2010b).

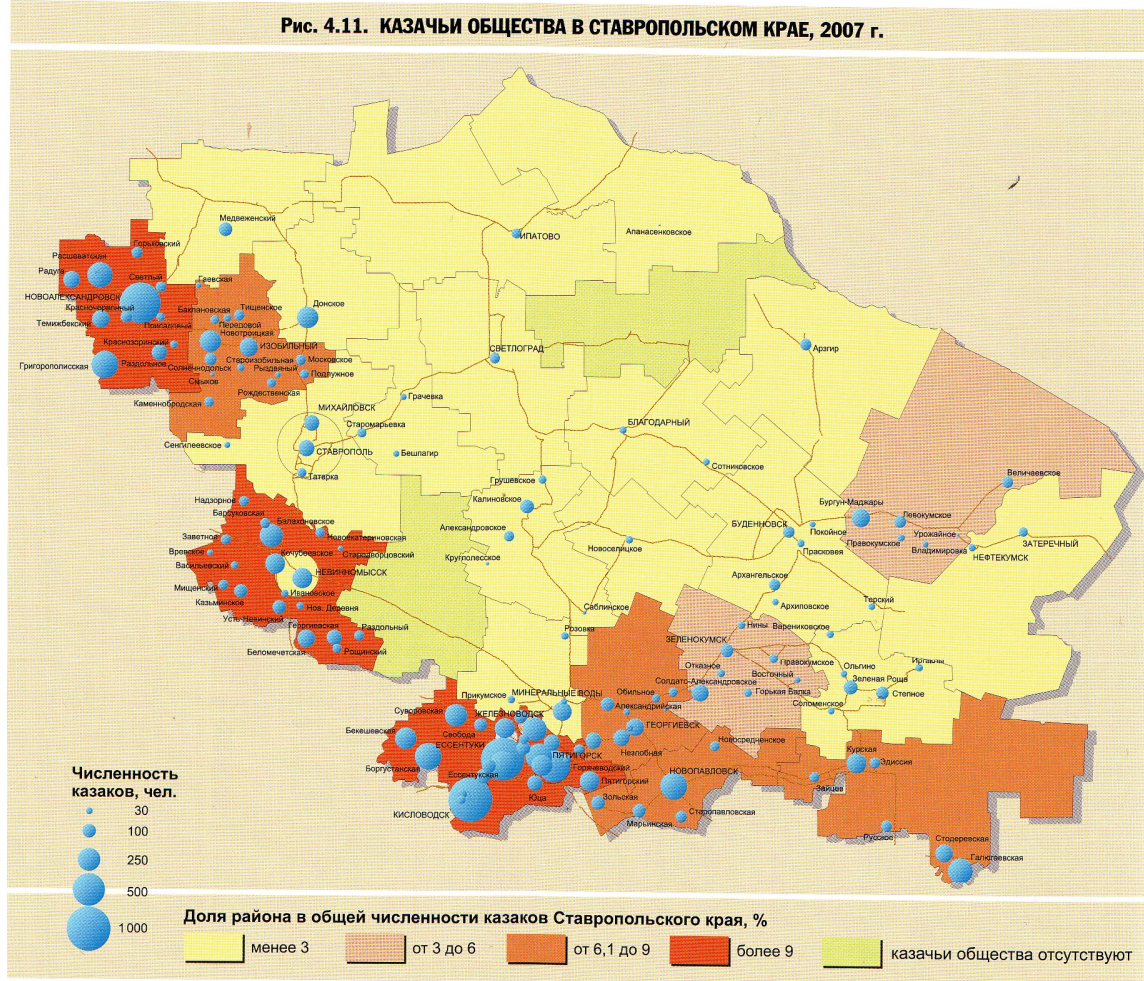
Currently, two Cossack units are present in Stavropol’skii krai – Terek³³ and Kuban – which are divided into 14 Cossacks okrugs. The largest Cossack okrug is *Stavropol’skii kazachii otdel im. Generala A. P. Ermolova* [Stavropol’skii krai Cossack department named General A.P. Ermolov], which occupies the territory of Apanasenkovskii raion, Grachesvskii raion, Ipatovskii raion, Petrovskii raion, and Shpakovskii raion. The remaining 13 Cossack okrugs are roughly coterminous with the krai raions, with some Cossack okrugs occupying the territory of two krai raions; Neftekumskii okrug, for example, occupies both Neftekumskii raion and Levokumskii raion. Within the okrugs, the largest Cossack populations are located in Nizhnokubanskii okrug (Krasnogvardeiskii raion and Novoalksandrovskaia raion) and Predgornii okrug (Predgornii raion) where there are over 2, 500 Cossacks, and Kurskii okrug (Kurskii raion) and Pavlovskii okrug (Kirovskii raion) where there are over 1, 000 Cossacks. In Kurskii raion, Novoalksandrovskaia raion, and Predgornii raion, Cossacks compromise more than 9% of the raion population.

³³ On 30 October 2010, Aleksandr Khloponin (Presidential Representative to the North Caucasian Federal District) officially became a member of the Terek Cossack army. Khloponin said that his “first task” must be to support and rely on the Cossack revival as part of Moscow’s effort to return ethnic Russians to the North Caucasus. See, Dzutsev (2010b).

Reflecting their role as ‘border guards’ in the post-Soviet era, the raions with the largest Cossack populations in Stavropol’skii krai are along the krai’s southern border with the North Caucasus republics, in particular Kurskii raion (bordering Chechnya, Dagestan, and North Ossetia-Alania), Kirovskii raion (bordering Kabardino-Balkaria), and Predgornii raion (bordering Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachaevo-Cherkessia). As might be expected, the cities in Stavropol’skii krai with the largest Cossack populations are found in these raions; Novoaleksandrovskii in Novoalksandrovskii raion, and Kislovodsk, Essentuki, and Pyatigorsk in Predgornii raion (see, Figure 10).

As Krag and Funch (1994) explain, it is not possible to compare the current Cossack population of Stavropol’skii krai with that during the Soviet period as Cossacks were never included in Soviet census data. While Cossacks themselves consider their population in Russia to be in the millions, this is questionable.

Figure 10. Location of Cossack Communities within Stavropol'skii krai, 2007



Source: Belozеров, Panin and Chikhichin 2008: 94

4.5.2. Raion Level Analysis

In what follows I briefly analyse the ethnic structure of each of Stavropol'skii krai's 26 raions. I do this by drawing on data from the 2002 All-Russian Census.

According to the 2002 Census, only Petrovskii raion has a population which is more than 90% ethnic Russian (93%), while two others have populations which are over 80%

ethnic Russian – Izobil’nenskii raion (89%) and Apanasenkovskii raion (88%). Meanwhile, the largest concentrations of Armenians, the second largest ethnic group in Stavropol’skii krai, are in the raions of Kurskii (14%) and Georgievskii (12%). Dargins, meanwhile, compose 18% of the population of Levokumskii raion, 13% of Heftemkumskii raion, and 11% of Stepnovskii raion and Arzgirskii raion. While the largest concentration of Chechens (again, measured as a percentage of the raion population) is in Kurskii raion, where they compose 5% of the population.

Aleksandrovskii raion

Aleksandrovskii raion has a population of 49,485, all of which is located in rural areas. The dominant ethnic group are Russians, with 44,929 people, or 90.7% of the raion population. Dargins are the second largest group and comprise 1,190 people, or 2.4% of the population, while Gypsies are the third largest and comprise 973 people, or 1.9% of the population. According to the 2002 Census, more than 50 nationalities live in this raion.

Andropovskii raion

Andropovskii raion is in south-west Stavropol’skii krai on the border with Karachaevo-Cherkessia. It has a population of 34,941, all of which is located in rural areas. The dominant ethnic group are Russians, with 26,840 people, or 76.8% of the raion population. Armenians are the second largest group and comprise 1,810 people, or 5.1% of the population, while Dargins are the third largest group with 1,421 people, or 4% of

the population. According to the 2002 Census, more than 60 nationalities live in this raion.

Apanasenkovskii raion

Apanasenkovskii raion is in north Stavropol'skii krai and shares a border with the Republic of Kalmykia. It has an entirely rural population of 34,669, of which the largest ethnic group is ethnic Russians, with 31,901 people, or 92% of the krai population. The second largest ethnic group is Dargins, with 1,776 people (5.1% of the population), and Belarussians are the third largest, with 493 people, or 1.4% of the population. According to the 2002 Census, more than 50 nationalities live in this raion.

Arzgirskii raion

Arzgirskii raion is in north-east Stavropol'skii krai and shares a border with the Republic of Kalmykia. It has an entirely rural population of 27,115. The largest ethnic group are the Russians, with 31,901 people, or 84.9% of the krai population. The Dargins are the second largest ethnic group in the raion, with 3,201 people (1.2% of the population), and Kumiks are the third largest ethnic group, with 712 people (2.2% of the population). According to the 2002, more than 40 nationalities live this raion.

Blagodarnenskii raion

Blagodarnenskii raion is in central Stavropol'skii krai, and has a population of 63,857 which is split 33,165 people in urban areas and 30,692 people in rural areas. The

presence of Blagodarnii *gorod* skews the population statistics in this raion, as the *gorod* contains all of the urban population. Within the *gorod*, the population of 33,165 is split: 29,386 (88.6%) ethnic Russian, 1,340 Gypsy (4%), and 1,079 (3.6%) Armenian, with small numbers of Turkmen and Ukrainians. Of the rural population, 26,949 are ethnic Russians (87.8%), 1,236 are Turkmen (4%), and 498 are Dargin (1.6%). Overall, therefore, 88.2% (56,335 people) of the raion population is ethnic Russian. According to the 2002 Census, more than 60 nationalities live in this raion.

Budennovskii raion

Budennovskii raion is located in central Stavropol'skii krai, has an entirely rural population of 51,912. Russians are the dominant ethnic group in the raion, with 45,042 people, or 83.3% of the population, with significant minorities of Dargins (2,833 people) and Armenians (1,810 people). According to the 2002 Census, more than 80 nationalities lived in Budennosvkii raion, compared with more than 70 nationalities in Budennovsk.

Georgievskii raion

Located in southern Stavropol'skii krai, Georgievskii raion has an entirely rural population of 90,961. Russians are the dominant ethnic group in the raion, with 70,484 people, or 77.1% of the rural population. This is down from 93% of the population in 1970. Armenians are the second largest ethnic group (12.5% of the population), while Gypsies (2.5% of the population) the third largest group. According to the 2002 Census, Georgievskii raion recorded more than 70 ethnic groups.

Grachevskii raion

Located in north-east Stavropol'skii krai, Grachevskii raion has an entirely rural population of 35,840 people. The largest ethnic group in the raion are Russians, who compose 82.1% of the population (29,423 people). The next largest ethnic groups are Armenians, 8.4% of the population (3,015 people), and Dargins, 1.7% of the population (608 people). There are also notable Ukrainian, Kumik, and Chechen populations (around 500 people each). Ethnic Russians are the majority ethnic group in each municipal raion with Grachevskii raion, varying in share of the local population between 89.5% in Sergievskoe to 73.1% in Staromariievskia. The raion centre, Grachevka, contains 17% of the raion population, and has a population which is 86.8% Russian.

Izobil'nenskii raion

Located in north-west Stavropol'skii krai on the border with Krasnodar krai, Izobil'nenskii raion has a population of 99,856 people. The raion has a rural population of 41,308 (41% of the raion population), and an urban population of 58,548 (59% of the raion population). The urban population is primarily located in Izobil'nii *gorod* (38,645 people, or 38.7% of the raion population), with smaller populations in the towns of Rizdvyanii (7,466 people) and Solnechnodol'sk (12,437 people). Russians are the dominant ethnic group, with 91.6% of the raion population (91,510 people). Izobil'nii *gorod*, the largest urban settlement in the raion, has an ethnic Russian population of 89.9%, with smaller numbers of Armenians (3.2%) and Gypsies (1.9%). Outside of

Izobil'nii *gorod*, the population of 61,211 people is heavily dominated by ethnic Russians (56,512 people, or 92.3% of the population), with smaller numbers of Armenians (1,429 people, or 2.3%) and Ukrainians (1,085 people, or 1.7%).

Ipatovskii raion

Ipatovskii raion is located in north Stavropol'skii krai, and shares a border with the Republic of Kalmykia. Ipatovskii raion has a population of 65,949 people, divided between 28,031 people (42.5%) in urban areas and 37,918 people (57.5%) in rural areas. All of the urban population is concentrated in Ipatovo *gorod*. The rural population is dominated by ethnic Russians, who composed 90.3% of the population (34,264 people), with smaller numbers of Tatars (1,464 people, or 3.8% of the rural population) and Turkmen (1,397 people, or 3.7% of the rural population). The Turkmen population is concentrated in Malnii Barakhanchak municipal raion, in the south-east of the raion, where it composes 88.1% of the population. Elsewhere, ethnic Russians are the majority populations in each of the municipal raions, varying from 95.7% in Ipatovo *gorod* to 86% in Liman.

Kirvoskii raion

Kirvoskii raion is located in south Stavropol'skii raion, and shares a border with Kabardino-Balkaria. Kirvoskii raion has a population of 66,500 people, which is divided between 22,993 people (34.6%) in urban areas and 43,507 people (65.4%) in rural areas. The urban population is concentrated in Novopavlovsk *gorod*. Ethnic Russians dominate the raion (55,837 people, or 83.9% of the raion population), with

19,564 Russians living in Novopavlovsk (85% of the urban population), and 36,273 Russians living in rural areas (83.3% of the rural population). In both urban and rural areas, there are significant minorities of Armenians (3.9% of the raion population), Gypsies (2.7% of the raion population), and Karbards (1.6% of the raion population). It is notable that the entire Kabardin population is located in rural areas, particularly in the Sovetskaya municipal raion where they compose 12.9% of the population (ethnic Russians compose 74.2% of the population).

Kochubeevskii raion

Kochubeevskii raion is located in south-west Stavropol'skii krai, and shares a border with both Krasnodar krai and Kabardino-Balkaria. Kochubeevskii raion has a population of 77,472 people, all of which live in rural areas. Ethnic Russians dominate this population, with 70,287 people, or 90.7%. This is down from 91.5% in 1970. The next largest group are Armenians (1,973 people, or 2.5%) and Ukrainians (1,795 people, or 2.3%). There are also significant numbers of Nogais, Tatars, Chechens, Germans, Belarussians, and Cherkessians (c. 500 people each). Ethnic Russians are the majority population in each of the raions 14 municipal raions, varying from 94.1% in Beseloe to 73.5% in Zavetnoe.

Krasnogvardeiskii raion

Krasnogvardeiskii raion is located in north-west Stavropol'skii krai, and shares a border with Krasnodar krai, Rostov Oblast', and the Republic of Kalmykia. While more than 50 nationalities live in the krai (according to the 2002 Census), the krai population of

40,187 people is dominated by ethnic Russians, who compose 96.8% of the population (38,910 people) -- a decline from 97.6% in 1970. There are smaller numbers of Armenians (722 people, or 1.7% of the population), Gypsies (599 people, or 1.4% of the population), and Ukrainians (410 people, or 1% of the population), as well as smaller numbers of Kurds, Belorussians, Dargins, Azeris, and Lezgins.

Kurskii raion

Kurskii raion is located in south-east Stavropol'skii krai, and borders the Republics of Chechnya, Dagestan, and North Ossetia-Alania. Kurskii raion has an entirely rural population of 51,528 people, of which 51.9% (28,645 people) are ethnic Russian – a decline from 67.1% in 1970. There are significant minorities of Armenians (7,393 people, 14.3% of the population), Turks (4,544 people, 8.8% of the population), Chechens (2,890 people, 5.6% of the population), Kabardins (2,348 people, 4.5% of the population), and Dargins (2,007 people, 3.9% of the population), with smaller numbers of Ossetians, Georgians, Kumyks, and Ukrainians (c. 1000 people each). Despite being the majority ethnic group in the raion, ethnic Russians are only majority populations in eight of the 12 municipal raions in Kurskii raion: Galyugaevskaya (91.1%), Stoderevskaya (82.8%), Baltiiskii (82.6%), Poltavskoe (73.8%), Kurskaya (72.8%), Kanovo (67.6%), Aga-Batir (51.7%), and Russkoe (50.9%). Elsewhere, ethnic Russians are the largest minority populations in Mirnii (30.7% Russian, 28.8% Chechen), and Rostovanovskoe (45.7% Russian, 14.5% Azeri). In the remaining two municipal raions, Turkmen (83.6%) are the largest ethnic group in Sernovodskoe (3.8% Russian), and Armenians (94.1%) in Edissiya (2.8% Russian). 5% of Chechens, 4% of Kardins, and 2% of Ossetians within Stavropol'skii krai live in Kurskii raion.

Levokumskii raion

Levokumskii raion is the most easterly raion in Stavropol'skii krai, and borders the Republics of Dagestan and Kalmykia. It lies in the region of semi-desert in the south-east of European Russia, and has an entirely rural population of 42,115 people. Ethnic Russians compose 77.5% of the population (32,639 people) – compared with 90.4% in 1970 -- while Dargins are the most significant minority group (18.5%, or 7,816 people). There are smaller numbers of Avars (1.2%, or 531 people), and Chechens (0.9%, or 410 people), as well as Ukrainians, Kumyks, Armenians, and Ezidi. Recent migrations into Levokumskii raion – the Armenian population, for example, increased three-fold between 1970 and 2002 – have lead to the increasing spatial segregation of ethnic groups and intensified the ethno-geographical division of labour (Pallot and Nefedova 2007: 148). Ethnic Russians are the majority ethnic group in 11 of the 12 municipal raions in Levokumskii raion, with Dargins the largest minority (47.3%) in Priezernoe (45.4% Russian). Where Russians are the majority population, their share of the municipal raion population varies from 97.3% in Novokumskii to 60% in Nikolo-Aleksandrovskoe. Pallot and Nefedova (2007: 146) write that Levokumskii raion “stands at a cultural boundary between Christian Orthodox and Muslim peoples”.

Mineralovodskii raion

Mineralovodskii raion is located in south Stavropol'skii raion, and has an entirely rural population of 45,601 people. Russians are the dominant ethnic group, with 72.9% of the population (33,273 people) – compared with 85% in 1970. Armenians are the second

largest ethnic group, with 3,629 people (7.9% of the population), and Nogais are the third largest ethnic group, with 2,929 people (6.4% of the population). Russians are the majority ethnic group in 11 of the 13 municipal raions. Where Russians are not the majority, Greeks (70.8%) dominate in Grecheskoe, and Nogais (69.6%) in Kangli.

Neftekumskii raion

Neftekumskii raion is located in south-east Stavropol'skii krai, and borders the Republic of Dagestan. Neftekumskii raion has a population of 68,925 people, which is divided between urban areas (34,260 people) and rural areas (34,665 people). The majority of the urban population is concentrated in Neftekumsk *gorod* (26,621 people), with a smaller concentration in Zatrechnii (7,639 people). Overall, the krai population is divided 37.6% Russian (16,373 people), 27% Nogai (11, 618 people), 13% Dargin (5,610 people), 11% Turkmen (4,054 people), and 2% Tatar (1,079 people). In Neftekumsk *gorod*, meanwhile, the population is split 79.9% Russian (21,891 people), 4% Dargin (1,175 people), 3.6% Tatar (1,010 people), 2.4% Nogai (675 people), and 2% Armenian (601 people). 60% of the Nogais within Stavropol'skii krai are located in the raion. Russians are the dominant ethnic group in only four of the 13 municipal raions in Neftekumskii raion: Zatrechnii (89.7%), Neftekumsk (79.9%), Achikulak (59.8%), and Zimnyaya Stavka (53.1%). Elsewhere, Russians are the largest minority in two municipal raions: Zunkari (46%, with 39.2% Nogai), and Andrei-Kurgan (39.4%, with 24.4% Dargin). Of the remaining seven municipal raions, Nogais are the majority ethnic group in Tukui-Mekteb (73.3%) and Abram-Tyube (66.9%), and the largest minority in Kayasula (48.6%, with 28.5% Russians), Hovrus-Artezan (48.6%, with 28.5% Russians), and Kara-Tyube (37.8%, with 32.5% Russians). Turkmen,

meanwhile, are the majority ethnic group in Ozek-Suat (59.3%), and the largest minority in Makhmud-Mekteb (38.4%, with 27.6% Nogai). Those municipal raions in which Nogais are either the majority or largest minority populations are located in the south and west of the raion, near the borders with Stepnovskii raion and Kurskii raion.

Novoaleksandrovskii raion

Novoaleksandrovskii raion is located in north-west Stavropol'skii krai, and borders Krasnodar krai. Novoaleksandrovskii raion has a population of 64,441 people, and there is a clear divide between urban areas (26,517 people) and rural areas (37,924 people). All of the urban population is concentrated in Novoaleksandrovsk *gorod*. The urban population is 92.3% ethnic Russian (24,731 people), compared with the rural population is which 91.3% ethnic Russian (34,645 people). These figures compare with 95.8% and 95.5%, respectively, in 1970. In Novoaleksandrovsk, there is a small Armenian community of around 900 people (or 3.2% of the population). Russians are the majority ethnic group in each of the Novoaleksandrovskii raion's 11 municipal raions, varying from 95.7% in Karmalinovskii to 79% in Svetlii. At the same time, there are notable Armenian populations in Temizhbekskii (9.8%), Grigoropolisskaya (7.3%), and Paduga (7.2%).

Novoselitskii raion

Novoselitskii raion is located in central Stavropol'skii krai, and has an entirely rural population of 25,622 people. Ethnic Russians number 20,451 people, or 79.8% of the population, and there are notable populations of Dargins (1,438 people, or 5.6% of the

population) and Armenians (675 people, or 2.6% of the population). Russians are the majority ethnic group in seven of Novoselitskii raion's eight municipal raions, and in Dolinovka (34.8% Ossetian) where they are not the majority they are the second largest minority (30.9%).

Petrovskii raion

Petrovskii raion is located in central Stavropol'skii krai, and has a population of 79,605 people, clearly divided between the urban (39,453 people) and rural (40,152) population. All of the urban population (39,453 people) is located in Svetlograd *gorod*. Russians are the majority ethnic group in both Svetlograd (93.7%, or 36,900 people) and the rural areas (93%, or 40,074 people), and this is reflected in the fact that Russians are the majority ethnic group in all thirteen of Petrovskii raion's municipal raions, varying from 98.7% in Shvedino to 84.2% in Prikalausskii. There are small communities of Tabasarans (578 people) and Armenians (554 people) in the raion. Tabasarans are concentrated in Gofitskoe (3.7% of the population), while Armenians are primarily located in Prikalausskii (3.3% of the population) and Donskaya Balka (2.9% of the population).

Predgornii raion

Predgornii raion is located in south Stavropol'skii krai, and borders the Republics of Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachaevo-Cherkessia. It has an entirely rural population of 109,065 people, which is 65.7% ethnic Russians (71,706 people) – compared with 82.1% ethnic Russian in 1970. There are considerable Greek (15.3% of the population,

or 16,690 people) and Armenian (6% of the population, or 6,561 people) communities in Predgornii raion. Indeed, 67% of the all ethnic Greeks in Stavropol'skii krai are located in Predgornii raion (see, Pallot and Nefedova 2007: 139). Russians are the majority ethnic group in 13 of Predgnornii raion's 15 municipal raions. In the two municipal raions where Russians are not the ethnic majority group, Greeks dominate in Tel'mana (70.7%), and Karachae dominate in Mirnii (79.7%). There are also large Greek minority populations in Suvororskaya (42.4%) and Essentukskaya (32.5%), and a large Armenian minority population in Etoka (35.9%).

Sovetskii raion

Sovetskii raion is located in south-east Stavropol'skii krai, and has a population of 70,924 people, which is divided between Zelenokumsk *gorod* (40,336 people) and the remaining rural areas (30,588 people). Russians are the dominant ethnic group in both Zelenokumsk (88.2%, or 35,595 people) and the rural areas (87.4%, or 28,335 people) – this figures show a relative decline since 1970, when Russians composed 94.5% of the urban population and 95.7% of the rural population. There is a notable Armenian community (1,688 people), the majority of which is concentrated in Zelenokumsk (2.7% of the urban population, or 1,080 people) over the rural areas (1.9% of the rural population, or 608 people). Ethnic Russians are the majority population in each of Sovetskii raion's seven municipal raions, ranging from 97.9% in Gor'kaya Balka to 78% in Vostochnii.

Stepnovksii raion

Stepnovskii raion is located in south-east Stavropol'skii krai, and has an entirely rural population of 22,677 people. This means that Stepnovskii raion is one of the least populated raions in Stavropol'skii krai, and contains less than 1% of the krai population. Ethnic Russians compose 65.1% of the krai population (15,168 people) – down from 96.9% in 1970. The next largest ethnic groups are Dargins (2,649 people, or 11.7%) and Nogais (1,567 people, or 6.9%). Russians are the majority population in seven of the raion's nine municipal raions, and the largest minority in one. In Irgakli, where Russians are the largest minority population, Russians compose 41.7% of the municipal raion population, while Nogais compose 33.4%. In Bogdanovskoe municipal raion, Russians compose 24.8% of the population, Dargins 14.3%, along with a significant minority of numerous other ethnic groups, including Avars, Chechens, and Nogai.

Trunovskii raion

Trunovskii raion is located in north-west Stavropol'skii krai, and has an entirely rural population of 34,519 people. The population of the raion is 84.4% Russian (29,863 people) – down from 96.9% in 1970. Reflecting this, Russians are the majority population in each of the raion's six municipal raions, ranging from 95.5% in Podlesnoe to 80.3% in Besopasnoe. Armenians are the second largest ethnic group in Trunovskii raion, with 4.4% of the population (1,541 people), and Chechens the third largest, with 2% of the population (708 people).

Turkmenskii raion

Turkmenskii raion is located in north Stavropol'skii krai, and borders the Republic of Kalmykia. Turkmenskii raion has an entirely rural population of 26,512 people, of which 68.1% are ethnic Russian (18,601 people) – down from 72.5% in 1970. As the name of the raion suggests, Turkmenskii raion has long contained large numbers of Turkmen. Indeed, 4,891 Turkmen currently live in Turkmenskii krai, making Turkmen the second largest ethnic group in the raion with 18.4% of the population. Tatars, meanwhile, are the third largest ethnic group, with 5.9% of the population (1,580 people). Russians are the majority population in eight of Turkmenskii raion's 11 municipal raions, varying from 96.7% in Malie Yaguri to 56.8% in Vladimirovka. In those three municipal raions where Russians are not the majority, Russians are the largest minority in Kucherla (45.3% Russian, 29.6% Turkmen) and Kendzhe-Kulak (46.5% Russian, 35.2% Turkmen). In only one municipal raion (Kulikovi Kopani), therefore, are ethnic Russians not the majority or the largest minority ethnic group. In Kulikovi Kopani, Tatars are 61.2% of the population, and Russians 17.6%.

Shpakovskii raion

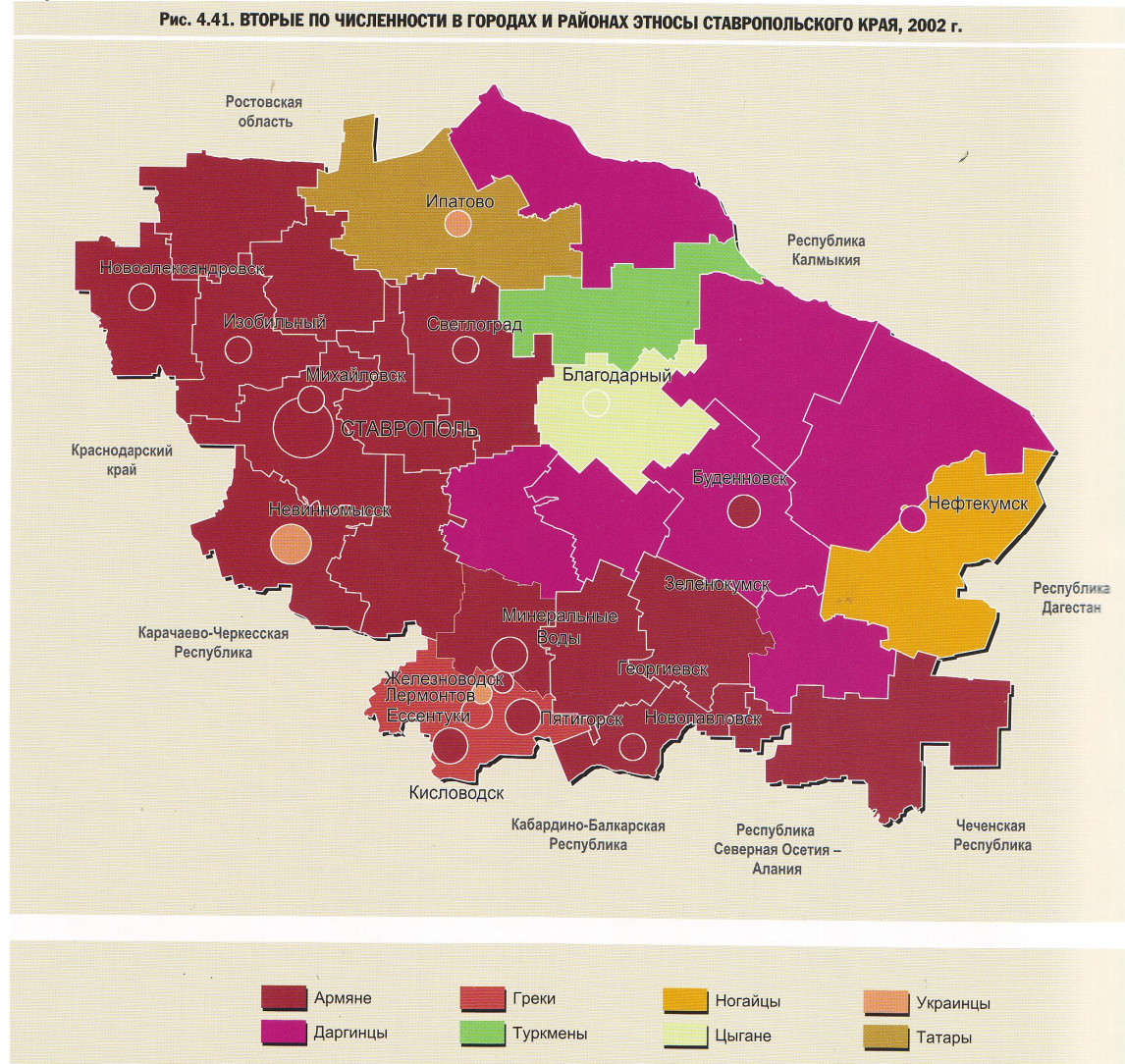
Shpakovskii raion is located in west Stavropol'skii krai, and borders Krasnodar krai. It has a population of 111, 419 people, which is divided between Mikhailovsk *gorod* (60,722 people) and the remaining rural areas (50,697). Ethnic Russians dominate in both Mikhailovsk and the rural areas, with 87.1% of the urban population and 83.1% of the rural population – this compares to 96.2% in 1970 for Shpakovskii raion³⁴. In Mikhailovsk, the next largest ethnic groups are Armenians (7.7%), Gypsies (1.3%), and

³⁴ Mikhailovsk had city status conferred upon it in 1999, and thus comparative data prior to 1999 are unavailable.

Ukrainians (1.2%). In the rural areas, meanwhile, Armenians are the second largest ethnic group (5%), Dargins are the third largest (2%), and Gypsies are the fourth largest (1.5%), with smaller numbers of Chechens (1%) and Ukrainians (1%). Russians are the majority ethnic group in each of Shpakovskii raion's 12 municipal raions, ranging from 75.3% in Nadezhda to 94.6% in Novomar'evskaya. The Armenian population is located primarily in Nadezhda, where it composes 12% of the population.

As the preceding analysis has shown, Russians, despite significant variations in their number and proportion of the local population, are the majority ethnic group in each of Stavropol'skii krai's 26 raions and 19 cities. Notwithstanding Russians, however, the ethnic geography of the krai is complex and far from simple (see, Figure 11). While Armenians are the second largest ethnic group in 14 raions, largely in the west and south of the krai, Dargins (7) and Nogais (1) are the largest minority population in eight raions in the east and north, reflecting the proximity of these raions to Dagestan, and with Tatars, Turkmen and Gypsies each the second largest ethnic group in one raion.

Figure 11. Ethnic Map of Stavropol'skii krai by Second Largest Ethnic Group, by city and raion, 2002



Source: Belozеров, Panin and Chikhichin 2008: 102

4.5.3 City Level Analysis

According to the 2002 Constitution, six cities have a population that is 90% or more ethnic Russian – Ipatovo, Svetlograd, Nevinnomysk, Lermotov, Novoaleksandrovsk, and Izobil'nii. Meanwhile, the largest concentrations of Armenians, the second largest ethnic group in Stavropol'skii krai, (measured as a percentage of the city population) are in the cities of Pyatigorsk (12%), Georgievsk (11%), Kislovodsk (11%), and

Mikhailovsk (8%). Notwithstanding ethnic Russians (who are the largest ethnic group in each of Stavropol'skii krai's 19 cities), Armenians are the second largest ethnic group in 12 cities, Dargins and Ukrainians in 3 cities each, and Gypsies in 1 city (see, Figure 11).

The most 'multi-ethnic' cities in Stavropol'skii krai are Neftekumskii (34% ethnic Russian, 27% ethnic Nogai, and 13% ethnic Dargin), Kurskii (51% ethnic Russian, 14% ethnic Armenian, 9% ethnic Meskhetian Turk, and 5% Chechen), Predgornii (69% ethnic Russian, 16% ethnic Greek, 6% ethnic Armenian), and Stepnovskii (65% ethnic Russian, 11% Dargin, 7% Nogai). These raions are located on Stavropol'skii krai's southern border with the North Caucasus republics and, with the exception of Predgornii (which borders Karachaeno-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria), each is in the south-east of the krai, near the shared borders with Chechnya and Dagestan.

As I mentioned earlier, Stavropol'skii krai categorises its cities two-fold according to their administrative purposes. For example, while Mikhailovsk *gorod* is included within Shpakovskii raion, Stavropol' *gorod*, which is an enclave within Shapovskii raion, is classed as separate to the raion. I now analyse this latter category of city, paying special attention to Stavropol' *gorod*.

Stavropol' gorod

According to the local statistics office, the population of Stavropol' *gorod* in 2007 was 361,721 people. This was an increase from 355,066 people when the most recent All-Russian Census was completed in 2002, and, in turn, an increase from 316,857 people

in 1989 when the last Soviet Census was completed. As a percentage of the krai population, Stavropol' city represented 13.3% in 2007, 13% in 2002, and 12.7% in 1989, making it the largest urban area in the krai.

Geographically, in 2007 the largest population in Stavropol' was concentrated in Promishlennii raion (180,936 people) in the south of the city, followed by Leninskii raion (111,118 people) in the north of the city, and Oktyabrskii raion (69,642 people) in the centre of the city. Given the predominantly administrative nature of the centre of Stavropol', it is not surprising that this raion recorded the lowest population of the three. Unfortunately these data are not disaggregated by ethnicity.

Ethnically, Stavropol' is a multi-ethnic city, with more than 100 nationalities living within the city boundaries. The largest population, of course, are ethnic Russians, who compose 88.7% of the city population (315,044 people) – down from 91.5% (235,496 people) in 1979, and 90.3% (286,351 people) in 1989. Armenians are the second largest population, with 15,144 citizens (4.3% of the population), and Ukrainians are the third largest, with 5,796 citizens (1.6%). These two groups showed contrasting processes in the period 1989 to 2002, with the Armenian population increasing, from 7,167 (2.3%) in 1989, and the Ukrainian population decreasing, from 8,132 (2.6%) in 1989. At the same time, there are smaller ethnic populations, varying from Greeks (2,431), Karachaevo (1,680), Belarussians (1,500), who number well over a thousand, to Polish (131), Chuvash (127), and Kumiks (124), who number a little over a hundred, and further still to smaller ethnic groups. These data suggest that as the population of Stavropol' has increased it has become decoupled from the ethnic Russian population; that is to say

that the ethnic Russian population of Stavropol' has decreased at the same time that the population of Stavropol' has increased.

Budennovsk

In 2007, Budennovsk had an entirely urban population of 65,357 people, down from 65,687 people in 2002. Russians are the majority ethnic group in the city, representing 85.7% of the population (56,318 people), compared with 7.5% of Armenians (4,898 people) and 1.8% Ukrainians (1,185 people). In absolute terms, each of these populations has increased since 1970: from 31,663 people for Russians, 2,559 people from Armenians, and 740 people for Ukrainians. However, while the Russian and Ukrainian proportion of the population has fallen from 1970 (from 88.5% for Russians, and 2.1% for Ukrainians), the Armenian proportion has grown from 7.2%.

Essentuki

Essentuki has an entirely urban population of 81,354 people (2007), a small decrease from 2002 when the population was 81,758 people. In 2002, the population was 79.3% (64,850 people) ethnic Russian, compared with 85.6% (55,562 people) in 1970. As the ethnic Russian proportion of the population has fallen, the Greek and Armenian populations have increased: Greeks from 1.5% (1,004 people) in 1970 to 5.7% (4,660 people) in 2002, and Armenians from 1.8% (1,190 people) to 5.4% (4,382 people) in the same period. There are significant minority populations of Ukrainians (c. 2,000 people) and Azeris (c. 1,500 people).

Georgievsk

Georgievsk has an entirely urban population of 69,276 people (2007). This was an increase from 44,243 people in 1970, but a decrease from 70,575 people in 2002. At the time of the 2002 Census, Russians composed 82.2% of the population (58,024 people), Armenians composed 10.7% (7,530 people), and Ukrainians 1.9% (1,321 people). The Russian proportion of the population has steadily declined over recent decades, from 91.4% in 1970 to 90.2% in 1979 and 85.5% in 1989. At the same time, the Armenian population has increased, from 2% (244 people) in 1970 to 10.7% (7,530 people) in 2002. Ukrainians, by contrast, have decreased from 3.1% (1,368 people) in 1970 to 1.9% (1,321 people) in 2002. There are smaller minorities of Azeris (c. 670 people) and Koreitsi (c. 525 people).

Kislovodsk

Kislovodsk has a population of 134,607, which is split 128,880 people in urban areas, and 5,727 in rural areas (2007). In 2002, Kislovodsk had a population 129,788 people, an increase from 1970 when it was 89,572 people. As the population has grown, the ethnic Russian share of the population has decreased, down from 78.7% (70,509 people) in 1970 to 73.4% (95,315 people) in 2002. At the same time, the Armenian population has grown from 7% (6,289 people) in 1970 to 11.2% (14,475 people) in 2002, and the Karachaevtsi population has also grown, from 1.5% (1,311 people) in 1970 to 4.4% (5,674) in 2002. There are smaller numbers of Georgians (c. 1,400 people) and Abazins (c. 1,300 people), as well as other groups.

Lermontov

Lermontov had a population in 2007 of 24,419 people, which is split 22,357 people in urban areas, and 2,062 people in rural areas. This was an increase from 2002, when the population was 22,964 people. Since 1970, the ethnic Russian proportion of the population has grown from 89.6% (13,499 people) to 90.7% (20,822 people) in 2002. During the same period, the Ukrainian population fell from 860 people (5.7%) to 767 people (3.3%), and the Armenian population increased from 110 people (0.7%) to 434 people (1.9%). There are smaller communities of Belarusians (c. 200 people), Greeks (c. 190 people), and Tatars (150 people).

Mineral'nie Vodi

Mineral'nie Vodi has a population of 89,569 people which is split 82,896 people in urban areas, and 6,673 in rural areas. In turn, the population is divided between Nevinnomissk, which has an urban population of 129,157 people, Mineral'nie Vodi gorod, which has an urban population of 76,238 people, and a further administrative unit within Mineral'nie Vodi, which has an urban population of 6,569 people.

Nevinnomissk

In 2007, Nevinnomissk had an entirely urban population of 129,157 people (2007), which was a decrease from 132,141 people in 2002. According to the 2002 Census, the population was 90.2% ethnic Russian (119,250) – down from 91% (86,723 people) in 1970. Ukrainians are the second largest ethnic group, with 2.7% of the population

(3,593 people), and Armenians the third largest, with 1.8% (2,344 people). Ukrainians and Armenians manifest contrasting processes, however, with Ukrainians now fewer than in 1970 (3,608 people, or 4.2% of the population), and Armenians now larger (478 people, or 0.6% of the population). There are smaller numbers of Belarussians (c. 650 people), Azeris (c. 550 people), Tatars (c. 500 people), Lezgins (c. 500 people) and Gypsies (c. 500 people).

Pyatigorsk

In 2007, Pyatigorsk had a population of 206,268 people, which is split between 193,690 people in urban areas, and 12,578 in rural areas. The urban population is located in Pyatigorsk gorod (139,705), and the largest of its two further administrative units, Goryachevodskii (36,084). The rural population is concentrated in the smaller of the administrative units, Svobodn, which has an urban population of 17,901 people and a rural population of 12,578 people.

According to the 2002 Census, Russians are the largest ethnic group in Pyatigorsk, with 76.2% of the population (107,112 people), followed by Armenians with 8.4% (17,274 people), and Ukrainians with 1.5% (3,100 people). The Russian population has decreased since 1970 as a relative proportion of Pyatigorsk's population, from 82.3% (76,564) in 1970 to 81.9% (83,501 people) in 1979 and 80.5% (100,624 people) in 1989. At the same time, the Armenian population has increase in both absolute and relative terms, from 6.7% in 1970 (6,246 people) to 7.1% (7,269 people) in 1979 and 7.9% (9,838 people) in 1989. The Ukrainian population, by contrast, has decreased from

4.6% (4,308 people) in 1970 to 2.2% (3,100 people) in 2002. There are also significant populations of Azeris (c. 2000 people) and Greeks (c. 1150 people).

Goryachevodskii has a population which is 70.5% ethnic Russian (34,456 people), down from 89% (24,195 people) in 1970 and 86.2% (24,587 people) in 1979. The Armenian population, meanwhile, has grown rapidly, from 472 people (1.7%) in 1970 to 6,105 people (17.8%) in 2002. This same pattern is also visible in Svobodni, where the ethnic Russian population has decreased from 87.4% (10,792 people) in 1970 to 76.6% (13,281 people) in 2002 at the same time as the Armenian population increasing from 2.1% (256 people) in 1970 to 13.6% (2,358 people) in 2002

Zheleznovodsk

Zheleznovodsk has an entirely urban population of 52,541, which is divided between Zheleznovodsk gorod (23,933 people) and a further administrative unit of Inozemtsevo (28,608 people). While the population of Zheleznovodsk has decreased from 25,135 people in 1970 to 23,933 in 2002, the population of Inozemtsevo has increased from 27,110 in 1970 to 28,608 in 2002. In both places, Russians are the dominant ethnic group – 89.5% in Zheleznovodsk (down from 87.1% in 1970) and 79.4% in Inozemtsevo (down from 88.5% in 1970). At the same time, Armenians have increased their proportion of the population in both places – from 1.1% (200 people) in 1970 to 2.3% (578 people) in 2002 in Zheleznovodsk, and from 0.6% (93 people) in 1970 to 8.4% (2,280 people) in 2002. In Zheleznovodsk, Ukrainians are the third largest ethnic group, with 2.1% of the population (532 people), down from 5.4% (1,024 people) in 1970. Whilst, in Inozemtsevo, Greeks are the third

largest group, with 4.7% of the population (1,284 people), up from 4.4% (717 people) in 1970.

4.6 Ethnic Minority Legislation in Stavropol'skii krai

Understanding that ethnic conflict impacts on various aspects of daily life, regional authorities throughout Russia attempt to manage ethnic relations. According to the national and regional policy of Stavropol'skii krai, krai authorities recognise the importance of monitoring and managing ethnic relations, suggesting that specific 'national policy' programmes should pay attention to the experience of ethnic minorities in the labour market, assist in the economic development of national-cultural autonomies, create development programmes for economically 'depressed' areas, create ethnic educational schemes, and develop regional cooperation for the maintenance of peace and stability³⁵. Questions of ethno-national policy are also implicated in other policies, for example with migration policy. The policy "About measures on improvement of work with refugees and the compelled immigrants and their social adaptation in Stavropol'skii krai" (adopted 14 July 1999, Decree No. 421) specified that it was necessary to develop a nationalities policy in view of contemporary migration patterns. At the same time as being economic and socio-cultural concerns, ethnic relations also impact on traditional conceptions of security; the ethno-national policy for Stavropol'skii krai for 2006-2010 recognises the importance of proactivity (rather than reactivity) in the prevention and settlement of ethnic conflicts.

³⁵ See, Osnovnie napravleniya natsional'noi i regional'noi politiki Stavropol'skogo kraya, yablyayushchiesya Prilozheniem No. 1 k Postanovleniyu Gubernatora kraya ot 31 dekabrya 1999 goda No. 798 [Basic directions of the national and regional policy of Stavropol'skii krai, being Appendix 1 of the Regulation of the Gubernator of the krai from 31 December 1999, No. 798], available at: http://www.garant.ru/hotlaw/stav_real/

In the early post-Soviet years, Matveeva (1999: 42) wrote, Stavropol'skii krai was host to numerous Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as a result of the political instability in the North Caucasus that accompanied the collapse of the USSR, with every twelfth migrant in Russia registered there. At the same time, Pallot and Nefedova (2007: 83) note, pressure on agricultural land in south-eastern Stavropol'skii krai increased:

“In parts of Russia where population is growing dynamically, as in the southern cereal producing regions, the fixed amount of land available for distribution as household plots poses a difficult problem for local authorities. In the western districts of Stavropol'skii krai, for example, a combination of high rates of natural increase and in-migration taking place in the context of profit-making large enterprises (that jealously guard their land resource) means that local authorities have limited scope for meeting demand for new or supplementary household plots. In the environs of large cities, local authorities face similar problems although it is often self-imposed since they hold back land that could be allocated as plots in the hope of making money from second home development. However, it would be incorrect for additional arable land. Russia has abundant agricultural land available for individual use and, except where there is competition from other users, there is generally sufficient for households wishing to expand personal subsidiary production to do so. Many loss-making large farms were happy to divest themselves of their least productive hectares. These passed into district reserve land funds and became available for allocation to private farms and for rent. In reality, much reserve land has been abandoned for lack of demand.”

During this period, resentment of North Caucasians in Stavropol'skii krai was high, exacerbated by the Chechen terrorist attacks in Mineral'nye Vody in 1993-4, hostage-taking in Budennovsk in 1995, and a spill-over of crime from the North Caucasus republics. Given this immigration pressure, in 1995 the krai legislature adopted a law on the 'Status of a Resident of Stavropol'skii krai', which stipulated that resident status can be acquired only after seven years' residence in the krai; high tariffs for registration were also introduced (Matveeva 1999: 42). In April 1996, the federal Constitutional Court ruled against the law, but the krai deputies retaliated with the adoption of a strict

Immigration Code, unique in the Russian Federation, which has been applied since February 1997. Today, those individuals who do not hold a residence permit (*propiska*) in Stavropol'skii krai, or otherwise do not hold passports, are subject to open discrimination by krai authorities and in daily life. Without a residence permit individuals are denied the rights of ordinary citizens, unable to own land, rent a house, or occupy a job. In their research on tomato-growing in Novoaleksandrovsk raion, Pallot and Nefedova (2007: 164) note that immigrants are often forced "... to accept ... lowly paid work because they are not passport holders and no one else will employ them. There is a large pool of marginal labour in the south of Russia that is excluded from formal employment either because it does not have the correct documentation and/or because of the racism of potential employers".

After the Budennovsk siege in 1995, the issue of the border between Stavropol'skii krai and the North Caucasus 'proper' became a priority for the Stavropol'skii krai authorities (Matveeva 1999). In this atmosphere, Cossacks gained influence and acquired support from the administration; Petr Fedosov, the Stavropol' Cossack *ataman* (chieftain or leader), was co-opted as a member of the Stavropol'skii krai State Duma in 1996. As well as campaigning for the right to create self-defence units and carry arms, the Cossacks also campaigned for the return to Stavropol'skii krai of the Shelkovskii and Naurskii raions of Chechnya. In 1997, Cossack patrols were put on the shared border between Stavropol'skii krai and Chechnya. While their influence has waned over recent years, Cossacks still remain an important (and divisive) part of the society in Stavropol'skii krai.

Since 1996, authorities in Stavropol'skii krai, in line with the federal law 'About national-cultural autonomy', have allowed national-cultural autonomies to develop in the krai. National-cultural autonomy is seen as a means to satisfy varying ethno-political demands from ethnic minorities, and as a way to achieve interethnic stability and prevent interethnic conflict. At the beginning of 2003, there were 20 national-cultural autonomies in Stavropol'skii krai, representing ethnic minorities including Dargins, Armenians, Greeks, Germans and Turkmen. At the same time, there were over 70 national-cultural organizations, including Slavic organisations, registered in the krai.

Writing in 2007, Astvatsaturova noted that the two main policy documents in the sphere of ethno-nationalism in Stavropol'skii krai were "The basic directions of national and regional policy of Stavropol'skii krai" and "The Complex programme of harmonization of interethnic attitudes in Stavropol'skii krai for 2000-2005" (both adopted on 31 December 1999) (Astvatsaturova 2007). Reminiscent of the Soviet-era process of 'folklorisation' of ethnic minorities (see, Zaslavsky 1994), the Complex programme focussed on the construction of an atmosphere of interethnic harmony, emphasising, for example, the role of festivals and seminars, days of national cultures, cultural societies, and policy-orientated academic conferences. The Complex programme also paid attention to: studying the interethnic situation in the krai; introducing a system of monitoring of interethnic attitudes; and, forecasting and prevention of interethnic conflicts. To realise each of these, krai authorities awarded three contracts to Stavropol' State University (approved on 26 December 2001, Decree No. 320) for projects entitled: "The creation of system of monitoring and forecasting of ethnopolitical and ethnosocial processes in Stavropol'skii krai"; "Ethnic migration in Stavropol'skii krai: problems of adaptation and migratory behaviour of ethnoses"; and "The formation of modern skills

of interethnic interaction in Stavropol'skii krai". More recently, on 26 March 2007, a programme for the "Development of ethno-social and ethno-confessional relations in Stavropol'skii krai between 2007-2009" [*Razvitie etnosotsial'nikh i etnokonfessional'nikh otnoshenii v Stavropol'skom Krae na 2007-2009 godi*] was adopted by Decree No. 163 of the Gubernator of Stavropol'skii krai³⁶. The primary objective of this programme was to create conditions that guarantee equality for all citizens, and emphasised the use of culture as a means to integrate ethnic populations, and an increase in the activity and role of the mass media in reporting ethno-social processes and ethno-confessional attitudes.

An important part of the Complex programme was the creation, in 2005, of the 'Committee of Stavropol'skii krai for National and Cossack affairs' (*Komitet Stavropol'skogo Krai no delam natsional'nostei i kazachestva*)³⁷. This committee complements two other organisations, both of which were created in Stavropol' city in 2007 as a direct outcome of the riots in the summer of that year: the 'Advisory Council for questions of national-ethnic relations under the administration of Stavropol' city' (*'Konsul'tativnii Sovet po voprosam natsional'no-etnicheskikh otnoshenii pri administratsii goroda Stavropol'ya*)³⁸; and the 'Stavropol' city department for questions of national-ethnic relations, public communications, religious organisations and Cossacks' (*Otdel po voprosam natsional'no-etnicheskikh otnoshenii, svyazyam s obshchestvenimi, religioznymi organizatsiyami i kazachestvom administratsii goroda Stavropol'ya*). The Committee is responsible, according to federal law and the legislation of Stavropol'skii krai, for developing policies in the area of national attitudes,

³⁶ The policy is available, in its entirety, at www.stavinvest.ru/docs/kzp_etnic.doc

³⁷ The Committee has a website which is particularly useful, see <http://www.stavkomnat.ru/>

³⁸ The Advisory Board has a website, see <http://stavropol.stavkrai.ru/bezop/pksovet/>

maintaining state support of Cossacks, maintaining relations between religious organisations and enforcement authorities, as well as participating in state policy concerning compatriots abroad. This is manifest most recently in the regional programme “Development of ethnic and ethno-confessional attitudes in Stavropol’skii krai for 2007-2009” (*Razvitie etnicheskikh i etnokonfessional’nikh otnoshenii v Stavropol’skom krae na 2007-2009.*). The Committee, acting within federal law, also coordinates the activities of krai authorities to counteract national and religious extremism. More broadly, the Committee is responsible for: reacting to situations of inter-ethnic tension and inter-ethnic conflicts; developing conflict warning and preventative measures; leading long-term ethnological monitoring; and, cooperating with academics, state government and leaders of ethnic organisations and regional religions. Initially headed by Dr. Vasili Shnukov (2005 – 2009), Dr. Boris Aleksandrovich Kalinin became the current chairman of the Committee in July 2009. One of Kalinin’s first acts after becoming chairman was to visit, in August 2009, southern and eastern Stavropol’skii krai, where interethnic relations are particularly tense and where there had been a large-scale interethnic riot in June in Irgakli, Stepnovksii *raion*, between Dargins and Nogais.

4.7 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I have outlined the national and regional context within which demographic processes occur in Stavropol’skii krai. These processes are not abstract or remote, but are real and lived for citizens in the krai, affecting their daily lives. For much of the post-Soviet period, the ethnic Russian population in Stavropol’skii krai has increased in contrast to Russia as a whole. To be sure, the ethnic Russian population in

Stavropol'skii steadily increased from 1991 to 1999, before decreasing from 2001 to 2007, increasing in 2008 and remaining stable in 2009. At the same time, the post-Soviet conflicts in Chechnya and wider instability in Dagestan and Ingushetia have intensified well-established migration patterns of ethnic Caucasians into the krai. This has led to conflict over territory and resources, in particular over land in the south and east of the krai where raions have seen large-scale migration of Avars, Dargins, and Nogai from Dagestan. In most raions in Stavropol'skii krai, the ethnic Russian population increased between 1989 and 2002, albeit at a rate slower than that of other ethnicities. This has led to a situation where population growth has become decoupled from the ethnic Russian population; that is to say that the ethnic Russian population has slowly increased in absolute terms but rapidly decreased as a proportion of the population.

These processes (as well as others) have created situations in which ethnicity occurs in a radical context.

Chapter 5. A Contested Landscape: Memory and Alexei Ermolov in Stavropol'skii krai

Foxall, A. 'A Contested Landscape: Memory and Alexei Ermolov in Stavropol'skii krai', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, (submitted)

Abstract: Much recent literature in cultural, political and social geography has considered the relationship of memory, urban landscape, and geopolitics. This paper interrogates such literature through exploring the complex materialisation of memorialisation in a North Caucasian landscape. Using the example of the statue of General Alexei Ermolov in Stavropol', a close reading of the city landscape reveals interethnic tensions over differing interpretations of the life and history of the person upon whom the statue is based. The existence of a rich literature on Ermolov and the Russian colonial experience in the North Caucasus helps to explain such tensions. The symbolic landscape of Stavropol'skii krai plays an important role in the cultural and political system of the multi-ethnic region; it is both an arena through which Russian national political identity is communicated with people and produced and reproduced, and an arena through which differing Russian citizens compete with each other for authority on historical narratives which operate at and between a number of scales. While these efforts function as one of a range of power practices visible in contemporary Russia, my purpose here is to show how ordinary people's divergent and critical readings of the landscapes message can shed light on the workings and failures of these processes. Although this paper is about Stavropol'skii krai, the observations which this paper makes have implications for how other landscapes and monuments might be understood.

5.1 Introduction

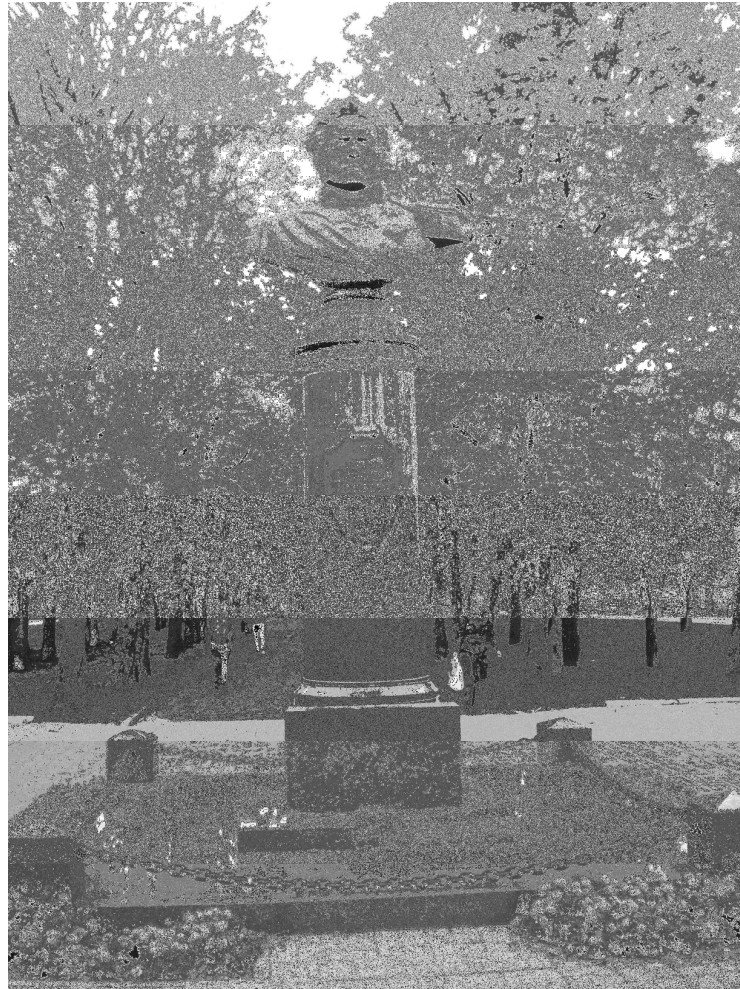


Figure 12. ‘General Ermolov, Aleksei Petrovich 1777-1861’. (Authors own photograph)

On *Prospekt Karla Marksa* (Karl Marx Prospect) in Stavropol’, Russia, a statue stands out. It is a simple bust, commemorating the life of General Alexei Ermolov (1777 – 1861). It is known locally as *Pamyatnik Ermolovu* (‘Monument to Ermolov³⁹’).

Drawing on discussions of geography, ethno-nationalism, and Russian history, this paper is primarily concerned with contestations over memory in the urban landscape

³⁹ Ermolov’s name can also be spelt ‘Yermolov’. The discrepancy lies in the transliteration of the Russian letter ‘E’ which can be rendered ‘E’ or ‘Ye’ depending on the transliteration style.

within the context of interethnic conflict and tension. Reflections on the Ermolov statue by ordinary Russian citizens, primarily ethnic Caucasians, go some way to explaining how it embodies the complex materiality of memorialisation, and how the statue affects those who live in Stavropol'; how interethnic tensions have become woven into the textures of the everyday urban landscape. In 2007, in the midst of six weeks of violent interethnic rioting in Stavropol' (see, Foxall 2010), the statue became a focal point of tensions as ethnic Russian citizens (including ethnic Russian nationalists) came together to celebrate the 230th anniversary of Ermolov and ethnic Caucasians protested against his role in the Russian colonisation of the North Caucasus⁴⁰. The symbolic meanings of this are readily apparent. As cultural and social geographers writing on the urban landscape have charted, the cityscape is a space of commemoration, communication, competition and contestation. The Ermolov statue forces those who walk through the streets of Stavropol' to form their own interpretation of Russian history. The urban landscape therefore becomes a medium through which the authority of Russian 'history' is articulated, reproduced, and challenged, and one open to disparate readings and interventions by oppositional groups and ordinary people, thus potentially undermining dominant relations of power in both society and the nation-state project more broadly.

The paper follows work over two years in Stavropol' and draws on more than 75 semi-structured interviews and numerous informal discussions conducted in 2008 and 2009. Although this paper is about Stavropol'skii krai, the observations which this paper makes have implications for how other landscapes, monuments, and places might be understood.

⁴⁰ Coincidentally, Stavropol' was established in 1777 and also celebrated its 230th birthday in 2007 (see, Foxall 2009).

5.2 Geography and Memorialisation

The challenge of producing narratives of memory has been registered across various disciplines and in a range of topics, including: nationalism and wars of independence (e.g., Dabrowski 2004; Foote 2003; Johnson 1995, 1994); the First and Second World Wars (e.g., Muzaini and Yeoh 2005a, 2005b; Till 2005; Ashplant, Dawson and Roper 2001); the Holocaust (Hornstein and Jacobwitz 2003; Marcuse 2001; Van Pelt and Dwork 1996); and post-Soviet Europe (Rev 2005; Light 2004; Forest and Johnson 2002; Foote, Toth and Arvey 2000)⁴¹. Much recent work on memory has focussed almost exclusively on the monumental -- grand monuments, memorials, and places of memory (Stangl 2008; Forest and Johnson 2002; Atkinson and Cosgrove 1998). In tandem with historians, political scientists, sociologists, and others, human geographers have long scrutinised monuments as embodiments of official memory and history. Within this literature, issues surrounding the memorialisation of contested historical figures have received considerable attention. In the US, for example, studies have explored the naming of streets after Martin Luther King Jr (Alderman 2003; 2008; Mitchelson, Alderman and Popke 2007; Alderman, Spina and Mitchell 2008), whilst others have explored the memorialisation of Nathan Bedford Smith, a Confederation general and early leader of the Klu-Klux Klan (Alderman and Dwyer 2004). Like Ermolov, statues of Forrest carry oppressive connotations for some groups, particularly Blacks, and are invariably designed to be substantial and permanent structures: they are, in Johnson's (1995) words, artefacts 'cast in stone'.

⁴¹ It is important to note that such literature is multidisciplinary, there is diversity in approaches to theory and empirical evidence, and so does not constitute a unified canon of work. For an overview of this literature, see Foote and Azaryahu (2007).

With these literatures in mind, it is my intention to draw on studies on the monumentalisation (commemoration) of great leaders and martyrs in the urban landscape to bring this into closer and more productive dialogue with geopolitics and studies of nationalism, in particular the role of ethnicity in geopolitics and the role of the urban landscape in nationalism.

In Russia, the specific context of monumentalisation is heavily influenced by the legacy of the USSR. The cults of Lenin and Stalin are well known, but recent research has increased understanding by exploring controversies surrounding the statue of Felix Dzerzhinsky in Moscow's Lubyanka Square (Forest and Johnson 2002) and elsewhere (Forest, Johnson and Till 2004). In their work on key Soviet monuments and memorials in Moscow in the 1990s, Forest and Johnson (2002: 528) write that "Monuments, memorials, museums, and place names have traditionally played a central role in defining Russian national identity", suggesting that "control over symbolic public spaces is exceptionally important in Russian politics". Following this, Forest, Johnson and Till (2004: 371) note that "many Russian elites and publics would not only prefer to forget the injustices of the past, but to symbolically restore their perpetrators to a place of honour"; a sentiment which has special purchase for the Ermolov statue in Stavropol'. As Bilig's (1995) famous argument goes, monuments (as well as other physical images, for example, buildings and scenes) encountered in everyday life are important as they constitute a 'banal' form of nationalism. Within human geography, Johnson (2004), in particular, has addressed the ways in which identity at the *popular* level and *everyday* scale is constructed, maintained or challenged⁴², emphasising that:

⁴² The work of Brian Osbourne is also particularly useful in explicating the role of monumentalism, both hegemonic and everyday, in the identity-project. See, for example, Osbourne (2001 and 2002).

“the role of public sculpture and monumental architecture in framing the geographies of everyday life and in anchoring our collective social memory cannot be underestimated” (Johnson 2004: 316).

Duncan (1990: 22) has written that memory and representation of the past is “an important political resource”, while Johnson (2004: 318) explains that “re-membering the past – the putting together of its constituent parts into a single, coherent narrative – has been profoundly significant for the emergence of a popular nationalist identity”. This is not unique, Agnew argues (2004: 233), as “[t]ying the nation to territory has often involved identifying a prototypical landscape as representative of the collective identity”. Subsequently, Forest and Johnson (2002: 530) propose that, “The glorification of selected Tsarist-era sites reflects the desire of many nationalistic politicians to co-opt and redefine post-Soviet Russian national identity by appealing to deeply held beliefs about Russia’s unique and important spiritual and cultural heritage”, arguing that these sites often “emphasize the ‘best’ of Russia’s ethnic and imperial past”.

Yet, Forest and Johnson’s (Ibid.) emphasis on the role of monuments in the post-Soviet Russian nation-building process is at odds with most literature on nationalism, which has overlooked the central role of cities and the ‘urban’ in facilitating nation and state building, and in maintaining national consciousness and identity (Yiftchal and Yacobi 2003). Critical writings on cities share an understanding that they are by and large the most elaborate and advanced form of modernity, modernization projects, politics, and progress as perceived by the enlightenment project (Harvey 1989). However, cities, particularly in conditions of modernity and postmodernity, Luz (2008: 1040) writes, “are fast becoming sites of extreme inequality and contestations between those who

have and those who have not”, which can be seen in increasing instances of interethnic violence and discrimination. In this context Sibley (1996: 86, 107 and 108) articulates well the contradictions between national xenophobia and the exigencies of capitalist developments:

“The built environment is ... implicated in the construction of otherness and deviancy. Pure space exposes difference and facilitates the policing of boundaries ... This xenophobia is based ... on a purified national identity; (it) sits uneasily with economic flows and cultural fusions, which are generated by global capitalism. The myth of cultural homogeneity is needed to sustain the nation-state ... It is convenient to have an alien other hovering on the margins.”

One way in which the role of the urban in the nation-building process has been registered is in geopolitics. Owing to its analytical flexibility, geopolitics has long recognised and incorporated ethnicity as a salient factor influencing politics. Yet, as Bassin (2009: 132) notes, “geopolitical theory has always fumbled with ethnicity”, finding it an awkward factor to assimilate into its own framework. At the same time, geography has been slow to respond to the growing importance of ethno-nationalism in the post-Soviet space. One grounded way in which geopolitics can engage with ethnicity is through the study of everyday interethnic relations. The Ermolov statue in Stavropol’ thus serves as a highly condensed case study that fittingly addresses all of the above characteristics.

In their essay *Toward a Geography of Memory: Geographical Dimensions of Public Memory and Commemoration*, Foote and Azaryahu (2007) suggest three future directions for geographical research on the ‘geography of memory’. The first is the need “to expand the range of cases available for comparative analysis, particularly those from outside Europe and North America” (Ibid.: 132). The second is that “more attention

might be focussed on events ... whose meanings cross international borders and require negotiations among nations that were once enemies” (Ibid.). The final direction is that research should “benefit from interdisciplinary perspectives which consider how public memory and commemorations are expressed across a wider range of cultural practices and media and how space and place interact with these” (Ibid.: 133).

With all of this in mind, this paper seeks to connect with each of Foote and Azaryahu’s (2007) suggestions through an account that shifts geographical and temporal scales and perspectives, and through considering the role of the urban monument in the ethno-national nation-building project. My paper considers what happens to existing literatures when monuments are located in multi-ethnic regions with a history of colonisation and genocide, war and peace, and when the monument is of a figure involved in those processes, but annexed by a (post-communist) state for nation-building processes? The existence of a rich literature on Ermolov and the Russian colonial experience in the North Caucasus open up possibilities and politics for answering this question, as does work under the label of ‘psychogeography’. Work in ‘psychogeography’ has foregrounded the politics and experiences of walking in Western cities, emphasising how monuments “can foster sharper and greater awareness of both our community and ourselves as members of that community” (Sibley 2009). Originally concerned with 1950s and 1960s Paris, Coverley (2006: 10) notes that:

“Debord’s oft-repeated ‘definition’ of psychogeography describes ‘The study of specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organised or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals’ ... and, in broad terms, psychogeography is, as the name suggests, the point at which psychology and geography collide, a means of exploring the behavioural impact of urban place”.

This work and political geographies (particularly those on military geographies and postcolonialism) reinforce the possibilities for answering the above question. A key target of all of this is the aspiration to connect recent debates about ethnicity in geopolitics with those around memory and the urban landscape in Russia, and the North Caucasus more specifically. The paper therefore aims to illustrate how the repercussions of interethnic relations (and conflict) are folded into the texture of everyday urban life in a provincial Russian city and thereby how people in Stavropol' are constantly touched by multiple overlapping geographies of meaning.

5.3 Stavropol'skii krai

Located in southern Russia, Stavropol'skii krai "occupies a special place in the strategy for Russia's territorial development because of its contemporary geopolitical position, at the centre of the North Caucasus, contiguous to a majority of the republics of the area" (O'Loughlin, Panin, and Wittmer 2007: 250). In many respects, the situation in Stavropol'skii krai serves as a bellwether for both ethnic Russians and non-ethnic Russians in Russia. Stavropol'skii krai borders five of the seven republics in the North Caucasus (Dagestan, Chechnya, North Ossetia-Alania, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Karachaevo-Cherkessia) (see, Figure 13), and the mountains of the Caucasus are in close view, a tangible if unnecessary reminder that this is a geographic periphery. From the competing governmentalities of Ottoman, Persian, Tsarist, Soviet, and Russian Empires, to Soviet-era border changes, the North Caucasus (and its spatiality) has long been a site of contestation⁴³ (Grant 2009: xiv). As has been noted elsewhere, the

⁴³ And this contestation continues today. On 19 January 2010, President Medvedev divided up the Southern Federal District (SFD) to create the North Caucasus Federal District (NCFD), appointing Alexander Khloponin as its envoy (<http://news.kremlin.ru/transcripts/6664>). This process of *geo-graphing*

meaning of the border between Stavropol'skii krai and the North Caucasian republics is in flux, and in daily life its significance is increasingly important (Rikhlin 2005; Markedonov 2007 and 2009). Markedonov (2009) has written that “Stavropol’ has become a frontier, a unique border line dividing ‘the Russian world’ and ‘the Caucasus world’”.

Figure 13. A map of Stavropol'skii krai and the North Caucasus



While traditionally considered a multi-ethnic region, because of its attractive urban and rural opportunities for employment in the immediate vicinity of zones of recent interethnic conflict, Stavropol'skii krai has become a primary destination for migrants

[earth writing] represents the latest in a long series of attempts by Russia to control the most restless of its regions. And whilst Khloponin's appointment was notable for a number of reasons, most notable was Medvedev's decision to identify Stavropol'skii krai with the North Caucasus republics and centre the NCFD on Pyatigorsk, in southern Stavropol'skii krai.

from the ethnic republics of the North Caucasus (see, O'Loughlin, Panin and Wittmer 2007). Over the period 1970-2006, the ethnic structure of Stavropol'skii krai's population changed more dynamically than any of the other North Caucasian territories, which is clearly evident in the growing territorial and ethnic differentiation in the krai's population (Belozerov 2005). In the 1990s, this process of ethnic segregation (Kolossoy, Galkina and Grindatch 2001) led to calls for combining ethnic Russian populated areas of neighbouring republics (in particular, Chechnya and Dagestan) with Stavropol'skii krai (Matveeva 1999).

To live in Stavropol'skii krai is to live in one of the most strategically important and ethnically diverse regions of Russia⁴⁴, and the krai is both an articulation of Russia's geopolitical situation and a reflection of how Russia treats its own citizens. The krai is dominated by ethnic Russians -- 81.6% of Stavropol'skii krai's 2,735,139 population is ethnic Russian (according to the 2002 Russian Census) -- but within the North Caucasus in which the ethnic Russian population, already a minority, is rapidly declining (see, Belozerov 2005)⁴⁵. Today, having fled the conflict in Chechnya and being discriminated against in everyday life (Kozhevnikova 2009), many ethnic Caucasians nevertheless remain politically active and engaged. This can be seen in their protests against the memorialisation of the Stavropol'skii krai landscape.

⁴⁴ The 2002 Russian Census recorded over 140 different ethnic groups in Stavropol'skii krai, 33 of which had more than two thousand people each.

⁴⁵ According to the 2002 Census, the population of the North Caucasus (in its Federal District guise) was 8.9 million people, of which 2.9 million (33.45%) were ethnic Russians. The geographical distribution of the ethnic Russian population in the NCFD varies from 81.6% in Stavropol'skii krai to 1.2% in Ingushetia.

5.4 Ermolov, Russia and the North Caucasus

Coinciding with Russia's search for a post-Soviet identity, the Two Chechen Wars, and more recent geopolitical instability in the North Caucasus, a new flush of interest in General Alexei Ermolov has appeared (see, King 2008 and Mikaberidze 2005). At the same time, there has been a proliferation of 'far right' discourse in Russia that has read and adapted Ermolov's nineteenth century actions into a twenty-first century context. The malleability of Ermolov, *who* he was and *what* he did, renders him a frequent (and repeated) point of departure in Russian historical and political writings on both Stavropol'skii krai (Krugov 2001) and the North Caucasus region more broadly (Gammer 2003), and he often features in Russian military discourses surrounding the region (Trenin and Malashenko 2004).

Ermolov was a key actor in Russia's conquest of the North Caucasus from the early nineteenth century onwards. Upon being appointed Governor of Georgia and the Caucasus by Tsar Alexander I in 1816, Ermolov's main tasks were to secure Russia's hold over the South Caucasus (recently conquered in wars with the Qajars [1805-13] and the Ottomans [1807-12]), to occupy the Caucasus mountain range (which separated Russia from the South Caucasus), and to subdue the Muslim peoples living in the Caucasus mountains (Gammer 2003, page 178). In undertaking these tasks, Ermolov (based from the military garrison of Stavropol') employed "a comprehensive strategy for the subjugation of the Caucasus, and his ruthless methods would be used, in one form or another, by tsarists, Bolsheviks, and Russian generals well into the twenty-first century" (King 2008, page 45). As King (2008, page 46) has noted, Ermolov "saw himself as an imperial commander, one serving on the very edge of civilisation" in

which Russia had to be willing to use barbaric tactics against the ‘barbarians’ themselves. Ermolov once vowed:

“No worthy officer will die under my watch without revenge ...
Rebel villages will be torn up and burned, gardens and vineyards
will be cut to the root, and many years may pass before the
traitors evolve to a primitive state. Extreme poverty will be their
punishment” (quoted in Grant 2009, page 48)

While such a comprehensive strategy -- which included the systematic burning of villages, forced mass deportations, and the settlement of Cossacks on lands vacated by ethnic Caucasians (in particular, Chechens) -- was celebrated for its role in ‘civilising’ the North Caucasus, it has been called “state-sponsored terrorism” (King 2008, page 45) and “genocide” (Hosking 1997, page 22) by contemporary writers⁴⁶. Ermolov’s actions were hailed by many of his contemporaries, including the playwright Alexandr Griboedoev who described Ermolov’s actions as the “drumbeat of Enlightenment” (quoted in Wood 2007, page 21)⁴⁷. Such attitudes, however, overlook events such as those of 27 September 1819 when General Sysoev, following orders from Ermolov, ordered his troops to massacre all men, women and children in the Chechen village of Dadi Yurt (Gammer 2006, page 35): a tragedy, Russell (2007, page 30) notes, “seared into the cultural memory of the Chechens as firmly as the Stalinist atrocity at Khaybakh

⁴⁶ As Grant (2009, page 50) explains though, Ermolov’s violent actions were in no-way incompatible with a language of generosity. Ermolov once said: “I highly approve of the return of female captives, to say nothing of the liberation of captives in general, for it is helpful to persuade others that Russians generously make a gift of life itself [что русские великодushно дарюиut i samuiu zhizn’] to those who put up resistance”.

⁴⁷ Alexander Pushkin so admired Ermolov’s actions in the Caucasus that in his poem ‘The Prisoner of the Caucasus’ [*Kavkazskii Plennik*] (published 1820-21) he wrote: “Submit and bow your snowy head / Oh Caucasus, Yermolov marches”.

during the 1944 deportations, but rarely remembered, if at all, in Russian history books”.

Wood (2007, page 20) writes that “Russian policy [in the North Caucasus] was personified by General Aleksei [sic] Ermolov”, and Ermolov himself once remarked that “I desire that the terror of my name should guard our frontiers with more potential than chains or fortresses, that my word should be for the natives a law more inevitable than death” (quoted in Russell 2007, page 31). Of all the Caucasian peoples, his view of Chechens was particularly dismissive; he thought them to be the “most evil of all the bandits who attack the [Caucasian] Line [of military garrisons] ... Chechnya can be rightly called the nest of all bandits” (quoted in Mikaberidze 2005, page 288). In 1818, he wrote to Tsar Alexander I commenting that he “would find no peace whilst a single Chechen remained alive” (quoted in Bennisen 1999, page 536).

The time Ermolov spent in the North Caucasus marked the start of a long series of wars of Russian conquest in the region, and would only come to a close only in 1864⁴⁸. The Caucasian War was the longest running conflict in the history of Imperial Russia, and the North Caucasus continues to plague practitioners of statecraft in Russia today. When Ermolov left his post in the Caucasus in 1827, the political landscape of the North Caucasus was vastly different to that when he was appointed: King (2008, page 46) notes how, “Through Ermolov’s efforts, Russia’s possessions in the [North]

⁴⁸ There has been much recent debate amongst historians about the exact duration of the ‘Caucasus War’. As Grant (2009, page xvi) explains, questions such as “Did the Caucasian War start in 1801, when Georgian rulers first pledged loyalty to the Russian Empire, or in 1817, when the policies of Ermolov came into play? Did it end in 1859, with the capture of Caucasus rebel leader Imam Shamil, or in 1864, with the more decisive Russian military victories over the remaining rebel forces?” reveal a concept of sovereignty that “understands conquest to be finite and the question of sovereignty to be closed”. .

Caucasus moved from being part of a pre-modern imperial order toward becoming, for better or worse, part of a fitfully modern one”. Even after Ermolov left the North Caucasus, his policies remained in force. As Woods (2007, page 22) notes, “their immediate effect was to dispossess and enrage an entire population; but they also had longer-term sociological consequences that only increased the likelihood of resistance”. While this brief overview makes no claim to do justice to the horror experienced by North Caucasian peoples as a result of Ermolov’s policies, it gives some indication of the political geography surrounding the history.

5.5 Stavropol’s Geography: Ermolov’s Presences⁴⁹

Like most Russian urban spaces, Stavropol’s landscape is one of public memory and memorialisation, the prevailing messages of which stress Tsarist and Soviet histories. As Foote and Azaryahu (2007: 127) note, “public memory might be conceived of as a matrix in which time and space are used separately and in combination to embed shared historical experiences and a sense of a shared past in the public life of a community”. Events such as memorial days – *Den’ Zashchitnika Otechestva* (Defender of the Fatherland Day) on 23 February and *Den’ Pobedy* (Victory Day) on 9 May -- festivals – *Den’ kraya* (Krai Day) on 19 May, and *Den’ goroda* (City Day) on the third Saturday in September -- and other commemorative rituals -- *Den’ Rossii* (Russia Day) on 12 June, and *Den’ Harodnogo Edinstva* (Day of National Unity) on 4 November -- help to link

⁴⁹ Notwithstanding the statue (which I go on to describe), Ermolov has other presences in contemporary Stavropol’skii krai. Of course, many of these are more ‘ordinary’ and less permanent than the statue. Thus, Ermolov is remembered annually by his many (nationalist) followers at the Ermolov Fest (Ermolov Festival), held most recently in Stavropol’ on 24 October 2009 (see, http://www.soprotivlenie.su/slovo/ermolov_fest_v_stavropole.html). There is a Stavropol’-based Russian nationalist organisation called Front imeni Generala Ermolova [General Ermolov Front] (see, <http://ermolovfront.nm.ru/>). And a Cossack battalion, comprised of Terek and other Cossacks from Stavropol’skii krai, named after Ermolov [Batalion Ermolov] fought in Grozny, Bamut and Achkhoy-Martan during the First Chechen War.

memory to the regularity of the weekly, monthly and yearly calendar with other anniversaries celebrated at still longer intervals.

At the same time, street names serve “a commemorative function but belong to the realm of language” (Foote and Azaryahu 2007: 128). While the primary function of memorial days is symbolic, street names have a well-defined function: to distinguish between places and provide spatial orientation. However, when invested with commemorative functions, street names introduce an official version of history into everyday life in a way that seems totally detached from ideological contexts. Azaryahu (1996; 1986) has shown how commemorative street names not only perpetuate in the landscape the memory of historical figures and events found worthy of public remembering by the agencies in charge, but also are instrumental in the reification of these figures and events. Stavropol’ has a number of street names which link the present spatial structure of the settlement to Tsarist and Soviet histories. For example, like most Russian urban settlements, the central square in Stavropol’ is called *Ploshad Lenina* (Lenin Square) and is surrounded by four streets: *Ulitsa Lenin* (Lenin Street), *Ulitsa Derzhinskogo* (Derzhinskii Street), *Ulitsa Marshala Zhukova* (Marshall Zhukov Street) and *Ulitsa Atrem* (Artem Street). Only one of which (*Ulitsa Artema*) is not named after a key figure of Soviet history. Other notable streets include: *Prospekt Karla Marksa* (Karl Marx Prospect), *Ulitsa Lermontov* (Lermontov Street), *Ulitsa Lomonosova* (Lomonosov Street) and *Prospekt Oktab’rskaya Revolutsii* (October Revolution Prospect). Although often assumed to be innocent, the selection of these names is not simply a by-product of urban planning but a product of histories of struggle between competing authorities over the power to organise and legitimate ‘history’. They are also

indicative of the wider practices which govern public memory in the North Caucasus, and commemorative traditions and trends in public art in Stavropol’.

Unlike those mentioned above, General Alexei Ermolov does not have a street named after him in Stavropol’⁵⁰. Rather, Ermolov’s enduring presence in Stavropol’ is in the statue described at the outset and shown in Figure 12. Designed by Georgii Myasnikov, the statue was erected on 19 September 1998. Statues, Johnson (1994: 51) writes, “have [long] been the foci for collective participation in the politics and public life of towns, cities, and states”. As part of the urban landscape, they act not only as concentrated nodes but also as circuits of memory where individual elements can be jettisoned from popular consciousness:

“*Pamyatnik Ermolova* is important, to be frank, it is part our identity and the identity of the region”

- Russian Male, 23, 2008 Interview

Interpreted as a ‘symbol’ of Russian colonial policy in the North Caucasus, the Ermolov statue is viewed with disdain and hatred by many Caucasians who see Ermolov as embodying the violence of the Caucasian Wars:

“I studied history and I can tell you that Ermolov actually was the perpetrator of genocide against Caucasian people [*genotsida protiv kavkazskikh narodov*]. Frankly speaking, personally I consider the monument to ‘the hero’ of the Caucasian Wars an attempt to start interethnic conflict and breakup interethnic harmony. The authorities should think a hundred times about the effect the monument has for representatives of other regions of the south of Russia: Chechens, Kabardians, Circassians, whose *auls* were ruined and destroyed by this general, this executioner. Only once they have thought about this, should the authorities then put up monuments”.

⁵⁰ There are numerous examples of Ulitsa Ermolova (Ermolov Street) elsewhere in Stavropol’skii krai, most notably in Essentukki.

- Chechen Female, 18, 2008 Interview

Writing on ‘spatial architectonics’, Henri Lefebvre (1991) explains that monuments inherently embody an “*horizon of meanings*: a specific or indefinite multiplicity of meanings, a shifting hierarchy in which now one, now another meaning comes momentarily to the fore”. Recognising this, Johnson (2004: 230) notes that memory recalls not only times past, but also “spaces past where the imaginative geography of previous events is in constant dialogue with the current metaphorical and literal spatial setting of the memory-makers”. Thus, that which the monument represents is also bound up in complex ‘horizons of meaning’. Much like the Caucasian War, the 1944/45 mass deportations during the *Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voini* (‘Great Patriotic War’) are central to the public memory of many Caucasians who live in Stavropol’, and bound up temporally and spatially. Yet the importance of the deportations is not constant and has fallen in the post-Soviet period. At the same time, the role of Ermolov in ‘public memory’ has increased:

“It [the deportations] is important. But at present it is less important than many other things. The conflict over Prigorodny Raion for example pre-dates the deportations ... There was the problem that there was no town in Ingushetia to be its capital. There were discussions in Vladikavkaz and Ordzhonikidze and then the deportations happened, and the deportations were exploited in the 1990s. Nowadays everybody acknowledges that it was an illegal action. The generation changed. Many Ingush people during the Soviet period went straight from Kazakhstan to university in Moscow before coming back here. They realise that nothing can be got from the deportations in a political sense now. Nowadays the Caucasian War is most important. People are beginning to talk about Ermolov again.”

- Russian Male, 68, 2008 Interview

One of the greatest challenges in Stavropol’ is the representation of the multi-ethnic history of the region within the context of contemporary Russian politics and the

widespread *Kavkazofobiya* (Caucasophobia) which permeates Russian society. In October 2002, Lyudmilla Alekseyeva, Chair of the Moscow Helsinki Group, identified *Kavkazofobiya* as “definitely the most serious problem that Russia is faced with today. It is very widespread among the population in general, at all levels” (quoted in Russell 2005: 112). In Stavropol’skii krai, the situation is particularly acute. Reports from both SOVA⁵¹ (see, Kozhevnikova 2009) and EAWARN⁵² suggest that ethnic conflict in the region is increasing both in frequency and intensity. However, exact figures for instances of ethnic conflict and discrimination against ethnic minorities are hard to obtain due to chronic under-reporting. The power of names and statues in the Stavropol’ landscape reinforces this conflict through simultaneously glorifying ‘great’ Russia [*Veliki Rossii*] and demonising people of Caucasian nationality [*litsa kavkazskoi natsional’nosti*]. Whenever ethnic conflict has occurred in Stavropol’ since 1998, the Ermolov statue has become a focal point of ethnic tension. One person with whom I spoke said:

“Of course nowadays at the federal level of government there is one elected leader. He was President and now he is Prime Minister. There are no other elections for the government. Only this one. So they [regional government] are trying to do their best for Moscow. To show to Moscow that the region is ok and there are no problems. If there are any problems then they will be solved from Moscow. But no problems reflect the good work of the regional governmental structures. That’s why they are using the civil argument [in ethnic clashes]. Of course, some conflicts are just civil. But not all. At some stage a conflict grows beyond being civil to be an ethnic one. And if, like in 2007, there are thousands of people on the street fighting and conducting pogroms [*pogromi*] then it is not a civil problem. The ethnic problems here [in Stavropol’] are greater because they are not just over a girl or opposition at work. Often the basis is history. The

⁵¹ Formed in 2002, SOVA is a human rights NGO and think tank, based in Moscow. It conducts sociological research on the development of nationalism and racism in contemporary Russia. See, <http://sova-center.ru>

⁵² Formed in 1993, EAWARN (Network for Ethnic Monitoring and Early Warning) is an independent expert organization affiliated to the Institute for Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IEA RAS). Registered as a regional NGO in 1999, EAWARN monitors the ethno-political situation in Russia and other post-Soviet states. See, <http://eawarn.ru>

role of *Pamyatnik Ermolov* shows this. It also shows that the governmental [*vlast'i*] structure sometimes doesn't work"

- Chechen Male, 47, 2008 Interview

The Ermolov statue highlights what is a central problem of memorialisation, namely how the memorial is *consumed* by the public. This problem is particularly manifest on 4 June, Ermolov's birthday. Large-numbers of Russians gather at the statue to celebrate this occasion:

"On 4th June it is [Aleksey Petrovich] Ermolov's birthday. It is a celebration for us, and we go to the statue of Ermolov to undertake our patriotic duty to remember who it was who stopped the Caucasian War. We take flowers and other gifts to his statue."

- Russian Male, 52, 2008 Interview

"What is the problem? This is Russia. Ermolov was Russian. It is our right to celebrate Ermolov's birthday. He is a hero for us. He stopped the Caucasian Wars and made southern Russia a peaceful place. There is nothing wrong with Ermolov."

- Russian Male, 25, 2007 Interview

It is redundant to observe that, in contemporary Russia, it would be impossible for a large gathering of people to take place without a large security presence, or without the gathering being officially sanctioned by the local authorities. Despite having the 'freedom of assembly' guaranteed by Article 31 of the Russian Federation Constitution, as well as by Russia's international legal obligations to ensure freedom of assembly, Russian authorities frequently (and often brutally) intervene to break-up meetings, rallies, demonstrations and other gatherings⁵³ thus reinforcing what Freedom House (2010) calls "the authoritative and undemocratic atmosphere that persists in Russia

⁵³ 'Strategiya-31' [Strategy-31] is a series of civic protests to support the right to peaceful assembly in Russia which have been held since 31 July 2009 in Moscow, on Triumfalnaya Square, on the 31st of every month with 31 days. Initiated by Eduard Limonov (one of the leaders of 'The Other Russia' coalition), Strategy-31 is supported by prominent Russian human rights organisations, including the Moscow Helsinki Group, and the human rights centre 'Memorial'. See, <http://strategy-31.ru>

today”. While it goes without saying that the safety of those taking part in the gathering is paramount, authorities in Stavropol’ increasingly prohibit Caucasians from gathering at the statue to protest about Ermolov.

“We are in a difficult place. It is difficult enough for Caucasians in Russia today without this statue reminding us of what Ermolov did to our ancestors. We are Caucasians, yes. But we are also Russian citizens. This means that we have the same rights as all Russian citizens. It is our right to protest.”

- Chechen Male, 56, 2008 Interview

“There are certain events in the calendar which are important for Caucasians in the region. For example, on 4 June Russians celebrate the birthday of Ermolov. It is important for us to protest on this day against the genocide which he committed in the nineteenth century.”

- Ingush Male, 58, 2008 Interview

Writing about the symbolic power of commemorations, Bodnar (1992) notes that through its combination of monuments, ceremonies and words, a commemoration to the dead displays a variety of qualities: comradeship, devotion to the good of others, anti-militarism, emotional buoyancy in adversity. One other important aspect of their character, by omission rather than assertion, is the avoidance, as far as possible, that the dead had, in life, been violent or aggression – what Michalski (1997: 200) calls the “awareness that different artistic forms are required for different purposes and places”. This is easily accomplished through the posture and gesture. In the case of World War II memorials, Forty (1999: 9) has noted that “the choice of certain conventions for the figurative representation of the soldier(s) – for example, a figure at rest, showing no aggression – was a highly selective, and in some peoples view, a most misleading view of the war that had been fought”. The representation of Ermolov by a bust and not by a ‘full’ statue is something which both Caucasians and Russians felt aggrieved by:

“It should show Ermolov as a strong man. With his horse and sword. Although the bust is respectful, it should have been different.”

- Russian Male, 24, 2008 Interview

“Ermolov was a very bad man. We should not celebrate him in Stavropol’. Stavropol’ is a multi-national city and many of the nationalities here were killed by him in the past. The statue does not do him justice. We show just his head and shoulders. It should show him with blood on his sword.”

- Ingush Male, 26, 2008 Interview

The fact that the Ermolov statue as it currently exists (regardless of its shape or form) as part of the materiality of the urban landscape causes interethnic tension recalls Lefebvre’s (1991: 222) observation that “To the degree that there are traces of violence and death, negativity and aggressiveness in social practice, the monumental work erases them and replaces them with a tranquil power and certitude which can encompass violence and terror”.

In light of the 15th anniversary of the first post-Soviet meeting of Stavropol’ State Duma (on 22 April 1994), Andrei Besedoval Orlov (writing the official ‘history’ of the Duma) reflected on the accomplishments of Nikolay Georgievich Naumov (Head of the Duma, 1996-1999) in the context of the current (economic) situation in the region. Orlov (2009b) suggested that the erection of the Ermolov statue in 1998 was ‘proof’, as if it were needed, that Stavropol’ had acted ‘positively’ during the economic crises of the same year:

“Here today, we speak about [economic] crisis. But we have also, in fact, gone through many cataclysms. We shall recollect the collapse of the rouble which divided the life of the majority of Russians between ‘up to’ and ‘after’ 17 August 1998. The budget of city during that time was filled with difficult work, the collection of taxes in the city decreased by 13% ... Despite the crisis ... It is symbolical, that in 1998 in Stavropol’ there were new monuments: to the great Russian general [*velikomu Russkomu Generalu*] A.P.Yermolov [sic] and the

restored Triumphal arch [*Triumfal'naya Arka*]. Lessons of the most recent history teach us: financial difficulties should not stop important, socially significant projects, and on the contrary, should urge us to undertake more effective work with long-term results of development and prosperity.”

More recently, on 4 October 2008, a statue of Ermolov was erected in Mineral'nye Vody, Stavropol'skii krai⁵⁴. When unveiling the monument, Valerii Galchenko (Deputy of the State Duma and Chairman of the All-Russian Union of Self-Management) made a ready and evident connection across time and space between Ermolov and the Russo-Georgian conflict of August 2008, declaring that the monument was being opened “when, on southern borders of Russia, it was again necessary to use the Russian army for the protection of Russia’s population” (Stavropol'skaya Pravda 2009a). Recalling Vladimir Putin’s declaration after the Beslan School hostage siege that “We showed weakness, and the weak are trampled upon ... Some want to cut off a juicy morsel from us while others are helping them”⁵⁵, Galchenko went on to explain that the moment “reminds all those who cherish the idea of tearing off a slice of our [Russian] ground: we shall not admit it”. In his immediate reaction, Dukuvakha Abdurakhmanov (secretary of the regional branch of ‘United Russia’) addressed the authorities of Stavropol'skii krai on behalf of the Chechen diaspora requesting that the statue to Ermolov be taken down:

“The act of glorification of the person who, during the Caucasian War, used retaliatory expeditions and extreme cruelty against mountain people, and who, during his time as proconsul on the Caucasus, did not show mercy to women or children or old men, demands general condemnation. This is our firm belief.”

⁵⁴ Supported by the Terek Cossacks of Stavropol'skii krai, the statue, which stands at a height of 2.85 meters on a 3 meter high granite pedestal, cost R4 million and was funded by over 300 organisations throughout Russia.

⁵⁵ For a critical analysis of Putin’s speech, see Medvedev S, 2004, “Juicy Morsels”: Putin’s Beslan Address and the Construction of the New Russian Identity’, PONARS Policy Memo 334. Available from: http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/pm_0334.pdf

A similar opinion was expressed by the Chechen Minister of External Communication on National Policy, Shamsail Saraliev, who said that the unveiling of the statue was contrary to the policy of ethnic ‘integration’ in both Stavropol’skii krai and Russia, and showed “disrespect” to the Caucasian people who had experienced “Ermolov’s policy of genocide” (Kavkaz Uzel 2009). Saraliev also complained that mainstream historical accounts of the Caucasian Wars in Russia do not properly describe Ermolov’s actions (Ibid.). The Representative of Human Rights in Chechnya, Nurdi Nukhazhieva, later explained that:

“We [the Chechen Republic] are against a monument to Yermolov [sic], but not, at the same time, General Sleptsov or Field Marshals Baryatinsk and Paskevich, who although leading Russia military personal, are less offensive to us than Yermolov [sic]. They helped in the activities of trade and the development of education. It is telling that Chechens have named their children ‘Sipso’ and ‘Paskoch’, when the name ‘Yarmol’ has become the nickname of *elikh sobak* [evil dogs]. The erection of a monument to one of the most severe *Konkistadorv* [conquistadores] of the Caucasus is deeply symbolical. Xenophobia is growing in Russia, nationalists of all colours have raised their heads and there has been a revival of imperial thinking.”

These contradictions between what Russia does in the landscape and what Russia says in practice open a space in which critical opinions can be formed and aired. A critical reading of the Stavropol’ landscape can lead people to reject the claim, outlined in the preamble to the Russian Constitution that “We, the multinational people of the Russian Federation, [are] united by a common fate on our land”. And the repetition of Russia’s message repeats its contradictions, and repeated rejection may strengthen ethno-nationalist calls from the North Caucasus for independence. As I was told by one person:

“I have read the Russian Constitution. I know this document. It says in the Russian Constitution that we are one people. That we all have rights. That we are united by land and by history. But the history which this statue represents is not the history of Caucasian peoples. The statue presents Ermolov as a good person. He was not. The Ermolov statue creates tension and conflict. There is enough of this already in the North Caucasus. For the Russian people, the North Caucasus is a source of ethnic dispute and conflict. It would be real a present, the best gift of all time, for the majority of Russian citizens if there was no North Caucasus in Russia. The North Caucasus is a region of worry for ordinary citizens and politicians. In the mind of people it is an area of potential territorial loss for Russia. During the time when Ermolov was in the North Caucasus many people died. Russians do not want to be reminded of this. People are very scared that this may happen again. The annual conflicts over the Ermolov statue reinforce the idea that there are no positive images of the North Caucasus in Russia today. But it is the fault of the power structure. If they did not erect statues like this then perhaps we could live peacefully in the region. Instead we are being reminded of our bloody past.”

- Russian Male, 42, 2008 Interview

As the French linguistic philosopher Roland Barthes argues, ‘real’ objects have a ‘facticity’ which myth must ‘deform’, whereby objects become alienated from their actual histories so they can signify new meanings (Barthes 2009). For such ‘alienation’ to lead to ‘new meanings’, there must be a pre-existing ‘history’ which is both objective and uncontested. The narratives and myths which surround the Ermolov statue problematise this linear approach to ‘history’ and lead ‘us’ to recognise multiple ‘histories’ of the North Caucasus. And in this vein, while my analysis above has primarily focussed on the reactions of ethnic Caucasians to the Ermolov statue, it is clear that the attitudes of ethnic Russians, often conflated with that of the Russian state, similarly contest the history of Ermolov, instead emphasising Ermolov’s role in ‘defending’ Russia. The words of one interviewee are particularly revealing of this:

“For me, this statue is a symbol of Russian military power. It a symbol of Russian military power in the North Caucasus. Nowadays, we are trying to be tolerant. But I don’t like using this word, tolerant. It is a dirty, meaningless word. Originally, it [the statue] symbolised the Russian military defeat of the Caucasians so that they would not come on to our territory. Territory is very

important to Russians. And that is why [Tsar] Catherine II built the Azov-Mozdok Line [of fortresses], so that if the Caucasians fought [against Russia], the wall would defend our land. For me, it [the Ermolov statue] is a sign of Russian military power and it is a sign that if we need to defend ourselves then we can do it. If we are in need of this. And we are. For me, I am [ethnic] Russian and Russia should be for [ethnic] Russians [*Rossiia dlya Russkii*] not for Caucasians ... Ermolov brought peace to the Caucasus.”

- Russian Male, 51, 2009 Interview

5.6 Concluding remarks

The reflections of everyday citizens on the Ermolov statue form a kind of ‘psychogeography’ which foregrounds the politics and experiences of being in Stavropol’, and hint at how this geopolitics affects people; the repercussions of war and death, conflict and discrimination, militarism and colonialism, economic crisis and recovery, are folded into the textures of the statue. Following the growing awareness among geographers of the relevance of the ‘everyday’, this study highlights the geopolitical nature of statues and their use as a nexus of identity formation and as a site of resistance to the state. These ‘politics and experiences’ operate at and between a number of scales, and people in Stavropol’ are constantly touched by multiple overlapping geographies of meaning. This complex geometry of memorialisation suggests that the Ermolov statue is ‘beyond’ the ‘Either/Or’ dichotomy of local/global scale, to use Hyndman’s (2004) phrase, which characterises dominant geopolitical discourse, to invoke “multiple scales of inquiry and knowledge production” (Ibid.: 10). Following recent feminist critiques of globalisation, this points to the need to unlearn and relearn scale (Roberts 2004) in studies of memorialisation. While the statue of General Alexei Ermolov in Stavropol’ commemorates the life and times of a single man, the complex materiality of stone, representation and affect relate to contestations about Russian history and conflicts over power and space in contemporary Russia, and

point to a great many questions yet to be resolved about Russia's territorial expansion into the North Caucasus.

Given the contested nature of statues, and memorialisation more broadly, it should come as no surprise that they are often used as a space for politics of difference. In the context of interethnic conflict, and within multi-ethnic regions, particular populations are inclined to view statues which glorify contested figures, such as Ermolov, as a spatiality for overthrowing (resisting) dominant materialisation of space and history. In his book *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (1999), Anthony Smith writes that a major theme of the ethno-national project is 'ethno-history', understood as the subjective history of an ethnic group rather than the objective histories and dispassionate analyses of professional historians (Smith 1999: 16). Much like the places to which it refers, however, this 'subjective history' is not fixed in absolute or Cartesian space, rather it is in a continuous process of reinterpretation. The 'history' of the Ermolov statue calls to attention the role of ethno-nationalism and symbolic sites in the construction of national identity; monuments like the Ermolov statue provide a spatiality in which people can reject the 'subjective history' to which they are exposed, potentially undermining dominant relations of power in both society and the ethno-national project more broadly. This connects to a current concern with post-Soviet material culture and cultural norms, in particular the significance of other monuments built on the cusp of the post-Soviet transition (Sidorov 2000).

As to the observations that this paper makes, there are also practical implications for Stavropol'skii krai and the North Caucasus. The Ermolov statue represents a point of conflict between competing Russian and North Caucasian histories, and highlights the

profound limitations to the nature of that contact. It is redundant to observe that the contestations (and conflicts) surrounding the Ermolov statue arise out of its being. While authorities in Stavropol'skii krai recognise the importance of monitoring and managing ethnic relations, they underplay the role of the physical environment in affecting ethnic relations. The regional policy of Stavropol'skii krai (adopted on 31 December 1999), for example, highlights the need for an "interethnic space" (undefined). Both "The complex programme of harmonization of interethnic attitudes in Stavropol'skii krai, 2000-2005" and "The programme for the consolidation and progress of the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society of Stavropol'skii krai, 2006-2010", meanwhile, focus attention on the "construction of an atmosphere of interethnic harmony" through festivals and days of national culture (amongst other initiatives) (see, http://www.eawarn.ru/pub/Bull/WebHome/61_33.htm). Yet, without a complementary focus on the places that people inhabit and where events occur – what McDowell (1999) calls "regimes of place" – such initiatives are likely to continue to lead to division and strife.

Ethnic and ethno-national monuments (and 'spaces' more broadly), as the contested Ermolov statue in Stavropol' reveals, are crucial and relevant in contemporary societies, particularly in the post-Soviet space. These sites therefore merit further investigations in different settings and within various geopolitical contexts.

Chapter 6. Ethnic Relations, Geopolitics, and Post-Soviet Parades: An analysis of *Den' Stavropol'skogo Kraya*

Foxall, A. 'Ethnic Relations, Geopolitics, and Post-Soviet Parades: An analysis of *Den' Stavropol'skogo Kraya*', *Political Geography* (submitted)

Abstract:

Interethnic relations and conflicts are an important feature of contemporary Russia, and efforts to understand and negotiate such conflict require an examination of individuals' understandings of interethnic relations and how this relates to "the eternal interethnic peace proclaimed by the [state] authorities" (Dzutsev 2010a). This paper examines the role played by the '*Denya Stavropol'skogo Kraya*' ('Days of Stavropol'skii krai') celebration in the negotiation of ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai as a way to bring these issues into closer and more productive dialogue with political geography. On the basis of fieldwork carried out in Stavropol' city over two different periods, I present unique and original qualitative data. I examine the ways in which ethnicity is enacted and performed in Stavropol', arguing that '*Den kraya*' is grounded not on what ethnic relations are like, but on what they 'ought' to be like, seeking to re-script ethnic relations toward a predetermined 'ideal' of Soviet-era harmony. Alexei Yurchak's writings on ideological representations in the late Soviet period open up possibilities and politics for explaining this. I suggest that the specific history of the region means that parades, such as *Den kraya*, and other markers of ethnic identity will only lead to increase interethnic tension, and that such markers demand attention in the study of interethnic relations as they affect the potential for conflict management.

6.1 Introduction

The bomb attack on 26 May 2010 (which killed seven people and injured more than 40 others) outside the House of Culture and Sport in Stavropol', only minutes before the Chechen dance ensemble *Vainakh* (which enjoys the sponsorship of pro-Moscow Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov) were due to perform, provides an opportunity to reflect on the connection between 'performance' and 'violence' in Stavropol'skii krai, and the role of both in affecting ethnic relations in the krai. Although readily apparent, in an interview with *Kommersant*, Vladimir Nesterov, head of the Union of Slavic Communities of Stavropol', made clear this ready and evident connection when he said that performances in Stavropol' of "national dances" by ethnic Caucasian groups were deemed "unacceptable" by the region's majority ethnic Russian population (<http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=1376316>).

Despite the paucity of academic work on parades in Russia, popular and media interest is high, particularly in Red Square parades (see, Cohen 2008). This paper connects with geographic literatures on public processions and parades which have been used elsewhere as analytical entry points for the study of public space and power, for the study of ritual, of celebration, of resistance, of community and identity. Stavropol'skii krai provides a remarkable site for the study of parades, as it occupies a key place in contemporary Russian politics -- it is the only region within the newly created 'North Caucasus Federal District' with an ethnic Russian majority population -- and is a key symbolic place in the history of Russian control over the North Caucasus. This paper also connects with work in Anthropology, particularly that of Alexei Yurchak (2005). Writing about the paradoxes of state socialism within the Soviet Union, Yurchak has

observed that ideological ‘representations’ -- speeches, ritualised practices, slogans, posters, monuments, and urban visual propaganda -- became increasingly normalised, ubiquitous and predictable in the period of late socialism. These representations no longer had to be read literally to work as elements of the hegemonic representation dictated by the Communist Party. This change in the functioning of Soviet ideology was reflected in how Soviet citizens participated in ideological rituals and events, particularly parades. “Participating in these events”, Yurchak (2005: 121) argues, “reproduced the collectivity of belonging that was enabled by these slogans and portraits [sic] but no longer bound by their literal sense”. In the case of *Den’ kraya* in Stavropol’skii krai, the ‘hegemonic representation’ which krai authorities present is “eternal interethnic peace” (Dzutsev 2010a). In so far as this representation is ‘no longer bound by its literal sense’, those participating in *Den’ kraya* realise that the ethnic relations which are on display are an idealised form of reality, which is connected in popular consciousness with Soviet-era ethnic relations and interethnic ‘harmony’. In the contemporary sphere, this ‘reality’ is based not on what ethnic relations *are* like but on what they *ought* to be like. This, I suggest, represents a realisation by krai authorities of the need to present ethnic relations in the krai as ‘peaceful’ and ‘harmonious’ in order to secure a place for itself in the changing landscape of power in post-Soviet Russia. The krai authorities clearly believe that this goal is best served by reference to Soviet-era practices -- exemplified by the ‘folklorisation’ of ethnic groups -- that are embodied in *Den’ kraya*. Further, although the *Den’ kraya* parade is free to attend and open to all residents of the region, I document the ways in which citizens exhibit a capacity to resist the re-scripting of ethnic relations. The ethnic relations which *Den’ kraya* presents, I conclude, are far removed from the everyday lived experience for many

people in the krai and, in current conditions, will only lead to increased interethnic tension.

In some respects, the situation in Stavropol' serves as a bellwether for both ethnic Russians and non-ethnic Russians in Russia. Stavropol'skii krai borders five of the seven republics in the North Caucasus (Dagestan, Chechnya, North Ossetia-Alania, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Karachaevo-Cherkessia), and the mountains of the Caucasus are in close view, a tangible if unnecessary reminder that this is a geographic periphery (see, Figure 14). From the competing governmentalities of Ottoman, Persian, Tsarist, Soviet, and Russian Empires, to Soviet-era border changes, the North Caucasus (and its spatiality) has long been a site of contestation (Grant 2009: xiv). As has been noted elsewhere, the meaning of the border between Stavropol'skii krai and the North Caucasian republics is in flux, and in daily life its significance is increasingly important (Rikhlin 2005; Markedonov 2007; 2009). This makes many ethnic Russians in Stavropol'skii krai uncomfortable as they fear inclusion of the krai by default into the affairs of the North Caucasus 'proper': what Malashenko (2009) has called Russia's "internal abroad". The *Den' kraya* parade is thus evaluated in the context of both the past and the future, and as a harbinger of interethnic relations in Stavropol'skii, and between Russia and the North Caucasus more broadly.

Figure 14. An administrative map of the Caucasus



This paper is based on fieldwork I conducted in Stavropol'skii krai in October 2008 and June, July and August 2009. This research explored ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai, and made use of an eclectic methodology which included 60 semi-structured interviews (and 5 focus-groups) with a range of Russian citizens (ethnic Russian and non-ethnic Russian, males and females, of different ages and political beliefs). As has been observed by both Eriksen (1993) and Megoran (2007), the question of how to study 'ethnic relations' poses a dilemma. In one of the most important theoretical studies of ethnicity to date, Eriksen wrote that "The choice of an analytical perspective or 'research hypothesis' is not an innocent act. If one goes out to look for ethnicity, one will 'find' it and thereby contribute to constructing it" (Eriksen 1993: 161). Following the example of Megoran, I addressed this dilemma by researching a political issue

(regional politics) that was not explicitly 'ethnic'. In none of my interviews did I ask, either directly or indirectly, any questions relating to ethnicity (except for the purpose of basic self identification in the introductory stage). By structuring discussions around a number of political events (for example, the Chechen Wars, local terrorist attacks, and the Russo-Georgian conflict of August 2008), I allowed ethnicity to emerge as a pertinent issue (if this were the case). For the purposes of this paper it is important to note that I asked various questions about *Den' kraya* -- including about its history, meaning, and organisation -- and the wider role of krai authorities in (interethnic) conflict management. I believe that this enabled me to avoid the dangers that Eriksen outlined, whilst constructing an account of the meaning and importance of ethnicity in understanding *Den' kraya*.

6.2 Parading

Much of the work on parades in the social sciences is concerned with Northern Ireland. Work on the Protestant Loyal Orders has been extensively explored by Bryan (2000, 2001), Fraser (2000), Jarman (1997, 2003) and Jarman and Bryan (1998), and Orange Order parades by Jarman (2001). Writing on the Apprentice Boys parades in Derry, for example, Cohen (2007) concluded that ethno-national parades are a powerful political tool in shaping ethnic relations and "have inherent potential to be political, and often controversial or problematic" (Ibid.: 956). Elsewhere, studies have analysed parades in Britain (Busteed 2007), Canada (Powell 2009; Goheen 1993; Jackson 1992), Singapore (Kong and Yeoh 1997), the Republic of Ireland (Finlay 2004) and the United States (Marston 1989; Davis 1986). While there is much to commend about this body of literature, few (indeed, if any) connections have been made with Russia, and the post-

Soviet space more broadly. Indeed, despite the long history of parading, particularly military and pseudo-military parades, in Russia (and beforehand, the Soviet Union), academic studies are scarce. Clearly this indicates a need to expand the range of studies available for comparative analysis. While some authors have begun to do this (Pallot, Piacentini and Moran 2010; Adams and Rustemova 2009; Onken 2007), they remain the minority.

One grounded way in which an interest in parades in Russia has been registered is in Anthropology. In his book *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More*, the Russian Socio-Cultural and Linguistic Anthropologist Alexei Yurchak (2005) explores the paradoxes of state socialism within the Soviet Union. Soviet socialism, he argues, was based on paradoxes that were revealed by the experience of state collapse. At the moment of the collapse, it became clear that Soviet life had always been viewed through characteristics which, although appearing to be mutually exclusive, were, in fact, mutually constitutive: what Yurchak calls “Binary Socialism” (Ibid.: 4). A constitutive part of the phenomena, Yurchak argues, is the way that during the late Soviet period the form of ideological representations -- speeches, ritualised practices, slogans, posters, monuments, and urban visual propaganda -- became increasingly normalised, ubiquitous and predictable. These representations no longer had to be read literally to work as elements of the hegemonic representation. This change in the functioning of Soviet ideology was reflected in how Soviet citizens participated in ideological rituals and events, particularly parades. Yurchak (Ibid.: 15) writes:

“... it was well known that during the period from 1960s to the 1980s, the overwhelming majority of Soviet people participated in May Day and Revolution Day parades in Soviet cities. The apotheosis of such parades in the cities was the

walk across the central square in front of the city's party leaders, who stood on a high platform and waved to the marching masses. People cheered as official slogans blared from the loudspeakers, and the thundering roar of these hundreds of thousands of voices sounded impressive and unanimous. According to Soviet newspapers at the time, these massive events "convincingly demonstrate[d] the unbreakable union of the party and people ..." (*Pravda* May 2, 1981). In practice, however, most people in the parades paid little attention to the slogans, and many were not aware who exactly was depicted on the Politburo portraits they carried."

For example, Victory Day (May 9) and November 7 (Anniversary of the October Revolution) parades, were seen as both obligatory duties and appealing celebrations. With their massive scale, parades were a powerful machinery for the cultural production of public communities, creating temporary collectivities of friends and strangers who marched together through the streets, carried the same portraits and slogans, shouted 'hurray' in response to the same appeals blaring from loudspeakers, and publicly displayed the same celebratory mood. "Participating in these events", Yurchak (*Ibid.*: 121) argues, "reproduced the collectivity of belonging that was enabled by these slogans and portraits but no longer bound by their literal sense".

In an attempt to draw a more nuanced understanding of everyday life in the Soviet Union and move beyond a binary understanding of Soviet era rituals, Yurchak draws on the work of John Austin. Introducing Speech Act Theory, Austin (1999) argues that in addition to 'constative' utterances that *state* something, language includes a whole class of utterances that *do* something. Such utterances change the social reality instead of describing it and are called 'performatives'. What makes an utterance a 'performative' is not the intention of the speaker, but the consumption of the utterance by the audience according to accepted conventions surrounding the utterance. Through critical readings of Austin by Derrida (1977) and Bourdieu (1991), Yurchak argues (2005: 21) it is necessary to consider both the constitutive elements of the performative

force of a speech act -- the delegated power of external social contexts and institutions -
- and the semiotic power of discourse to produce unpredictable meanings and effects in
new contexts. It is precisely because the two elements of performative force operate
simultaneously that speech acts even in strictly controlled institutionalised contexts can
take on meanings and produce effects for which they were not intended. Judith Butler
(1997:161) has argued that this possibility of an unanticipated outcome by the audience
constitutes “the political promise of the performative, one that positions the
performative at the centre of a political hegemony”.

Austin’s work has been influential in the analysis of various forms of ritualised practice
that are not necessarily linguistic and in the analysis of how aspects of subjectivity may
be produced in such practice. For example, Butler focuses on the ritualised repetition of
embodied norms as performative acts – acts that do not simply refer to an *a priori*
existing “pure body” but shape that body as sexed, raced, classed and so forth (Butler
1990; 1993). Drawing on Derrida’s and Bourdieu’s critical readings of Austin, Butler
notes that subject is enabled through discourse, without being completely determined by
it:

“[A] regularised and constrained repetition of norms is not performed *by* a
subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal
conditions for the subject. The iterability implies that ‘performance’ is not a
singular ‘act’ or event, but a ritualised production, and ritual reiteration under and
through constraint, under and through force of prohibition and taboo, and with the
threat of ostracism and even death controlling and compelling the shape of the
production, but not, I will insist, determining it fully in advance” (Butler 1993:
95)

Drawing on Butler’s work and theories of the ritual in anthropology and religious
studies, Hollywood proposes to broaden the discussion of the performative to various

‘ritualised acts’ that are repeated in different contexts and whose meanings are neither completely known in advance nor determined by the participants’ intentions (Hollywood 2002: 113). Bell further points out that through the repetition of ritualised actions in different contexts, bodies are produced and produce themselves as “ritualised agents ... who have an intrinsic knowledge of these schemes embedded ... in their sense of reality, and in their understanding of how to act in ways that both maintain and qualify the complex micro-relations of power” (Bell 1992: 221).

Bell’s emphasis on the role of the ‘body’ in the ‘complex micro-relations of power’ connects with Thrift’s (2000a and 2000b) call for a more sensitive inquiry in human geography into the workings of geo-power by attending to objects, the human body and matters of percept, affect and emotion, as well as the most ordinary (‘precognitive’) forms of sociality. While attempts to meet this challenge have been registered across political geography (see the brief overview in Campbell and Power 2010), more needs to be done. At the same time, recent work in critical geopolitics has pointed to the need to reconsider geopolitical discourse as language and practice (Müller 2008, see also Sidaway 2009), and has emphasised the importance of critical geopolitics in ‘everyday life’ (Pain and Smith 2008). While this paper is not, to be sure, a ‘critical geopolitics’ paper -- “the dominant conception”, Ó Tuathail (2009b) wrote, “is that critical geopolitics is about discursive critique not fieldwork, and that geographically grounded fieldwork on political issues is political geography not critical geopolitics” -- it does engage with and explore literature associated with that particular intellectual project. In reviewing ‘New Directions in Critical Geopolitics’, Ó Tuathail (2009b) wrote of the “Enduring global problems [which] are deepening and require attention ... while ‘traditional’ state rivalry issues should not be ignored ... [there are] intractable problems

in the Balkans and Caucasus”, to argue that “If Critical Geopolitics only lightly engages these pressing impasses and dilemmas of our time, it will become an academic niche chasing America-centric outrages that does not matter much in the arena of global practice”. This paper uses the *Den’ kraya* case study as a way to engage with each of these agendas, and as a way to begin to answer Ó Tuathail’s plea.

6.3 Stavropol’skii krai

Located in southern Russia, Stavropol’skii krai “occupies a special place in the strategy for Russia’s territorial development because of its contemporary geopolitical position, at the centre of the North Caucasus, contiguous to a majority of the republics of the area” (O’Loughlin, Panin, and Wittmer 2007: 250) (see Figure 14). Because of this, Stavropol’skii krai has long been a focus of research on ethnic relations (for example, Kolossov, Galkina and Krindatch 2001; Vendina, Belozarov and Gustafson 2007; O’Loughlin, Panin and Witmer 2007; O’Loughlin, Kolossov and Radvanyi 2007; Kolossov and O’Loughlin 2009; Foxall 2010).

For many Russians, Stavropol’skii krai holds a symbolic value that serves as a touchstone for identity and history in ways that simultaneously both include (*russkii*) and exclude (*rossiiskii*) ordinary Russians. The establishment of Stavropol’ city in 1777 and the subsequent two hundred and thirty three years of history have become emblematic of broader Russian experiences of processes like expansion and colonisation, ethnic integration and separatism, war and peace, in the North Caucasus. It was from Stavropol’ that Russian efforts to survive, subdue and defeat the resistance of Caucasian, particularly Chechen and Ingush, forces during the Caucasian War (1817-

1864) began, and military bases in Stavropol' were used during both Chechen Wars (1994-1996 and 1999-2002).

6.4 Ethnic Geography in Stavropol'skii krai

“The exodus of the ethnic Russians is creating a problem for the whole North Caucasus” (Vladimir Putin quoted in Smirnov 2005)

According to the 2002 Census, Stavropol'skii krai has a population of 2,735,139 people. While 81.6% ethnic Russian, 4% of its residents are Armenians, 3% are Ukrainians, 1.4% are Dargins, 1.2% are Greeks, 0.7% are Nogais, 0.5% are Chechens, and 0.5% are Turkmens, along with a scattering of smaller groups. Both individually and collectively, Markedonov (2009) argues, these groups have a “latent” potential for conflict.

Since 1991, the population of Stavropol'skii krai has changed more dynamically than any region in Russia. This change must be understood in the context of political change, economic liberalization, military conflict, and the deterioration of inter-ethnic relations (Zayonchkovskaya 2000). In their study of the ethnic geography of Stavropol'skii krai, O'Loughlin, Panin and Witmer (2007) identify the most salient characteristics of ethnic geography in the krai as: the low net in-migration of Russians and other Slavic peoples; high in-migration of Armenians; renewed out-migration of Chechens after nearly a decade (1996–2004) of in-migration coinciding roughly with the first and second Chechen wars; and large-scale net in-migration of Avars and Dargins (from Dagestan). Owing to these (and other) processes, they argue that a trend of “de-Russification”, reflecting the in-migration of ethnic Caucasians and out-migration of ethnic Russians (combined with a low rate of natural increase), is manifest in a noticeable reduction in

the ethnic Russian share of the total population, now 81.6% as compared to 84% in 1989, 87.8% in 1979, and 91.3% in 1959. While such figures, however, do not give a sense of the very real spatial segregation of ethnic groups in Stavropol'skii krai (see, Belozarov 2005 or O'Loughlin, Panin and Wittmer 2007), it is clear that there is increasing internal ethnic differentiation within Stavropol'skii krai.

More broadly, in the post-Soviet years the ethnic Russian population in the North Caucasus republics has fallen as Russians have fled conflict and what they perceive to be increasingly hostile policies. This is part of a more long-term 'de-Russification' of the North Caucasus republics: in 1959 ethnic Russians accounted for 38.8% of the population in the seven national republics of the North Caucasus and by the time of the 2002 census this figure had dropped to 14.9%. In absolute terms, the number of Russians living in the North Caucasus republics dropped by 994,600 people in this period (1959-2002). As the ethnic Russian population has decreased in the North Caucasus, the population of the ethnic republics has grown rapidly. This has meant that many ethnic Caucasians have migrated into regions traditionally occupied by ethnic Russians outside the republics. As a result of this, ethnic Russians have become a minority in the North Caucasus, and even in areas where they are in the majority, such as Stavropol'skii krai, they consider themselves as an embattled minority group (Belozarov 2005).

In Stavropol', as well as other cities in Stavropol'skii krai, shifts in demographics have created situations in which parades and other demonstrations of ethnic identity occur in a radical context.

6.5 Ethnic Relations in Stavropol'skii krai

Before exploring the *Den' kraya* celebration, it is important to note the situation of ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai.

Despite having their basic human rights guaranteed under Article 19 of The Russian Constitution, discrimination of ethnic minorities is widespread in Russia. This is particularly the case for ethnic Caucasus as since 1991 *Kavkazofobiya* (Caucasophobia) has permeated virtually every aspect of society. In October 2002, Lyudmilla Alekseyeva, Chair of the Moscow Helsinki Group, identified *Kavkazofobiya* as “definitely the most serious problem that Russia is faced with today. It is very widespread among the population in general, at all levels” (quoted in Russell 2005: 112). According to Amnesty International (2006), Russian authorities have created a state of “impunity” against violent ethnic attacks and discrimination. Scholarly research supports this conclusion, showing that authorities actively discriminate against minorities (for example, Popov and Kuznetsov 2008; Swerdlow 2006). Amnesty International also report that Russian authorities target visible minorities for racial profiling, resulting in unnecessary registration and passport checks, searches, and arbitrary arrest and detention (Amnesty International 2004). It is indicative that the Russian Immigration Service remains part of the MVD, which is *a priori* engaged in tackling crime. Such an institutional structure creates an atmosphere in which most ethnic minorities are immediately classed as those who fall under the jurisdiction of the law enforcement agencies (Chebankova 2007).

In Stavropol'skii krai, reports from the Moscow-based NGO *SOVA Centre* suggest that ethnic conflict is increasing both in frequency and intensity (Kozhevnikova 2009). According to data which it has pieced together, the *SOVA Centre* report that in 2009 there were 16 racist and neo-Nazi attacks in Stavropol', an increase from 0 in 2004 (<http://xeno.sova-center.ru/6BA2468/6BB4208/E7F0971>). However, exact figures for instances of ethnic conflict and discrimination against ethnic minorities are hard to obtain due to chronic under-reporting. Sociological surveys are, therefore, a useful indicator of the state of ethnic relations. Monitoring conducted in 2002 by Stavropol' State University and the Russian Academy of Sciences suggested that there was a low level of interethnic conflict in Stavropol'skii krai (Kolossova, Galkina and Krindatch 2001). The following year, research carried out by the Centre for Ethnopolitical Studies in Moscow suggested that ethnic discrimination in Stavropol'skii krai was widespread (Centre for Ethnopolitical Studies 2002). What potential for ethnic conflict there was came to a head in the summer of 2007, as six weeks of intermittent interethnic rioting left three students dead (see, Foxall 2010). More recently, Astvatsaturova (2009) observed that interethnic tensions in Stavropol'skii krai are high, as reflected by an increase in so-called 'household xenophobia' and the fact that it is increasing common to see graffiti like '*Rossiia dlya Russkikh*' ('Russia for ethnic Russians'), swastikas, and other nationalist inscriptions in public places throughout Stavropol'. Clearly, the writing of slogans and the drawing of murals is a powerful public demonstration of identity for both ethnic Russians and ethnic Caucasians in Stavropol'. The situation, Astvatsaturova noted, required not only "constant attention and preventive actions from the state power structures", but was also evidence of the "underestimation by authorities of conflicts with an ethnic component". Astvatsaturova's warning proved timely. In the summer of 2009 alone there were high profile ethnic clashes in: Pelagiade, Izobil'nenskii raion

(August 2009); Irgakly, Stepnovskii *raion* (June 2009); Georgievskii, Predgornii *raion* (May 2009); and Stavropol' *gorod* (April 2009).

Understanding that ethnic conflict impacts on various aspects of daily life, regional authorities throughout Russia attempt to manage ethnic relations. In Stavropol'skii krai, these attempts have been registered in policies such as "The basic directions of national and regional policy of Stavropol'skii krai" and "The Complex programme of harmonization of interethnic attitudes in Stavropol'skii krai for 2000-2005" (both adopted on 31 December 1999), and "The development of ethno-social and ethno-confessional relations in Stavropol'skii krai between 2007-2009" (adopted on 26 March 2007). Reminiscent of the Soviet-era process of 'folklorisation' of ethnic minorities, these programmes focussed on the construction of an atmosphere of interethnic harmony through emphasising, for example, the role of festivals and seminars, days of national cultures, and cultural societies. *Den' kraya* is typical of this.

6.6 *Den' kraya*

Stavropol'skii krai has celebrated *Denya Stavropol'skogo Kraya* [Days Stavropol'skii krai] since 1995. *Den' kraya*⁵⁶ is an important part of the wider culture of public displays typical to Russian urban spaces; events such as *Den' Zashchitnika Otechestva* (Defender of the Motherland Day) on 23 February, *Den' pobedy* (Victory Day) on 9 May, *Den' Rossii* (Russia Day) on 12 June, and *Den' Harodnogo Edinstva* (Day of National Unity) on 4 November (as well as other commemorative rituals) are celebrated

⁵⁶ Although the official title of the celebration is *Denya Stavropol'skogo Kraya* [Days Stavropol'skii krai], it is known locally as *Den' kraya* [Krai Day].

throughout Russia and help to link memory to the regularity of the weekly, monthly and yearly calendar with other anniversaries celebrated at still longer intervals. As Foote and Azaryahu (2007: 127) note, “public memory might be conceived of as a matrix in which time and space are used separately and in combination to embed shared historical experiences and a sense of a shared past in the public life of a community”.

Den' kraya, which marks the establishment of Stavropol'skii krai by the Russian Empire on 2 May 1847 (14 May 1847 on the Gregorian calendar), combines a parade with other markers of celebration and cultural productions of 'history'. For example, in 2009 *Den' kraya* (which is celebrated on the nearest Saturday to 14 May) coincided with the 'International Day of Museums' (16 May), so all state and municipal museums in Stavropol'skii krai were open free-of-charge for citizens of the krai. This included special exhibitions which documented the history of the krai and which drew attention to “people who deserve special mention for making a significant contribution to its social and economic development” (see, *Den' Stavropol'skogo kraya* 2009). In the cities of Stavropol' and Pyatigorsk, museums were opened earlier than usual so that morning programmes and activities could be provided for the youth, including the study of local folklore, competitions, and quizzes. Reflecting their patriotic purpose, the nine collections and many exhibitions housed at *Kraevedcheskii im. G.N. Prozriteleva i G.K. Prave* (opened in 1904), as well as in its four branches⁵⁷ throughout Stavropol', ordinarily provide a broad 'history' of the city and region. Such a 'history' is necessarily officially sanctioned by local (and, in contemporary Russia, national)

⁵⁷ The four branches of the Museum are: the *Muzei istorii kazachestva* [Museum of Cossacks history] on Vokzalnaya Street; *Muzei-usad'ba khudozhnika akademista V.I.Smironova s memorialom K.L. Khetagurova* [Museum-manor of the academician artist V.I. Smirnov with a memorial of K.L. Khetagurov] on Dzerzhinsky Street; *Kartinnay galereya peizazhei P.M.Grechishkina* [P.M. Grechishkin Landscape Picture Gallery] on Morozov Street; and *Arkheologicheskii i prirodnyi muzei-zapovednik -- Tatarskoe gorodische* [Archaeological and Natural Museum Reserve --Tatar City] on Dzerzhinsky Street.

powers. As in every local historical museum in Russia, this includes a celebration of war heroes and the commemoration of war dead. Inevitably however, certain ‘moments’ are overlooked, forgotten or otherwise ‘written out’ of this history. In the case of Stavropol’, this includes the forced deportations of Chechens, Ingush and other Caucasian nationalities in the period 1944/5. Assuming that the majority of visitors take the exhibition at face value, the museum emerges from the process of what the French linguistic philosopher Roland Barthes (2000: 151) refers to as the “privation of history” and David Lowenthal (1999: xii) as “artfully selective oblivion”, with its sanitised version of history intact and its claims to legitimacy strengthened. Thus, it is through *omission* rather than *rejection* that the truth about the deportations is written out of the history of Stavropol’skii krai.

Attended by both young and old, ethnic Russians and non-ethnic Russians, the official start of celebrations for *Den’ kraya 2009* was on 16 May at 1000 on Lenin Square. The celebration began with a speech by Valerii Gaevskii (Governor of Stavropol’skii krai), in which he noted that *Den’ kraya* had become a symbol of the region:

“Our krai includes the plowman, and the healer, and the soldier. And we use the best efforts so that it prospers. Let the energy of the young and the wisdom of the elderly lead Stavropol’ to new victories.” (Gaevskii quoted in Stavropol’skaya Pravda 2009b)

This was followed by a dramatized representation of the main stages in the establishment and development of the krai. Directed by A. Rostov (Honoured Artist of the Russian Federation), the representation was divided into eleven parts, the latter parts of which focussed on events in Stavropol’skii krai “in the struggle against fascist aggressors” (Stavropol’skaya Pravda 2009b). This included a Soviet-style parade,

entitled ‘We are your youth, natives of Stavropol’ [‘*Mi – molodost’ tvoya, rodnoe Stavropol’e*’], of around 3000 youths from Stavropol’ and other cities and rural areas of the krai. After the parade, the celebrations continued on Lenin Square and at 18 smaller locations both in central Stavropol’ and its districts. For example: on Peasant Hill [Krepostnaya gora] there was a festival ‘In friendship of people - unity of Russia’ [‘*V druzhbe narodov – edinstvo Rossii*’]; on October Revolution Prospect there was an arts and craft exhibition showcasing the best work from the krai; and in Central Park there was a ‘festival of bards songs’ which included performances of the songs ‘I am in love with Stavropol’ [‘*Ya vlyublen v Stavropol’e*’] and ‘I will never, And neither for what, And nor what, I shall not exchange you, my Stavropol’ land! You are my Stavropol’skii krai!’ [‘*Ya nikogda ... I ii za shto ... I ii na shto ... ne promenyayu tebya, moi Stavropol’ rodnoi! Tebya, moi Stavropol’skii Krai*’]. At the memorial ‘Fire of the Eternal Glory’ there was a concert involving the regional winners of a competition to write a military-patriotic song – with the title ‘the Soldiers Envelope’ [‘*Soldatskii Konvert*’] – in which around 100 musicians from the krai performed. There was also a festival of national cultures [‘*festival’ natsional’nikh kul’tur*’] which took place on Peasant Hill involving 22 national farmsteads [podvor’ya] who presented and celebrated the life, traditions and ceremonies of the ethnic groups in the krai. The celebrations continued with a football match, at 1700, between Stavropol’e-2009 (from Stavropol’) and Rotor Volgograd (from Volgograd) at the Dinamo Stadium on Lenin Square. Later, in Culture Park there was a youth festival of interethnic friendship entitled ‘*Mir*’ [World / Peace]. The celebrations culminated with a gala-concert at Peasant Hill involving professional actors and musicians from across the krai.

Thus it was that *Den' kraya* was marked in Stavropol'skii krai in 2009. Reporting the proceedings in *Argumenti i Fakti*, Vladimir Ruzhnikov (2009), a local journalist, observed that:

“Owing to a rather impressive contingent of employees of law enforcement bodies in the streets of the regional centre, the celebrations there [Stavropol'] have passed according to plan. People, figures and patriotic feelings, undoubtedly, have remained within the limits of the law.”

It is redundant to observe that, in contemporary Russia, it would have been impossible for such an event to take place without a large security presence, or that those who would have resisted the celebration, or chosen to mark it differently, were not canvassed for their views. While it goes without saying that the safety of those taking part in the celebrations is paramount, it is often the case that the numerous security checks and other procedures involved prohibits certain demographics – the elderly, for example, or those with young children -- from taking part. While I speak about other forms of resistance to the celebration later, I want to emphasise here that the events of *Den' kraya* bear the hallmarks of the type of ‘normalised ubiquitous and predictable’ ideological representations that Alexei Yurchak (2005: 6) has identified as characteristic of late socialism.

6.7 Micro-geography of *Den' kraya* parade

Thus, *Den' kraya* is actually a sequence of events that occur from morning to late evening on the parade day. Each component of *Den' kraya* has a particular spatiality, rules, and set of participants, which govern its performance. And here I will focus on the first parade of the day, the dramatised procession “We are your youth, natives of

Stavropol’”, which took place in Lenin Square. It is composed of around 3000 citizens of Stavropol’skii krai, and it has two principal purposes. One is the celebration of the youth of Stavropol’skii krai. There are strict conditions on this portion of the parade: it is limited in its route (Lenin Square), the number of participants (invitation only), and their conduct (military-style parade); non-formal participation (spectators) is encouraged, although this too is limited by space constraints. The geography of the parade is notable. And it recalls certain nostalgia for the USSR. Valerii Gaevskii and representatives of the major ethnic groups in the krai (recognised as members of the Committee of Stavropol’skii krai for National and Cossack affairs’ [*Komitet Stavropol’skogo Krai no delam natsional’nostei i kazachestva*]) stood on a large stage which had been erected for the day, and which formed the centrepiece of the celebrations. Gaevskii was joined on the podium by Sergey Nevar, President of Kabardino-Balkaria and Arsen Kanokov, President of Karachaevo-Cherkessia. The stage was erected in front of the statue of Vladimir Lenin which occupies a premium place in Lenin Square. As the youths paraded passed the waving dignitaries, so too did they parade passed the statue of Lenin in much the same fashion as soldiers and other military officials taking part in Soviet-era military parades in Red Square (see, Figure 15).

Figure 15. Leaders beneath statue of Vladimir Lenin during Den' kraya, Lenin Square, Stavropol'



Source: http://www.stappravda.ru/20090519/den_kraya_s_razmakhom_otmetili_na_stavr_opole_37629.html

The parade is highly symbolic for all concerned, as attested by the fact that Valerii Gaevskii (Governor of Stavropol'skii krai) delivered a speech and gave the citizens of the krai a message of congratulation from Vladimir Putin (Prime Minister of Russia). The symbolic tension comes from the fact that the major ethnic groups (including, Cossacks) in the krai (as recognised by the 'Committee of Stavropol'skii krai for National and Cossack affairs') are involved. Each group parades in 'block formation', and in order. There is a clear hierarchy of authority in the parade, and there is no assimilation of ethnic groups.

The second feature of this parade is the emphasis on the history of the krai, through parading the main eleven stages in its development. Here, too, the conduct of the parade is the subject of ongoing negotiations. The individuals who participate -- students, sportsmen, the military, musicians, and school children -- are chosen by the krai authorities. The organisation is mainly local (i.e., in Stavropol'), though with representatives from other urban and rural areas of the krai (see, Den' Stavropol'skogo krai 2009). A further symbolic tension comes with the end of the parade, when military (and non-military) veterans from the 'Great Patriotic War' parade across Lenin Square: while celebrating the role and achievements of the Soviet Union both abroad and at home, no space is made to acknowledge the many 'wrongs' of the Stalin's leadership during this period.

Once the parade has finished, at 1100, those who participated gather on Peasant Hill for the festival of national cultures "In friendship of people – unity of Russia" [*V družbe narodov – edinstvo Rossii*]. The festival, in which the same ethnic groups who earlier participated in the parade in Lenin Square present their 'national cultures' to Stavropol'skii krai, continues for several hours, and frequently more than 5 000 people participate: both ethnic Russian and non-ethnic Russian. Each ethnic group has a distinct 'space' on Peasant Hill: it is in these 'spaces' that members of the group present their national foods, drinks, costumes, and dress. In many ways, this festival, both in its name and its spatiality, encourages the cohesion of the Russian nation as a whole, giving the message that the Russian Federation promotes ethno-cultural diversity. Such multiculturalism recalls the 'folklorisation' of the cultures and traditions of ethnic populations during the Soviet period, and serves to reinforce the messages contained in

the preamble to the Russian Constitution that “We, the multinational people of the Russian Federation, [are] united by a common fate on our land”.

6.8 ‘Performance’ of Language and Post-Soviet Parades

As I suggested above, Alexei Yurchak’s writings on post-Soviet parades provide an appropriate theoretical starting point from which to explore the *Den’ kraya* celebrations in Stavropol’. From the outset, people who attend *Den’ kraya* reject the ‘hegemonic representation’ of ethnic relations embodied by the parade on the basis that they are not an everyday reality. Rather, they are what ethnic relations *ought* to be like and are reminiscent of the Soviet-era – the messages of parade, in Yurchak’s (2005) words, are ‘no longer bound by their literal sense’.

“If you asked ‘Does *Den’ kraya* improve ethnic relations in Stavropol’skii krai?’ then I would say ‘*da-nyet*’ [of course not]. I like to think that it does. But, frankly speaking, the main problem is that with the exception of *Den’ kraya* different ethnic groups are segregated and don’t really touch each other in normal life. For me, the question is whether, after the Soviet period, the organisation of people along ethnic identity has created borders. And yes, I think there are [ethnic] borders between people in normal life. Not physical borders, [but] psychological borders. Especially when we remember the conflicts in Chechnya. The ethnic relations at *Den’ kraya* are not real. They are not the ethnic relations of Stavropol’skii krai in 2009. They are closer to the ethnic relations in Stavropol’skii krai during the Soviet-era.”

- Ethnic Russian, Cossack, 41, 2009 Interview

“*Den’ kraya* was created in the 1990s, and it does not work very well. It is part of the governance of ethnic relations in the region. And the biggest drawback of governance of ethnic relations in the region is that it does not work. There is not much use of *Den’ kraya*. This could be a very useful resource. There are some problems with the ethnic groups [who participate] because some of them use *Den’ kraya* for their own agendas and not cultural activities. And when the governance structure asks about the problems of ethnic relations not all of them are honest about these problems. You see, *Den’ kraya* has happened for the whole post-Soviet period but they are not useful. They are practised but they

make no difference practically. People do not believe that the ethnic relations which *Den' kraya* shows is the real situation. It has very little effect on the people here. *Den' kraya* is a symbol of how things should be. Perhaps how things were during the Soviet Union. The reason it does not have an effect is the absence of normal relations between regional authorities and the ethnic structures ... Every day there are crimes against ethnic groups in this region. The events in summer 2007 and earlier this year prove this. The authorities should accept that the situation is very bad. All the authorities try to show the situation as better than it currently is, [but] this is normal behaviour for politicians. The politicians use *Den' kraya* for this. But I believe that the situation needs to be shown in reality. The ethnic relations at *Den' kraya* are a performance. And the people taking part know this.”

- Ethnic Russian, 72, 2009 Interview

During *Den' kraya*, the constative dimension of the ritualised act(s) has become reinterpreted from their ‘hegemonic representation’ of ‘eternal interethnic peace’. Those who take part in the parades emphasise the centrality of the performative dimension of this discourse in the (re)production of ethnic relations. Thus, it is becoming increasingly more important to participate in the reproduction of the *form* of these ritualised acts of discourse than to engage with their constative meanings. In so far as this is true, those who attend *Den' kraya*, in the words of the above interviewee, ‘know’ that the ethnic relations are ‘a performance’ but nevertheless participate in the event.

“Yes, it is enjoyable. And it is true that people enjoy themselves ... The children enjoy waving flags ... But the government is wrong if it thinks that the interethnic problems in the krai can be solved by a parade. At the same time, what is needed is cultural understanding. Many of the conflicts result from misunderstanding. For example, a Russian woman and a Chechen man are on the street, the Chechen talks to the girl and they meet later the same day in a restaurant. They talk, nothing happens, and they leave peacefully. Another example. A Russian man and a Chechen woman. They see each other on the street and the Russian talks to the girl. If the girl is single, then Chechen culture says that she cannot talk to men. If she is married, then she can only talk with her husband’s permission. You see, cultural misunderstanding. This will lead to inter-ethnic conflict. Russians need to study our culture, and we need to study theirs. At *Den' kraya*, we all present our own cultures. If we learn from each other, then nothing like this would happen. But *Den' kraya* doesn’t teach people what they need to know. We know that *Den' kraya* is just a show.”

- Ethnic Chechen, 45, 2009 Interview

“*Den’ kraya* is a holiday, it is true. But it is important that we take part. It is important that we wave and cheer and show support for the krai, its history, and its political leaders ... It is important that we are united at the moment, that we show unity. You know what the situation is like in the republics ... I work very hard, you know, so I also enjoy seeing my friends. I do not have many holidays.”

- Ethnic Russian, 27, 2009 Interview

However, this ‘rejection’ of the ethnic relations embodied by *Den’ kraya* operates at a number of levels. At the visible level, the parade takes place in Lenin Square and the celebrations continue on Peasant Hill, and people participate as they might be expected to do so -- children wave flags, people wave and cheer at the appropriate time, and few (indeed if any) people attempt to alter the spatiality of the event as organised by krai authorities. At a deeper level however, individuals understand relationships and power between ethnic groups in Stavropol’skii krai, but more broadly between Russia and the North Caucasus. In this case, the *Den’ kraya* celebration is seen as a harbinger for Russo-North Caucasian relations. Indeed, while most people with whom I spoke emphasised that *Den’ kraya* is first and foremost a holiday, repeated stories of ethnic conflict, everyday discrimination, and troublesome youth are understood through the *Den’ kraya* parade. This suggests that the two levels of ‘rejection’ are not mutually exclusive, but rather operate at the same time.

“There are holidays such as *Den’ goroda* [City Day] and *Den’ kraya*. At *Den’ kraya*, every community, including Greeks, present their cultures to everybody else. Citizens have a holiday and meet these communities in everyday life. *Den’ kraya* allows citizens to become acknowledged with their neighbours and fellow citizens. It is important, but for the youth it is just a holiday. They are not concerned about learning about other communities. But it is the youth who need to learn. It is the youth who are involved in inter-ethnic conflict. Not the older people. We grew up during the Soviet period when interethnic relations were good. Nowadays, they are not so good. *Den’ kraya* shows relations how they

used to be. But relations used to be like this every day, not just once a year when the government decides.”

- Ethnic Greek, 53, 2009 Interview

“It is the youth, you see, who are the problem. Often people, young people, who come from the republics to Stavropol’ keep themselves to themselves and do not integrate with other students in the University, in the [student] hostels. This is the problem with ethnic relations in Stavropol’. They need guidance, and help, and lessons in school. Like there used to be, in the Soviet period. They lack guidance. They have no ideology. Why do the youth come to *Den’ kraya*? To cause trouble. They are angry because of the state of the krai and the country. They see people coming from the republics and working for small wages, and what future do they have? What future do they have in their own country?”

- Ethnic Georgian, 52, 2008 Interview

Concerns about the behaviour of youths from the republics of the North Caucasus came to the fore of Russian political debate in late July 2010, when following a large scale riot between ethnic Russians and ethnic Chechens at a youth camp in Tuapse, Krasnodar krai, Vladimir Shvetsov (the deputy Presidential plenipotentiary for the North Caucasus Federal District), proposed drafting a ‘code of behaviour’ to guide the young people from that region so that they could adapt themselves to the norms of people elsewhere in Russia (<http://www.regions.ru/news/2304926/>). This followed the earlier proposal (in June 2010) by Mikhail Solomentsev, chairman the Moscow city Duma ‘Committee on Inter-Regional Ties and Nationality Policy, to codify a series of ‘un-written rules’ for non-ethnic Russians visiting Moscow (see, www.rg.ru/2010/06/16/solomencev.html). As my interviews show, these are not new worries. Indeed, these are sentiments, together with the lack of opportunities for the youth as well as initiatives to integrate youths from different ethnic groups (many older interviewees reflected that the situation would be different if the youth could still join *Komsomol* [Communist Union of Youth]), were regularly expressed to me in different forms. In the same fashion, people emphasised the changing ethnic geography of the

krai, migration processes, and recent geopolitical events in shaping ethnic relations, and used these points to explain the shortcomings of *Den' kraya*. In doing so, they turned to narratives of victimisation:

“Why do they [ethnic groups] dress up at *Den' kraya*? Why the saddles and guns? Why all this performance? Why bring this all back? Is it really necessary? I know it is part of their military culture, but is it really necessary? Yes, they have their rituals and traditions, but it would not be so easy if this started to interfere in our social and political life. We have enough military in this region, in the North Caucasus. You remember what happened in Chechnya ... What do they want from us? They seem to say ‘We are here. This is our land. Caucasian land. Not Russia land’. This is unacceptable nationalism and it could become a big problem. It is very chauvinistic.”

- Ethnic Russian (Cossack), 32, 2009 Interview

“We will soon be a minority in our own krai. This is the reality, you know, and we have to accept it. And we will. But please do not push it in our faces ... I know about how regions in the south are changing, about the migration from the republics. For me, this is not a problem. Russia is their country too. But please do not push it in our faces.”

- Ethnic Russian, 61, 2009 Interview

While there are a variety of reasons why the local power structure in Stavropol'skii krai chose to mark the anniversary of the establishment of Stavropol'skii krai with a celebration (parade) that emphasised ethnic relations, one which kept repeating during my interviews was an attempt to show Moscow that Stavropol'skii krai, unlike the North Caucasian territories which border it, is stable and safe. The comments of one interviewee in particular reflect this:

“*Den' kraya* doesn't work. Like the other holidays which are celebrated in the region, it is just a day for people when they do not have to work. The Governor of Stavropol' uses *Den' krai* to show that he has good relations with the leaders of the republics, particularly Yevkurov in Ingushetia. There is a serious problem of Ingush migrants in the eastern raions ... and migrants from Dagestan ... He [Valeri Gaevskii, Governor of Stavropol'skii krai] uses *Den' kraya* ... with the

power structure in Russia today, Gaevskii cannot show Moscow that these problems exist. If he did, he would be replaced. ”
-Ethnic Russian, 67, 2009 Interview

It is in this light that the *Den' kraya* must be understood: as a parade which emphasises ethnic identity in one of the most ethnically diverse territories in Russia. The reflections of everyday citizens on *Den' kraya* suggest a realisation by krai authorities of the need to present ethnic relations in the krai as 'peaceful' and 'harmonious' in order to secure a place for itself in the changing landscape of power in post-Soviet Russia. The krai authorities clearly believe that this goal is best served by reference to Soviet-era practices -- parades, demonstrations of national culture (food, dress, dance, and music), and celebrations of regional 'ethno-history' (Smith, G. 1999) -- that are embodied in *Den' kraya*.

6.9 Resistance

The picture of the re-scripting of ethnic relations evident from the above discussion suggests an unquestioned acceptance of the *Den' kraya* parade, albeit an acceptance in which the parade is re-interpreted away from its 'hegemonic representation' of 'eternal interethnic peace'. However, there are a number of ways in which citizens resist the re-scripting of ethnic relations. Although broadly positive, the hospitality shown at *Den' kraya* is always not unconditional: it is usual for a small number, perhaps ten or twenty, of Russian nationalists to attend to protest against the event, and, as mentioned already, the presence of Russian security forces is both high and visible. It was made clear to me that, in the multi-ethnic North Caucasus, any event which emphasises difference rather than unity, division rather than integration, will be met with some resistance:

“If we speak about the ethnic identification of people in our region, the North Caucasus, then we must be honest and say that ethnic conflict happens every day, violent conflict. Of course this is the truth. It is a big problem for our region. And it is the image of Stavropol’skii krai in Russia and in the world. We cannot arrange a parade and think that everybody will forget [this].”

- Ethnic Greek, 48, 2009 Interview

Interviewees also resisted *Den’ kraya* by airbrushing ethnic minority groups out of their daily experiences. When, nevertheless, these groups do intrude, the interviewees’ narrative defaults to the familiar trope that local people are no less affected than the ethnic minorities themselves, thus demonstrating what Barthes (2000: 151) identifies as the tendency for myth to deny the existence of the Other: “If he comes face-to-face with him, he blinds himself, ignores and denies him, or else transforms him into himself”.

“This is my country, Russia. Because it is my country I can comment about it, I can be critical. To be frank ... there is too much ethnicity in this krai ... Too much emphasis of ethnicity. But it isn’t important in many aspects of life. For example, if I have argument with my friend, he is ethnic Azeri, over a girl, then the argument is about the girl. It is not about our ethnicity. It is not a Russia - Azerbaijan conflict. It is too much to say this ... It is too much for *Den’ kraya* to emphasise ethnicity.”

- Ethnic Russian, 32, 2009 Interview

In light of this experience, interviewees emphasised the need to foreground civic, rather than ethnic, identity in Stavropol’skii krai. One ethnic Chechen (47, 2009 Interview) told me that “*Den’ kraya* is wrong. It is wrong in this territory to pick people out because of their ethnicity”. This connects with Zaslavsky’s (1994) work on ‘The Ethnic Question in the USSR’, in which he noted that through the system of internal passports instituted in 1932, ethnic identity became institutionalised and Soviet authorities created “almost impassable boundaries between nationalities” (pg. 92) through establishing “rigid boundaries between ethnic groups” (pg. 93).

“I have lots of identities. I am male. I am not young, I am middle-aged. I am a sportsman. I am a member of *Edinaya Rossiya*. Do you understand? Why should I say I am ethnic German when I am a Russian citizen? I am a Russian patriot. I am patriotic toward my country – Russia.”

- Ethnic German, 68, 2009 Interview

“*Den’ kraya* emphasises ethnic identity. Why is this a good idea given the number of [ethnic] conflicts in Stavropol’skii krai? The local power structure should emphasise civic identity not ethnic identity.”

- Ethnic Russian, 32, 2008 Interview

In short, many people who attend *Den’ kraya* are far shrewder about the realities of the celebration and parade than those who arrange it, the regional authorities of Stavropol’skii krai, and while they enjoy *Den’ kraya* and the holiday which it affords them, most are under no illusions that the ethnic relations portrayed in the parade are far from the daily reality. In a country where discrimination of ethnic minorities is widespread and authorities target visible minorities for racial profiling, resulting in unnecessary registration and passport checks, searches, and arbitrary arrest and detention (Amnesty International 2004), ethnic identity is not always means for celebration.

6.10 Conclusion

Informed by recent work in anthropology and political geography, this article has extended analysis of parades to a previously underresearched area, Russia. In doing so, it has analysed the role played by the *Den’ kraya* celebration in affecting ethnic relations in Stavropol’skii krai. It has argued that *Den’ kraya* is grounded not on what ethnic relations are like, but on what they ‘ought’ to be like, and seeks to re-script ethnic

relations toward a predetermined ‘ideal’ of Soviet-era harmony. While many of those who participate in *Den’ kraya* reject this re-scripting, by their very act of taking part they produce and reproduce themselves as “ritualised agents” and “maintain and qualify the complex micro-relations of power” (Bell 1992: 221). This is not unique to Stavropol’skii krai though, as Yekaterina Salnikova, writing in *Chastnii Korrespondent* in late April 2010, has argued that for an increasing number of Russians the long holidays of early May, running from May Day through Victory Day, “are to a significant degree alien holidays ... although they take place as before in our streets”, and consequently, “what people will be celebrating remains a very large [and open] question”, even if it seldom asked (Salnikova 2010). There is an important political aspect to this, as citizens’ everyday understandings of these events can provide useful insights into power and politics in contemporary Russia. As a harbinger of the state of Russo-North Caucasian relations, *Den’ kraya* highlights the profound limitations to the nature of that contact.

There are two main disciplinary implications to be drawn from this study.

Firstly, as far as studies of Russia and the North Caucasus are concerned, this paper stresses that celebrations and parades, as part of the wider culture of public memory, are an important factor in negotiating interethnic relations and reflections of the participants in these events contribute to an understanding of individuals’ ‘everyday’ geopolitics.

Secondly, researchers in ‘critical geopolitics’ can profitably make use of “grounded fieldwork on political issues” and in doing so begin to overturn “the dominant conception ... that critical geopolitics is about discursive critique not fieldwork” (Ó

Tuathail 2010). My focus on the *Den' kraya* parade has mapped striking discrepancies between the “the eternal interethnic peace proclaimed by the [state] authorities” (Dzutsev 2010a) and the everyday reality of ethnic discrimination and violence as lived by citizens in Stavropol'skii krai, and joins with the work of others in “re-peopling political geography” (Megoran 2006: 625).

I was told more than once by interview participants that *Den' kraya* achieved nothing. Despite this, *Den' kraya* is a notable event. Although taking place for much of the post-Soviet period, there have been high-profile ethnic conflicts and more daily ethnic tensions in Stavropol'. And, as I have argued elsewhere, these tensions continue (Foxall 2010). However, perhaps without *Den' kraya* these incidents would occur more often or be more fatal. Perhaps *Den' kraya* is notable not for presenting an ‘idealised’ form of ethnic relations, but for presenting a ‘form’ of ethnic relations at all. This was the opinion of at least one person with whom I spoke,

“Of course you could say that, given events in our region, *Den' kraya* does not help relations. But without *Den' kraya* these conflicts could have been more regular and more widespread. It is impossible to argue either way because we cannot repeat history. But I think that *Den' kraya* is a positive influence on relations, even if it does not reflect the [true] interethnic situation in Stavropol'. *Den' kraya* stops people thinking individually about their own ethnic groups. People begin to think collectively for all ethnic groups. It begins this collective mentality. It unites groups and helps people to understand other cultures and traditions.”

- Ethnic Armenian, 36, 2008 Interview

Chapter 7. Discourses of Demonisation: Chechens, Russians, and the Stavropol' riots of 2007

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Abstract: In the summer of 2007, the geopolitics of Russo-North Caucasian relations were once again manifest in inter-ethnic violent conflict. During the course of six-weeks of rioting between ethnic Russian (*russkii*) and non-ethnic Russian (*rossiiskii*) citizens, three students were killed (one Chechen and two Russians) and pogroms were conducted widely. This paper addresses these events through a focus on the nature and politics of the riots and those involved. I argue that a range of tensions came together to form a localised geopolitics, and that this contributes to an understanding of why these events took place. Ultimately, the riots are important as an event which reveals much about the complexity of power, space, and identity in contemporary Russia.

7.1 Introduction

During the summer of 2007, Stavropol'skii krai⁵⁸ in the North Caucasus was the scene of a series of fierce riots between ethnic Russian (*russkii*) and non-ethnic Russian

⁵⁸ The term 'krai' is used to refer to nine of Russia's 83 federal subjects. It is often translated as 'territory', but can also be rendered: 'province', 'county', or 'region'. Etymologically, the word is related with the verb 'kroit' which means 'to cut'. Historically, krai's were vast territories located along the periphery of Russia, since the word krai also means border, 'a place of the cut-off'.

(*rossiiskii*) citizens⁵⁹. Over the course of six weeks of intermittent rioting, three students were killed (one Chechen and two Russians) and pogroms (*pogromi*) were conducted widely. Although local authorities finally managed to restore order in early June, the ethnic, social, and regional tension which contributed to the riots had already been noticeable for a number of years. Fragmented across borders, checkpoints, and time-zones, non-ethnic Russian citizens, particularly those from the Caucasus, have long occupied a multitude of unenviable positions in Russian society, as the conquered (during the Caucasian War, 1817-1864), the deported (during World War Two, 1944), and, more recently, as security or terrorist threats (since the Moscow Apartment Bombings of 1999).

In May and June 2007, as Russo-Chechen relations were manifest once again in violent clashes, ethnic Chechens found themselves in each of these aforementioned positions. As media reports from the time show, those ethnic Russians who participated in the events did not regard all ethnic minorities as their enemies. Rather, they had positive views of Armenians and Greeks; even negative views of Jews were mentioned only in passing. The focus was on ‘people of Caucasian nationality’ (*litsa kavkazskoi natsional’nosti* – LKN). In particular it was on the Chechens, who were demonised and seen as “the embodiment of all evil” (Shalpentokh 2007), people who should be deported or simply eliminated.

This paper addresses these events through a focus on the nature and politics of the riots and those involved. Instead of conceptualising the riots, as some commentators do (for

⁵⁹ These were not the only inter-ethnic riots in Stavropol’skii krai in 2007. In February, ethnic Russians and Cossacks attacked Armenians and Georgians in Novoaleksandrovskii.

example, Shalpentokh 2007; Isaev 2007), as being simply ‘another’ example of the violent tendency of Russian nationalism, of the kind characterized by the slogan ‘*Rossiya dlya Russkikh*’ (‘Russia for Russians’), I argue that they are the result of a number of entanglements which speak directly to political geography’s concerns with power and space. These are: demographic processes; the language (and actions) of practitioners of statecraft; and historical tensions. Engaging with recent debates in human geography surrounding scale, I argue that the riots are notable as an event whose origins cannot be located within a simple local/national binary, but rather require the identification of a more complex spatial geometry. I emphasise that North Caucasian localities, like all places, are part of a scalar geopolitics that links them to regional and global dynamics. From the shifting territorial governmentalities of empires (Ottoman, Persian, Russian, and Soviet) to twentieth-century territorial reconfigurations and post-Soviet ethnic animosities, North Caucasian localities and actors have long been produced at scales other than the local. As O’Loughlin, Panin and Wittmer (2007: 250) note, “Stavropol’skii krai occupies a special place in the strategy for Russia’s territorial development because of its contemporary geopolitical position, at the centre of the North Caucasus, contiguous to a majority of the republics of the area”. With a territory of 66 200 km² (0.4% of Russia and 19% of the North Caucasus), I argue that an understanding of Stavropol’skii krai’s strategic geopolitical position within the North Caucasus is important in understanding the riots and subsequent reactions.

This paper is based on fieldwork I conducted in Stavropol’ over two periods: in October 2008 and June and July 2009. I held sixty semi-structured, qualitative interviews with a wide range of adult Russians (male and female) including students, academics, politicians, journalists, retirees, and the unemployed. As has been observed by both

Eriksen (1993) and Megoran (2007), the question of how to study ‘ethnic conflict’ poses a dilemma. In one of the most important theoretical studies of ethnicity to date, Eriksen wrote that “The choice of an analytical perspective or ‘research hypothesis’ is not an innocent act. If one goes out to look for ethnicity, one will ‘find’ it and thereby contribute to constructing it” (Eriksen 1993: 161). Following the example of Megoran, I addressed this dilemma by researching a political issue (regional relations) that was not explicitly ‘ethnic’. In none of my interviews did I ask, either directly or indirectly, any questions relating to ethnicity (except for the purpose of basic self identification in the introductory stage). By structuring discussions around a number of political events (for example, the Chechen Wars, local terrorist attacks, and the Russo-Georgian conflict of August 2008), I allowed ethnicity to emerge as a pertinent issue (if this were the case). I believe that this enabled me to avoid the dangers that Eriksen outlined, whilst constructing an account of the meaning and importance of ethnicity in understanding the riots. Throughout all of the interviews, I worked with an interpreter to ensure that my understanding of Russian could be complemented by that of a native speaker.

7.2 Regions in Political Geography

Toal’s paper on ‘regional studies’ in political geography suggested that “It may be time to re-think the commitment to the systematic and global and re-assert the importance of regional geographical knowledge, especially in the light of contemporary geopolitics” (Toal 2003: 654). More recently, Murphy and O’Loughlin have pointed to “strengthening regional research and training” as “one of the most important tasks facing the discipline of geography today” (Murphy and O’Loughlin 2009: 245). These calls appear to challenge Bonnett’s earlier criticism that “academic geography’s

unwillingness to engage, challenge and re-imagine the ‘global’ ... [has] created the conditions for the representation ... and the study of ‘other societies’ as ... politically suspect” (Bonnett 2003: 56). Extending the geographical remit of this paper momentarily through looking both East and Westwards, authors such as Jeffrey (2008) and Megoran (2005) have contributed to ‘breaking down’ the ‘politically suspect’ nature of regional geography with their respective work in the Balkans (Bosnia) and Central Asia (the Ferghana Valley). Such work, based on sound qualitative methodological rigour, has demonstrated the ‘value-added’ nature of regional studies to contemporary political geography.

Events such as the Budyennovsk hospital crisis (June 1995), Two Chechen Wars (1994-6 and 2000-2), Stavropol’ train bombing (December 2003), Beslan School Hostage Siege (September 2004), the terrorist attack against the city of Nal’chik (October 2005), the Stavropol’ riots (May-June 2007), and more recent insurgency and terrorist attacks in Ingushetia (since 2008) suggest that studies of the North Caucasus should not be marginalized within Anglophone political geography⁶⁰. At the same time, Bassin’s recent paper on ‘ethno-geopolitics’ highlighted the need for detailed and comprehensive studies of the “volatile ethno-demographic situation” in many parts of Russia which “provides abundant opportunities for future [ethnic] conflict” (Bassin 2009: 131). It is my intention that this paper joins with Toal’s call that “Political geographers [need] to re-assert the importance of ‘thick’ regional geographical knowledge in the face of ‘thin’ universal theorising about world affairs” (Toal 2003: 654) and provides new

⁶⁰ Some steps towards this are visible in Gearóid Ó Tuathail and John O’Loughlin’s work with Vladimir Kolossov on North Ossetia (2008), as well as O’Loughlin and Wittmer’s recent work on localised geographies of violence (2009), and Ó Tuathail’s own work on Beslan (2009a). In 2007 a Special Issue of ‘Eurasian Geography and Economics’ (vol. 48, no. 2) devoted to ‘The Caucasus: Political, Population, and Economic Geographies’.

perspectives on debates surrounding ethnic conflict in the North Caucasus and on the Stavropol' riots themselves.

7.3 The Riots

“On Sunday night in Stavropol' two Russian students were killed. In one of the versions [of events], they were killed as a vendetta for the death of a Chechen student during a large fight on 24 May. The Central Administrative Board for Internal Affairs (GYBD), by contrast, argued that the students have been the victims of pillagers... The authorities fear that the funeral of the victims, as in Kondopoga, could turn into an anti-Caucasian riot [*bunt*]”

Kommersant, 4 June 2007

“Actions of unprecedented security were taken in southern Russia's Stavropol' yesterday. All central parks were closed, no entertainment centres will work after midnight and rectors of universities will submit to enforcement authorities the lists of all students (specifying their whereabouts). In Stavropol', authorities fear a massacre [*voinya*] may begin today as the students killed [on June 3]... will be buried... The Slavic organizations of Stavropol' will attempt to rally on the day of the funerals and the city's authorities will endeavour to prevent them. In today's Stavropol', the chances are strong that the rally will turn into a pogrom [*pogrom*] between hundreds of Caucasus migrants and local Russians”

Kommersant, 5 June 2007

“Yesterday evening in Stavropol' there occurred anti-Caucasian pogroms [*pogromi*] and clashes [*stolknoveniya*] with the police. The disturbances at the rally, held after the funeral of students Dmitry Blokhin and Pavel Chadin killed last Sunday, took place nine days after massive Russian-Caucasian fights [*draka*]”

Kommersant, 6 June 2007

The Stavropol' riots, which erupted with a brawl between a group of ethnic Russians and non-ethnic Russians after an altercation in an Internet cafe, involved between 300 and 400 individuals. The first riot, on May 24, saw dozens of people seriously injured,

and one Chechen (Gilani Ataev) killed⁶¹. This quickly led to ethnic tensions, panic, and a rumour that “dozens of Russians were killed by natives of the Caucasus” (Kozhevnikova 2008). Nine days after the first riot subsided, on June 3, two Russian students (Dmitry Blokhin and Pavel Chadin) were killed. Their throats were slit. Although Sergei Dubrovin, Stavropol’skii krai First Deputy Prosecutor, stated that “There is absolutely no connection” between the murders (O’Flynn 2007), the popular feeling in Stavropol’ was that Blokhin and Chadin were killed in revenge for the murder of Ataev⁶². Accordingly, the crime was attributed to Chechens. On June 4, ethnic Russians gathered in Stavropol’ to celebrate the birthday of General Alexei Ermolov⁶³. At the gathering, Igor Artyomov, leader of the ultranationalist ‘Russian National Union’ (*Russkiy Natsional’niy Soyuz*), called for a ‘Slav Rally’ to be held in the city to protest against the ‘black wave of violence’ (*chernomy rezkii rost nasilenosti*) which had hit Stavropol’⁶⁴. The following day, on June 5, the funerals of Blokhin and Chadin took place. The location of Blokhin’s funeral is notable as it took place at the largest

⁶¹ The influential Russian Human Rights group ‘*Za Prava Cheloveka*’ (‘For Human Rights’) issued a report which diverged significantly with the ‘official’ version of events. They reported that Ataev had not been killed in a brawl with ethnic Russians, but had been beaten to death by the police. Quoting Ataev’s Uncle, a statement on their website said that Ataev’s wrists bore signs of having been handcuffed and that he had other injuries which indicated he had been beaten with a blunt object. The statement, which was accompanied by a photograph of the injuries, said police officers at the brawl had dragged the victim into a police car while he was still alive. Available from <http://www.zaprava.ru/content/view/912/2/>

⁶² Given the tendency for Chechens to follow traditional means of avenging death -- ‘Chechen Blood Feud’ -- it is not entirely out of question that Ataev’s family launched a vendetta

⁶³ Alexei Petrovich Yermolov (1777 – 1861) was Commander of the Tsarist forces in the North Caucasus in the early nineteenth century where his name became a byword for brutality. He once remarked that “I desire that the terror of my name should guard our frontiers with more potential than chains or fortresses, that my word should be for the natives a law more inevitable than death” (Russell 2007: 31). Yermolov’s view of the Chechens was particularly dismissive. He thought of them as the “basest of the bandits who attack the (Caucasian) Line... Chechnya might rightly be called the nest of all bandits” (Gammer 2006: 35) and, in 1818, wrote to Tsar Alexander I that he “would find no peace whilst a single Chechen remained alive” (Bennisen 1999: 536). He is a source of pride for Russian nationalists, and a figure of hatred for Chechens. See Russell (2007), Gammer (2006) and Bennigsen (1999).

⁶⁴ Russians often refer to Chechens and other inhabitants of the North Caucasus as *cherniye* (blacks) and *chernozhopy* (black arses), despite the fact that Caucasians, being Caucasian, are largely white-skinned. For an overview of racial discourse in Russian nationalism, see Amnesty International (2006) and Kachaturian (2009).

cemetery in Stavropol', in the South-West district of city (*Promishlennii raion*). It was in this district, eleven days earlier, that Ataev had been killed.

Once the funerals of Blokhin and Chadin had finished nearly a thousand people gathered on Lenin Square (*Ploshchad' Lenina*) in central Stavropol' to rally against non-ethnic Russians living in the city. Although largely composed of members of the 'Stavropol' Union of Slav Communities' (*Stavropol'skii Soyuz Slavyanskikh Soobshestvi*), the 'Movement against Illegal Immigration' (*Dvizhenie Protiv Nelegal'noi Immigratsii*), the RNS, and other right-wing nationalist groups, there was a sizable number of local residents present. The slogans of the crowd were belligerent enough and spatially explicit, calling for Chechens to be 'cast out' of Russian 'space': '*Slava Rossii!*' (Hail Russia!), '*Russkiy Vpered!*' (Forward [ethnic] Russia!), '*Chemodan, vokzal, Chechnya*' (Suitcase, Railway Station, Chechnya), '*Svoi samosyd*' (Our Own Law), and '*Poymayem, i v sortire zamochim*' (Waste them in the shithouse). Rioters were also heard shouting '*Mi ne ubivali dostatochno mnogikh iz Vas v Chechne*' (We did not kill enough of you in Chechnya) and '*Mi sdelaem druguyu Chechnyu Zdes*'. *Slava k Russii*' (We'll make another Chechnya here. Glory to [ethnic] Russia) (RFE/RL 2007). The protestors also demanded the creation of grassroots military detachments (*druzhin*) to maintain public order, and called for the resignation of Stavropol'skii krai governor Aleksander Chernogorov (a member of Vladimir Putin's 'United Russia' -- *Edinaya Rossiya* -- party)⁶⁵.

⁶⁵ Chernogorov was removed from office a year later, in 2008, after 'A Just Russia' (*Spravedlivaya Rossiya*) defeated 'United Russia' (*Edinaya Rossiya*) in a vote for the regional legislature. Chernogorov was subsequently ousted from 'United Russia' by State Duma speaker, and (then) United Russia leader, Boris Gryzlov.

According to eyewitnesses, several hundred individuals who participated in the rally in Lenin Square later broke away and headed towards the ‘Tourist Hotel’ (*Gostinitsa Turist*) intent on committing violence against the ethnic Caucasian residents staying there (Mel’nik 2008). However, local police and OMON (*Otryad Militsii Osobogo Naznacheniya*, Special Purpose Police Squad) were able to disperse them and stop a wider scale pogrom, and damage was limited to a few store and car windows belonging to non-ethnic Russians.

In response, on June 5, an entire delegation of federal officials and MPs arrived in Stavropol’ to investigate the ethnic unrest. In spite of the fact that by the time that they arrived nine criminal cases had already been started, 51 individuals had been taken into police custody, and Alexander Chernovolov (leader of the local division of the RNS and the so-called ‘Ermolovskii Front’) had been charged under article 282 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (“Incitement of Ethnic Enmity”), Russian Minister of Internal Affairs, Rashid Nurgaliev, claimed that there had been “no riot” and that “the murders that were committed in Stavropol’ were not ethnically motivated” (Kommersant 2007).

On June 6, Vladimir Putin dispatched State Duma deputy speaker Vladimir Katrenko to Stavropol’. Speaking on the same day, Dmitry Kozak, Putin’s authorised representative in the Southern Federal District, laid the blame for the trouble squarely at the feet of the local authorities, questioning whether they had been effective in combating extremism.

Certainly, the Stavropol’ authorities did their best to prevent a ‘Kondopoga scenario’ (see later): they mobilized the city’s emergency services, and temporarily limited the

opening hours of the city's restaurants, clubs, and other entertainment facilities. At the same time though, they made a number of mistakes which, in the short term, added to the tensions already existing in the city, and, in the longer term, are ominous if future ethnic riots occur. Firstly, the authorities attempted to withhold vital information from the public about what was happening⁶⁶. This caused panic and led to the spread of inaccurate and misleading rumours. When official information about the riots became available, it was too late, and the initial rumours persisted. Thus, one university imposed a curfew on its students to protect them from "massive killings and rapes of young people" (Stavropol'skaya Pravda 2007). Secondly, local police lacked clear guidance on how to respond to the conduct of the rioters, and the ultra-right groups in particular. As a result, the situation was exploited by two competing nationalist groups: while the authorities suppressed the RNS, the SSSS joined with city authorities to 'assist' them in resolving the conflict⁶⁷. At the same time, the authorities attempted to lay responsibility for the riots at the feet of a transnational network of unspecified actors. Recalling Vladimir Putin's geopolitical designation of "an arc of instability extending from the Philippines to Kosovo" (Putin 2000), the authorities blamed "a professional hand which has done a lot of evil deeds in Yugoslavia, Ukraine, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan, and now seeks to 'help' Russia" (Kozhevnikova 2008).

⁶⁶ Just as during the Beslan hostage siege, see Ó Tuathail (2009a)

⁶⁷ There is reason to believe that Alexander Chernogorov sympathised with the ultra-nationalists. During an investigation into allegations of official misconduct, he was found to have kept Nazi paraphernalia in his office. Further, such an alignment between ultra-nationalists and city authorities is nothing new in Stavropol'. In the 1990s, the 'Russian National Unity' (now disbanded) found official support from the Stavropol'skii krai regional administration. Members of the group 'patrolled' public parks and city streets, gradually becoming an arm of the regional government. However, in 1998, Moscow's mayor, Yuri Luzhkov, a nationalist sympathizer himself, forbade a planned Russian National Unity gathering, as part of a larger federal anti-Russian National Unity campaign. The influence of the group began to wane after that, and two years later it split into a number of smaller factions, which are still active today.

The Stavropol' riots were variously portrayed in the mass media as being a pogrom (*pogrom*), riot (*bunt*), or fight (*draka*) between ethnic Russians and 'people of Caucasian nationality'. This is nothing new in Russia: in fact, this has all happened before. A year earlier, it was in Kondopoga (Republic of Karelia). After two ethnic Russians were killed and several others badly injured by Chechens, groups of ethnic Russian youths clashed with OMON troops and targeted a number of Chechen-owned businesses. Two days after the beginning of rioting (on 2 September), a mass meeting was held at the town hall. A number of Russian nationalists came from Moscow, including leaders of DPNI, and organized a rally calling on the government to resettle all 'people of Caucasian nationality', especially ethnic Chechens. As a result, hundreds of ethnic Chechens and other ethnic Caucasians had to flee the town (RFE/RL 2006). Thus, in thinking about the Stavropol' riots it is important to consider exactly how it was that Chechens became demonised to the extent that they were. Indeed, while certain aspects of the event were reported widely in the press at the time, one of the essential aspects was ignored. This was the discourse of the participants in the event, particularly their vision of their enemies.

Much like the case of Kondopoga, whilst some generalisation can be made about the Stavropol' riots -- it is true that violence was localised and the authorities were able to stop it fairly quickly -- popular receptiveness to this type of violence (pogrom) indicates that the Stavropol' riots cannot be wholly regarded as isolated events. But nor would it be right, I argue, to pass them off as 'just another' example of the violent side of Russian nationalism. What is interesting about the Stavropol' riots is the way in which particular national and nationalist stereotypes were picked up on and mobilised as ethnic Russians targeted ethnic minorities. If successive statements of President Putin

regarding the Chechen nation are to be believed, then during the riots Russia found itself fighting against forces menacing modern civilisation itself (Putin 2000).

7.4 Geopolitical Entanglements

Clearly, a number of processes were at work in the Stavropol' riots which are important in explaining the geopolitical entanglements which surround the events. As a result, in considering the events and their geographical/spatial dimensions we must ask questions such as: What was the cause of the riots? How should we understand the riots? Which factors contribute to an understanding of why the riots took place?

During my three months of research in Stavropol' three themes predominated amongst interviewees and press sources: the long-term 'de-russification' of the North Caucasus; the threat of terrorism linked to the language (and actions) of practitioners of statecraft in Russia; and historical tensions stemming from already existing ethnic anxieties. In the specific context of the Stavropol' riots, these three themes came together to constitute a collective justification for calls for the forced deportation of an entire population (ethnic Chechens) from the city. As such, each entanglement deserves critical reflection for the effect that it had in creating the image of a Chechen (Them) who needed to be removed from the local landscape in the name of protecting Russia (Us); a stereotype which served, instrumentally, simultaneously to include (*Rossiia*) and exclude (*Russiia*) ordinary Russian citizens. It is an enduring refrain in Russia to place political (*Rossiia*) and ethnic (*Russiia*) identity in a binary relationship. Such a relationship, which is important in terms of national (political) identity, is a theme of permanent academic debates in Russia. The closeness in the popular Russian mind-set

between ethnic Chechens and perceptions of (in)security allowed those who took part in the Stavropol' riots to blur the distinction between 'right' and 'wrong'. This resulted in an acute state of insecurity where the normal protections of civilians (as guaranteed under Russian domestic law) were briefly removed from ethnic Chechens (just as they had been during the Two Chechen Wars, 1994-6 and 2000-2).

At the time of the Second Chechen War, Vladimir Putin (2000) stated:

“We will pursue them everywhere. Excuse my saying so, if we catch them in the toilet, we'll waste them in the shithouse.” (*Yesli, pardon, v tualete ikh poymayem, i v sortire zamochim*)⁶⁸

The same language of 'wasting' Chechens in the 'shithouse' was revived by ethnic Russians in the Stavropol' riots. Such a discourse works to remove ethnic Chechens from our imaginations of Russia, so that Chechnya is no longer part of Russia. As Ó Tuathail has argued elsewhere, the North Caucasus has a long history of such indiscriminate and undifferentiating demonising discourses (2009a). It is these discourses which made possible this variety of geopolitical entanglements which surround the Stavropol' riots. Ultimately, the riots are not an event with a singular meaning or geography. Rather, they are an event whose contested meaning -- much like Ó Tuathail (2009a) argues in relation to the Beslan school hostage siege of 2004 -- reveals much about the complexity of the North Caucasus and about power, space, and identity in contemporary Russia.

*Demography: Ethnic-Russians Flee the North Caucasus*⁶⁹

⁶⁸ For an overview of the contested meaning of the phrase, see Camus (2006).

In the majority of my interviews the one theme which stood out more than any other was the changing population structure of Stavropol'skii krai, a process indicative of the North Caucasus more broadly. Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union the ethnic Russian population in North Caucasus has fallen as local ethnic Caucasian populations have been expanding: Russians have fled conflict and what they perceive to be increasingly hostile policies in the ethnic republics (for an example of a pro-Russian hostile ethnic policy in the North Caucasus, see Popov and Kuznetsov 2008). More long term, the share of ethnic Russians in the overall composition of the population has declined dramatically: in 1959 Russians accounted for 38.8 percent of the population in the ethnic republics of the North Caucasus and by the time of the 2002 census this figure had dropped to 14.9 percent. At the same time, conflicts in Chechnya and elsewhere have created a significant refugee population (composed of both Russians and other ethnic groups) scattered throughout the region⁷⁰. To be sure, as ethnic Caucasian populations in the region have grown rapidly they have migrated into regions traditionally occupied by ethnic Russians outside the republics. As a result of this, ethnic Russians have become a minority in the North Caucasus, and even in areas where they are in the majority, they consider themselves as an embattled minority group (Belozerov 2005). Vladimir Putin himself acknowledged the political importance of this

⁶⁹ This heading is taken from the title of report written by Oleg Tsvetkov and published in the Russian Analytical Digest, see Tsvetkov (2006).

⁷⁰ At the height of the Second Chechen War in early 2000, Human Rights Watch reported that over 300,000 people had been forced out of their homes. After the war, authorities put heavy pressure on the displaced to go home, and in 2004 Russian authorities closed camps in the neighbouring republic of Ingushetia that housed the majority of refugees. The head of Norwegian Refugee Council's Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre said in early 2007 that authorities throughout Russia were still pushing displaced Chechens to go back to Chechnya. According to UNHCR, there were still more than 50,000 displaced Chechens living in private accommodation in early 2008, as well as almost 6,000 still in temporary homes. The Danish Refugee Council said almost 13,000 displaced Chechens were still in Ingushetia and Russian non-governmental organisation VESTA registered about 4,000 remaining in Dagestan. See, Human Rights Watch (2004).

when, in a meeting with Cossacks in 2005, he commented that “the exodus of the ethnic Russian population is a problem for the entirety of the North Caucasus” (Putin 2005).

The demographic statistics of the first post-Soviet decade tell a clear story. According to official data, 343,000 ethnic Russians left the republics of the North Caucasus during the 1990s. Migration accounted for 86 percent of this loss, while natural population decline accounted for 14 percent. During this same period, the size of Caucasian nationalities in the republics of the North Caucasus grew by 403,000 individuals. The share of Caucasian nationalities in the population of each of the titular republics grew significantly during this time: at the beginning of 1999, it ranged from 92.9 percent in Ingushetia to 23 percent in Adygea. The share of ethnic Russians correspondingly dropped during the same period, ranging from 1.1 percent of the population in Ingushetia to 81.6 percent in Stavropol’ (ethnic Russians make up a majority only in Krasnodar, Stavropol’, and Adygea).

In conditions of deep economic crisis, corruption, intense ethnic conflict, and high levels of crime, the main actors in the North Caucasus republics are the ethnic clans and groups. Ethnic Russians have only a weak ability for ethnic mobilization, are losing the battles for influence and resources, and therefore are leaving the region for “Russia proper” (Male, Dargin, 19, 2008 Interview). With the departure of ethnic Russians from the region, the cultural distance between the North Caucasus and the rest of Russia is growing. The two sides claim different historical, social, and cultural-religious identities (Zhirinovskii 2006). I was told how, as a result, a “domestic abroad” (Male, Ethnic

Russian, 30, 2008 Interview) has appeared inside of Russia⁷¹. Many of my interviewees also spoke of a growing ‘civilisational’ divide between Stavropol’skii krai and the North Caucasus, and linked this to the 2007 riots. The comments of one interviewee in particular are worth noting (Male, Ethnic Russian, 47, 2009 Interview):

“As for internal immigration, it is impossible to prohibit people from Dagestan and Chechnya on the borders of Stavropol’ region from coming here because we are all citizens of the same country. But problems of different approaches to the economy, different stereotypes, and maybe different mentality exists. And this is the main problem. Because we are two different civilisations, in Stavropol’ region we have conflicts and problems. This is to be expected. [Throughout Russia] We have examples of hostility between different ethnic groups. In Stavropol’ region these problems survive more acutely because of its geographical location at the centre of geopolitical configuration of the whole North Caucasus. That’s why it has become the frontier between the Russian world ... internal Russian world ... and Caucasian world. The events in Stavropol’ in 2007, and recently in Stepnovskii Raion, are not the exception, but the rule. Analysts and politicians alike believe that they will not be the last events of their kind.”

The administrative borders with the ‘domestic abroad’ (more often referred to in Russia as the ‘near abroad’) are guarded not simply as state borders, but as “borders with our enemy” (Male, Ethnic Russian, 30, 2008 Interview). Although this situation also affects Krasnodar Krai (as it shares a border with Karachaevo-Cherkessia), I was told that the situation in Stavropol’ was “worse ... we are closer to Chechnya ... closer to terrorists” (Female, Ethnic Russian, 20, 2008 Interview). The Russian exodus from the North Caucasus republics comes at a time when anti-Caucasus feelings in the rest of Russia

⁷¹ This phrase is significant because Russians refer to the Post-Soviet states as the *blizhneye zarubezhye*. Although this phrase is difficult to translate into English, it is usually rendered as the ‘near abroad’: ‘*Blizhneye*’ is the neuter of ‘*blizhniy*’, an adjective meaning ‘near’, while ‘*zarubezhye*’ (a noun with no English equivalent) is constructed from ‘*rubezh*’ (‘border’) and the prefix ‘*za*’ (‘beyond’). The phrase originally had an ironic nuance, used by people during the Soviet-era to describe ‘the present-day abroad’ (*nastoyashcheyeye za rubezhye*). However the words have now acquired a politico-geographical meaning in order to distinguish the states of the C.I.S. (Commonwealth of Independent States -- a title now rarely used) from Russia’s ‘original’ abroad. Rightly or wrongly, Russia’s political elite have difficulty viewing the republics on its periphery as fully sovereign entities; the use of the term ‘near abroad’, in addition to qualifying their independence, signifies to the ‘far abroad’ (*dalniye zarubezhye*) that Russia claims certain rights in the region that transcend traditional diplomatic conventions.

are growing. In the post-Soviet period, the complex ethnic situation in Stavropol' has promoted the growth of Russian ethno-nationalist sentiments and mass xenophobia. Such feelings, once peripheral, show signs of spreading to a much wider array of Russian society and of being directed against the entire North Caucasus. Thus, the threat to Russia's internal cohesion may come not only from North Caucasian terrorists and separatists, but also from 'everyday' Russians unhappy about the need to provide financial subsidies to economically ineffective republics with restless and culturally distant populations, and ready to take matters into their own hands:

“Chechnya isn't Russia. It never has been ... and never will be. Why should we give money to them when they repay us by bombing our theatres, blowing up our aeroplanes, and killing our children.” (Male, Ethnic Russian, 30, 2008 Interview)

“It is not Russia and should not have Russian money” (Male, Ethnic Russian, 29, 2008 Interview)

“[The exit of ethnic Russians] is the violation of the culture of neighbourly relations in this territory” (Male, Ethnic Russian, 71, 2009 Interview)

Although Krasnodar Krai is more populated and economically more powerful, for areas of the North Caucasus with high relative density of Russian population Stavropol'skii krai is the centre of gravity. While Stavropol' is overwhelmingly ethnic Russian in population (82%), 4% of its residents are Armenians, 3% are Ukrainians, 1.4% are Dargins, 1.2% are Greeks, and 0.5% are Chechens, along with around 130 smaller ethnic groups. Both individually and collectively, there is a “latent” potential for conflict (Markedonov 2007). In the post-Soviet period, there have been several major conflicts over the political geography of the region, with Cossacks playing a leading role in the border disputes between Stavropol' and Dagestan (over Kislyarskii and

Tarumovskii raions) and Stavropol' and Chechnya (over Naurskii and Shelkovskii raions) (Matveeva 1999: 42). Since the early 1990s, the southern regions of Stavropol'skii krai (Kurskii, Stepnovskii and Andropovskii raions) and the north-west regions (Kochubeevskii, Trunovskii and Grachevskii raions) have seen significant immigration from Chechnya (Vendina, Belozerov, and Gustafson 2007) which has led to an incipient process of ethnic segregation (Kolossoy, Galkina and Krindatch 2001) and occasional conflict. According to the 2002 census, there are more Chechens in Stavropol'skii krai than in any federal subject except Chechnya itself, Ingushetia, and Dagestan. In conditions of economic crisis and hardship, conflicts, although not always fatal, have occurred around more banal and 'everyday' issues such as land ownership, land distribution, migration policy, and access to education (Belozerov 2005; Belozerov, Tikhuchin and Panin 2008). This emigration of ethnic Russians, both forced and voluntary, has fundamentally altered the ethnic composition of the krai and, I was told, means that the border with the 'domestic abroad' is "moving further into Russia" (Male, Ethnic Russian, 30, 2008 Interview).

I was told of many reasons for the out-migration of Russians from the North Caucasus republics: the "zone of conflict" in the region (Female, Ethnic Chechen, 23, 2008 Interview); the high level of "corruption and crime" (Male, 18); the exclusion of ethnic Russians by Caucasian clans from management, education, and business positions; the lack of employment opportunities (Male, Ethnic Russian, 27, 2009 Interview); and the day-to-day prejudice of Caucasus peoples in relation to Russians. Many Russians with whom I spoke see part of the reason for the departure of ethnic Russians in the specific federal construction of Russia, which includes non-ethnic regions (oblasts and krajs), and ethnic regions, such as the North Caucasus republics. In the ethnic republics, the

status of ethnic Russians will always be lower than the status of the titular peoples, a factor that “will always push us [ethnic Russians] to leave” (Female, Ethnic Russian, 45, 2009 Interview).

Terrorism: Chechnya and Putin

The threat of terrorism, linked to the rise of Vladimir Putin through the military reassertion of Russian power in the North Caucasus, is a theme which kept repeating itself during my interviews. Putin established his reputation with his hard line response to the ‘invasion’ of Dagestan led by the Chechen militant Shamil Basayev (in August 1999) and the mysterious apartment bombings in Moscow and elsewhere (in September 1999). Launching a second war against Chechnya, this featured the indiscriminate use of aerial bombing and the merciless shelling of the residents of Grozny which fell to Russian forces after a winter siege in February 2000 (between 1999 and 2002, an estimated 10,000 to 20,000 people were killed in Chechnya and Ingushetia, while over 300,000 Chechens were driven out of the republic into squalid holding camps in Ingushetia). Later, Putin made quick use of ‘9/11’ to cast the Russian war against Chechen separatism as part of the ‘global war on terror’, declaring that all Chechens were terrorists⁷².

Many people with whom I spoke in Stavropol’ mentioned the issue of terrorism in relation to Chechnya. Some even asked me if I felt safe travelling to the region and conducting research because of the threat of terrorism. For this reason, two terrorist

⁷² It was only on 25 June 2002 that Putin declared that not all Chechens are terrorists, admitting that “Our task is to destroy this image [of Chechens] as terrorists”. See, www.rferl.org/newsline/2002/06/1-RUS/rus-250602.asp

attacks in particular are worth mentioning because of their connection to the Krai. The first is the Budyennovsk hospital crisis of June 1995 when Chechen militants, led by Shamil Basaev and Aslambek Abdulkhadzhiev, seized a hospital in the city of Budyennovsk in south-east Stavropol'skii krai, killing 129 people and injuring 415 more. The second, and more recent, took place on 5 December 2003 when, at 8am, a suicide bomber blew himself up (along with his one female accomplice) on a commuter train near Yessentuki, in south-west Stavropol'skii krai. 40 people were killed immediately and at least 148 people were seriously injured⁷³. Many were pupils from local schools and university students. In his response to the bombing, Vladimir Putin (2003) stated that:

“The crime that was committed today is clearly an attempt to destabilise the situation in the country... This crime that was committed this morning also shows us that international terrorism, this challenge faced by many countries today, also remains a serious threat for our country. This is a ruthless, cunning and dangerous enemy that we face, an enemy whose crimes bring suffering, above all, to innocent people.”

In making a clear and evident connection between the attack and ‘international terrorism’, Putin laid the blame for the attacks squarely at the feet of Chechens (and a wider network of Islamic terrorists operating in the North Caucasus). Despite the fact that the ethnicity of the suicide bomber is still unknown, people with whom I spoke linked the events to Chechens:

“Suicide bombing is a Chechen tactic. Not a Russian one. They’re Muslims... It’s just what they do. They’re bandits... They cut off the heads of Russians... Russians differ greatly from Chechens, this is why there is so much conflict in the Caucasus” (Female, Ethnic Russian, 20, 2008 Interview)

⁷³ Like many acts of ‘terrorism’ in Russia, the precise details of what exactly happened are not known. Indeed, certain aspects of the train bombing are unclear and are not likely to ever be free of contention. I have pieced together this ‘version’ of events from numerous (often conflicting) newspaper reports.

“It was the Chechens. Who else would have done that to innocent [ethnic] Russian people?” (Female, Ethnic Russian, 23, 2008 Interview)

A woman with whom I spoke remembered the terrorist attack on the train. I reminded her that the attack had taken place several years ago and there have been no terrorist attacks in Stavropol’ since then. She said the fact that terrorist acts took place many years ago does not matter -- she is still afraid while riding the trains. The same woman made a connection between the train bombing and the riots:

“Stavropol’ is not Chechnya, they cannot go around doing as they please, blowing up trains and fighting the authorities. I do not agree with what happened [the riots], but it should teach them a lesson” (Female, Ethnic Greek, 30, 2009 Interview)

While for some Russians with whom I spoke those who took part in terrorist attacks in Russia were not clearly defined individuals, for others they were directly connected with Chechens. In fact, those with whom I spoke primarily associated terrorists with Chechnya, and those who are too interested in Chechnya are objects of suspicion. Echoing a story told by Dmitri Shlapentokh (2006), one individual with whom I spoke told me that he discussed practically all subjects with his friends but they became visibly apprehensive when he mentioned that he read Kavkaz-Center, the major Internet site of the Chechen resistance, and took an interest in Chechen politics:

“Sitting at the table, my friend stared at me with obvious suspicion and asked why I read it [Kavkaz-Center] ... I said I did so for curiosity. He did not believe me and asked why I was interested in Kavkaz-Center and in Chechnya in general... I think he began to question my image as an ordinary Russian and my loyalty to the *rodina* [Motherland]”. (Male, Ethnic Russian, 34, 2008 Interview)

In the year and a half before the riots a series of terrorist incidents took place in Stavropol'skii krai which are also noteworthy. Two in particular were mentioned often in my interviews. The first took place between 9 and 10 February 2006 in the village of Tujukj-Mekteb in Neftekumskii raion. During the incident, Russian police killed eight to 12 militants who were all members of the 'Nogai Battalion': a djamaat, or militant group, based in the Shelkovskii raion of north eastern Chechnya. This incident is notable because many people in the region began speaking about it as a "second Budyennovsk" (Markedonov 2008). However, given that the intention of the militants was to take a school hostage rather than a hospital, some people with whom I spoke suggested that it was more appropriate to speak about a 'second Beslan'. The second incident occurred a year later, in March 2007, soon after regional elections in Stavropol'. During a gun-fight near a passport check-point in Neftekumskii between Russian police and militants, one militant was killed and two were arrested. Two policemen were also wounded, one of whom later died. I was told that this event had for the political situation in Stavropol' "an equal if not greater significance than the elections" (Male, Ethnic Chechen, 49, 2009 Interview). I was also told how these events, together with the krai's shared border with Chechnya, and North Caucasian republics more broadly, has prompted people in Stavropol'skii krai to form a "defensive consciousness" (Male, Ethnic Russian (Cossack), 51, 2008 Interview).

Although Chechens are not the only source of terrorism, their image invariably blends with those of other ethnic groups from the Caucasus. One individual with whom I spoke conveyed to me the view of the majority: "It was *litsa kavkazskoi natsional'nosti* [people of Caucasian nationality] who brought crime to Russia" (Female, Ethnic Russian, 23, 2008 Interview). This is one major reason landlords prefer to rent

apartments to ethnic Russians. This is well understood by potential renters, who emphasize their ethnicity when looking for an apartment. In Stavropol' I saw several advertisements that ethnic Russians -- ethnicity underlined -- would like to rent an apartment.

History: Localised geopolitics of the Stavropol' riots

To understand the Stavropol' riots we need to place them within the context of historical geopolitical processes, each of which is characterised by distinctively indiscriminate geographies. One is the long history of inter-ethnic conflict in the North Caucasus as the Russian state expanded into the region and centralized its power. This does not begin with the Russian Empire in the region but the establishment of Tsarist power in the region in the Seventeenth Century which changed power relations between the different ethno-political governmentalities in the area. I was told how:

“Stavropol' has always been Russia... For me it is Russia. For Russians it is Russia. People of the Caucasus are not welcome here. It has always been that way.” (Male, Ethnic Russian, 71, 2009 Interview)

Another process at work is the Soviet-era legacy of disputed political boundaries in the region. While this is not to overplay the importance of Soviet-era boundary disputes (a tendency in much of the literature), it is to emphasise that tensions related to these disputes are still 'real' and 'felt' for people in Stavropol'skii krai. The 1917 Russian revolution and subsequent civil war brought great strife to the North Caucasus, with the Bolshevik Red Army forming an alliance with independent minded Chechen and Ingush fighters against the many Cossack fighters who sided with General Denikin and the

White Army. After changing hands several times, Stavropol' finally fell to the Red Army from the Volunteer Army of General Anton Denikin on 29 January 1920. During the subsequent years, the political geography of Stavropol'skii krai was re-drawn on several separate occasions (see, Tsutiev 2005). The city was renamed Voroshilovsk on 5 May 1935, after Kliment Yefremovich Voroshilov⁷⁴, but returned to its original name in 1943 as World War II brought the terror of war to the region. As part of his collective punishment through deportation of the Ingush and Chechens in 1944, Stalin re-organized the borders, disbanding the Chechen-Ingush ASSR (Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic) and placing Grozny *okrug* within Stavropol'skii krai. In 1957, as part of Nikita Khrushchev's 'de-Stalinisation' process, Ingush and Chechens were allowed return to their ancestral lands. Chechen-Ingush ASSR was re-formed and given much of south-eastern Stavropol'skii krai, including the three regions which had changed hands in 1944. The legacy of this is a region where ethnic geography is mismatched with political geography: O'Loughlin, Kolossov and Radvanyi (2007: 141) speak of the "delayed impacts of Stalinist deportations and ethnic engineering".

7.5 Conclusion: After the riots

In this paper I have argued that the riots in Stavropol' in summer 2007 were the result of three interconnected geopolitical factors: demographic, political, and historical. As ethnic Russians rioted against ethnic Caucasians living in Stavropol'skii krai, those involved in the events drew on a mirrored discourse of Self and Other in which

⁷⁴ Kliment Voroshilov (1881 – 1969) was Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR (1925-1934) and a full member of the Politburo (1926-1960). He was also People's Commissar for Defence (appointed in 1934), a Marshal of the Soviet Union (appointed in 1935), and oversaw the establishment of the communist regime in Hungary (1945-47). Voroshilov played a central role in the Great Purge of the 1930s, denouncing many of his own military colleagues and subordinates and, when Stalin died (in March 1953) was appointed Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet.

Chechens were victimised and pro-Slavic organisations called for their expulsion from the krai. Although these Slavic organisations had no mandate to speak or act on behalf of the wider community, the solution which they proposed to the ‘Chechen problem’ was picked up on and became mobilised in the rallies which took place.

There are two main disciplinary implications to be drawn from this study. Firstly, as far as North Caucasian studies are concerned, this paper stresses that the Stavropol’ riots were the result of a series of entanglements operating both at and between a number of scales. By emphasising the importance of ‘everyday’ geopolitical discourses, this paper contributes to an understanding of ethnic conflict in the North Caucasus. In literature on ethnic conflict, the North Caucasus has been insufficiently recognised (Wolff 2007) or simply ignored (Horowitz 2000). Secondly, political geographers can profitably make use of ‘regions’ in their research. Recent renewed interest in regional geography can help political geographers engage, challenge and re-imagine the ‘global’, providing a frame for gaining a fuller sense of ‘other’ places and spatialities. This has particular lessons for dismantling scale, analysing how ‘geopolitics’ move, and rethinking the relations of the global/geopolitical and the local/everyday.

With border disputes, rising unemployment, nationalism, and terrorism, and with memories of the 2007 riots still fresh, there is significant potential for ethnic conflict to erupt again Stavropol’skii krai. In the last year alone there have been high profile ethnic clashes in: Pelagiade, Izobil’enskii *raion* (August 2009); Kaysula, Neftekumskii *raion* (July 2009); Irgakly, Stepnovskii *raion* (June 2009); Georgievskii, Predgornii *raion* (May 2009); and Stavropol’ *gorod* (April 2009). These clashes cannot be seen in isolation though, and are not just a result of the riots of summer 2007. Rather, they must

be seen in the wider context of recent political developments in the North Caucasus, with increased federal operations in Chechnya, Dagestan and Ingushetia in response to the 'year of the offensive' announced by the rebel leader Dokka Umarov in May 2009. As for ethnic minorities in Russia, the political situation continues to be disturbing. Despite having their basic human rights guaranteed under Article 19 of The Russian Constitution, discrimination against ethnic minorities is widespread. Amnesty International (2004) reported that Russian authorities target visible minorities for racial profiling, resulting in unnecessary registration and passport checks, searches, and arbitrary arrest and detention. It is indicative that the Russian Immigration Service remains part of the Ministry of the Interior, which is *a priori* engaged in tackling crime. Such an institutional structure creates an atmosphere in which most ethnic minorities are immediately classed as those who fall under the jurisdiction of the law enforcement agencies (Chebankova 2007). At the same time, Russian skinhead gangs often target minorities without receiving adequate punishment. While exact figures for numbers of attacks and racist incidents are hard to obtain due to chronic under-reporting, in their most up-to-date survey Amnesty International reported that attacks on ethnic minorities are a daily occurrence, with 61 people killed and 369 injured during 2007 (Amnesty International 2008). During this same period, the SOVA centre, based in Moscow, reported that criminal prosecution of individuals who committed ethnically-motivated violent crimes decreased for the first time since 2003 (Kozhevnikova 2009).

Chapter 8. ‘Stavropol’e: plavil’nii kotel ili oboronitel’nii val?’ (Stavropol’: a melting pot or boiling shaft?): fear and violent geographies of ethnic relations in the North Caucasus

Foxall, A. ‘Stavropol’e: plavil’nii kotel ili oboronitel’nii val?’ (Stavropol’: a melting pot or boiling shaft?): fear and violent geographies of ethnic relations in the North Caucasus, *Europe-Asia Studies* (submitted)

Abstract: According to the Russian NGO SOVA-Centre, 71 people were killed and at least 333 were injured in racist and neo-Nazi attacks in 2009 in Russia. Although a decline on 2008 (when 109 people were killed and at least 486 injured), the figure remains worryingly high. These people, as well as many others who are not included in these statistics, are victims of Russia’s violent geographies of ethnic relations. At the same time, others are drawn into these geographies through being affected by ethnic conflict and violence, a process which turns them into ‘quasi-victims’.

8.1 Introduction

The bomb attack in May 2010 outside the House of Culture and Sport in Stavropol’, Stavropol’skii krai, an ethnic Russian territory within the predominantly non-ethnic Russian North Caucasus, is a reminder that ethno-nationalist tensions and violence are an everyday reality for people in that region. The US 2009 Annual Report on Human Rights, published on March 11 2009, declared that while the number of racially and religiously motivated crimes in Russia had declined since 2008, ethnic discrimination

and violence was still a matter of concern. Indeed, despite having their basic human rights guaranteed under Article 19 of The Russian Constitution, ethnic discrimination is widespread, with Amnesty International (2006) reporting that Russian authorities have created a state of “impunity” against ethnic discrimination and violence. Scholarly research supports this conclusion, showing that authorities actively discriminate against minorities (see, Swerdlow 2006; Popov and Kuznetsov 2008). Everyone who has a relative or friend who has been the victim of ethnic discrimination or violence is a victim of Russia’s continuing failure to deal with these problems. Nor should the 1.4 million people employed in the MVD’s *militsiya* (and other security services(s)) be forgotten⁷⁵. They are also participants in Russia’s violent geographies of ethnic relations (see, Payin 2007: 900-1). Amnesty International (2004) reported that Russian authorities target visible minorities for racial profiling, resulting in unnecessary registration and passport checks, searches, and arbitrary arrest and detention. It is indicative that the Russian Immigration Service remains part of the MVD, which is *a priori* engaged in tackling crime. “Such an institutional structure”, Chebankova (2007: 450) notes, “ creates an atmosphere in which most ethnic minorities are immediately classed as those who fall under the jurisdiction of the law enforcement agencies”⁷⁶. Population is ‘shaped’ in myriad ways by the location of ethnic violence: directly, by its influence on where people live, and indirectly, by the impact it has on rates of birth and death, patterns of migration, and rates of crime.

⁷⁵ This figure of 1.4 million includes all those individuals employed by the MVD. In Russia, the problem with the MVD is not over-staffing but inefficient use of resources. Given the size of the country and the scale of the challenges, a case could be made for more officers, not fewer, at least until after qualitative improvements are in place. The MVD’s current establishment strength means a relatively high ratio of one officer for every 101 citizens (compared with the UK’s 1:254, for example), but this is deceptive. It is likely that only 40-45% of these, around 530,000, are actually ‘active’ officers. See, <http://www.rferl.org/content/blog/1904585.html>

⁷⁶ For an analysis of how the changing context of Russian Federal Policy has impacted on the North Caucasus, see Kramer (2006).

Ethnic conflict in Russia is seen as a result of modernity, and is primarily an urban phenomenon (Shlapentokh 2007). In March 2010, Mikhail Solomentsev, Chairman of the Moscow ‘Committee for Interregional Relations and National Policy’⁷⁷, announced that authorities had created a map showing the main areas of ethnic conflict in the city. Solomentsev explained that a variety of people, including representatives from the police and security services, and culture, education, social and sport departments, had collaborated on the project to highlight ‘race-hate hot spots’, thus helping citizens to ‘know’ their city in a fuller sense⁷⁸. This followed earlier work in Stavropol’skii krai by Vitali Belozarov, Alexander Panin, and Vasili Chichin with their *Etnicheskii Atlas Stavropol’skogo kraya* [Ethnic Atlas of Stavropol’skii krai] (2009). Reviewing the Atlas, Vasilii Shnukov (former chairman of the Committee of Stavropol’skii krai for National and Cossack affairs’ [*Komitet Stavropol’skogo Krai no delam natsional’nostei i kazachestva*])⁷⁹ argued that the work would allow authorities to “solve questions of interethnic attitudes” as “experience shows that the transformation of [ethnic] Russians into the minority populations in multi-ethnic regions increases the probability of different sorts of conflicts, including interethnic, occurring” (Stavropol’skaya Pravda 2008). In this sense, the mapping of Stavropol’skii krai’s ethnic geography is one way through which authorities attempt to negotiate ethnic conflict, pointing to an embryonic ‘conflict management of cartography’ (see, Foxall forthcoming in ‘Mapping Peace and Conflict in Eurasia’).

I have written elsewhere about everyday ethnic relations in Stavropol’skii krai (see, Foxall 2010). Much like in the other North Caucasian territories, post-Soviet ethnic

⁷⁷ See, <http://www.koms.mos.ru/>

⁷⁸ ‘Moscow authorities create map of ethnic tension sites’, *RIA Novosti*, 22 March 2010, see <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20100322/158275719.html>

⁷⁹ See, <http://www.stavkomnat.ru/>

relations in Stavropol'skii krai must be understood in the context of political change, economic liberalisation, military conflict, and demographic processes (Zayonchkovskaya 2000). While traditionally considered a multi-ethnic region, Stavropol'skii krai has become a primary destination for migrants from the ethnic republics of the North Caucasus because of its attractive urban and rural opportunities for employment in the immediate vicinity of zones of recent conflict (O'Loughlin, Panin and Wittmer 2007). Rapid population growth and immigration in the ethnic republics of the North Caucasus, a well-established tradition, contrast dramatically with the natural population decrease of ethnic Russians and the high natural increase of the Caucasian peoples in Stavropol'skii krai. Over the period 1970-2006, the ethnic structure of Stavropol'skii krai's population changed more dynamically than any of the other North Caucasian territories, which is clearly evident in the growing territorial and ethnic differentiation in the krai's population. In the 1990s, this process of 'ethnic segregation' (Kolossoy, Galkina and Grindatch 2001) lead to calls for combining Russian areas of Chechnya (Naurskii raion and Shelkovskii raion) and Dagestan (Kislyarskii raion and Tarumovskii raion) with Stavropol'skii krai (Matveeva 1999: 42) and attracting ethnic Russians from these republics. As a result of these processes, ethnic Russians have become a minority in the North Caucasus, and even in areas where they are in the majority, such as Stavropol'skii krai, they consider themselves as an embattled minority group (Belozerov 2005). These changes are captured in the question '*Stavropol'e: plavil'nii kotel ili oboronitel'nii val?*' [Stavropol': a melting pot or boiling shaft?].

As proposed by the International Relations scholar Barry Buzan (1983) during the latter years of the Cold War (and later finessed by feminist and other critiques of security

discourses) the language of security should not be taken for granted. Rather, its meaning can be broadened away from conflict, to focus on personal, social, economic and other aspects of being and feeling *secure* from violence, hate, disease, poverty and exploitation. Ethnic conflict, therefore, is not constrained solely to acts of violence. Rather, its spatialities go much further and encompass instances of discrimination and perceptions of violence, reflecting how such conflict affects people, their thoughts and behaviour. Conflict can have a *disciplining* affect on people: from the choices they make about where to go in urban/rural areas (particular places are associated with ‘danger’, for example poorly lit alley ways), what time of the day/night to conduct their business (night-time is often thought of as being more dangerous than daytime), and how to dress (the choice of footwear is an obvious example, as it is easier to run from danger in trainers than flip-flops or high-heels). Such *discipline*, as Michel Foucault (1987) argued in relation to prisons, spreads its tentacles through the whole of society to create a vast complex. Within Russia, ethnic-motivated violence is a crime punishable by prison. However, perceptions or fear of ethnic-motivated violence have no place in law. Thus, the people who are victims to the latter are, in a sense, quasi-victims; located at the interface between the direct power over the body exercised by physical (or verbal) violence in contemporary Russia and the more diffuse power of fear of violence and conflict. In this paper, I discuss how Russia’s quasi-victims experience the violent geographies of ethnic relations in Stavropol’skii krai.

8.2 Methodological issues

It is necessary to use an eclectic range of sources when conducting research on ethnic conflict in Russia as authorities traditionally do not welcome the interest of outsiders on

the issue. Since 1991, *Kavkazofobiya* (Caucasophobia) has become widespread in Russia, permeating virtually every aspect of society. In October 2002, Lyudmilla Alekseyeva, Chair of the Moscow Helsinki Group, identified *Kavkazofobiya* as “definitely the most serious problem that Russia is faced with today. It is very widespread among the population in general, at all levels” (quoted in Russell 2005: 112). In Stavropol’skii krai, which is the only ethnic Russian territory within the North Caucasus Federal District, the situation is particularly acute (for an overview of human rights in Stavropol’, see Selyukov 2008). Reports from the Moscow-based NGO SOVA Centre suggest that ethnic conflict in the krai is increasing both in frequency and intensity (see, Kozhevnikova 2009). However, exact figures for instances of ethnic conflict and discrimination against ethnic minorities are hard to obtain due to chronic under-reporting. Authorities, for example, frequently charge perpetrators with the less serious offence of ‘hooliganism’. Amnesty International note how the killing of a medical student from Guinea-Bissau in Voronezh in 2004 was originally dismissed by police as non-racist on the grounds that the assailants -- a youth and two young men -- ‘had hair’ and thus could not have belonged to a ‘skinhead’ group (see, Amnesty International 2006: 20). Therefore, I have had to follow the time-honoured method of research into ‘closed’ aspects of Russian society (see, Pallot 2007) by piecing together data from a variety of sources. The accuracy of these is, inevitably, open to question as they rely upon research by NGOs and independent researchers. I have been able to supplement them with my own research, conducted over the course of two years between 2008 and 2009, in Stavropol’skii krai. My research involved semi-structured interviews with fifty people and five focus-group interviews. Since the objective of my research was to develop an idea of the state of ethnic relations in Stavropol’skii krai, I interviewed twenty individuals who could provide informed answers and who could

direct me to other people who could answer specific questions, including academics, politicians, policymakers, political commentators, and other opinion formers. These interviews had a dual purpose in that the interviewee was both informed and offered an informed opinion. This allowed me to excavate the opinion formers' range of opinions, and to see to what extent their, on the whole, measured views were internalised by the population through thirty interviews which I conducted in Stavropol' with students, workers, the retired and unemployed. A secondary aim of these interviews was to gauge the everyday opinions of citizens in Stavropol' about ethnic relations. The results of this research are the subject of other publications (see, Foxall 2010), but some information is relevant to the present discussion.

The two principal sources of data for this paper are EAWARN⁸⁰ ('The Network of Ethnological Monitoring and Early Warning for the Prevention of Conflicts') and the SOVA Centre. EAWARN is a joint project of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of Sciences, and the Conflict Management Group based in Boston, Massachusetts. It is funded by the Carnegie Corporation in New York and the Russian Academy of Sciences. Created in 1993 by Prof. Valerii Tishkov, the goal of EAWARN is to undertake ethno-political monitoring of post-Soviet states, particularly regions within Russia with a multi-ethnic population and complex ethno-political situations, for the purpose of conflict prevention and conflict management. Since 1994, EAWARN has published a bi-monthly bulletin (*Byulleten'*) and special reports available to international academic audience and political institutions, national and regional power structures of Russia and of other states, NGOs, experts and

⁸⁰ EAWARN was described as "a unique epistemological community" by the US communication studies expert Kirsten Foot who, in 1999, defended her PhD dissertation on EAWARN under the title 'Writing conflict: An activity theory analysis of the development of the Network for Ethnopolitical Monitoring and Early Warning' at the University of California, San Diego.

practitioners. Since 1995 meanwhile, EAWARN has provided regular reports on the issues of forced migration and refugees with partial support of the Open Society Institute. In 1999, EAWARN was given recognition by the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation for its work. The information produced by EAWARN is stored in the computerised 'Data-Bank on Ethnicity and Conflict' at the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology. For my study, I was given full access to this Russian-language data-bank. This data-bank amounted to nearly 200 pages of reports on the ethno-political situation in Stavropol'skii krai. These data are not available via the EAWARN website, <http://www.eawarn.ru>. SOVA, meanwhile, is a human rights NGO and think tank, based in Moscow. Formed in 2002, SOVA conducts sociological research on the development of nationalism and racism in contemporary Russia. SOVA produces regular reports and recommendations regarding ethnic conflict, hate crimes, racist violence and other manifestations of nationalism that are widely used and cited by OSCE, Amnesty International, Pulitzer Centre on Crisis Reporting, and other human rights and political organisations. These reports are freely available from its website, <http://sova-center.ru/>.

8.3 Geography and Demography in Stavropol'skii krai and the North Caucasus

According to the 2002 Census, Stavropol'skii krai has a population of 2,735,139 people. While 81.6% ethnic Russian, 4% of its residents are Armenians, 3% are Ukrainians, 1.4% are Dargins, 1.2% are Greeks, 0.7% are Nogais, 0.5% are Chechens, and 0.5% are Turkmens, along with a scattering of smaller groups. Both individually and collectively, Markedonov (2009) argued when reflecting on an increase in the instances of ethnic violence in Stavropol'skii krai over recent years, these groups have a "latent" potential

for conflict. Because of this, Stavropol'skii krai has recently become a focus of research on ethnic relations and ethnic conflict (for example, Kolossov, Galkina and Krindatch 2001; Anenko 2004; Belozarov 2005; Vendina, Belozarov and Gustafson 2007; O'Loughlin, Panin and Witmer 2007; O'Loughlin, Kolossov and Radvanyi 2007; O'Loughlin, Toal and Kolossov 2008; Kolossov and O'Loughlin 2009; Foxall 2010).

In their study of the ethnic geography of Stavropol'skii krai, O'Loughlin, Panin and Witmer (2007) identify the most salient characteristics of ethnic geography in the krai as: the low net in-migration of Russians and other Slavic peoples; high in-migration of Armenians; renewed out-migration of Chechens after nearly a decade (1996-2004) of in-migration coinciding roughly with the first and second Chechen wars; and large-scale net in-migration of Avars and Dargins (from Dagestan). Owing to these (and other) processes, they argue that a trend of "de-Russification", reflecting the in-migration of ethnic Caucasians and out-migration of ethnic Russians (combined with a low rate of natural increase), is manifest in a noticeable reduction in the ethnic Russian share of the total population, now 82 percent as compared to 84 percent in 1989 and 88 percent in 1979. While such figures, however, do not give a sense of the very real spatial segregation of ethnic groups in Stavropol'skii krai (see, Belozarov 2005 or O'Loughlin, Panin and Wittmer 2007), it is clear that there is increasing internal ethnic differentiation within Stavropol'skii krai (and, more broadly, the North Caucasus) which is seen as politically sensitive for the Kremlin and Russian society, as the retreat of ethnic Russians from this region has long been equated with losing control over it. Indeed, Markedonov (2009) argues that contemporary demographic processes mean that "Stavropol has become a frontier, a unique border line dividing 'the Russian world' and 'the Caucasus world'".

Since 1991, the ethnic Russian population in the North Caucasus republics has fallen as Russians have fled conflict and what they perceive to be increasingly hostile policies. This is part of a more long-term 'de-Russification' of the North Caucasus republics: in 1959 ethnic Russians accounted for 38.8 percent of the population in the seven national republics of the North Caucasus and by the time of the 2002 census this figure had dropped to 14.9 percent. In absolute terms, the number of Russians living in the North Caucasus republics dropped by 994,600 people in this period (1959-2002). Within the republics, Chechnya saw the most dramatic reduction of the ethnic Russian population due to two bloody wars and the ensuing period of lawlessness and low grade warfare. It is estimated that the ethnic Russian population of Chechnya dropped by 250,000 in the period between 1989 and 2002, and declined by 364,000 people across the North Caucasus republics during the same period. However, the real numbers are likely to have been higher: experts estimate that the Russian population dropped by between 415,000 and 420,000, which brought the number of Russians in the region from 1.36 million in 1989 down to 940,000 to 945,000 in 2002. By way of comparison, in the previous statistical period 1979-1989, the ethnic Russian population in the North Caucasus decreased only by 53,000. From 1989-2002, the percentage of the ethnic Russian population in the overall population of North Caucasian republics decreased from 26 percent down to between 12 and 15 percent of the total populations, while the indigenous populations grew from 66 percent up to 80 percent (in absolute numbers, from 3.5 million to 5.3 million). Conflicts in Chechnya (and elsewhere), meanwhile, have created a significant population of Internationally Displaced Persons (IDPs) (composed of both ethnic Russians and non-ethnic Russians) scattered throughout the

region: at the height of the Second Chechen War in early 2000, Human Rights Watch reported that over 300, 000 people had been forced out of their homes (HRW 2004).

8.4 Post-Soviet ethnic conflict in Russia at the regional level

While prejudice existed in the Soviet Union towards non-Slavs, instances of ethnic conflict increased noticeably throughout the 1990s in Russia as ethno-nationalism became widespread, growing to “astonishing levels” (Verkhovsky, quoted by Harding 2009) since 1999. In the early 1990s, there was a considerable level of resistance to all forms of ethnic conflict and violence (as well as ethnic discrimination), as the officially enforced ‘Soviet’ rather than ‘ethnic’ identity, which proclaimed the equality of all ethnic groups in the Soviet Union, was still strong (Gudkov 2006). The rise in ethno-nationalism in the mid-1990s can be seen as a reaction to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the chaos of financial (and societal) reforms, and went hand-in-hand with a growth of support for Russian ‘conservative’ political parties: the KPRF (Communist Party of the Russian Federation) and the LDPR (Liberal Democratic Party of Russia). Support for these parties had a particular geography. In the 1996 election, for instance, 14, 936, 328 votes (49.6%) of the total votes won by Gennady Zyuganov’s KPRF (30, 102, 288 votes, or 40.3% of the national vote) were concentrated in the so-called ‘red belt’ stretching along the southern border of Russia, and including the ethnic Russian territories of the North Caucasus. At the same time, Russian neo-nationalist organisations⁸¹, for example the ‘Movement against Illegal Immigration’ (*Dvizhenie Protiv Nelegal’noi Immigratsii*) and ‘Russian National Union’ (*Russkiy Natsional’niy*

⁸¹ There is reason to believe that Dmitri Kuzmin (Major of Stavropol’ *gorod* in 2007) sympathised with ultra-nationalists. During an investigation into allegations of official misconduct, he was found to have kept Nazi paraphernalia in his office. See, von Twickel, N. (2009) ‘Stavropol’s Ex-Mayor Detained in Austria’, *The Moscow Times*, January 30, pp. 2

Soyuz)⁸², began to appear in these same territories, particularly Stavropol'skii krai, seeing themselves as 'defenders' of Russia from immigrants, particularly those from the ethnic republics of the North Caucasus (or 'people of Caucasian nationality' (*litsa kavkazskoi natsional'nosti*))⁸³. The rebirth of the Cossack movement -- like ethnic, cultural, and religious groups in general -- during perestroika also explains the rise in ethno-national tensions, as descendants of the Kuban Cossacks in Krasnodar krai and the Terek Cossacks in Stavropol'skii krai reformed into Cossack hosts (*voisko*) (see, Boeck 1998; O'Rourke 2007). Part of the Cossack ideology is virulently anti-ethnic migrant and its expression often degenerates into a general hatred towards all ethnic minorities, especially Chechens. Cossacks, who operate as a vigilante force not answerable to any government authority but closely associated with some officials, were given government authority in the mid-1990s to conduct joint patrols with police units⁸⁴. In the name of law enforcement, Cossacks and other authorities frequently commit ethnic violence. Indeed, while skinheads are the perpetrators of ethno-national

⁸² In the 1990s, the 'Russian National Unity' (now disbanded) found official support from the Stavropol'skii krai authorities; members of the group 'patrolled' public parks and city streets, gradually becoming an arm of the regional government. However, in 1998, Moscow's mayor, Yuri Luzhkov, forbade a planned Russian National Unity gathering, as part of a larger federal anti-Russian National Unity campaign. The influence of the group began to wane after that, and two years later it split into a number of smaller factions, which are still active today in Stavropol'skii krai. The most notable of these groups is the 'Union of Slavic Communities of Stavropol' or *Soyuz Slavyanskiki Obschestvennikh Organizatsii Stavropol'ya*.

⁸³ In 1991 only a handful of these groups were operating in Russia (perhaps no more than a couple of dozen), but 10 years later there were already more than 10,000 such groups, and in 2004 their number stood at more than 33,000. On 11 March 2001, the 'National Anti-Terrorist Committee' (*Natsional'ni Antiterroristicheskie Komitet -- NAK*) released a report which cited data from the MVD (a member of the NAK) which asserted that right-wing extremist movements have 200,000 members, with approximately 10,000 people facing charges for extremist related crimes. These are official figures, but experts agree that the overall participation of Russia's youth in ultra-radical nationalist organizations is in reality more widespread. See, Jamestown Foundation (2009) 'Russian Neo-Nazi Movement Facing State Crackdown', *Eurasian Daily Monitor*, 6(96), 19 May 2009, [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=35011](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=35011)

⁸⁴ This is particularly true in Stavropol'skii krai. In 2001, Vasily Bondarev (occupying positions as both ataman of the Terskii Cossacks and secretary of the Stavropol'skii krai Security Council) explained that Cossacks had established 33 self-defence detachments and dozens of volunteer patrols and Cossack security firms, bringing together 8,000 Cossacks. Bondarev also claimed that Terskii Cossacks had formed patrols in the districts bordering on Chechnya and Dagestan, for which they received an annual 18-million ruble allocation from the regional budget. See, <http://www.russijournal.com/node/5020>

attacks in most Russian regions, in the North Caucasus such violence is primarily associated with Cossacks. That is not to say though that these groups are mutually exclusive; in 2005, SOVA reported that Cossacks had begun to coordinate with skinheads, seeing each other as ‘comrades-in-arms’ (Kozhevnikova 2005). And in spring of the same year, Vladimir Putin signed into law a bill granting Cossacks the right to bear arms and assist the *militsiya* in ‘crime fighting’ (Parsons 2005). Writing in 2006, Lev Gudkov, head of the Levada Centre, explained that current ethno-nationalism “is connected with the general state of affairs with federalism, the war in Chechnya, the situation in the Caucasus, and their failing immigration policy”.

One feature of ethnic violence in Russia is that, until recently, it had been on the rise. Although 2009 saw the first decrease in the number of recorded victims of racist and neo-Nazi⁸⁵ attacks since 2004, the number of attacks in 2009 (404 victims) is only slightly less than double that in 2004 (268 victims) (see Table 10). Today, each Russian city has its own particular distribution of violent attacks. Ethnic conflict, discrimination, everyday tension, and fights are found in virtually all regions. Nationally, Moscow and St. Petersburg, as the two largest cities, have the highest recorded number of attacks (since 2004), 1259 and 378 respectively, but with concentrations in other large cities. Coverage of ethnic violence is incomplete, and data frequently does not include Chechnya or other ethnic republics in the North Caucasus. Instances of racist and neo-

⁸⁵ I use the term ‘neo-Nazi’ here only because it is the term used by Russian authorities to identify the groups in question. In reality, as Laquer (1996: 178-96) notes, National Socialism defined Slavs as racially inferior *Untermenschen* and thus appeals to few people in Russia. Instead, Russian neo-Nazi groups are characterized by racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and extreme xenophobia towards people from Asia and the Caucasus. Their ideology centres on defending Russian national identity against what they perceive as a takeover by minority groups such as Jews, Caucasians, Central Asian people and Muslims. Russian neo-Nazis have generally not outlined discernible economic programmes. They have openly admired and imitated the German Nazis and Adolf Hitler. See, Laquer, W. (1996) *Fascism: Past, Present and Future*, Oxford University Press: New York

Nazi attacks are more common in Russia's violent 'heartland'⁸⁶-- Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhnii Novgorod, Voronezh -- than in cities on Russia's southern border. Nevertheless, of the 3 032 racist and neo-Nazi attacks in Russia between 2004 and 2009, 2 252 (or 74%) occurred in either of these regions. Two of the cities with the highest number of racist and neo-Nazi attacks between 2004 and 2009 were in the North Caucasus: Krasnodar (61) and Stavropol' (52). Ethnic violence tends to be concentrated in areas with high levels of immigration, and where the impacts of changing demography are felt most acutely. Whilst this means that ethnic violence is most common in cities or other urban settlements, it also occurs away from the 'ecumene' in rural peripheries. That being said, perpetrators of ethnic violence frequently 'get it wrong' and not all of these victims are from traditional groups targeted by Russian skinheads and ethno-nationalists. In late 2007, for example, a group of skinheads in Moscow killed Sergey Nikolaev, a world-class chess master, who was an ethnic Yakut (a Turkic people from Siberia who have had a near-model union with Russia since the 17th century). On the day Nikolaev was killed, 26 others suffered in ethnically motivated attacks in Moscow. Although little comfort to Nikolaev (and other 'mistaken' victims), this works both ways and can be redeeming, as people from the North Caucasus are often mistaken for southern Slavs and therefore not attacked (Sapozhikova 2008).

⁸⁶ In 2004, there were approximately 6,000 young neo-Nazis in Moscow. In St. Petersburg there were over 3,000, with one neo-Nazi organization -- *Russkiy Kulak* (The Russian Fist) -- alone having no fewer than 500 active members, while other groups such as *Kolovrat* have 100 or more members. In Nizhni Novgorod there were well over 2,500 skinheads, 300 of whom were part of the largest skinhead group in the city, called *Sever'* (North). See, Tarasov, A. (2004) *Nazi-skinny v sovremennoy Rossii*. Analytical Report by Moscow Bureau for Human Rights. Moscow: Moscow Bureau for Human Rights

Table 10: Statistics of Racist and Neo-Nazi Attacks between 2004 and 2009, by city

	2004			2005			2006			2007			2008			2009			
	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Total, 2004-9
Total in Russia	50	218	268	49	419	468	66	522	588	89	618	707	110	487	597	71	333	404	3032
<i>Top ten cities by total number of attacks</i>																			
Moscow	18	62	80	16	179	195	40	228	268	53	222	275	61	217	272	38	131	169	1262
St. Petersburg	9	32	41	4	45	49	6	56	62	11	118	127	15	39	54	8	36	44	378
Nizhny Novgorod	1	5	6	4	12	16	0	36	36	1	44	45	2	16	18	6	21	27	148
Sverdlovsk Oblast	1	7	8	6	6	12	0	6	6	3	17	20	4	16	20	1	21	22	88
Voronezh	1	2	3	1	21	22	1	6	7	0	17	17	2	22	24	0	3	3	76
Irkutsk Oblast	3	0	3	2	5	7	0	8	8	1	53	54	0	1	1	0	0	0	73
Krasnodar	2	32	34	1	3	4	0	7	7	0	11	11	1	2	3	0	2	2	61
Vladivostok	5	9	14	0	3	3	2	18	20	1	3	4	2	6	8	1	8	9	58
Novosibirsk	2	12	14	1	9	10	0	9	9	1	5	6	3	7	10	1	6	7	56
Stavropol'	0	0	0	0	21	21	0	1	1	1	8	9	3	10	13	2	6	8	52
<i>Bottom ten cities by total number of attacks</i>																			
Abakan	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	5
Chita Oblast	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Birobidjan	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Ulan Ude	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	3
Astrakhan	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Kemerovo oblast'	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	2
Yakutia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Pskov	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Source: SOVA Centre website: <http://xeno.sova-center.ru/6BA2468/6BB4208/E7F0971>

In an attempt to explore the geographic distribution of violent attacks, Table 11 shows the ethnicity of the victims of racist and neo-Nazi attacks. Unfortunately data which are available does not reflect ‘actual’ identity of victims, but rather the identity given to them by the attackers. In other words, if a Slavic person was mistaken for a Caucasian, he would be registered as a ‘person from the Caucasus’. According to these data, the number of attacks rose steadily from 268 in 2004 to 597 in 2008, before falling to 404 in 2009. However, as Table 11 makes clear, some groups of people suffer disproportionately from Russia’s violent geographies of ethnic relations; for example, the number of attacks against people from the Caucasus increased from 53 (of 268) in 2004 to 100 (of 597) in 2008, before falling to 58 (of 404) in 2009, following the pattern for racist and neo-Nazi attacks as a whole. Overall, 450 out of 3032 (15%) racist and neo-Nazi attacks between 2004 and 2009 were committed against people from the Caucasus. Table 11 shows how this compares with other victims of the same violence.

Table 11. Statistics of Racist and Neo-Nazi Attacks in 2004 – 2009, by categorisation of victims⁸⁷

Year		Categorisation of Victim										Total
		Dark-Skinned	Central Asian	Caucasian	Middle Eastern or North African	Other Asian	'non-Slav' appearance	Members of subcultures, fascists and leftist youth	Other, anti-youth	or known	not	
2004	Killed	1	10	15	4	8	2	0		10		50
	Beaten or Wounded	33	23	38	12	29	22	4		57		218
2005	Killed	3	18	12	1	3	3	3		5		49
	Beaten or Wounded	38	35	52	22	72	72	121		21		419
2006	Killed	2	17	15	0	4	4	3		21		66
	Beaten or Wounded	32	60	72	11	52	69	119		107		522
2007	Killed	0	33	27	1	2	19	5		2		89
	Beaten or Wounded	38	81	61	21	45	91	195		86		618
2008	Killed	2	57	25	1	1	14	3		6		110
	Beaten or Wounded	23	122	75	12	40	53	84		78		487
2009	Killed	2	29	11	0	7	13	5		4		71
	Beaten or Wounded	39	68	47	9	18	39	77		36		333
Total		213	553	450	94	281	401	619		433		3032

Source: SOVA Centre website: <http://xeno.sova-center.ru/6BA2468/6BB4208/E7F0971>

⁸⁷ This table does not include victims of attacks in the ethnic republics of the North Caucasus. Nor does the table include attacks committed on homeless people with ideological motivation. SOVA report that in 2004 there were 13 murders of this kind, in 2005 5 murders and 4 beatings, in 2006 7 murders and 4 beatings, in 2007 4 murders and 2 beatings, and in 2008 7 murders and 1 beating. Data for 2009 are not yet available.

At the same time, statistics for the number of convictions for violent crimes with a recognised hate motive roughly map onto the pattern of racist and neo-Nazi Attacks in the same 2004-2009 period (see, Table 12). Thus, while Moscow and St Petersburg are the location of the majority of attacks, there were a number in Stavropol'. Indeed, in 2007 there was the same number of attacks in Stavropol' as in St Petersburg. This is due to the six-weeks of intermittent bitter ethnic rioting, when two ethnic Russians students and one ethnic Chechen student were killed (see, Foxall 2010). For Russia, the number of convictions has steadily increased year-on-year, from 40 in 2004 to 213 in 2009. In 2004, 15 of 40 convictions (or 37.5%) took place in Moscow, while in 2009 this figure had risen to 46 of 213 (or 21.6%). Over the same period, convictions in St. Petersburg decreased from 16 (or 40%) in 2004 to 10 (or 4.7%) in 2009. This suggests a geographical widening of the places where violent crime is committed and its perpetrators convicted. For Stavropol', 2007 and 2008 can be seen as the 'peak' of violent crimes with a recognised hate motive. Nevertheless, just because a violent crime with a recognised hate motive has not occurred recently in Stavropol' does not mean that people are not affected by violent crime. I have explained elsewhere how the suicide bombing of a commuter train in Yessentuki, in southern Stavropol'skii krai, in 2003 still affects how people think about train travel, safety, and everyday mobility (see, Foxall 2010).

Table 12. Statistics of convictions for violent crimes with a recognized hate motive in 2004-2009

Year		City			Total
		Moscow	St. Petersburg	Stavropol'	
2004	Number of Convictions	4	2	0	9
	Number of offenders convicted	11	10	0	26
	Including suspended sentences of release from punishment	Unknown	4	0	5
2005	Number of Convictions	2	2	0	17
	Number of offenders convicted	4	10	0	56
	Including suspended sentences of release from punishment	0	4	0	5
2006	Number of Convictions	5	3	0	33
	Number of offenders convicted	11	10	0	109
	Including suspended sentences of release from punishment	1	4	0	24
2007	Number of Convictions	4	2	2	23
	Number of offenders convicted	11	11	2	65
	Including suspended sentences of release from punishment	0	3	0	18
2008	Number of Convictions	7	4	1	35
	Number of offenders convicted	40	9	2	118
	Including suspended sentences of release from punishment	4	2	1	31
2009	Number of Convictions	7	3	0	45
	Number of offenders convicted	35	6	0	137
	Including suspended sentences of release from punishment	4	1	0	31

Source: SOVA Centre website: <http://xeno.sova-center.ru/6BA2468/6BB4208/E7F0971>

The distribution of racist and neo-Nazi attacks and the ethnicity of the victims of these attacks are only one element of the problematic violent geographies of ethnic relations in Russia. Within cities, ethnic violence affects people in different ways, creating *fear*. It is difficult to collect and produce statistical data on fear as fear is, in many respects, unquantifiable. Therefore, in what follows I draw on semi-structured interviews conducted in Stavropol' *gorod* (city), Stavropol'skii krai, to highlight this phenomena. Figure 16 shows Stavropol'skii krai in its geographical context. In the 1990s, Stavropol'skii krai was the primary destination for Caucasian migrants fleeing ethnic conflict and warfare in Chechnya and other ethnic republics in the North Caucasus. The legacy of this migration is that, according to the 2002 census, there are more Chechens in Stavropol'skii krai than in any federal subject except Chechnya itself, Ingushetia and Dagestan. The impacts of migration in the 1990s on Stavropol'skii krai were geographically uneven, with raions in the south (Kurskii, Stepnovskii and Andropovskii raions) and west (Kochubeevskii, Trunovskii and Grachevskii raions) receiving the most significant migration flows from Chechnya. Today, in the two raions, Neftekumskii raion and Kurskii raion, of Stavropol'skii krai which border Chechnya and Dagestan, ethnic Russians compose 37.6% and 51.5% of the population respectively (Belozerov et al 2009: 175 and 180). In conditions of economic crisis and hardship, conflicts (although not always fatal) have occurred around more banal and 'everyday' issues such as land ownership, land distribution, migration policy, and access to education. In the last year alone there have been high profile ethnic clashes in: and Stavropol' *gorod* (May 2010 and April 2009); Pelagiade, Izobil'nenskii *raion* (August 2009); Kayasula, Neftekumskii *raion* (July 2009); Irgakly, Stepnovskii *raion* (June 2009); and Georgievskii, Predgornii *raion* (May 2009).

Figure 16. Stavropol'skii krai in its geographical context



8.5 'Everyday' ethnic discrimination

In violent Russia racist and neo-Nazi attacks and violent hate crimes are not the only manifestations of ethno-nationalism. Rather, ethnic discrimination is important to consider. For victims, the violent geographies of ethnic relations exacerbate ethnic discrimination. Although discrimination affects access to employment, services, transport and many other aspects in life, it is manifest most in access to housing. According to research carried out by the Centre for Ethnopolitical Studies in Moscow in 2002, of 400 newspaper articles advertising private housing for rent surveyed in Stavropol'skii krai 140 announcements (or 35% of all announcements) stated they were

only available to “[ethnic] Russians” (see, Table 13). Approximately the same share of announcements in other media (for example, street advertisements or other notices) also stated that the accommodation was only available to ethnic Russians. Analysis of the advertisements show that expressions containing the phrases “for Russian family” (*dlya Russkie sem’e*) or “Russian” (*Russkie*) were the most common way in which this discrimination was made apparent, for example “to a Russian female student” (*Russkie devushke-studentke*), “for two Russian men” (*dlya dvukh Russkikh muzhchin*), “to a Russian family with registration in Saratov” (*Russkie sem’e s saratovskoi propiskoi*), while phrases such as “for Slavs” (*dlya Slavyanam*), “Slavic family” (*Slavyanskie sem’e*), “man of a Slavic nationality” (*muzhchine Slavyanskie natsional’nosti*), “for a respectable Russian family” (*dlya prilichnoi Russkie sem’e*) appeared less often. There are also more explicit demands, for example “only Russian” (*tol’ko Russkie*) and “only to Slavs” (*tol’ko Slavyanam*). There was no mention of any ethnic groups in the advertisements, except for ethnic Russians and Slavs.

Table 13. Private advertisements by landlords with the indication of the nationality of a tenant, 2002 and 2003

	December 2002			October – December 2003		
	Total announcements	“For [ethnic] Russians”		Total announcements	“For [ethnic] Russians”	
		No.	%		No.	%
Private advertisements in newspapers	400	140	35	355	47	13.2
Private advertisements in other media	100	33	33	208	60	28.8
All	500	173	34.6	563	107	19

Source: <http://www.indem.ru/Ceprs/Minorities/mainStDER.htm>

The fact that landlords prefer to rent apartments to Slavs is well understood by potential renters, who emphasise their ethnicity when looking for an apartment. Here, phrases like “for Russian family” (*dlya Russkie sem’e*), “Russian man” (*Russkie muzhchin*), “Russian woman” (*Russkie zhenshchiny*), “Russian girl” (*Russkie devushki*) are more common. Similarly, in all advertisements Russian is the only ethnicity mentioned. Of the 500 advertisements placed in newspapers by potential tenants in December 2002, 135 (or 27%) stated that they were only “For [ethnic] Russians” (*dlya Russkikh*). At the same time, of the 100 advertisements placed in other media 28 also stated they were meant for ethnic Russian landlords. Table 14 shows this data for both December 2002 and December 2003. These figures can be supplemented by interview data from Stavropol’.

Table 14. Private advertisements by potential tenants with the indication of the nationality of a landlord, 2002 and 2003

	December 2002			October – December 2003		
	Total announcements	“For [ethnic] Russians”		Total announcements	“For [ethnic] Russians”	
		No.	%		No.	%
Private advertisements in newspapers	500	135	27	1030	207	20.1
Private advertisements in other media	100	28	28	51	13	25.5
All	600	163	27.2	1081	220	20.4

Source: <http://www.indem.ru/Ceprs/Minorities/mainStDER.htm>

The interviews that I conducted in Stavropol’skii krai confirm these prior reports of ethnic discrimination in the sphere of accommodation. For most, ethnic discrimination first occurs after the process of migration has been completed and accommodation is

required. I was told by many ethnic Caucasian interviewees that they had been forced to move frequently by landlords unwilling to rent to them for extended periods or to register them as resident in the dwelling; most explained that having one of the North Caucasus republics (for example, Chechnya) listed as their area of origin in their internal passport meant that they had been refused accommodation. It emerged from a small number of interviews, however, that the longer ethnic Caucasians had lived in Stavropol'skii krai the less difficulty they had in finding housing. At the same time, the interviews also revealed other types of discrimination. I was frequently told by ethnic Slavs how in the agricultural sphere ethnic minorities are given the best land by authorities and ethnic Slavs are given the worst land often without water supply (see, Pallot and Nefedova 2007). Other interviewees told me how they had been treated differently to ethnic Russians when applying to receive or renew documents and frequently face other difficulties on account of their ethnicity. For example, I was told by several interviewees how the police frequently check the passports of ethnic Chechen men, who are forced to pay bribes since they often do not have valid documents. This limits their ability to move freely in their area of residence and around the country. Other restrictions on movement, for example checkpoints and roadblocks, are a regular occurrence in Stavropol'skii krai and the North Caucasus more broadly. Yet, while these restrictions apply to all citizens, particular people are disproportionately affected owing to their vehicle registration plates. One interviewee told me how:

“My car is registered in Kabardino-Balkaria ... If your vehicle has Caucasian number plates, they [the Russian police officers] always stop you, even if your papers are correct. What are the checkpoints for? Any terrorist can get around them, so they are useless as security barriers. They are there to show us who's who and to make money, or maybe to get another medal on your chest ... We don't go to Moscow now. We used to, but we don't go anymore. It isn't safe.

The police are always on our backs because we are from the Caucasus and they don't like us. They call us 'blacks'".
- Ethnic Azeri, 25, 2009 Interview

These (and other) forms of discrimination are a particularly harsh introduction to Russia's violent geographies of ethnic relations for many migrants in Stavropol'skii krai. For many, this discrimination compounds the hardship of forced migration associated with fleeing the Chechen Wars and other political instability in the ethnic republics of the North Caucasus. Whilst not all migration is forced, even those migrants who migrate for economic reasons are open to forms of discrimination.

8.6 *Fear and ethnic conflict*

Interviews from Stavropol'skii krai can be read in two ways. First, they can be read for the empirical information they contain about the locations of ethnic violence, the reasons for ethnic violence and discrimination, and the mechanisms of discrimination. The narratives of everyday citizens in Stavropol'skii krai of their experiences of ethnic relations show how attempts by the post-Soviet state to promote interethnic harmony and a Russian civic identity run up against the practical difficulties associated with war and peace, demographic and migration processes, economic stagnation and crisis, in the North Caucasus. In this sense, the interviews present competing discourses rather than objective fact. Secondly, the narratives can be read for what they convey about how citizens experience Russia's violent geographies of ethnic relations in everyday life. These interviews thus give a voice to the people who are affected in violent Russia.

The interviewee of the first quotation is a young ethnic Ingush male. It is included here to give meaning and perspective to the word ‘fear’ that I used above to describe the wider spatialities of ethnic violence and discrimination. Fear pervades all aspects of life, from decisions individuals make about where to go in urban spaces to the way that individuals travel through spaces. As I argued earlier, individuals who fear ethnic discrimination and/or violence are located at the interface between the direct power over the body exercised by physical (or verbal) violence and the more diffuse power of fear of violence.

“When I wake in the morning I am afraid. I am afraid of leaving the house and going into the street, and also about being visited by the police, or Cossack groups ... I do not leave home often. When I have to shop, or go outside for some other task, I think that I am going to be stopped ... Some of the authorities do not accept my documents because they are from the 1990s. Even though I have been here for over ten years they do not accept my documents. They say that my documents are not valid. When I try to explain my circumstances, about the [First Chechen] War, they do not care. Their reply is, ‘go home or die’ ...”
- Ethnic Ingush, 43, 2009 Interview

Experiences like this are not exceptional. One interviewee describing the change in ethnic relations in the post-Soviet period focussed on the year 2000, pointing to the Second Chechen War (1999-2001) as the key event.

“I have lived in Stavropol’ for fifteen years since 1994. In the early days it was ok. But now when I go outside I get stopped and asked for my documents. The moment a police officer sees me, he becomes aggressive and acts as if I am a monster. Before the Second Chechen War we were protected, defended, and this makes all the difference ... Then, everything was available and if you worked hard and stayed within the law, then everything was ok. But now, it is difference and nothing is in your hands.”
- Ethnic Chechen, 45, 2009 Interview

It is obvious that the fear which the Ingush male spoke about, while occasionally misplaced, is most often well founded, as the next quotation illustrates. For such fear to operate, individuals do not have to have experienced violence themselves. In the most extreme example of this, Akhmedova and Speckhard (2006) found that suicide terrorists in Chechnya were motivated not only by their own experiences of years of violence which had led to personal trauma, but also by a wish to avenge the deaths (and experiences) of relatives and friends. In Stavropol'skii krai, the experiences of friends, relatives and acquaintances are bound up in narratives surrounding 'fear' of ethnic violence.

“People talk about interethnic conflict, but mostly they have not experienced this ... A few years ago my friends were walking through Stavropol' at night when a group of men in black masks and uniforms started to hit them. The men jumped from an ally and started to hit them, causing numerous injuries and heavy concussions. One of my friends has a boy, and his boy had psychological problems after seeing his father in hospital. Now my friends are afraid to walk around outside and are afraid to go out at night. We do not receive any sort of protection from law enforcement.”

- Ethnic Ossetian, 43, 2009 Interview

As these extracts show, the quasi-victim status of Caucasian migrants permeates most aspects of daily life. Due to these (and other) forms of discrimination, certain ethnic groups are left open to exploitation, and are deprived of 'normal' hospitality. At the same time as anti-Caucasian discrimination, however, ethnic Russians (and other nationalities) also feel discriminated by the process of migration, particularly the movement of ethnic Russians from the southern raions of Stavropol'skii krai:

“In the south the ethnic Caucasians are the majority populations in certain towns and raions. Although they lived there during Soviet times, they migrated in the 1990s. Ethnic Russians have left these places because they do not like to be dominated by people from the republics. In Stepnovksii raion, for example, there

was a conflict between the Dargin population and Nogai population recently. Over 200 people were involved and it was very nasty. If you were ethnic Russian, then would you want to live there? No. People fear this violence in the south. In 2007 the violence came to Stavropol', and people will never forget it."

- Ethnic Russian, 51, 2009 Interview

"If the current migration processes continue on their own without governmental policies and without restriction and control, without any calculation as to the social impacts that it will have, then of course it will lead to conflict. And nowadays you can see what this has led to in Stepnovsky Raion, between Nogais and one of the nationalities from Dagestan. Nogais understand themselves as the local people and they understand Stepnovsky Raion as their territory. They were given some of this territory during the Russian Empire -- the so-called 'Nogai Field' ... And people from Dagestan are migrating there because of poor economic and social conditions there, for example a lack of free land and work ... There are over 40 national groups in Dagestan, but once they [Dagestan] leave they act as one. They settle in the same area, give each other jobs, and colonise. The same process is happening in almost every raion in eastern Stavropol'skii krai. In most villages and settlements and cities where people have migrated from Dagestan, and the increase of Dagestani culture leads to the out-migration of ethnic Russians."

- Ethnic Ossetian, 58, 2009 Interview

Like all migration processes, the local population in violent Russia have their own perspective on forms of discrimination. As the narrative above indicates, ethnic Russians problematise the migration experience. For many of the local ethnic Russian population, the issue is not ethnic Caucasians who have migrated to Stavropol'skii krai per se, but rather the time which they have stayed in the krai and the extent to which they have integrated into the local population.

"15 years ago, Chechens and other North Caucasian peoples came here to flee the [Chechen] War for what should have been just a couple of months or years. From the beginning, they have taken advantage of the hospitals, schools, and other services. Because they have stayed here for too long, they have not properly integrated and have not accepted our [ethnic] Russian way of life. In the eastern raions of their compact settlement, the crime rate has increased noticeably ..."

- Ethnic Kabardine, 38, 2009 Interview

“There are German and Greek people who live here [in Stavropol’skii krai], Polish too. And they are civilised compared to the Caucasians. I have friends from these ethnic groups, they don’t have any problems with us [ethnic Russians] and we don’t have any problems with them ... every day there is a reduction in the number of Slavic people in Stavropol’skii krai. 3 years ago we had 84% of the population, 2 years ago it was 78%, and now it is 74% or 73%. People are fleeing. In Neftemkumskii, Kurskoi, Budyennovsk there are just a few, a handful, of ethnic Russians left. The border with the North Caucasus is moving. At the moment, the border is in Stavropol’skii krai. But it will go to Rostov and Krasnodar. Two years ago, [former] governor Chernogorov said that the unity of the Caucasus republics is such a problem that it needs to be discussed in Moscow. He meant that Stavropol’skii krai, Kalmykia, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Chechnya, Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachaevo-Cherkessia should be united into a single okrug, a South-East Region, or a Caliphate ... And when Chernogorov built the highway from Budyennovsk it was symbolic of a new road or channel to unite the Caspian and Black Sea. He was supporting the idea of a united Caucasus ... But this road makes it easier for the Caucasians to move to Stavropol’skii krai. If there are more Caucasians and fewer [ethnic] Russians then we will be discriminated against even more [than now]. And there will be more violence. A Caliphate will favour non-Slavs.”

- Ethnic Russian, 27, 2009 Interview

In their study of the localised geographies of violence in the North Caucasus between 1999 and 2007, O’Loughlin and Wittmer (2011: 186) note how the Caucasian Federal Highway (M-29), the main highway of the region which links Makhachkala (Dagestan) to Grozny (Chechnya), Nazran (Ingushetia), Nal’chik (Kabardino-Balkaria), Mineral’nyy Vody (Stavropol’skii krai) and Rostov-na-Donu (Rostov oblast), is marked “by the clusters of violence at its major towns and cities” along its route. This gives substance to the claim made by the interviewee above that the new highway would bring ‘more violence’ to Stavropol’skii krai, albeit in a way other than which the interviewee intended.

Like most Russian regions, the issue of the declining ethnic Russian population in Stavropol’skii krai is particularly sensitive. As has been noted elsewhere, the meaning of the border between Stavropol’skii krai and the North Caucasian republics is in flux,

and in daily life its significance is increasingly important (Rikhlin 2005; Markedonov 2007 and 2009). This makes many ethnic Russians in Stavropol'skii krai uncomfortable as they fear inclusion of the territory into the affairs of the North Caucasus 'proper': what Malashenko (2009) has called Russia's "internal abroad". In the excerpt above, the interviewee explained how the building of a highway in southern Stavropol'skii krai will facilitate the migration of ethnic Caucasians to Stavropol'skii krai in the future. In the first excerpt below, the interviewee complains about the current ethnic composition of the krai. The interviewee describes how people from the Caucasus, despite being a minority population, make up the majority of people in hospital in Stavropol', meaning that Russians do not have equal access to emergency services and thus are open to discrimination. In the second excerpt below, the interviewee complains about unequal access to education, highlighting the role of corruption. As these (and other) excerpts suggest, concerns surrounding the provision of services (and who will benefit from the service) are widespread.

"The population of Stavropol'skii krai is over 80% ethnic Russian, but people from the Caucasus live here and work here too, and they have businesses here. They come to study at our universities because they prefer to get an education from Stavropol' because it is more prestigious than local universities. About one third of the students in Stavropol' are from the republics. And also hospitals. Over half of the people in hospitals are from the republics. But they are only 20% of the population. Why aren't [ethnic] Russians or Slavs in these hospitals?"

- Ethnic Russian, 51, 2009 Interview

"They [ethnic migrants] come from the [North Caucasus] republics to here [Stavropol'skii krai] because it is cheaper for them to enter into our universities. But for us [ethnic] Russians, it is impossible to enter into the universities. For example, a girl came from a Cossack school with a gold-diploma and tried to enter university. They told her that she wouldn't enter university unless she gave them money. They had a quota for individuals from the Caucasus which they had to fill. How could she have this amount of money? Why do the authorities privilege the Caucasians? Why are we discriminated against?"

- Ethnic Russian (Cossack), 71, 2008 Interview

A number of interviewees complained about a quota system in education, yet while this system (as well as for other services) existed during the Soviet period (see, Zaslavsky 1994), as far as I am aware no such system exists today⁸⁸. Nevertheless, for these interviewees acceptance of the conditions of the 'system' in return for attending university underlies the discrimination, and unequal nature of ethnic groups, in Stavropol'skii krai. Other interviewees accepted that the declining ethnic Russian population combined with the increasing ethnic Caucasian population in Stavropol'skii krai meant that there would be a change in those ethnic groups using certain services and needing particular provisions; for example, the low birth rate of ethnic Russians compared to the high birth rate of ethnic Caucasians means that ethnic Caucasians are more likely to use kindergartens. Nevertheless, most ethnic Russians with whom I spoke argued that they had developed a 'defensive consciousness' in light of the large-scale immigration of ethnic Caucasians. One interviewee said:

"A defensive consciousness has developed amongst [ethnic] Russians. Nowadays it is common for people to buy guns. For those people in Russia who are patriots and those people who have nowhere to go, then when the war with the Caucasians begins they will come here to help defend Russia. Those people who have houses, they will sell their houses and move elsewhere. And those ones who have nowhere else to go, they will defend. They will defend their families and Russia. Right to the end. Until death. It will come to this, unfortunately. And I recommend everybody to buy a gun, if they have the opportunity. Or at least to take the phone number of somebody who has a gun ... People have guns not because they desire one, but because they need one. The *militiya* is useless ... On Monday, I can go out and buy a new passport with my photograph but with Vladimir Vladimirovich's [Putin] details. I can buy a

⁸⁸ New details about the Russian government's strategy to modernize the North Caucasus emerged on 15 September 2010. The strategy described provisions for the large-scale resettlement programme of ethnic Caucasians from the North Caucasus republics into inner Russian regions and of ethnic Russians from inner Russia into the North Caucasus republics. The report indicated that the Kremlin plans to offer the ethnic Russians special access to jobs, quotas in local universities and special access to positions in government service in that region. See, <http://marker.ru/news/1979>

driving license in the name of Dmitri Sergeevich [Medvedev]. This is no problem. All you need is money. The licence will be official, with the stamp of the FSB and MVD. And now let's say that we are extremists from the Caucasus and we have just bought our passports. We are stopped by the *militsiya* who ask for our passports. When we show them our passports there is no problem. So we commit terrorist activities and then leave. And the *militsiya* don't even know our real names ... But it will be so huge that you cannot imagine the scale of violence and death. In comparison to what will happen here, your events in England [London bombings in July 2007] will be nothing. Here there will be so much blood, because it is the Caucasus ... If something happens here between ethnic groups, then nobody can say where the violence will stop and who it will involve ... For example, I have a double-barrel gun and an automatic gun. I don't think that anybody [any authorities] will protect me."

- Ethnic Russian, 68, 2009 Interview

Judging from other interviews, corruption -- a problem throughout post-Soviet Russia -- is particularly problematic in the North Caucasus, jeopardizing national security and undermining state and social institutions. President Medvedev has alluded to this on several occasions, most notably in his Federal Address of November 2009, and more recently in addressing human rights activists at a meeting of the Council for Civil Society in May 2010.

"I think that, of course, the situation [in Russia] would be different without the national republics ... Three years ago, I wrote to Putin when he was President and I told him to look at the question of a united Russia without any federal subjects and republics. If we all say that we are Russians, even though the situation in the North Caucasus is that they are living on handouts, then we wouldn't make any payments to the federal centre. And why should the republics have this money thrown at them. If Russia was a united country, if you are a citizen of Russia, then why are you happy to live off handouts. [In Stavropol'skii krai] We are saying that we want factories and an economy, a programme for our children, a project of houses, but nobody hears us. Instead the money is going over there to the territories of the republics. And they get money under the table and steal things. And this money from Russia just disappears. Nobody [in Russia] asks where this money is spent. They use slaves. In Ingushetia there are 200 [ethnic] Russian slaves. In Dagestan at one brick factory there are 150 [ethnic] Russian slaves. And this kind of business is growing. They even make money out of this kind of this barbaric business. So, why are people closing their eyes? Everybody knows this is happening."

- Ethnic Russian, 42, 2009 Interview

Corruption, however, goes hand-in-hand with discrimination, as one interviewee explained:

“... one of the main reasons [for corruption] is the decline of the economy and especially industry. This has led to unemployment, and to the revival of ethno-clans which always existed but when this territory was modernised and industrialised they were not so important as nowadays. Nowadays there are ethno-clans in Dagestan, in Chechnya, in Ingushetia, in Karachaevo-Cherkessia and they are the major social institution. This is some kind of reaction, it helps people survive in the periods of crisis and unemployment. If you live in the city and the factory where you work closes, then the ethno-clan looks after you. If you are in trouble then the ethno-clan helps you ... It’s like a family. But, if you are in power, or have a job, or a member of the local or regional authorities then now it’s your turn to help your ethno-clan and this is a very serious problem ... It leads to discrimination ... For non-Russians living in Stavropol’skii krai the ethno-clans are very important. Especially in the eastern regions. Take Dagestanis for example. Dagestanis are members of ethno-clans. They have not appeared by chance. No. One person appears and then the next. And when he sees that it possible to live here then he invites members of his ethnic group. Dagestanis always prefer to do business with fellow Dagestanis, and if possible their own ethno-clan. They have a hierarchy which goes, ethno-clan, Dagestani, Caucasian people and then Slavs ... “

- Ethnic Russian, 71, 2009 Interview

As these extracts show, ethnic discrimination and corruption go hand-in-hand in Stavropol’skii krai, permeating most aspects of life; from pro-natal incentives for individuals from the ethnic republics to ethnic ‘quotas’ in education institutions. Compounding this, as I suggested above, ethnic groups are subject to different crime and punishment. One person with whom I spoke told me that Russian authorities often charge assailants of violent conflict from the Caucasus with ‘lesser’ charges, such as hooliganism, compared to ethnic Russians, in an effort to downplay the significance of ethnic conflict, perhaps in the face of pressures emanating from Moscow:

“... ethnic conflicts appear [in Stavropol’skii krai] everyday. We have a statistic according to which it is likely or not whether you go to prison. If Russians are fighting against non-Russians, then Russians are sentenced according to the law

on 'ethnic' violence. And if the non-Russians are sentenced they are charged only with bad behaviour. Another example [is] the Chechen War. Russian officers are put in to prison as killers. And all the people who fought against us in the name of 'anti-Russian' forces, they now have streets named after them and all sorts of awards. It was the genocide of the Russian population in Chechnya. Russian officers were forced to go there, and nowadays they give them long sentences in prison. And that's why people are angry. I am saying this because the behaviour of governmental [*vlast'*] structures forces us to fight against each other. In other words, if we are all citizens of the Russian Federation regardless of what nationality we have, if there is a law, defined by an administrative or by the constitution, then everybody is supposed to follow this law. But nowadays we have the situation that the law is there for some people, and other people are given privileges. We can see it, we are not stupid."

- Ethnic Russian, 34, 2008 Interview

8.7 Managing Ethnic Relations in Russia

Barry Buzan's (1983) observation that the language of security should not be taken for granted has particular resonance for ethnic conflict in Russia. His argument rests on the proposition that the meaning of security can be broadened, to focus on personal, social, economic and other aspects of being and feeling *secure* from violence, hate, disease, poverty and exploitation. Buzan had in mind the macro-geography of global security in the latter years of the Cold War, but it is obvious from the Russian example that this insight applies to lower spatial scales. The current distribution of ethnic violence has repercussions for the whole of Russian society in the identities it constructs for people, the discrimination that accompanies it, and the fear that it creates. Understanding this, regional authorities throughout Russia attempt to manage ethnic relations in various spheres of life. According to the national and regional policy of Stavropol'skii krai, krai authorities recognise the importance of monitoring and managing ethnic relations, suggesting that specific 'national policy' programmes should pay attention to the experience of ethnic minorities in the labour market, assist in the economic development of national-cultural autonomies, create development programmes for

economically ‘depressed’ areas, create ethnic educational schemes, and develop regional cooperation for the maintenance of peace and stability⁸⁹. Questions of ethno-national policy are also connected with migration policy; the policy “About measures on improvement of work with refugees and the compelled immigrants and their social adaptation in Stavropol’skii krai” (adopted 14 July 1999) specified that it was necessary to develop a nationalities policy in view of contemporary migration patterns. At the same time as being economic and socio-cultural concerns, ethnic relations also impact on traditional conceptions of security (EAWARN 2005); the ethno-national policy for Stavropol’skii krai for 2006-2010 recognises the importance of proactivity (rather than reactivity) in the prevention and settlement of ethnic conflicts.

Writing in 2007, Astvatsaturova noted that the two main policy documents in the sphere of ethno-nationalism in Stavropol’skii krai were “The basic directions of national and regional policy of Stavropol’skii krai” and “The Complex programme of harmonization of interethnic attitudes in Stavropol’skii krai for 2000-2005” (both adopted on 31 December 1999) (Astvatsaturova 2007). Reminiscent of the Soviet-era process of ‘folklorisation’ of ethnic minorities (see, Zaslavsky 1994), the Complex programme focussed on the construction of an atmosphere of interethnic harmony, emphasising, for example, the role of festivals and seminars, days of national cultures, cultural societies, and policy-orientated academic conferences. The Complex programme also paid attention to: studying the interethnic situation in the krai; introducing a system of monitoring of interethnic attitudes; and, forecasting and prevention of interethnic conflicts. To realise each of these, krai authorities awarded three contracts to Stavropol

⁸⁹ See, *Osnovnie napravleniya natsional’noi i regional’noi politiki Stavropol’skogo kraya, yablyayushchiesya Prilozheniem No. 1 k Postanovleniyu Gubernatora kraya of 31 dekabrya 1999 goda* No. 798, available at: http://www.garant.ru/hotlaw/stav_real/

State University (approved 26 December 2001) for projects entitled: “The creation of system of monitoring and forecasting of ethnopolitical and ethnosocial processes in Stavropol’skii krai”; “Ethnic migration in Stavropol’skii krai: problems of adaptation and migratory behaviour of ethnoses”; and “The formation of modern skills of interethnic interaction in Stavropol’skii krai”. More recently, on 26 March 2007, a programme for the “Development of ethno-social and ethno-confessional relations in Stavropol’skii krai between 2007-2009” [*Razvitie etnosotsial’nikh i etnokonfessional’nikh otnoshenii v Stavropol’skom Krae na 2007-2009 godi*] was instituted by Decree No. 163 of the Gubernator of Stavropol’skii krai. The primary objective of this programme was to create conditions that guarantee equality for all citizens, and emphasised the use of culture as a means to integrate ethnic populations, and an increase in the activity and role of the mass media in reporting ethno-social processes and ethno-confessional attitudes. A ‘Committee of Stavropol’skii krai for National and Cossack affairs’ (*Komitet Stavropol’skogo Krai no delam natsional’nostei i kazachestva*) was created as part of this programme, with responsibility for: reacting to situations of inter-ethnic tension and inter-ethnic conflicts; developing warning and preventative measures of conflict; leading long-term ethnological monitoring; and, cooperating with academics, state government and leaders of ethnic organisations and regional religions.

Will Kymlicka considers that the securitisation of (inter)ethnic relations in Eastern and Central Europe contrasts sharply with the ethnic minority rights discourse of de-securitisation in the West (2002: 20-21). The interests of ‘national security’ are defining for contemporary Russian “nationalities” policy, with its main theme being the “prevention of ethnic conflicts.” Russian ethnologist Aleksandr Osipov (2002: 62)

believes that “conflictological” discourse is used to justify the Russian authorities’ policy, leading to the violation of civil and minority rights and curtailing society’s control over the power of the state. According to Popov and Kuznetsov (2008: 230), although research into ethnicity in conditions of socio-economic transformation as well as into armed conflicts is often conducted within the frameworks of constructivist or instrumentalist paradigms (which are now usurping the “theory of ethnos” from its position as the grand narrative of Russian ethnology) the very use of the conception of ‘ethnic conflict’ permits a primordialist (essentialist) understanding of ethnicity and interprets society’s ethnic diversity as a conflict-causing factor.

8.8 Concluding remarks

The prospects for improvements in Russia’s violent geographies of ethnic relations are not, in the short term, encouraging. Although there are strong humanitarian and economic reasons for Russia trying to improve how it treats its non-ethnic Russian (Slavic) population, there are strong interests working in the opposite direction. Alexander Verkhovsky, of the SOVA Centre, has argued that “Xenophobic prejudice is widespread in Russia ... More than 50% [of Russians] support the idea that ethnic Russians should have privileges over other ethnic groups ... More than 50% believe that ethnic minorities should be limited or even expelled from their region” (Verkhovskiy, quoted by Harding 2009). Lev Gudkov, Director of the Levada Centre, meanwhile, notes how between 50% and 52% of Russians currently support the slogan ‘*Rossiya dlya Russkikh*’ (Russia for [ethnic] Russians) (Gudkov 2008). In 2009, an investigation ordered by a Russian court was conducted in connection with the case of a teenager who was badly beaten near his school. The attackers shouted “Russia for Russians!” and

“Kill all the Khachi!” (a slur denoting people from Caucasus), and “Beat the Blacks!”, while beating the boy. The investigation concluded that slogan ‘*Rossiya dlya Russkikh*’ does not fuel ethnic tension or hatred (see, Ekho Moskvi 2009).

It would be reasonable to think that because so many people are affected in one way or another by ethnic relations, the Russian population with their new-found democracy will constitute a force for change and make a stand against ethnic discrimination and violence. The small amount of research that has been done on popular attitudes to crime and punishment in Russia suggests otherwise (Pallo 2007). Evidence from the post-socialist countries shows that after a period of softening, in reaction against the socialist regime’s harsh environment, neoliberal economic and social policies and media attention may encourage the resurfacing of ‘traditional policies of social exclusion and stigmatisation’ (Krajewski 2004). Anton Popov and Igor Kuznetsov, who have researched ethnic discrimination in Krasnodar krai, conclude that “the Soviet principle of the institutionalisation of ethnicity continues to dominate unchallenged post-Soviet public consciousness and political practices, thus creating the conditions for ethnic discrimination, racism and xenophobia” (2008: 245). Dmitri Shlapentokh raises a similar possibility, suggesting that ethnic conflict “indicates that the deep-seated ills of Russian society [which] could have powerful implications for the country’s future” (2010: 199). While ethnic conflict is not just a feature of post-Soviet Russia -- ethnic riots, for example, erupted several years ago in France and not just in provincial towns but also in the French capital, Paris, and the US can hardly be said to be immune from the same problems -- there is one feature of ethnic conflict in Russia which is especially noteworthy; whilst in Europe and the US it is ethnic minorities who engage in violence, in Russia it is the Russian majority that engages in violence. This points to an inability

by ethnic Russians to accommodate non-Slavic peoples in a way that is essential if the country is to develop.

Chapter 9. Conclusion: Towards a critical political geography of ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai

9.1 Introduction

In this thesis I have investigated how the geopolitics of ethnic relations, as part of the wider North Caucasus situation, impact on the everyday lives of citizens in Stavropol'skii krai. I have done this through a series of interviews and focus-groups with citizens in Stavropol', the administrative capital of the krai, through analysing English and Russian language academic, media and political sources, through drawing on statistical data from the local statistics office in Stavropol' and from EAWARN and the SOVA Centre, and through researcher observation.

In the four preceding empirical chapters of this thesis I explored the contested nature of memorialisation, arguing that the symbolic landscape of Stavropol' plays an important role in the cultural and political system of the multi-ethnic region. Using the example of a statue of General Alexei Ermolov, a close (and critical) reading of this landscape reveals ethno-national tensions over differing interpretations of the life and history of the person upon which the statue is based. The landscape is both an arena through which Russian national political identity is communicated with people and produced and reproduced, and an arena through which differing Russian citizens compete with each other for authority on historical narratives that operate at and between a number of scales. I examined the role played by the '*Den' kraya*' ('krai Day') celebration in the construction of ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai, arguing that *Den' kraya* is grounded not on what ethnic relations are like, but on what they 'ought' to be like,

presenting an idealised form of reality. In doing so, I uncovered the ‘exceptional banality’ of ethno-nationalist parades in the North Caucasus, which seek to re-script ethnic relations toward a predetermined ‘ideal’ of Soviet-era harmony. I explored the events of summer of 2007 when the geopolitics of Russo-North Caucasian relations were once again manifest in violent conflict. During the course of six-weeks of rioting between ethnic Russian (*russkii*) and non-ethnic Russian (*rossiiskii*) citizens, three students were killed (one Chechen and two Russians) and pogroms were conducted widely (Shlapentokh 2007). I addressed these events through a focus on the nature and politics of the riots and those involved, arguing that a range of tensions came together to form a localised geopolitics, and that this contributes to an understanding of why these events took place. Finally, I explored how the growth in ethno-nationalism, racism and xenophobia in post-Soviet Russia is translated into the everyday lives of citizens in Stavropol’skii krai, highlighting daily forms of discrimination and violence.

This final chapter draws together some key concluding points from the four preceding empirical chapters. As I outlined in Section 1.1, while each chapter has told a different empirical story they have been drawn together by three research themes:

- 1) How ethnicity is written into geopolitics, and how geopolitics can illuminate understandings of how ethnicity is inscribed into everyday life in Russia.
- 2) The understandings, actions, and motivations of citizens as they actively define contemporary ethnic relations in Stavropol’skii krai, and as they cope with wider geopolitical events, both spatially and temporally.

3) How the 'spaces' of Stavropol'skii krai are created by, and partially determine, ethnic relations.

While I have focussed on four snapshots of 'geopolitics' in this thesis, it goes without saying that the geopolitics and geopolitical events that have affected ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai are numerous. Everything that has happened in Stavropol'skii krai is partly due to the fragmentation of the USSR in 1991 and, like ethnic relations in the krai, is interpreted and understood through the lens of that event. Thus, the fragmentation of the Soviet Union and the creation of the North Caucasus republics within the Russian Federation have ongoing effects nearly twenty years later. The history of Caucasian, particularly Chechen, rejection of Russian authority and governmentality, since the eighteenth century, and the years of Russian expansion and colonisation of the region, continue to have impacts today, and continue to be a source of tension between ethnic Caucasians, particularly Chechens and Ingush, and ethnic Russians.

"The events after the collapse of the USSR, after the USSR was destroyed, somehow lead to worsened ethnic relations and ethnic conflict on the territory of the North Caucasus. Geopolitically, the North Caucasus is a very complex territory, because of the compact settlement of many nationalities, and because of the historical conflicts on the territory. These conflicts are still important today. And it's hard to talk about the North Caucasus, to look at the picture of the North Caucasus, by just beginning in 1991. For the last few years, it has been a tendency in Russia to say that what happened on this territory [the USSR], the destruction of this territory, was a tragedy. In reality, it [the tragedy] was the [length of the] period of conflict and the number of fatalities that are the result of the previous conflicts. The result of policies of the Russian Empire. The result of the experiments of the USSR, the experiment of territorial division. And the main 'bomb' that in the 1990s exploded and has the potential to explode the Russian Federation is the national-administrative division and split of Russia. The conflict between Russian and Chechnya. Between Ossetian and Ingushetia. And many other small conflicts ... And also, on the ground level of society there are the feelings about the destruction of the Russian Empire.

Russian society nowadays still has not got rid of this 'Empire Syndrome'. Russian society still thinks that Russia is an Empire. And especially here in the North Caucasus where there are a lot of people who live on territories which were colonised. And Russian society discriminates against them."

- Ethnic Russian, Politician, 42, 2009 Interview

The First Chechen War between 1994 and 1996, the Second Chechen War between 1999 and 2001, the Global War on Terror that began in 2001, and the Russo-Georgian War of August 2008, have all impacted on ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai. The history of Chechen terrorist attacks in Russia, including the Budyennovsk Hospital Siege of 1995 and the Beslan School Hostage Siege of September 2004, have effects on ethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai, as does Russian suspicion of the North Caucasus as a space of insecurity and terrorism.

"Russian officers are put in to prison as killers [for their actions during the Chechen Wars]. And all the people who fought against us in the name of 'anti-Russian' forces, they now have streets named after them and all sorts of awards. It was the genocide of the Russian population in Chechnya. Russian officers were forced to go there. And nowadays they give them long sentences in prison. That's why people are angry..."

- Ethnic Russian, Businessman, 51, 2008 Interview

More recent geopolitical instability in the Caucasus, namely the Russo-Georgian War of August 2008, however did not lead to conflict in Stavropol'skii krai. Here, the work of Radvanyi and Muduyev (2007) and Coene (2010), both of whom emphasize the intense political and human links across the Caucasus Mountains, is particularly apt.

"The Caucasus is very important geopolitically, it is comparable to the Balkans and the Middle East. There have been no long periods of stability. There is no durable peace. All famous migrations have moved this territory. We are witnesses of a new geopolitical reconstruction of the world. It is part of life. It may be acute or it may be latent. But we are witnessing history. Georgia, of course, played a false role in the recent war [in August 2008]. Really, Georgia is objectively interested in good relations with Russia. Frankly speaking, the only

people who understand Georgians are Russians. This situation touched them very deeply. Georgian leaders placed themselves in an anti-Russian position. There are many ethnic Georgians in the region, but we didn't witness any serious anti-Georgia activities. There was such a risk, of course, but it did not happen. This war did not cause an ethnic reaction in Russian society. Everybody understood that Georgia was being used as an instrument."

- Ethnic Russian, Academic, 71, 2009 Interview

9.2 Ethnic Relations in Transition

Ethnic relations should not, of course, be seen in isolation, but rather must be seen in the wider context of the politics of 'transition' in Russia, particularly the end of ethno-federalism. Since 1991, the economic and social impact of post-Soviet 'transition' in Russia has become ever more visible. Between 1989 and 2002, Russia's population fell from 147, 022 million people to 145, 164 million. At the same time, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contracted by 39%, unemployment increased by 39%, and a staggering 23.8% of the population dropped below the \$2 a day poverty line between 1990 and 1999 (World Bank 2004). The impact of transition was more prevalent in Russia's ethnic republics than in ethnic Russian-dominated regions. In 1997, for example, 12 of Russia's 21 republics had a poverty rate of 30% or more, compared to just nine of 58 Russian regions. (The average rate for the Russian Federation as a whole was 20.8%). Of the 11 regions in Russia with the highest poverty rates (40% or more of the population living below the poverty line), eight were republics (Bahry 2002), six of which were in the North Caucasus. This placed Stavropol'skii krai, in a sense, on the 'front line' of the post-Soviet transition, located on the 'border' between the North Caucasus republics and Russia 'proper'. In the economic sphere, efforts to marketise and privatise as part of the post-Soviet transition redrew social boundaries, undermined traditional job guarantees and eroded social safety nets. In ethnically diverse regions,

this also involved a restructuring of the old cultural division of labour -- the distribution of occupations and rewards among ethnic groups (Zaslavsky 1994). The Soviet-era commitment to affirmative action policies for non-Russian regions and their resident minorities unravelled along with the USSR.

During the Soviet-era, citizens were genuinely internationalist as jobs, together with most aspects of life, were organised and guaranteed by the all-encompassing state. This meant that few, indeed if any, ethnic conflicts arose (Tilly 1991). Many ethnic and religious groups in the Soviet Union coexisted peacefully (with a few notable exceptions). Nevertheless, Mikhail Gorbachev's twin policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost* gave rise to an unprecedented tide of protests and demonstrations across the USSR, in which ethno-national grievances occupied a central place (alongside economic unrest). As a result, wide range of sensitive issues previously closed to discussion became the subject of public debate. For example: the extent to which the national republics that comprise the Soviet federation should enjoy actual sovereignty; the representation of different nationalities in leadership positions; the language and cultural rights of different national groups; and, the role of Russian as a lingua franca. Thus, when the Soviet Union fragmented and ethno-federalism ended, the 'nationalities problem' appeared. In a sense, the collapse of the Soviet Union showed how and why, despite official declarations and the centralised nature of the Soviet system, the 'nationalities problem' was never solved.

This 'crisis of internationalism' occurred at the same time as the increasing cultural and economic globalisation of the 'developed' world in the 1990s. However, Fukuyama's much heralded 'end of history' thesis (1992), which suggested that nation-state

boundaries would ‘disappear’ as globalisation and democratic liberalism ultimately succeeded in the new uni-polar world, was quickly replaced by Huntington’s ‘Clash of Civilisations’ (1993; 1996), which asserted the renewed importance of national boundaries. Indeed, into this post-Soviet context of the ‘crisis of internationalism’ appeared the complex phenomenon of nationalism⁹⁰, particularly Russian nationalism. Understood by many scholars (for example, Smith, G. 1999) as a reaction to the Soviet manipulation of symbols of Russian nationhood and promotion of Russification of non-ethnic Russians -- it widely accepted that the Russian nation did not exist independently of the Soviet party and state⁹¹ -- Russian nationalism has taken both violent and non-violent forms. A key non-violent element of Russian nationalism has been the re-centring of the importance of the Russian Orthodox Church in society and the state. Seen as the only Russian institution in the USSR that represents a pre-Soviet Russia, one without the Communist Party, the Orthodox Church, Keenan (quoted in Szporluk 2000: 245) wrote, “is slowly recapturing a role which it has often been cast by both well-wishers and enemies – that of the only authentically Russian institution”. At the same time, the rise of violent Russian nationalism has been marked. As I explained in Chapter 8, ethnic discrimination and violence is widespread in Russia, particularly racist and neo-Nazi attacks. Together with federal and regional policies, Russian authorities have created a state of “impunity” against violent ethnic attacks and discrimination (Amnesty International 2006). Amnesty International (2004) reported that Russian

⁹⁰ As Smith, G. (1999) explains, in distinguishing between the ‘nation’ and the ‘state’ the Soviet successor states undertook a process of (re)nationalisation whereby the titular nation and the geopolitical nation, once divergent, became increasingly congruent.

⁹¹ Smith, G. (1999: 48) notes that, “More than any other Soviet nationality, the Russians were encouraged to identify the Soviet Union as their homeland (*Sovietskaya rodina*). The Soviet state placed considerable emphasis on promoting a symbolic and institutional association in the Russian mind-set between Russian nation-building and the Soviet Union ... Russians were encouraged to look upon all-Union institutions as the social basis and identific framework of support for their nation”. Similarly, Yaz’kova (2006: 274) explains that “The role and position of the Russian Federation (RSFSR) in the former Soviet Union is at best described as ambiguous ... Russia (RSFSR) as a jurisdictional entity was merely an appendage of the [Soviet] Union’s centre for many years.”

authorities target ethnic minorities for racial profiling, resulting in unnecessary registration and passport checks, searches, and arbitrary arrest and detention. It is indicative that the Russian Immigration Service remains part of the MVD, which is *a priori* engaged in tackling crime. Such an institutional structure creates an atmosphere in which most ethnic minorities are immediately classed as those who fall under the jurisdiction of the law enforcement agencies (Chebankova 2007).

Other ethnic groups have responded to the revival of Russian nationalism by following their own national projects. Non-ethnic Russians responded to the de-Sovietisation of Russia by raising analogous demands for the rehabilitation of *their* respective cultural figures from their pre-Soviet and Soviet histories, particularly those repressed under Stalin. This movement has been stimulated, and to a degree legitimised, by developments in ethnic Russia, particularly, the incorporation of the Russian Orthodox Church into the Russian national identity project.

In this context of the end of Soviet ‘internationalism’ and rising ethno-nationalism in Russia, the question that emerges is, should we not expect more ethnic violence in Stavropol’skii krai?

As I noted in Chapter 8, reports from the Moscow-based NGO *SOVA Centre* suggest that ethnic conflict is increasing both in frequency and intensity in Stavropol’skii krai, while at the national level ethnic violence in Russia has, until recently, been on the rise. Although 2009 saw the first decrease in the number of recorded victims of racist and neo-Nazi attacks since 2004, the number of attacks in 2009 (404 victims) is only slightly less than double that in 2004 (268 victims). In Stavropol’skii krai, there were 52

racist and neo-Nazi attacks between 2004 and 2009, with the number of attacks slowly decreasing from a peak of 21 attacks in 2005 to 16 attacks in 2009 (Kozhevnikova 2010). However, exact figures for instances of ethnic conflict and discrimination against ethnic minorities are hard to obtain due to chronic under-reporting. Sociological surveys are, therefore, a useful indicator of the state of ethnic relations. Monitoring conducted in 2002 by Stavropol' State University and the Russian Academy of Sciences suggested that there was a low level of interethnic conflict in Stavropol'skii krai (Kolossova, Galkina and Krindatch 2001). The following year, research carried out by the Centre for Ethnopolitical Studies in Moscow suggested that ethnic discrimination in Stavropol'skii krai was widespread (Centre for Ethnopolitical Studies 2002). What potential for ethnic conflict there was came to a head in the summer of 2007, as I explained in Chapter 7, as six weeks of intermittent interethnic rioting left three students dead. More recently, Astvatsaturova (2009) observed that interethnic tensions in Stavropol'skii krai are high, as reflected by an increase in so-called 'household xenophobia' and the fact that it is increasingly common to see graffiti like '*Rossiya dlya Russkikh*' ('Russia for [ethnic] Russians'), swastikas, and other nationalist inscriptions in public places throughout Stavropol'. The situation, Astvatsaturova noted, required not only "constant attention and preventive actions from the state power structures", but was also evidence of the "underestimation by authorities of conflicts with an ethnic component". Astvatsaturova's warning proved timely. In the summer of 2009 alone there were high profile ethnic clashes in: Pelagiade, Izobil'nenskii *raion* (August 2009) between around 300 Dargin and Nogai youths; Irgakly, Stepnovskii *raion* (June 2009) between around 160 Dargin and Nogai youths; Georgievskii, Predgornii *raion* (May 2009) between around 100 Russian and Chechen youths; and Stavropol' *gorod* (April 2009) between around 150 Russian and Caucasian youths.

Nevertheless, while ethnic conflict and violence is an important feature of contemporary Russia, it does not affect a large majority of Stavropol'skii krai's population. That is to say that for all the instances of ethnic conflict and violence in Stavropol'skii krai, there are many more instances of where there has not been ethnic conflict and violence. This challenges the perception that ethnic Russian and ethnic Caucasian everyday experiences are characterised by violence, and points to a need to reorient focus towards everyday 'peace' as experienced in Stavropol', alongside explanations of violent conflict. While the absence of violence in Stavropol' for much of the post-Soviet period does not, of course, imply peace (although it is frequently understood as doing so), I now briefly examine the mechanisms that attempt to enable interethnic peace to prevail in Stavropol'skii krai in light of rising ethno-national conflict⁹². At the core of this approach is the belief that peace should be conceptualised as a process in which conflict and tensions are common occurrences (see, Williams 2007).

As I explained in Chapter 4, authorities in Stavropol'skii krai understand that ethnic conflict impacts on various aspects of daily life and thus attempt to manage interethnic relations and enable interethnic peace. Over the last decade, the two main policy documents in the sphere of interethnic relations in Stavropol'skii krai have been "The basic directions of national and regional policy of Stavropol'skii krai" and "The Complex programme of harmonization of interethnic attitudes in Stavropol'skii krai for 2000-2005" (both adopted on 31 December 1999), as well as the more recent programme for the "Development of ethno-social and ethno-confessional relations in Stavropol'skii krai between 2007-2009" (adopted on 26 March 2007). An important

⁹² For an example of a similar study elsewhere, see Williams (2007).

part of the Complex programme was the creation, in 2005, of the ‘Committee of Stavropol’skii krai for National and Cossack affairs’ (*Komitet Stavropol’skogo krai no delam natsional’nostei i kazachestva*). Led by Boris Aleksandrovich Kalinin, the Committee is composed of 22 members, including 5 experts on Cossacks affairs and 5 experts on national affairs. The Committee complements two other organisations, both of which were created in Stavropol’ city in 2007 as a direct outcome of the riots in the summer of that year: the ‘Advisory Council for questions of national-ethnic relations under the administration of Stavropol’ city’ (*Konsul’tativnii Sovet po voprosam natsional’no-etnicheskikh otnoshenii pri administratsii goroda Stavropol’ya*) which is composed of the leaders of each ethnic group in Stavropol’ city; and the ‘Stavropol’ city department for questions of national-ethnic relations, public communications, religious organisations and Cossacks’ (*Otdel po voprosam natsional’no-etnicheskikh otnoshenii, svyazyam s obshestvenimi, religioznimi organizatsiyami i kazachestvom administratsii goroda Stavropol’ya*) which is composed of a number of politicians. Although responsible for a number of issues (for example, maintaining state support for Cossacks, and advising on krai policy relating to the compatriots abroad), the central tasks of the Committee are: reacting to situations of inter-ethnic tension and inter-ethnic conflicts; developing conflict warning and preventative measures; leading long-term ethnological monitoring; and, cooperating with academics, state government and leaders of ethnic organisations and regional religions.

It is through such mechanisms, along with others, that authorities attempt to facilitate an interethnic peace in Stavropol’skii krai. In doing so, they emphasise the vital role of human agency, particularly community leaders, in understanding the processes by which peace is maintained.

9.3 Deconstructing the Boundary of Stavropol'skii krai

The situation in Stavropol'skii krai seems to be symptomatic of much that is problematic about power, space, and identity in contemporary Russia. With a declining ethnic Russian population and an increasing ethnic Caucasian population, the situation in Stavropol'skii krai raises some important questions. Most notable, perhaps, is the question as to whether it is the ethnic geography or political geography of the region that is a more salient factor in explaining contemporary territoriality. Traditional concepts of territory hold that the Stavropol'skii krai is *a priori* a Russian 'space' by virtue of its inclusion in the Russian Federation. My research in Stavropol', however, suggests that Stavropol'skii krai is increasingly seen by those people with whom I spoke as being outside of Russian 'space' because of its decreasing ethnic Russian population and rapidly increasing ethnic Caucasian population. This position was summed up recently by Sidorenko (2010) who argues that, "a Caucasus without ethnic Russians can mean only one thing: a Russia without the Caucasus" [*Kavkaz bez russkikh mozhет oznachat' odno: Rossiya bez Kavkaza*].

In 2005, writing in *Ezhednevnyi Zhurnal*, Aleksandr Riklin described his experience of landing at the Shpakovskoye airport in Stavropol' (Riklin 2005). On arrival, Riklin writes, all the passengers were "forced to remove footwear and to pull out belts from trousers", noting that these were "not ordinary security measures" for domestic flights in Russia. When one of the passengers enquired as to why this was necessary, a security guard replied "Why are you surprised? We are on the border of our territory [*pogranichnaya territoriya*]". "What territory?" asked one passenger, "What state does

Stavropol'skii krai border?" asked another, but neither received an answer. While, Rikhlin writes, Stavropol'skii krai does not share a border with a foreign state,

“... it does not mean that the employee of the airport has made a mistake or learnt geography badly at school. It feels this way. Simply, local residents perceive the region as the last Russian territory in the south of the country. Next is the [North] Caucasus.”

Such an ‘imagined geography’ is widespread in Russian society, and informs the opinions of many political commentators and other opinion formers in Russia. For Malashenko (2009), contemporary demographic processes combined with the growing influence of Islam in the republics is transforming the North Caucasus into Russia’s “internal abroad”. Recent political changes in the region, in particular the creation of the North Caucasus Federal District, Malashenko argues, is “an indication of the complete impotence of the powers that be [ie, the Russian government] and of their lack of understanding of what they are doing” in the North Caucasus. For Karpets (2010), the “mass exodus” of the ethnic Russian population from the North Caucasus “threatens the very existence of the Russian Federation” because “the Russian people are the state-forming people of the country”. Markedonov (2009), meanwhile, argues that ethnic clashes in the summer of 2009 mean, “Stavropol has become a frontier, a unique border line dividing ‘the Russian world’ and ‘the Caucasus world’”. And this geographical imagination, of Stavropol'skii krai being a ‘border’ between Russia and the North Caucasus, is one that kept repeating my interviews.

More recently, in October 2010, ethnic Russian residents in Stavropol'skii krai, unhappy that the krai was included in the North Caucasus Federal District (NCFD) when that administrative unit was reformed in January 2010, launched an online petition

campaign in order to pressure Moscow to shift Stavropol'skii krai to the Southern Federal District⁹³. Four days after being posted online (on 10 October 2010), the 220-word appeal had attracted more than 6, 700 signatures, although a significant fraction of the signatories are not residents of Stavropol'skii krai but rather Muscovites and ethnic Russians from other parts of the Russian Federation (Russkii obozrevatel' 2010). According to the appeal (available at: www.sborgoloso.ru/voiteview.php?voite=147), residents in Stavropol'skii krai have suffered in a variety of ways since their predominantly ethnic Russian krai was combined with the North Caucasus republics in the NCFD. The number of non-Russian migrants has increased as have violence -- including three terrorist attacks -- and crime. "In recent months", the appeal begins, "the worst fears of the residents of the krai" concerning the inclusion of Stavropol'skii krai within the NCFD "have been confirmed." As a result, "many people [in Stavropol'skii krai] view [Moscow's decision to do include Stavropol'skii krai in the NCFD] as a territorial division" of Russian territory. Because of the increase in crime and terrorism, the appeal says, residents in Stavropol'skii krai now have "a feeling of fear for their own lives and for the lives of their near ones". Those who can have already voted with their feet, leading to "a still greater outmigration of the ethnic Russian and Christian population from Stavropol'skii krai". If that trend continues, the appeal goes on to say, it will "negatively affect the chances of our region [Stavropol'skii krai] to fulfill its main mission over the course of the last centuries to be an advanced post of Russia in the North Caucasus". Consequently, the appeal says, not only residents of Stavropol'skii krai but all ethnic Russians should sign the appeal and support this drive.

⁹³ The Kremlin is unlikely to agree with the appeal. Stavropol'skii krai was included in the NCFD in order to reduce the non-Russian share of that district's population and to ensure the continuing presence of a large ethnic Russian population there. Indeed, having only non-Russian units in the NCFD would represent a more genuine 'territorial division' of Russia.

Of all of the attempts to define the border between Russia and the North Caucasus, Huntington's 'Clash of Civilisations' thesis (1993 and 1996) – which does so as part of a wider project to map the future of the post-Cold War world – is unmatched in influence (Bassin 2007: 351). As Bassin (Ibid.) notes, Huntington's primordialist approach to the construction of civilisations has effectively become a discourse in its own right, and most (though not all) of the works which have appeared on the issue of the future arrangement of world affairs in the last decade have done so in direct response to Huntington.

Huntington's 'Clash' thesis is based on the belief that in the future the world will not be structured according to countries but by civilizations. He claims that, "Spurred by modernisation, global politics is being reconfigured along cultural lines. Peoples and countries with similar cultures are coming together. Peoples and countries with different cultures are coming apart" (Huntington 1996: 125) and that "... it is delusory to separate culture from its foundation civilisation [original emphasis retained]" (Ibid.: 41). Huntington theorises that the world will be divided producing seven, possibly eight, major civilizations: Sinic, Japanese, Hindu, Islamic, Orthodox, Western, Latin American, and possibly Africa. According to Huntington, the future 'Clash of Civilisations' will be played out in two forms, each reflecting a distinct geographical scale. At the global or macro level, civilisational conflict will "occur between the major states of different civilisations" (Huntington 1996: 208) as a result of changes in the global balance of power between civilisational 'blocs'. At the local or micro level, those geographic localities where these "civilisational blocs" (Huntington 1996: 155, 163) come together will produce 'fault lines'. These 'fault lines' will be the epicentre of intense conflict and will "occur between neighbouring states from different

civilisations” (Ibid.: 208). Adding a further civilisational dimension, Huntington suggests that ‘fault lines’ “are particularly prevalent between Muslims and non-Muslims” (Ibid.). Highlighting what he terms ‘Islam’s Bloody Borders’ and tracing the history of twentieth-century conflict through various and competing geographical scales, Huntington concludes that “the overwhelming majority of conflicts will take place along the boundary looping across Eurasia... that separates Muslims from non-Muslims” (1996: 255)

One of Huntington’s ‘test cases’ for his ‘Clash’ thesis was the North Caucasus, where he argued that a ‘fault line conflict’ was visible between Russia and Chechnya, which had “occurred in the past and existed in present minorities of the past, which in turn generated fears and insecurities on both sides” (1996: 259). The relationship between Russians and Chechens, Huntington argued, “through the centuries have [sic] involved alternations between mistrustful coexistence and vicious violence”, to conclude that, “a historical legacy of conflict exists to be exploited and used by those who see reason to do so. In these relationships history is alive, well, and terrifying” (Ibid.). In the contemporary sphere, Huntington wrote, the demographic expansion of Chechens has generated political, economic, and social pressures on other groups and has induced countervailing responses. Even more importantly, it has produced military pressures on less demographically dynamic groups, particularly ethnic Russians. He concludes, “The ‘fault line wars’ between Russians and the Muslim peoples to their south were fuelled by major differences in population growth” (Ibid.).

Two decades or so of critical border studies scholarship, however, suggests that such a simplistic (and deterministic) interpretation of Stavropol’skii krai’s border with the

North Caucasus is wrong. While traditional interpretations of borders and boundaries -- as exemplified by Prescott's seminal text *The Geography of Frontiers and Boundaries* (1965) -- focussed on the political dimensions of boundary questions and landscapes, recent theoretical advances signal the need to study the human experience of living in 'frontier zones'. Within Political Geography, the work of Paasi (1999) and Megoran (2004) are perhaps the best examples of this critical scholarship. In his book *Territories, Boundaries and Consciousness* (1996), Paasi combines regional and national economic, social and geopolitical history, with an attempt to explore these processes in relation to intimate consciousness of place at the local level. Later, Paasi (1999) argued that geographers have not paid much attention to the meanings of boundaries in the construction, organisation and reproduction of social life. Building on the work of Paasi, Megoran (2006: 636) makes use of an ethnographic methodology in his work on the Ferghana Valley to emphasise the embodied and lived experiences of the border crisis of 1999-2000: "it would be a mistake to suggest that borderland dwellers were simply passive victims of a totalising power. On the contrary, they actively sought imaginative ways to circumvent the new obstacles...". It is in a similar light that the Stavropol'skii krai border should be interpreted.

In both the Soviet period and in the post-Soviet period, the Russia-North Caucasus borderlands, as typified by Stavropol'skii krai, were and are interconnected. Economic, linguistic and social geographies are not coterminous with the formal political geography of post-Soviet borders. Stavropol'skii krai is populated by people located within dense trans-border social networks and who have lived, worked or studied over the border. Many people with whom I spoke in Stavropol' talked about the high level of inter-ethnic marriage between ethnic Russians and ethnic Caucasians in Stavropol'skii

krai, and the high number of students from the North Caucasus republics who study in Stavropol'skii krai. At Stavropol' State University, for example, the student population of c. 20 000 is comprised of more than 50 nationalities, including more than 1, 100 students from the North Caucasus republics (Belozarov, Panin and Chikhichin 2008: 24). Others with whom I spoke, meanwhile, emphasised the economic linkages between Stavropol'skii krai and the North Caucasus republics, particularly the importance of economic migration of ethnic Caucasians into south-east Stavropol'skii krai. In their work on household agricultural production in post-Communist Russia, Pallot and Nefedova (2007: 5-6) give the example of 'Fatima', a migrant from Dagestan who lives in a hamlet in southern Stavropol'skii krai:

"Fatima came to southern Russia with her husband, his two brothers, and their families in the early 1990s when the collective farm on which they all worked in Dagestan collapsed; neighbouring Stavropol'skii krai was sparsely populated compared with their native land and in the early 1990s there was abundant pasture going for nothing as a result of large farms pulling out of livestock production to concentrate on more profitable cereals. [In] Pregor'ya, to which the family was directed ... [the] new arrivals bought two adjacent houses from the local authority and, with the twenty or so sheep and cattle they had brought from Dagestan, started producing beet and mutton ... the grazing land around the village had been abandoned by the large farm and was available for their use. For a decade Fatima's family has grazed its livestock free of charge with nobody objecting; indeed there were advantages for the local authority in turning a blind eye to such 'unregulated' use since were the land not grazed it would be invaded by common ragweed... Furthermore, by letting Fatima and her relatives provide for themselves, the local authority did not have to take responsibility for supporting them."

Through 'Fatima', Pallot and Nefedova (2007) emphasise the mutual benefits of economic migration to both Stavropol'skii krai and the migrants themselves. While such migration has, as I explained in Chapter 4, led to tensions and conflicts over land distribution, these conflicts are rare and there are more examples of where rural migration has not led to conflict than to where it has. Thus, the 'border' of

Stavropol'skii krai is highly contorted, with people moving employment and residence backwards and forwards between Stavropol'skii krai and the North Caucasus republics over their lifetimes. For many people with whom I spoke, the notion that Stavropol'skii krai was a 'border' between Russia 'proper' and the North Caucasus was absurd, and these same people greeted my questions on the subject with bewilderment. In short, the post-Soviet 'border' between Stavropol'skii and the North Caucasus is porous, and its social geography dynamically interconnected.

However, into these narratives, which emphasise the fluidity of the 'border' between Stavropol'skii krai and the North Caucasus republics, intrude other narratives that emphasise the cultural significance of Stavropol'skii krai as the 'last bastion' of Russia in the 'hostile' North Caucasus region. These narratives centre on the changing demography of Stavropol'skii krai, but also include ethno-national tensions over land distribution, access to jobs, housing, education, and other services, and concerns over terrorism. People with whom I spoke hotly disputed the reasons for, and the rights and wrongs of, the role of the authorities of Stavropol'skii krai in migration processes. Some accused the Stavropol'skii krai authorities of turning a blind eye to the issue of large-scale ethnic Caucasian migration into the krai, while others claimed that the authorities were actively seeking to incorporate Stavropol'skii krai into the North Caucasus republics. Other narratives abounded, for example, that authorities regularly gave preference to ethnic Caucasians over ethnic Russians in distributing land, whilst others called for a formal border to be established between Stavropol'skii krai and the six North Caucasus republics, together with an associated visa regime that would oblige citizens to acquire passes from the republic capitals. This 'border', they argued, was institutionalised in the 1990s when Cossack patrols were put on Stavropol'skii krai's

administrative borders with Chechnya and Dagestan (Matveeva 1999: 43) and Interior Ministry troops protected the border with Chechnya (Ibid.: 75). For some, the rupture in political geographical imagination of the region between the Soviet and post-Soviet periods is immense; a territory in which they co-existed peacefully with ethnic Caucasians for much of their lives during the Soviet period has been transformed in the post-Soviet era into the border with Russia's 'internal abroad'.

It is in this context that Stavropol'skii krai should be conceived, as a space of dynamic interaction where competing geopolitical visions of the Russian state and Russian nation collide. These visions centre on the role of demography as the primary determinate of the Russian 'state'.

9.4 Disciplinary and Methodological Contributions

As well as contributing towards an understanding of the meaning of nationalism, ethnicity and geopolitics in Stavropol'skii krai, I hope that this thesis will be of particular interest to both political geographers and Russian area specialists. In Chapter 2, I argued that a number of theoretical developments over recent decades have equipped human geographers with a powerful range of tools to re-engage with 'regional geography' (Jeffrey 2008; Megoran 2005, 2006, 2007; Ramadan 2009). These developments provide the opportunity to 'correct' earlier deterministic, disembodied, and remote accounts of the North Caucasus and can be usefully appropriated by both geographers and non-geographers alike.

It is also my hope that this work will inform the engagement of anthropologists and ethnographers with questions of the meaning of the post-Soviet state in the lives of everyday citizens in the North Caucasus. As I have argued, the critical and ‘everyday’ accounts of the Chechen Wars often from journalists who worked in the region (e.g., Goltz 2003; Politkovskaya 2003; Seierstand 2008) have generated important insights into the North Caucasus, and this thesis contributes to the task of assembling examples of the fragmentary and variable experience of ‘ethnicity’ in everyday life.

Further, as I have argued throughout this thesis, much of the literature (both academic and non-academic) on the North Caucasus is dominated by Chechnya, and more detailed studies of other territories in the North Caucasus are required.

9.5 In Conclusion: War *and* Peace

By way of a conclusion, I want to say that local people in Stavropol’skii krai are now realising that the interethnic situation is not sustainable, and are developing various mechanisms to ensure that the 2007 ‘ethnic’ riots do not reoccur. And here I note the emerging body of work that challenges the primacy of ‘war’ over ‘peace’ that has come to dominant recent political geography studies (Megoran 2011). As Megoran (2010) notes, both Kliot and Waterman’s (1991) volume *The political geography of conflict and peace* and Flint’s (2005) edited book *The geography of war and peace* are more concerned with ‘conflict’ and ‘war’ than with ‘peace’: Flint’s book, for example, has eleven chapters in the section ‘geographies of war’ and only three under the section ‘geographies of peace’. In this context, Megoran (2010: 285) has called for the development of a ‘pacific geopolitics’ understood as “the study of ways of thinking

geographically about international relations can promote peaceful and mutually enriching human coexistence”.

In Stavropol', what I found during my interviews was an overwhelming desire to find peaceful solutions to the ethno-political problems. Citizens emphasised the need for local authorities, at both city and krai level, and national authorities to take a more active interest in ethnic relations.

“The government should show its interest in ethnic relations. It should invite scientific researchers and others who have studied these problems to speak about them and to report about them. It should provide regular information about the social conditions and economic conditions of all ethnic groups ... If we look at the conflict in Stepnovskii raion [in June 2009] then we can see the problem that land and territory is not separated. Everyday monitoring is very important ... So through social conflicts we can see that this or that regions are having problems and we can alert the government.”

- Ethnic Russian, Academic, 34, 2009 Interview

Academics at Stavropol' State University (SGU) have been particularly active and serve as one constructive example of this. For some time, SGU academics have studied firsthand the problems surrounding ethno-nationalism in Stavropol'. The ethnic balance of the raion (district) where SGU is located has been altered by the immigration of ethnic Caucasians replacing ethnic Russians who have emigrated. Tensions have grown between individuals. For many years now, the Institute of Geography at SGU has held annual international conferences on the topic of interethnic relations in the North Caucasus. Academics there have long believed that political inactivity at the federal level has contributed to ethnic extremism and conflict in their region. They see that they have a responsibility to educate the local population about ethnic relations. Without this education, they believe that ignorance and ethnic tension will spread. The approach of

uniting divided communities through education is one that has been taken up by other institutions. Local schools, for instance School Number 25, have been active recently in bringing students together in Stavropol' City through activities such as sports and foreign language lessons.

With the growth of xenophobia and ethnopolitical extremism in contemporary Russia, Pain (2007: 905) notes that, "Both the ethnic minorities as well as the ethnic majority are denied their share in political power. When the ordinary people are denied a sense of ownership in the country, they find solace in wanting to feel the power of ownership of the country vis-a-vis the minorities". While some constructive steps towards giving 'ordinary people' their share of political power are visible in Stavropol'skii krai through the creation of the *Komitet Stavropol'skogo Kraya po delam natsional'nostei i kazachestva* (Stavropol'skii krai Committee for the affairs of Nationalities and Cossacks) and in Stavropol' city with the *'Konsul'tativnii Sovet po voprosam natsional'no-etnicheskikh otnoshenii pri administratsii goroda Stavropolya* (Advisory Board for Questions of National-Ethnic Relations under the Administration of Stavropol' City), the notion of a 'democratic deficit' linked to the absence of a 'civil society' came through in interviews:

"The next step is to work with civil society organisations ... It's not like in Europe, when a person can go and speak to his religious leader because in Russia the religious leaders are in the political sphere. They are appointed by Putin. They are supported by the government. They are just changed by the government. They are supposed to know everything, but they have no financial support so they know nothing. Mass media must play its part. It must report truthfully on events. And, with governmental help, must somehow make people more tolerant ... Every politicians, whether in Russia or Africa or Switzerland, will not automatically try to ignore problems and leave them alone. If there is no corruption and civil society, then the politician understands that he must do something to try and solve the problem. In Russia, we do not have such civil

society and such control ... and there is much corruption ... so the politicians can get away with doing nothing. There are no normal political parties. There are no independent mass media outlets. There are no independent courts. No independent juries where people can go and ask for the law to be upheld. That is why Russia is different and why it deals with its problems differently. All ethnic problems are based on these problems. It is like a closed circle.”

- Ethnic Chechen, 47, Community Worker, 2009 Interview

Certainly, with border disputes, rising unemployment, nationalism, and terrorism, and with memories of the 2007 riots still fresh, there is significant potential for ethnic conflict to erupt again Stavropol'skii krai. This was emphasised to me most vividly in two interviews:

“If the current migration processes continue on their own without governmental policies and without restriction ... without control ... without calculation as to the social impacts that it will have, then of course it will lead to more conflict.”

- Ethnic Russian, Academic, 44, 2009 Interview

“A defensive consciousness has developed amongst [ethnic] Russians. Nowadays it is common for people to buy guns. For those people in Russia who are patriots ... proper patriots ... and those people who have nowhere to go, then when the war with the Caucasians begins they will come here to help defend Russia. Those people who have houses, they will sell their houses and move elsewhere ... And those ones who have nowhere else to go, they will defend. They will defend their families and Russia. Right to the end. Until death. It will come to this, unfortunately ... If the government does not look at this problem, then we will have the same as you had in 2007 and the same as New York had in 2001. But it will be so huge that you cannot imagine the scale of violence and death. In comparison to what will happen here, your events in England will be nothing. Here, there will be so much blood because it is the Caucasus ... If something happens here between ethnic groups then nobody can say where the violence will stop and who it will involve ... To the border with Georgia ... Who knows ... Can you imagine the conflict? ... It can involve the army ... It can be international ... It can affect global security ... You saw what happened in August 2008 with South Ossetia and Abkhazia ...”

- Ethnic Russian, Shop Owner, 68, 2009 Interview

In spite of this, Stavropol' has, in the four years since, been spared from a repeat of the 2007 'ethnic riots'. This is partly due to government policy, but also due to the

determination of local academics and local people to find solutions to their own problems. Many events other than the riots occurred in Stavropol' in 2007. Perhaps most notably, the city celebrated 230 years of history as a multi-ethnic city. It is that anniversary, rather than the violent events of three years ago, that I would rather focus on.

Appendix 1: List of Interviews and Focus Groups

Abbreviations

M	Male
F	Female
S	Stavropol'
R	Rostov
P	Pyatigorsk
MV	Mineralnya Vod
M	Moscow

First Trip: 6 October 2008 to 27 October 2008

Second Trip: 1 July 2009 to 14 August 2009

Third Trip: 13 November 2009 to 20 November 2009

Interviews

	Date	Topic	M/F	Age	Occupation	Ethnicity	Lives
01	08/10/2008	General	M	30	Taxi Driver	Rus	S
02	11/10/2008	General	M	48	Academic	Rus	S
03	11/10/2008	General	M	56	Academic	Rus	S
04	13/10/2008	General	F	19	Student	Ch	S
05	14/10/2008	General	F	23	Student	Ch	S
06	14/10/2008	General	M	24	Student	Rus	S
07	15/10/2008	General	M	18	Student	Dag	S
08	15/10/2008	General	M	29	Media	Rus	S
09	16/10/2008	General	M	54	Academic	Rus	P
10	16/10/2008	General	M	49	Academic	Ch	R
11	16/10/2008	General	M	51	Religious	Rus	P
12	16/10/2008	General	F	52	Academic	Geo	MV
13	17/10/2008	General	F	23	Media	Rus	S
14	20/10/2008	Ethnic	M	45	Politics	Arm	S
15	20/10/2008	Ethnic	M	71	Politics	Cos	S
16	24/10/2008	General	M	34	Academic	Rus	S
17	03/07/2009	Policy	M	42	Policy	Rus	M
18	04/07/2009	General	F	34	Academic	Rus	M
19	06/07/2009	General	F	45	Academic	Rus	M
20	07/07/2009	General	M	44	Academic	Rus	M
21	10/07/2009	General	F	67	Business	Azer	S
22	10/07/2009	General	M	51	Business	Rus	S
23	13/07/2009	General	M	52	Business	Ch	S
24	13/07/2009	General	M	43	Business	Ing	S
25	13/07/2009	Policy	M	42	Politician	Rus	S
26	14/07/2009	General	M	78	Retired	Abk	S
27	14/07/2009	General	F	23	Unemployed	Arm	S
28	14/07/2009	General	M	46	Market Seller	Arm	S
29	15/07/2009	General	M	71	Retired	Arm	S
30	17/07/2009	General	M	68	Business	Oss	S
31	17/07/2009	General	F	48	Business	Oss	S
32	18/07/2009	General	F	32	Teacher	Greek	S
33	19/07/2009	General	F	53	Linguist	Greek	S
34	19/07/2009	General	F	45	Business	Jew	S
35	20/07/2009	General	M	78	Retired	Jew	S
36	21/07/2009	General	F	21	Student	KC	S
37	21/07/2009	General	F	19	Student	Ch	S

38	22/07/2009	General	F	24	Dentist	Greek	S
39	22/07/2009	Human Rights	M	73	Retired	Rus	S
40	23/07/2009	Refugees	M	67	Lawyer	Rus	S
41	23/07/2009	General	M	38	Unemployed	Rus	S
42	24/07/2009	General	F	42	Business	Ing	S
43	24/07/2009	General	M	27	Shop Worker	Rus	S
44	27/07/2009	General	F	25	Shop Worker	Azeri	S
45	27/07/2009	General	F	58	Hotel Worker	Rus	S
46	28/07/2009	General	M	47	Security	Rus	S
47	28/07/2009	General	M	45	Unemployed	Ch	S
48	29/07/2009	General	F	43	Teacher	Oss	S
49	29/07/2009	General	F	49	Cleaner	Arm	S
50	30/07/2009	General	F	23	Market Seller	Arm	S
51	31/07/2009	General	F	61	Canteen Worker	Rus	S
52	31/07/2009	General	M	58	Security	Ing	S
53	03/08/2009	General	M	47	Community	Ch	S
54	03/08/2009	General	M	68	Shop Owner	Rus	S
55	04/08/2009	General	M	71	Academic	Rus	S
56	14/10/2009	General	M	67	Academic	Rus	M
57	15/10/2009	General	F	46	Academic	Abk	M
58	16/10/2009	General	M	38	Academic	KB	M
59	16/10/2009	General	F	24	Student	KC	M
60	17/10/2009	General	M	42	Academic	Rus	M

Focus Groups

1	05/07/2009	General	6 Middle-Aged Women at SGU	4 Rus, 1 Ch, 1 Geor	S
2	16/07/2009	Policy	3 Male Representatives of State Duma	3 Rus	S
3	26/07/2009	General	4 Male, 4 Female Students at SGU	5 Rus, 1 Azer 1 Ch, 1 Dar	S
4	01/08/2009	General	3 Male, Unemployed	1 Rus, 2 Geo	S
5	03/08/2009	General	4 Men at SGU	4 Rus	S
6	04/08/2009	General	4 Pensioners	3 Rus, 1 Balk	S

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