

ETHNO-NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS: EXAMINING PLACE AND
HOMELAND IN IDENTITY CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE YOUNG GENERATION

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Abstract

The dynamic landscape and historical legacies of the North Caucasus make it one of the world's most diverse and interesting regions. Throughout the region's history, its changing political geographies have worked to influence local constructs of identity and place. The younger generation today inhabits the North Caucasus in the context of Russian Ethno-Federalism, providing a variety of meanings regarding ethno-national groups and their territories. My aim is to explore how place factors into the construction of ethno-national identity by examining the concept of "homeland" (*rodina*) and the meanings associated with several place-based and traditional identity factors among young adults in Stavropol Krai and Karachay-Cherkessia. I utilized statistical analyses of survey data and a cognitive mapping exercise to identify significant differences regarding conceptions of place and ethno-national identity among groups of participants based on nationality, religion, and other factors. Using interview data and theory, I explain why these differences exist.

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Chapter I:

Historical Contexts Regarding Ethno-National Identity in the North Caucasus

Introduction and Project Goals

The North Caucasus is a region of physical and societal extremes, where a mountainous landscape has led to varying degrees of isolation for its inhabitants in terms of people's linguistic, ethnic, religious, and political development. This landscape has resulted in a great diversity of ethno-national groups in the region today. Each ethno-national group's development has yielded separate languages, cultural customs, and senses of homeland and territorial belonging, which have in turn factored in the construction of many unique identities.

Influences from outside the North Caucasus have historically been present, as various powers not native to the region have sought to include it into their imperial folds. Thus, the contemporary cultural and political landscapes of the North Caucasus exhibit Russian, Turkic, and Persian legacies, which have in turn influenced identity development (Grant, 2005). The region's distinct ethnic, linguistic, social, and territorial identities have traditionally made it difficult to subjugate as a unified political entity.

The "Question of Nationality" (*Natsionalnyi Vopros*), referring to how various ethno-national groups would be governed, was a concept that plagued the ruling factions of both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. Both governments faced the challenge of exerting political and territorial control over multi-ethnic space by utilizing the processes of Russification and Sovietization. The aim of both regimes in this regard was to promote a form of inclusive nationalism, allowing for the formation of a common civic identity. Such an identity would lead

to sense of belonging to St. Petersburg or Moscow, rather than to non-Russian or non-Soviet affiliations.

The Soviet Union's strategy for ruling the North Caucasus was to create and promote a universal civic "Soviet" identity for the entire country by emphasizing a common Soviet culture and homeland, rather than groups' ethnic differences (Gorenberg, 2006). This approach was implemented through nation building, religious repression, linguistic assimilation, and shifting ethnic population dynamics.

Today, the Russian Federation, as the Soviet Union's successor, rules the North Caucasus. Although Soviet legacies are still relevant to how people identify themselves there, the current generation of young adults, those individuals between the ages of 16-30 have spent most, if not the entirety of their lives in the Russian Federation, not the Soviet Union. This age cohort has experienced the legacy of Soviet nationalities policies but has been directly affected by the policies of the Russian Federation. Russia's policies will shape this region in the future. Thus, by examining identities of those who have come of age in the region's current political configuration and policies, it is possible to observe how new identities are being formed and to examine how members of multiple ethnic groups relate to and identify territory on several scales, ranging from the federal level (the Russian Federation), to regional (the Southern Federal District, the North Caucasus, Stavropol Krai and Karachay-Cherkessia), and to local (Stavropol, Cherkessk, villages and *auls* [settlements in Karachay-Cherkessia]).

Although all of the previously mentioned spatial scales of place identity are essential, the differences in administrative status and political ideology among the territories in which this study took place (Stavropol Krai and Karachay-Cherkessia) mean that the regional scale is of

particular interest. Republics within the Russian Federation, such as Karachay-Cherkessia, were established on an ethnic basis, thus providing an opportunity for select non-Russian ethnic groups to live in some degree of autonomy from Moscow. Republic status in the Russian Federation allows for the local population to have official languages other than Russian, establish its own laws, and have named (ethnic) recognition and status for its territory (*Constitution of the Russian Federation, Article 63*).

Despite special ethno-national privileges for some non-Russian groups, large numbers of ethnic Russians still reside in the republics, prompting inconsistencies about the degree of Russification (the process by which non-Russians assimilate into Russian society) that still exists in these areas. Ethnic Russians in Karachay-Cherkessia might identify themselves with the authority of The Russian Federation before identifying with a territory (republic) that is not designated as ethnically similar. However, ethnic Karachays and Cherkess in Karachay-Cherkessia might be less likely to identify with the Russian Federation than with their republic.

Ethnic Russians are under the control of their own ethno-national group both federally, and in the Stavropol Krai; thus one could expect ethnicity, language, religion, or any other nationality based factor of identity not to affect how they would relate to the Stavropol Krai as opposed to the Russian Federation. However, place-based factors differ in terms of scale and imagined sense of homeland, and as I will show, can have an effect on one's sense of ethno-national identity. Exploring place-based identity factors, territorial affiliations, and cognitive conceptions of homeland illuminates how places are constructed and given meaning in both the contexts of the North Caucasus, and in the Russian Federation in general.

The goal of this project is to advance an understanding of place-based identities as well as the concept of “homeland” in the North Caucasus. Examining how members of the young generation identified themselves in terms of different scales of territory while also regarding gender, religious, ethnic, linguistic, ancestral, and territorial affiliations, makes it possible to compare and contrast how different groups responded to various factors of identity. Understanding these place identities and their dynamics also helps to clarify potential problems in the region’s political geographies more widely. Strong identification with Russia at the federal level could suggest that certain problems, such as separatism and conflict, are likely to diminish in the future. However, a greater identification with regional elements over the Russian Federation could mean the opposite. Also, affinity for a republic by those citizens who reside there without named recognition (Russians or Nogay in Karachay-Cherkessia for example) might elucidate the degree to which a Republic has been successful as a legitimate governing body, autonomous from Moscow.

Concepts in Political Geography and Territorial Identity

The ideas of “place,” “place based political processes,” “territory,” and finally “place based/territorial identity” are relevant for studying identity in terms of spatial context. These concepts are vital for understanding how places and their meanings are constructed. In order to explore the notion of homeland, a critical conception for ethno-territorial identity, it is important to examine how place and its many meanings can develop into attachments that eventually lead to classification and recognition of territory as belonging to a certain group of people or a nation. In this study, I draw upon these ideas about place, territory, and homeland in order to evaluate

participants' place-based connections with the two federal territories being examined (Stavropol and Karachay-Cherkessia), as well as their possible affiliations with places at more comprehensive scales, such as a possible Caucasian regional, or state-level connection to the Russian Federation. Connections to smaller scale territories, such as cities, villages, and neighborhoods are also important to consider, as they may provide a sense of homeland through the lived-experience of everyday life.

Ethnicity

According to Max Weber (1922), in order to create an ethnic identity, groups must display a common language, a belief that they are descended from common ancestors, a feeling of ethnic affinity, and a shared belief system. He notes that:

The belief in common descent, in combination with a similarity of customs, is likely to promote the spread of the activities of one part of an ethnic group among the rest, since the awareness of ethnic identity furthers imitation. This is especially true of the propaganda of religious groups (Guibernau and Rex, 1997 p.22).

Weber's ideas have been influential in terms of studying how ethno-national identities are constructed and develop. Common language, belief in a common decent or heritage, and the effect of religious doctrines on perceived group mentalities and senses of identification can all be observed in the context of the North Caucasus.

Regarding elements of place, Weber (1922) notes that the "autonomous polity," or nation-state, in which a population speaks the same language and has sovereignty over its territory, is the ideal environment in which to promote and maintain feelings of national identity. However, for ethno-national identities to form and exist, neither a common language, nor a

common territory alone is sufficient. Thus, for ethno-national identities to be maintained, a combination of place-based and traditional identity factors must be present in their constructs.

Smith (1986) writes on the concept of “ethnie,” which are constructed through elements such as religion, customs, language, and institutions. He states:

Ethnie (ethnic communities) may be defined as named human populations with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity (p. 27).

In regard to ethnie and territorial power, Smith (1986) writes:

If the ethnie in question constitutes a majority of the population of the polity, if, for example, it constitutes a patrimonial kingdom or forms the core of a wider agrarian empire, then its ethnic myths and symbols will reflect the elements of political domination and kingship, and its conduits of ethnic communication will include officials, judges and officers alongside the priests and scribes which are common to all pre-modern ethnic communication (p. 30).

However, in the case of ethnic minorities, ideas such as the political kingdom and dynastic state are replaced by the concepts of ethnic homeland and the idea of belonging to a particular territory with solidarity and a glorious past that took place there.

Territory, Place, and Identity

Tuan’s (1974) work *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values*, examines the notion of sense of place. Having coined the term *topophilia*, meaning “love of place,” Tuan (1974) writes that people form bonds with their surroundings. These bonds are formed through an overlapping convergence of perceptions, attitudes, and values that they develop regarding their environments. People gather perceptions through basic survival and

responses triggered by their physical senses. Over time, perceptions gather together and overlap to form attitudes and these attitudes combine to form a culture stance and a world view. People use these elements when establishing opinions about places and when deciding with which places they personally identify.

The ideas of territorial attachment and societal scale are both vital for understanding identity and place. Knight (1982) addresses these concepts in terms of how territory is regulated. Territories at any scale are delimited within their bounds, within these bounds rules exist, and these rules can be different, depending on the territory. Territorial organization can exist on various levels, for example, the local level or the regional level (*krais*, republics, and federal districts in the North Caucasus context). Although the rules governing territories change at each level, they may all join together and become subordinate to a federal structure. In federal contexts, sub-state territories share at least some type of common set of rules.

Knight (1982) also notes that we can operate on several levels of abstraction at one time, but as political geographers have often stated, peoples' world view rarely extends beyond local limits. The local is seen as tangible and familiar as broader scales of organization and what they represent become increasingly less familiar and therefore, to draw from Anderson (1983), "imagined." Knight (1982) suggests that society has different meanings at different scales. To be a large scale society implies that the people have conscious relations with one another, with a sense of identity that goes far beyond that of a small-scale society. He points to the fact that large empires have existed, but how well people identified with them politically is uncertain. Local identities existed in Empires and after their break-up group territorial identities were brought back to smaller societies.

Medieval territorial identity was closely manifested in one's tribe or clan. In modern times, the concept of "nation" has become dominant. Modern Western economic conceptions see land not as something to which we are tied, but as a commodity that can be owned, bought, and sold. Although this switch occurred after the renaissance in Western Europe, the peasantry in Russian remained tied to land until the mid 1860s. The idea of a nation brings emphasizes idea of unity in a group, usually existing in a defined territory. Thus, socially cohesive groups once defined their own territory, but politically bounded territory has come to define ethno-national groups through bounded space: nation-states or autonomous polities within multi-national states. According to Knight (1982):

In Central and Eastern Europe the nation was defined as a cultural rather than a political entity, although once nationhood was achieved in those regions the concept of nation-state came more or less to approximate that found in Western Europe (p.519).

Here, Knight argues emphasis on identity has switched from group to territory in the context of Eastern Europe as well as Western Europe. However, the concept of "nation" still retains connotations of stronger cultural relevance in Eastern Europe. This idea is important for the Russian context, as the Russian construct *natsionalnost* retains connotations of homeland, culture, language, and ethnicity. Therefore I suggest that is appropriate to use the term ethno-national when referring to issues regarding *natsionalnost*.

Knight says that, in its most basic form, a state is a legal system of government. It is a bounded container for the contents of a particular area including, people, resources, and means for communication, organization, and movement, but it can also be thought of as having authority over social order. Therefore, having territory and a system of government means security and opportunity for those who live there. Citizens of a state all have a sense of

belonging, but the scale to which they belong can be problematic. Regions or certain groups of people might be emphasized within a state. People and places are often defined by a higher level of abstraction by governmental factors, regardless of how they viewed locally.

In his work, *Place and Politics*, Agnew (1987) proposes three important moments in the making of space into place. First, space must be defined as a bounded physical structure, a geographical territory. This moment is when space becomes a specific territorial unit that can be used to answer the question “where?” Next, a specific territory needs a local or associated meaning. Places are made into locales through processes that occur within their own contexts, such as politics, work, or the activities of everyday life. Third, meaning is ascribed through sense of place or the emotional attachments people form regarding a specific territory. Sense of place refers to “subjective territorial identity,” or how one feels about the area.

Agnew (1987) also emphasizes the importance of scale, noting that every political geography is comprised of various spatial scales. He argues that too often attention is paid mostly at the state-level. Meanings of place are also focused at sub-state scales, which provide settings for political action as well. Places at every scale yield some form of politics, which then affect the meanings of these places and also wider environments. He states the relationships between federal and sub-federal governments and among ethnic groups as being potentially affected.

Brubaker (1995) speaks of “nationalizing states” and their prevalence in post-communist context. He defines nationalizing states as being considered nation-states while at the same time being ethnically heterogeneous. Elite individuals in these states emphasize citizenship of the state, but do so through the language, culture, economic advantage, and political dominance of

the “nominally state-bearing nation.” The Russian Federation arguably fits into this conception of a nationalizing state.

Within nationalizing states, Brubaker (1995) defines national minorities as being self-aware and able to organize demands for autonomy, thus attempting to avoid complete assimilation into the society of the nominally state-bearing nation. In the North Caucasus, essentially every major ethno-national group has exhibited some form of this organization (see Chapter 2).

Brubaker (1995) also states that minority groups with “external homelands” can draw on ethnic territory and group members for support across political borders. The idea of external homelands is important in the post-Soviet context because many individuals in the area, especially non-Russians, have had some contact with other former-Soviet territories throughout their family histories. Such histories may include forced migrations and refugee status. This idea is especially true for Stavropol Armenians who have immigrated to the North Caucasus both for economic reasons and also to avoid ethnic persecution in Azerbaijan.

Paasi (1996) claims that people are “spatially socialized” through various institutions such as symbols and the educational system. This process leads to the concept of “institutional shape,” where elements such as politics, economics, culture, and education are used to establish and advance the meaning of territorial boundaries and symbols (Paasi, 1996). Thus, examining attitudes of people in the study area might lead to a better understanding of the area’s “cultural shape.” For example, the idea that Russian territory ends at the Caucasus is something Russians would learn from previous generations. However, social, religious, and even educational institutions in Karachay-Cherkessia may not emphasize an attitude of Russian dominance,

potentially conflicting with the traditions and social connections of the republic's ethnic Russian population who may identify Karachay-Cherkessia as Russia.

Paasi's (1996) notion of "identity and territory," where a dominant group controls other groups through "space, boundaries, and various degrees of membership" is also important. Russians are the dominant group in the study area, being native to no part of it. However, Russians (or pro-Russian Soviet leaders) have been the ones to dictate how these territorial units have been formed, thus claiming the Stavropol Krai to be officially recognized as Russian territory, and dictating the group dynamics in the republics. The Karachay and Cherkess are not related to each other through common languages nor ancestry. They share only a common religion, Islam, and geographical proximity to one another. They were grouped together through Soviet power, rather than through self-determination.

On the subject of national identity and territory, Herb (1999) states that territory is vital to national identity because it provides "tangible evidence of the nation's existence (p.18)." According to Herb, national identity can exist in "civic" or "ethnic" terms, where the civic variant refers to the identification to all the people within a given (state) territory, thus referring to a "civic nation," and the ethnic variant refers to one's identification with one group within the state, thus referring to an "ethnic nation." These two forms of national identity were especially important in Eastern Europe (Herb, 1999). They are also evident in the Russian Federation today, as the Russian language makes a semiotic difference between words meaning the Russian ethnic group (*Russkii*), and the civic term for a citizen of the Russian Federation (*Rossiyanin*).

It is possible that both residents of Stavropol and Karachay-Cherkessia could hold their citizenship or their place within the Russian Federation in higher regard than their ethnic

affiliations, meaning that they would have similar identities. This situation would be ideal for stability because “territorial control by one nation is opposed only when other nations become aware of their limited place within the dominant national identity” (Herb, 1999). Uncovering feelings of limitation or lack of empowerment in society might be suggestive of future problems.

In terms of forming a nation, Herb (1999) proposes three crucial elements: membership, a shared past, and a common goal. When these factors culminate in a given territory, a “collective conscience” may result, thus leading to the creation of a “homeland” (Herb, 1999). Herb claims that autonomy of the dominant group might be enough to pacify national aspirations. However in the case of Karachay-Cherkessia, we observe an interesting scenario in which autonomy of the dominant group, the Russians, is had not by a single nation, but by two unrelated ethno-national groups together. There also remains a significant population of ethnic Russians within this territory. The non-Russian groups, as a collective, have autonomy from Moscow but remain bound to one another, sharing a territory (homeland). Also, the large presence of ethnic Russians in the Karachay-Cherkessia raises questions as to the actual level of autonomy, as Russians can associate with their own ruling group at the federal scale, as opposed to prioritizing a sense of regional territorial identity.

Kaplan (1999) describes territorial identity in terms of “geographic scale.” National identity, in Kaplan’s view, exists when a group of people is bound within a territory, has cultural attributes and political objectives, and develops an identity that differs from that of the state (when the group is not dominant); this national identity lies within a “hierarchy of geographically based identities,” which may serve to contend for the group’s adherence (Kaplan, 1999). Being from Russia, the South, the North Caucasus, Karachay-Cherkessia, Cherkessk, or particular neighborhood or street, might all play a part in forming the spatial context of a particular

individual's identity. Although each place constitutes a different scale of territorial specificity, individuals have personal experience with all of them. Each time we consider a broader scale there are more individuals to be included. All of the participants in the study can potentially relate to Russia (as citizens "*Rossiyanie*"), the South of Russia, the North Caucasus, a *krai* or republic, and cities or villages as they are bound to these territories. However, a particular territory might be one to which an individual most closely associates. For example a Karachay from Cherkessk could self-identify as *Rossiyanin*, Southern, North Caucasian, or as being from Karachay-Cherkessia, a region of Karachay-Cherkessia, or from Cherkessk. Closer affiliations with the later three than with the first three could foster Kaplan's concept of national identity, as different from that of the state.

Kaplan (1999) also differentiates between "state identity," involving membership in a polity and association with government, state symbols, and social order, and "national identity" in association with a cultural group. "Sub-state nationalisms" are therefore possible when a dominant group's territory encompasses the entire territory of a non-dominant group, and regional autonomy is sought by those in the non-dominant group to preserve national identity (Kaplan, 1999). Potential nationalisms in the context of Karachay-Cherkessia could be considered "sub-state nationalisms," regarding the Russian Federation as the state. However, because of the republic's autonomous status, ethnic Russian (or Cossack/Slavic) nationalism could also be considered a "sub-state nationalism," as Russians are a minority within the Republic.

Kaplan (1999) also suggests that "border lands" exhibit three types of identities: the dominant identity, nationalist identity, and a unique "border identity." Since the Caucasus region is indeed a border region, it is likely that all three of these elements are present. The dominant

identity is the Russian civic identity, nationalist identities would be those had by individual non-dominant ethnic groups (or by those Russians who might advocate for an ethnic-Russian nationalism), and an overall Caucasian identity, which could be had by any individual with an affinity for the region that is stronger than either his or her affinity to the Russian Federation or to his or her own ethnic group.

Paasi (2003) writes of territories as “social constructs,” having “shape” and “boundaries.” These “boundaries,” according to Paasi (2003), are “lines of inclusion and exclusion between social groups.” These lines both “separate ‘us’ from ‘them’” and “do not always exist where they are identified on maps, often spreading over a greater territorial expanse than is officially recognized” (Paasi, 2003). This idea is true in the case of Stavropol and Karachay-Cherkessia, as official territorial designations do not contain all of the members of any one group. The two titular groups for which Karachay-Cherkessia was named have group members living outside the republic and must share their territories with each other as well as with Russians and other smaller Caucasian ethnic groups that do not have a named territorial unit. The border between Karachay-Cherkessia and Stavropol Krai creates a symbolic and quasi-administrative break between Russian and non-Russian space, however Russians make up the second largest group in Karachay-Cherkessia, having a greater presence than even Cherkess, after whom the Republic is named.

Autonomous territorial units can be established to satisfy a group’s desire for recognition and differentiation, their “identity narrative,” which allows them to claim critical elements such as a “homeland” and national symbols (Paasi, 2003). He claims that symbols are often representative of the landscape, or space of identity, rather than people. This idea holds true for

Karachay-Cherkessia, as Mt. Elbrus and other prominent landscape features serve this role, appearing on the republic's flag. Elbrus is also a popular name for boys in the Republic.

Lynn Staeheli (2003) argues that place should be considered not only a physical location, but also a cultural or social location. Observing place-related phenomena politically can reveal political and social objectives. Hence, groups of people may be considered "in place" or "out of place," depending on particular scenarios. Placement within such a social scenario may affect one's propensity and or ability to take political action (titular-status in the Russian Federal context).

Staeheli defines place as a something that is "dynamic" and "being constructed and changing over time" through combining space and social identities (Staeheli, 2003). By observing the level of affinity attached to various places among different ethnic groups based upon their geographical location (in Stavropol, or in Karachay-Cherkessia), it should be possible to gain insight into the region's contemporary meaning, that is to say, how young people view these territorial constructions, after their creation and existence through Soviet and Russian Federal control.

O'Lear (2007) suggests that one way political legitimacy over territory is gained through "the right to make rules." The concepts of legitimacy can therefore be used to measure potential state-stability by measuring how well ruling political factions are able to "secure acceptance, if not approval by its populace." She argues that legitimacy is also important for internal sovereignty within a state, which is also connected to a state's ability to solidify notions of national identity.

In addition to a sense of national identity's importance for stability, O'Lear (2007) suggests that public expectations of future benefits are also important for stability in the greater Caucasian context. She argues that making the populous believe in short-term benefits, specifically oil-wealth in nearby Azerbaijan, is an effective short term solution to instability. This economic connection between government and the people is also important in the North Caucasus, as the economies are not only below the country's national averages, but also because a large percentage of the republics revenue comes through Moscow based subsidies. An awareness of financial sources might influence both stability, and local identity formation in terms of the republics' relationships to Moscow.

O'Lear (2009) also notes the importance of human security to the Caucasian context. She describes the state governments as:

gate-keepers to economic development and the enhancement of human well-being through their pursuit of international aid and trade, the crafting of national economic policy, and their maintenance and improvement of national education and healthcare systems as well as physical infrastructure (p. 103).

Thus, the Russian government's policy regarding development in the North Caucasus plays a major role in security throughout the region. The level of human security and its perceived sources may influence place affinities, and therefore conceptions of homeland and scale of political affiliation and preference.

Regarding Cognitive Maps

Lynch's (1960) *The Image of a City*, focuses on mental maps and how people form and use them within urban contexts. Lynch (1960) suggests mental maps as being of practical use

for recalling spatial information primarily for the purposes of navigation and spatial behavior. Lynch (1960) suggests five important elements of a mental map. Paths, such as trails and roads, provide routes for travel. Edges, such as rivers, buildings, or barriers work to frame the limits and boundaries of one's mental map. Districts are formed when one delineates sections of a city through forms of identification, such as through economics, recreation, or cohesive characteristics. Nodes may be intersections or other focal points. These nodes provide connections between other constructs. Finally, landmarks, objects that are quickly and simply identified, provide reference points on one's mental map.

According to Peter Gould (1966),

The human landscape, in reality, or abstracted and modeled as a map, is nothing more, but equally nothing less, than the spatial expression of the decisions of men...Many of the decisions that men make seem to be related, at least in part, to the way in which they perceive the space around them and to the differential evaluation they place upon various portions of it (p.2).

Here, Gould describes cognitive or mental maps that refer to the perceived images of space held by individuals or groups. Theory regarding such images is important to my study in terms of exploring imagined conceptions of homeland. Commonalities (or sometimes the lack there of) within groups' sketch maps represent the group's overall spatial viewpoint. This shared viewpoint, along with mental maps that are constructed to characterize it, represent a simplification of that group's interpretation of reality; a group's mental maps constitute a model of its shared spatial conciseness (Gould and White, 1974).

Mental maps reflect information taken from a participant's environment that becomes qualified in terms of attractiveness. Aesthetic components such as scenery and climate are important for finding a place desirable, as are elements of human activity. People become familiar with their surroundings, which are in turn reflected in their mental maps. Thus, the

longer people remain in the same environment, the more developed their mental maps (Gould and White, 1974).

When individuals from mental maps, they tend to stay within their cultural and linguistic comfort zones (Gould and White, 1974). In this tradition, there are several variables within the context of the North Caucasus that might mark these comfort zones, which may exist at the federal, regional, and local scales. “Linguistic comfort zones” could mean different things in the North Caucasus, depending on the contexts of given languages. Russian is the lingua franca throughout the country and throughout the North Caucasus. Since almost everyone speaks Russian, regardless of their ethno-national languages, Russian linguistic space is more or less comfortable for everyone. Thus, viewing the entire Russian Federation as a Russian linguistic zone means that any participant could find this particular sense of comfort in identifying with this territory. However, one might prefer to speak their native language regarding a linguistic comfort zone. In this case, non-Russians become very limited outside areas where their native languages are prevalent. Basically, Karachay and Cherkess would be confined to Karachay-Cherkessia, making their linguistic comfort zone a regional one. Smaller ethnic groups, like Nogais and Abazins, would be forced to identify linguistically with territory on a smaller scale, since their populations are dispersed into villages and local communities throughout Stavropol Krai and Karachay-Cherkessia.

“Cultural comfort zones,” regarding Russian culture, suggest a similar situation to that of the Russian linguist comfort zone. Because Russians are present throughout the Russian Federation, including the autonomous republics, Russian culture, to some degree, is also present there. Since Russian culture is the overall dominant culture in the country, and every citizen is equal under the laws of the Russian Federation, there exists the ideal (perhaps a remnant of the

Soviet Period), that any *Rossiaynin* (citizen of the Russian Federation) can be a part of the greater Russian civilization, and simply claim the entire country as his or her cultural comfort zone. However, the idea that the Caucasus represents a break between Russian and non-Russian space indicates that an inclusive Caucasian identity, a regional scale identity, or as Kaplan (1999) would term it, a “border identity” could exist. The notions of being non-Russian, as well as being Islamic, are both factors that play into a collective sense of a Caucasian cultural comfort zone, suggesting a connection to the wider region, rather than to a defined polity.

Again, the concepts of ethno-national territory and titular status are important. Obviously, if one is a member of an ethnic group having a territory officially designated to it, said individual would likely form some type of attachment. A Karachay in Karachay-Cherkessia exhibits such titular status. In Karachay-Cherkessia, Karachay culture is widespread, the Karachay language is prevalent (being one of the official languages of the Republic), and the republic is comprised of mostly Islamic inhabitants.

Karachays are also considered to be *Kavkazskye* (of the Caucasus) and Karachay-Cherkessia is located in the North Caucasus. Thus, it is reasonable for a Karachay to claim Karachay-Cherkessia as important in terms of his or her identity. The Cherkess enjoy basically the same official situation and it would make sense for a Cherkess to do the same. Since these two groups only exhibit such a “comfortable” situation in Karachay-Cherkessia, their mental maps should reflect the regional scale.

Most people have a rather intuitive feel for the core of a country and its peripheries (Gould and White, 1974). The North Caucasus is surely a peripheral region within the Russian Federation. For some, especially non-Russians, having a peripheral location might constitute a

comfort zone. Comfort zones might not exist beyond the local scale for some. In some small scale contexts, physical and social spaces are very tightly linked (Gould and White, 1974). This notion suggests that people might find it easier to identify with tangible space, seeing their comfort zone as containing places that they can see and visit on a regular basis. This idea is especially relevant when considering differences between rural and urban populations. In the study area, there are two large urban centers, Stavropol and Cherkessk. However, many respondents indicated that they were born (or even still officially reside) in smaller urban environments or villages.

Analysis of mental maps is done by ordering a set of experiences that appear unique by extracting from them their common characteristics (Gould and White, 1974). After information is obtained, is then simplified in order to produce mental maps; analyzing mental maps is a useful method for exploring relationships between people and places. In terms of spatial precision in sketch maps, peoples' accuracy is always better at smaller scales, and familiarity with cartographic perceptions is more evident as the scale is increased (Gould and White, 1974). Thus, the willingness to go beyond the local scale when asked to draw a concept like homeland is partly contingent upon one's spatial conciseness, but also on the confidence to associate with territory that is increasingly less familiar. The larger the scale demanded, the less able people are to accurately portray spatial relationships (Pocock, 1976).

According to Pocock (1976), a mental (cognitive) map is a mental image of an environment held by an individual or a group of people. A mental map is the store of spatial information that a person may recall when he or she needs to illustrate a place. This spatial information may include landscape features, different areas, or paths to various locations. This information is gathered either on a first hand basis (when a person comes into contact with his or

her environment), from geographical representations such as a map or a globe, or from other stimuli that prompt one to consider elements of a particular place, including cultural stereotypes of people and landscape.

The mental map is a product of one's ability to visualize space, and general ability to perceive and retain information (Pocock, 1976). The meaning of the information received by one's environment might be seen as incoming stimuli that must pass through a series of perceptual filters including physiological, social, and cultural factors, and personal value systems (Pacione, 1978). According to Pacione's model (Figure 1), an image results after perceived information has been filtered through each individual's unique set of filters. Since one's spatial knowledge set is called upon when he or she is prompted by particular stimulus, a particular question or instruction given by the researcher acts as this stimulus when drawing a sketch map. Therefore, a question such as "where is your homeland?" provides the stimulus necessary to invoke a participant's value system to define their own spatial definition of homeland, thus invoking the spatial knowledge needed to define it.

When asked to recall one's mental map of a particular place, specifically homeland in the context of my study, a respondent could consider any kind of spatial information gained from observed experience, including personal values and opinions. However, since no one has ever perceived environmental stimulus beyond a very local scale, images and perceptions of larger scale constructs, such as borders and territories, must be recalled from other sources, namely maps (Pacione, 1978).

Mental maps can be used to measure participants' values in terms of place (Pacione, 1978). The content found in sketch maps reflects not only spatial accuracy and awareness, but

qualitative elements, such as places and their general significance a given space can be observed. Places in one's mental map are important in terms of their value and meaning. Considering the places that a participant includes in a sketch map in terms of their overall meaning to the geographical area and scale portrayed allows the researcher to make inferences regarding the relative importance of a place and about the familiarity of the participant with places in a given area.

A common way to investigate mental maps is through a process called sketch mapping, in which a participant draws an image based upon his or her knowledge, and or opinions regarding a place. Every individual's own mental map is unique, thus every sketch map is also unique. However, when a number of sketch maps from a particular group of people are collected, many responses can be compared and contrasted to analyze the spatial awareness of that particular group (Pacione, 1978).

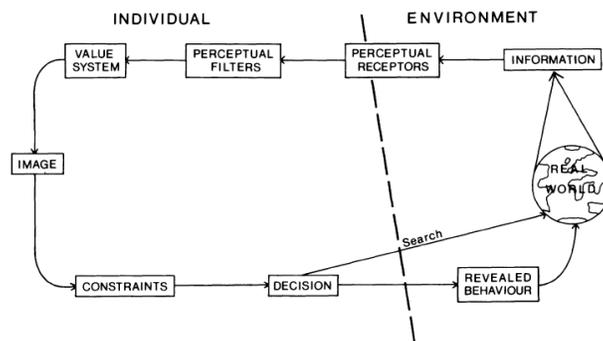


Figure 1: Pacione's Model of the Cognitive-Behavioral Process (Pacione, 1978 p. 556)

Because regional environments are assigned various characteristics both by outsiders and by residents (Raitz and Ulack, 1981), the North Caucasus is affected both by perceptions from other regions of Russia and by local lore. For many Russians outside the region, the North

Caucasus represents something wild and unruly, having been seen as politically and territorially problematic for hundreds of years. People from the North Caucasus, especially non-Russians, often face discrimination and stereotypes in the Russian core. Likewise, Russians from the region must deal with the fact that they are “Southern” in terms of their speech patterns and behavior. These stimuli work to reinforce the idea of a collective North Caucasian identity, making a sense of identity and place on the regional level most important when considering where one native to the region belongs. Overall group themes can be observed by testing whether groups’ members recognize similar spatial elements and value them consistently (Raitz and Ulack, 1981).

Mental maps can measure social space, and analyze levels of familiarity. Places can be recalled on cognitive maps due to their functional relationship to behavior (Raitz and Ulack, 1981). Because homeland is a social space, sketch maps provide participants with the opportunity to express their notions of this space on paper. Since in this study they were prompted to include three places within their homelands most important to them and those places close to them on their maps, the places they included represent a high level of familiarity. For example, most any place at the local scale is familiar to any given participant through simple personal experience.

Loyd (1989) claims that cognitive maps differ when gained from actual experience vs. cartographic knowledge gained from maps. When asked to draw one’s homeland, a participant must consider two components: with what particular territory do I identify, and how can I represent that territory in the form of a sketch map? This concept is important for participants to consider when they make the decision whether or not to include political borders in their maps, and at what scale they wish to define their homelands.

Historical Geography and Identity in the North Caucasus

Over 400 years of Russia presence in the North Caucasus has resulted in many different political and territorial changes in the region throughout recent history. Interaction between Russians and local Caucasian groups has led to conflict, changing borders, and various territorial constructs that Russians have utilized while attempting to dominate and administer the area. Although the policies of the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and the Russian Federation, have differed regarding policy, their basic goals have always been to exert control and promote political and territorial stability in the North Caucasus.

The Russian Empire

The Russian Empire was the first successfully to colonize the Caucasus. The Russians accomplished this feat through military, bureaucracy, missionaries, settlers, courts, and schools. Where other empires had been content with payments of tribute, taxes and slaves, the Russian Tsars wanted to control the Caucasus for strategic geopolitical reasons (Khodarkovsky, 2008). It is important to note that before the Russian Empire succeeded in annexing the North Caucasus into its fold through military action, there had been a Russian presence in the region for several generations, as Russia attempted to establish colonies in the North Caucasus before a major military offensive was attempted (Dunlop and Monon, 2006).

The Russo-Turkish War (1768-74) may be regarded as the first step in Russia's attempt to control the North Caucasus. Russian Imperial forces first entered the conflict in response to the request of King Irakli II who controlled territory that exists today in modern Georgia, to be protected from the Persians. Because Russian leaders wanted take control of the Black Sea from

the Turks, it made geopolitical sense to gain some influence in Georgia. However to get there meant going through the North Caucasus. As a result, cities like Stavropol and Vladikavkaz, which originally served as fortified settlements, were founded in the mid-1770s. Soon thereafter, Cossack (Russian military) settlements also began to appear along the Kuban River.

In 1792 Georgia was fully incorporated into the Russian Empire and in 1800, Tsar Paul ordered the first Cossack raids on Circassian lands. 1804 marked a general rebellion of all the peoples of the Northwest Caucasus when non-Russians demanded the removal of Russian military. Increased conflicts led to the appointment of General Alexei Yermolov who served as commander of the Caucasus from 1816 to 1827. Yermolov's offensives against Dagistanis, Chechens, and Kabardins earned him the reputation of conqueror and he remains an iconic symbol of Russian power of the Caucasus.



Figure 2: Monument to General Yermolov in Stavropol. Photo: Austen Thelen (2009)

Conflict between the Cossacks and Circassians reached its culmination in 1859, when the Russians destroyed 44 Circassian villages. However, plans to deport any Ottoman remnants and the Circassians from this newly conquered territory were in place long before final victory; the “Circassian Question” was debated after the war. Eventually, the majority of the Circassians were forcibly migrated to the Black Sea, and then deported to the Ottoman Empire (Richmond, 2008).

Miliutin was one Russian leader who sought to ethnically cleanse the Caucasus and his policies ultimately led to allowing for the creation of the Cherkess nation. First, 30,000 Nogais were deported from the area that would eventually become Karachay-Cherkessia in 1858-9 (Richmond, 2008). Then, in the early 1860s, around 200 Circassian family units were resettled on the Kuban river, where they joined with other Circassians who had historically resided there (Richmond, 2008). These Circassians joined together to become the Cherkess, for whom Karachay-Cherkessia is in part named.



Figure 3: The Study Area's Political Borders in 1860. Source: The Imperial Atlas. “The Isthmus of The Caucasus, and Armenia.” No. XLII. Blackie and Son: London (1860).

After the war, Russians remained in the Northwest Caucasus and inhabited the best farm land, which had been cleansed of the indigenous population. They advocated for assimilation of non-Russians by economic means and sought to incorporate the Russian administrative and judicial systems into these new political units. Russians were seen as occupiers, much like previous empires that attempted to control the Caucasus. Many local peoples saw Russian law replacing their centuries-old customs as an attack on their culture, thus criminal action could have been considered some form of protest (Richmond, 2008).



Figure 4: Monument in Cherkessk “400 Years with Russia.” Photo: Austen Thelen (2009)

Regional territorial governments in the Caucasus were known as *pristavstvos*; they acted as a go between for the local populations and the Imperial Government. *Pristavstos* were often unstable. They split, merged, and changed borders on numerous occasions. The system of government also lacked consideration for the semi-nomadic lifestyle of the local peoples. The *Pristav*, or leader of the *pristavstvo*, had the power to conscribe militias, seize personal property and land, and to impose fines, and also controlled the courts and trade. The *pristav* was himself almost always an ethnic Russian.

Administration was one of the Russians’ major goals in the North Caucasus (Richmond, 2008), but in order to achieve this, many diverse and unrelated local populations had to be conglomerated into some type of governable structure. In 1856, the entire North Caucasus region was divided into two units the Left and Right Wings. These territories became known as the Kuban and Terek Oblasts from the 1860s on. The Terek Oblast was divided into seven stable districts of administration (*okrugs*) and the Kuban Oblast into five; these *okrugs* were not based solely on ethnic boundaries (Richmond, 2008).



Figure 5: The Study Area's Political Borders in 1911. Source: Cram’s Unrivalled Atlas of the World. “Map of Russia.” p. 132-133. Geof Cram: Chicago (1911).

The Russian Empire used two important identity building processes in the North Caucasus: ethnification and indigenization. What Russian Imperial scholars and statesmen referred to as scientific ethnification, which meant defining groups by categories of otherness, such as language, territory, and religion, was a European invention that proved common and

useful for the colonial process (Funch, 1998). Utilizing this process meant that groups of people could be easily classified for administrative purposes, which would eventually lead to groups being assigned territory. When an area was first seen as a frontier with no fixed borders, colonizers first created boundaries based on ethnic classifications.

As Russian settlers began to arrive and claim territory, “boundaries of otherness,” especially those cultural in nature began forming (Funch, 1998). According to Funch (1998, p.87) establishing boundaries of otherness:

extended to not only include the often treated terms of ethnic and national identity, but also the creation of local, regional, or indigenous identities, on the background of the establishing of boundaries of otherness; partly through cultural boundaries, partly through the conflict itself: Us vs. them (free mountaineers vs. Russian army). This meant the creation of an outside-inside-dichotomy of identity production, and a ‘myth symbol-complex’ was created and has been in function ever since.

Ethnic groups suddenly began to appear on maps, which portrayed these groups in an area, according to how the process of ethnification applied to and defined each one. In addition to the visual representation that maps provide, various symbols and serotypes regarding the North Caucasus began to appear in 19th century Russian high culture. Many Russian literary works, from the likes of Pushkin, Lermontov, and Tolstoy, are commonly set in the Caucasus, giving the region a special place in Russian national heritage. Russian authors were fond of nature, especially forests and mountains, and the Caucasus were even over-represented in Russian imperial lore, as they were given much more attention than either Siberian or Central Asian colonies (Funch, 1998).

The Russification policies in the 1880s mark an important point in the relations between Caucasians and Russian. Russification aimed at forcing non-Russian ethnic groups throughout

the empire to become (at least culturally) Russian, through attempts at barring the practice of non-Orthodox-Christian religions, and the use of non-Russian languages in imperial institutions, especially in education and the print media. Funch (1998) notes that although attempts at Russification were made in the Caucasus, they were relatively ineffective because the North Caucasus region had not been “properly colonized,” that is, it remained under military administration due to its geopolitical importance to the empire.

In 1870, Ministry of Public Education first introduced “Rules on Methods for the education of the Mountaineers.” Mountain peoples were divided into three types: “not at all Russified,” “those living in areas where there are large numbers of Russians,” and “sufficiently Russified.” This meant different degrees of Russian language instruction; the goal was to Russify the population in one generation, and by 1804, the first school for indigenous peoples opened in Stavropol, and by the 1870s Stavropol had 7 such schools and a seminary (Richmond, 2008).

The Soviet Period

In order to get the cooperation of the local peoples, the Bolsheviks simply returned land given to Slavic colonists in the Tsarist period to their indigenous populations. The Bolsheviks used the imperial government’s traditional preferences for Slavs and wealthy capitalists as a means by which to gain the support of these indigenous peoples (Richmond, 2008).

The Union of Mountaineers of the Caucasus appeared in May, 1917 and was the first serious pan-Caucasian post-imperial political movement. This group lobbied for the independence of the Terek Oblast, as well as some portions of the Stavropol and Krasnodar

Krais. Independence was recognized by Germany and Turkey, but the leaders were forced to flee the North Caucasus. The Bolsheviks considered the region to be overpopulated and decided that mass population transfers via forced migration would be the most efficient way to solve the problem (Richmond, 2008). Stalin himself lobbied for the Cossacks to be recognized as a counter-revolutionary force to justify their deportation. However, Cossack deportations did not eliminate ethnic conflicts over territorial rights and land use. The region remained politically unstable and problematic for Soviet rule throughout the 1920s.

A conference was held in Vladikavkaz in September, 1920 with the goal of countering separatist movements, some argued for the creation of an autonomous territory which, unlike the Terek Oblast, would be divided by national regions assigned to various ethnic groups. This plan came to fruition in December, 1920. The resulting territory, known as the Mountain Republic, remained relatively unstable for the next two years. Finally, as each group sought to take control of more territory, the Mountain Republic was divided into a series of separate autonomous units. On the 12th of January, 1922, “Karachay-Cherkessia” became one of the republics resulting from delineation of the Mountain Republic. It had a land area of 11,701 square kilometers with a population of 163,000: 71,930 Slavs, 50,740 Karachays, 14,290 Abazins, 13,965 Circassians, 6,339 Nogais (Richmond, 2008). Conflict between all of the ethnic groups in Karachay-Cherkessia continued to be problematic during the Republics early period, and in 1926, ethnic tension was cited as the cause for dividing Karachay-Cherkessia into the Karachay Autonomous Oblast and the Cherkess National Okrug.

In April 1925, the Bolshevik decision against the Cossacks was reversed. Some cite the reason for this to be a desire for increased industrial production, for which local Russian speaking peoples were at a premium, but all Cossack semi-autonomous regions had already been

dissolved. By 1930, the new enemies of the state were Kulaks and Islam; however, Cossacks suffered again during “dekulakization” (politicide against rich peasants who were labeled “class enemies”) and large numbers of each Islamic ethnic groups were deported from the North Caucasus.



Figure 6: 1943-57: Stavropol and Cherkessk Autonomous Oblast Post-Deportation. Source: “Political and Administrative Districts of Russia.” Chief Administration of Geodesy and Cartography of The Council of Ministers, USSR: Moscow.

The Great Terror (Stalin’s purges) hit the North Caucasus in 1937 when the regions’ *intelligentsia* were accused of being Trotskyist revolutionaries, and blamed for an anti-Soviet uprising that had taken place in 1930. The entire Karachay *intelligentsia* were arrested along with all the rural officials and 8,000 farmers (Richmond, 2008). By 1938, all Karachay territory

was administered by NKVD officers, none of whom were ethnically Karachay (Collins-Richmond, 2002). The Soviets began to destroy national cultural elements such a native literature and even Party materials written in the local languages throughout the North Caucasus. These policies prompted a call to violence by leaders in Chechnya, and some uprisings did take place in Karachay areas. By the time the Nazis took brief control of the area during WWII, they were greeted by a substantial anti-Soviet movement that they sought to utilize.

Although anti-Soviet sentiment existed in the area, many North Caucasus ethnic groups actively backed the government in the war against the Nazis, sending many thousands of their young men to the front lines. However, there were those who understood the defeat of the USSR to mean liberation and even independence. This position was backed up by ex-Soviets who had emigrated to Germany and who were subsequently dropped over the Caucasus to spread propaganda in February of 1942. From 1943-1944, 68,938 Karachays, practically the entire Karachay population, were forcibly deported from the North Caucasus to a series of 550 camps in Central Asia (Collins-Richmond, 2002). In their absence, some of their land and livestock was taken by other ethnic groups who remained in the area.

In the 20th Party Congress, in February, 1956, Nikita Khrushchev famously spoke out against Stalin in what would become known as “The Secret Speech.” He cited Stalin as being in violation of fundamental Leninist principals regarding multinationalism, and how it was meant to be practiced in the Soviet Union. Among Stalin’s wrongs were the forced migrations of several North Caucasus national groups, including the Karachays. The Karachays were repatriated on January 9, 1957 by Order 149/12 issued by the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, “On the Transformation of Cherkess Autonomous Oblast into Karachay-Cherkess Autonomous Oblast.” This new territory was placed under the jurisdiction of the Stavropol Krai for the remainder of

the Soviet period. The population numbers in 1959 were: Cherkess 8.6%, Karachays 24%, Abazins 6.6%, and Russians 51%, with “titular-status” belonging to the Cherkess and Karachays (Gorenburg, 2001).



Figure 7: Post 1957: Karachay-Cherkess Autonomous Oblast under Stavropol’s Administration. Source: “Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.” Chief Administration of Geodesy and Cartography: Ministry of Geology, USSR: Moscow (1967).

All ethnic groups residing in their designated homelands were said to have “titular-status,” that is, the ability to claim certain rights in their territory and representation in Moscow, not afforded to non-titular persons. By the end of the Soviet period, 93% of all non-Russians received homelands, and were thus able to claim titular status somewhere in the country (Roeder, 1991). However, by the 1970s, the Russian population began to decrease in Karachay-Cherkessia due to the fact that Russians had a lower birth rate than non-Russians, and often

preferred to move out of the North Caucasus if given the opportunity (Richmond, 2008).

According to Funch (1998):

The creation of titular-nationalities and districts upon the break-up of the Mountain Republic was an upgrading of the already existing ethnic territoriality, and marked an important step in the ethnification of the North Caucasian peoples. The promotion of ethnic identities became a Soviet model for achieving class-consciousness, and became – as a Leninist supplement to monastic rapprochement of the different peoples of the country to become one ‘Soviet people’ (p.98).

Two key principles provided the basic foundations of Soviet nationalities policies were: Socialist Federalism and *Korenizatsiya* (indigenization). Socialist Federalism was the Soviet Union’s system of federal administration by which the country’s territory was divided into a hierarchy of federal subjects: fifteen union republics, twenty autonomous republics, eight autonomous oblasts and ten autonomous districts (*okrugs*). Although these territories differed in the amount of autonomy from Moscow they possessed, they were all created in order to serve as some sort of national territory or “homeland” for one or more recognized Soviet ethnic groups.

The term *Korenizatsiya* comes from the Russian word *koren* or “root.” This policy, which was prevalent in the North Caucasus throughout the mid-1930s, essentially advocated for the promotion of local, non-Russian, languages and cultural elements in order to ease the transition to Soviet power. Where tsarist policies of Russification were met with nationalist resistance, the Soviet concept is widely believed to promote a sense of national identity for indigenous populations, so as to provide a stepping stone to an all inclusive Soviet identity that would not be based on ethnicity, thus providing a solution to the national question.

Korenizatsiya, according to Martin (2001), would

address the positive psychological needs of nationalism... It would also likewise disarm the negative psychological anxiety associated with the perception of foreign rule (p.12).

Martin notes that both Stalin and Lenin had a deep psychological understanding of nationalism, and therefore wanted to make Soviet power seem “intimate,” “popular,” and “compressible” to non-Russians, and that in order for indigenous populations to accept Soviet power, they had to see it as “native.” Roeder (1991) suggests that the policy’s real goal was to promote indigenous peoples into the Party and use them in administrative posts over their peers, thus creating go-betweens that could be used in the governing of non-Russian areas.

Hunter (2006) explains Stalin’s policies for creating borders in the North Caucasus:

Stalin adopted a policy of creating territorial units in which territorial boundaries did not correspond to ethnic realities and often gathered rival ethnic groups within a single political unit... Soviet authorities intentionally drew the borders such that ethnic tensions within political units would facilitate Moscow’s control over the region (p. 113).

Titular elites in power were conditioned by Soviet nationalities policies to prioritize ethno-cultural development, and in the context of the ethnic group as an organic unit, politicians sought to implement cultural revival policies in order to ensure the group’s collective survival. Members of the titular political elite in each region sought to enact laws and adopt employment practices that would ensure that political power rested with members of their ethnic group, meaning that the territory “belonged” to the titular group.

It was in the elite’s best interest not to cause trouble for ethnic-Russians living in their region or for that matter cause trouble for Russians in Moscow because they knew the reality was that they would eventually need support from Moscow to implement policies that would eventually benefit their respective groups (Gorenburg, 1999). Gorenberg (1999) notes that

In all of the republics (including Karachay-Cherkessia), ethnic leaders took ethnic revival seriously and developed strategies designed to maximize the extent of ethnic revival that could be achieved without alienating members of non-titular ethnic groups or frightening the central government (p. 270).

Karachay-Cherkessia is a good example of early Stalinist ethno-territorial policy. Over Stalin's first ten to twelve years, nationalities were placed in territories two by two, creating potential for inter-ethnic discord (Funch, 1998). Ethnic groups were also given an official hierarchy, which meant that they could be promoted and demoted by Soviet leaders. Having two titular ethno-national groups in one republic mean that nationalism would focus toward one's own republic when shared titular status exists, rather than toward the country as a whole.

The construction of ethnic institutions by the Soviet government in the 1920s is a particularly clear example of a situation in which institutions are imposed on a society according to academic and political considerations that do not take existing social networks and identities into account. In many cases ethnic homelands were created according to political expediency or the beliefs of Russian social scientists about minority ethnic identities (p. 74).

The Soviet education system proved to be one such institution since Soviet power was established in the North Caucasus, as it was the primary vehicle by which young members of ethnic minority populations could be heavily exposed to Soviet nation-building ideology throughout the Soviet period (Gorenberg, 2001). 1960 saw the opening of the first Russian language schools, in which non-Russians could receive an education in their native languages. The goal of this policy was to create bilingual elite groups that could serve as go-betweens for the Soviet government and locals. Nonetheless, Russian was needed as the language of communication among non-Russians, and local languages were again threatened (Richmond, 2008).

Minority students were separated from Russians in areas where they had titular status, educated in their native languages, and taught the culture and history of those whom the Russians claimed were of a direct genetic link to the Soviet-recognized modern variant of their group. However, by the 1970s, this strategy was almost non-existent in the North Caucasus. Some scholars argue that the Soviet's ultimate goal with identity-building policies was to create a situation in which educated elites take on a cosmopolitan belief system, resulting in a decreased likelihood of ethnic nationalisms. On the contrary, others argue that educating groups' members about their history and identity only reinforced a sense of collective exclusion and can lead support of nationalism. According to Gorenberg (2001),

In the Soviet Union the formation of close ties within particular social groups was encouraged by state-run organizations such as academic institutes, communist party cells, youth organizations, factories and collective farms. The density of social ties is also closely linked to the strength of collective identity (p.76).

Triesman (1997) suggests a down side to such Soviet education policies and their ramifications because, in his view, traditional factors accentuating ethnic identification in other world areas, like modernization, migration, and conflict, were not as important in the Russian situation. He argues that promoting more educated leaders in Republic governments would make them more likely to lobby for separatist movements by incorporating exclusive nationalism for their entire political units, thus undermining Stalin's original intentions for these territories.

Triesman also notes that the Republics in the North Caucasus would logically be more prone to ethnic nationalism and separatism because they have international borders, either with Georgia, or with Azerbaijan. However, inconvenient this geographical positioning might be in the contemporary context, it was not a factor in Soviet times, as these two newly independent states were then part of the USSR.

Ethno-Federalism and Territorial Policy in the Russian Federation

When the Soviet Union disbanded in 1991, no autonomous republics, districts, or regions managed successfully to secede from Russia. The only Soviet federal territories that gained independence were the 15 union republics. Hale and Taagepera (2002) suggest several reasons for this situation. First, Soviet leaders allocated more “ethnic” resources on the union republics than on the autonomous republics due to their administrative rank, therefore Union republics had better institutions, their own academies of science for example, which put them in a better position to function independently from Moscow. Second, leaders of the union republics could also more effectively mobilize for separatism than leaders of autonomous republics in the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic. Autonomous Republics were subordinate to the RSFSR, which was in turn subordinate to the USSR, therefore Autonomous Republics would have had to cut through two layers of state structure to free themselves (Hale and Taagepera, 2002).



Figure 8: Post USSR: Stavropol Krai and the Republic of Karachay-Cherkessia. Source: National Atlas of Russia. “The Republic of Adegnya, The Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, The Republic of Karachay-Cherkessia, Krasnodar Krai, The Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, and Stavropol Krai.” Federal Service of Geodesy and Cartography of Russia: Moscow (2004).

Ethno-federalism is the Russian Federation's current model of administration, where the state is divided into territorial units based on ethnic populations, all of which are under some form of jurisdiction from the capital. Different types of federal subjects exist, and their various rights and degrees of autonomy depend upon how they are designated. For example, *krais* and *oblasts* have the least amount autonomy, being primarily populated by Russians, where republics, which have a majority non-Russian population, have the most autonomy. Republics have the right to use official languages other than Russian and they have the right to their own constitutions and legal systems.

Ethno-federalism was a logical system for the Russians to adopt, as it is quite similar to what the Soviets had already established. Republics seemed potentially useful from the beginning because they emphasized political autonomy and culture for indigenous populations and soft economic transition for Russians (Bahry, 2002). Prior republic autonomy under communism was the basis for ethno-federalism due to the fact that homelands and ethnic hierarchies were already in place, having been administered in such a fashion under Soviet Federalism. However, the breakup of the Soviet Union and the end of communism meant a less centrally controlled political situation. Lack of social control marginalizes the federal government as a locus of initiative in regime change, meaning that it essentially gives smaller entities or outsiders a way to gain power (Leff, 1999). Also, the potential for less influence from Moscow opened the door both for democracy and local authoritarianism in the republics.

Autonomous polities, like republics in Russia, are constructed like states, with similar bodies of governance and symbolic identity markers, but they serve as compromise that allows some kind of minority group to essentially form a nation-state within the territory of a larger

group, while at the same time, preserving the territorial integrity of the larger group. According to Cornell (2002),

When a central government grants autonomy to a given region, it acknowledges the devolution of a certain portion of its own sovereignty to the representatives of that region's population; the central government concedes that it no longer has unlimited jurisdiction over the territory – herein lies the essence of autonomy. At the same time, however, the central government emphasizes the subordination of the autonomous region to itself in that the existence of the latter in no way compromises its own territorial integrity (p. 252).

Russians residing in republics must deal with the fact that they are not in the republics' ethnic majority; however, they may draw upon the fact that they are still the overall dominant group in the Russian Federation as a whole. Although most local Russians feel a sense of collective discrimination in access to government positions and quality jobs in republics, they still retain the overall economic advantage over non-Russians; however, titular groups have been able to use this special status to sure up political power, and in some cases (like the Cherkess) achieve disproportionate representation and advancement of their agendas in regard to their population (Bahry, 2002). Thus, in the Caucasian context, ethno-federal policies have for the most part created potential conflicts, rather than preventing them (Cornell, 2002).

According to Hale (2004), an even distribution of any dominant ethnic group is key in avoiding instability, and the chances of avoiding the most horrific large-scale violence and the prospects for sustained state unity in divided societies are significantly improved when ethno-federal systems are crafted without core ethnic regions. These core ethnic regions can cause instability and the breakup of ethno-federal states if they become a rival center of power, which is possible due to the dual power idea, crucial to ethno-federalism (Hale, 2005).

Two cities in Russia have special political status as “Federal Cities”: Moscow and St. Petersburg. They constitute the major power centers of the country. There is currently no major powerful Russian center surrounded by non-Russian federal subjects, suggesting the Russian situation to be potentially stable using Hale’s concept.

Another key concept for state stability is that the core region must not become a security threat to peripheral regions and core ethnic regions must not promote identity-based conceptualization of the core groups as having a political status separate from the ethno-federal state (Hale, 2005). The ubiquitous nature of Russia’s major political party, *Yedinaya Rossiya* (United Russia), is present in the Republics and its presence is sometimes far more noticeable than in Russian titular areas in terms of propaganda.

Cornell (2002) notes that ethno-federal systems work best when civic identities are encouraged but the use of ethnicity in politics is discouraged. The tried and true umbrella style civic identity in the Russian Federation is to be “*Rossiyanin*.” To refer to oneself as *Rossiyanin* implies only to be a citizen of the Russian Federation, not necessarily to be ethnically Russian, which would be “*Russkii*.” This civic identity is an important concept, as it allows any citizen of Russia to potentially recognize the entire state as their own, regardless of one’s ethnicity.

According to Lynn and Novikov (1997),

the idea of federalism in Russian remains dominated by a focus on the constitutional importance of central state power and the political and economic importance of regional and local governments (p. 202).

Ethno-federalism in Russia is based on a series of treaties and agreements between the center and its constituent units rather than on a constitution that binds the center and the regions together, which has produced a bureaucratic and asymmetrical system; prior to the Putin era (2000), the

Russian Federation did not demonstrate the ability to coordinate central authorities with federal subjects effectively, or individual republics to regional governments (Lynn and Novikov, 1997). Federalism became about preserving political connections and advantages among elites (Lynn and Novikov, 1997).

Republics' actual degrees of autonomy have changed over the course of Russia's politics. Under Boris Yeltsin, governors could appoint the heads of federal bodies that existed in their territories, allowing them to go against federal power when they wanted. In Stavropol, governors appointed security councils, which allowed them to avoid federal security procedures and internal affairs investigations in the Stavropol Krai. At one point, the presidential representative (a federal post) was also held the position of deputy governor. 60 % of the presidential representatives serving outside of Moscow had to be replaced in 1997, due to the fact that they had all developed strong ties and conflicts of interests from their dealing with local powerful elites (Ross, 2003).

According to Cornell (2002),

The provision of institutional, territorial autonomy for an ethnic minority may cause the opposite of its intended effect – it may augment rather than deduce the potential for conflict between a minority and a central government (p. 276).

This potential problem has been recognized by Putin's administration and been dealt with in his reforms.

Putin, quoted here by Ross (2003), states:

It is a scandalous thing when a fifth of the legal acts adopted in the regions contradict the country's basic law, when republic constitutions and province charters are at odds with the Russian constitution, and when trade barriers, or even worse, border demarcation posts are set up between Russia's territories and provinces.

Putin's reforms created seven new federal super-districts (that number is now eight with the recent addition of the North Caucasus Federal District), reformed the federation council, created a state council, granted powers to the president to dismiss regional governors and dissolve regional assemblies, granted new rights for regional governors to dismiss municipal officials, and brought regional legislative and republican constitutions into line with the Russian constitution (Ross, 2003). Although Putin's decision regarding the tightening of federal control of the Republics received much western criticism, in Russia the policy was promoted as being important for achieving stability; the strive toward stability has proven to be a major element of Putin's and United Russia's rhetoric.

Chapter II:

Study Area, Local Factors of Ethno-National Identity, and Methodology

The Study Area and Its Major Ethnic Groups

The Stavropol Krai is among those federal territories exhibiting full integration into the Russian Federal System. It is located among nine other Russian federal territories including: the Republic of Kalmykiya and the Rostov Oblast to the north, the Krasnodar Krai to the west, the Republic of Dagestan to the east, and the Republics of Karachay-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia-Alania, Ingushetia, and Chechnya to the south. Stavropol's landscape ranges from flat steppe land in the north to the foothills and Front Range of the Caucasus in the south. The territory has a total population of 2,231,759 (*Russian All-Population Census, 2002*), of which ethnic Russians constitute approximately 86 %. Other ethnic populations relevant for this study include Nogay (20,680), Karachay (15,146), Abazin (3,300), and Cherkess (2,097).

First established by the Soviets in 1922, the Republic of Karachay-Cherkessia exists with the autonomous status granted to republics over other federal territorial units of the Russian Federation (Constitution of the Russian Federation, Section 21). Under Soviet rule, Karachay-Cherkessia had the status of "autonomous oblast," which granted it some autonomy from Moscow, but not the maximum amount possible. However, within the Russian Federation, Karachay-Cherkessia has "republic" status, which allows it the greatest level of autonomy allowed within the country. The republic's terrain is mostly mountainous, extending to the slopes of Mt. Elbrus, the highest point in Europe. Karachay-Cherkessia is bordered by the Stavropol Krai to the north, Krasnodar Krai to the west, the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria to the east, and shares an international border with Georgia to the south. Of the 439,470 people

residing in Karachay-Cherkessia, 38.5 % claim their nationality to be Karachay, followed by Russian at 33.6 %, Cherkess at 11.3 %, Abazin at 7.4 %, Nogai at 3.4 %.

Major Ethno-National Groups in the Study Area

Cherkess (Circassians)

Prior to the Russian conquest of the North Caucasus, Circassians were one of the region's major ethnic groups. When the Russian army defeated the Circassians, 90% of the entire ethnic group as well as some of their allies were forcibly deported. May 21, 1864 marked this mass deportation of Circassians out of the North Caucasus into Ottoman lands, which today constitute modern Kosovo, through Turkey, into Jordan, Syria, Palestine, and Iraq (Hewitt, 1999). Currently, around two million Circassians live throughout the Middle East and Eurasia, primarily in Turkey, Jordan, and Syria. These various Circassian groups have managed to keep a strong sense of their ethnic identity, primarily through romanticizing their homeland (Richmond, 2008).

The Circassians who were not exiled became three separate nationalities under the Russian Empire and then the Soviets: the Adyghe, Cherkess, and Kabardin nations. These nations' members primarily inhabit three North Caucasus Republics in the Russian Federation today, Adyghia, Karachay-Cherkessia, and Kabardino-Balkaria respectively. No completely Circassian political unit exists as Adyghia's population is around two-thirds Russian, and Cherkess and Kabardins both share titular status in their territories with Turkic nationalities, Karachay and Balkars respectively (Dunlop and Menon, 2006). The case of the Circassians' division into three separate peoples has become known as the Soviet Nationalities policy of "divide and rule," of which they are the prime example (Hewitt, 1999). The Soviets created two

distinct Circassian literary languages in addition to dividing the remaining Circassian population into the three above mentioned administrative units. The divide and rule policy eventually resulted in problems at the end of the Soviet period that were inherited promptly by the Russian Federation in the 1990s (Dunlop and Menon, 2006).

The Cherkess became a national group when a number of Circassians were relocated to an area then known as Kuban Oblast which spanned from Mount Elbrus to the Sea of Azov with the capital of Ekaterinador (Krasnodar). An area stretching from Mt. Elbrus in the south to the Kuban River in the north became the homeland for the Cherkess after the Circassians took on this name (Richmond, 2008). According to the 2002 Russian Census, there were 49,591 Cherkess in Karachay-Cherkessia but there were very few in Stavropol Krai.

Circassian nationalism has existed in several forms over time, and of the various groups, Adyche Khase, was the most influential (Richmond, 2008). A “pan-Circassian movement,” the group officially registered in Russia in March of 1990. Their main goal was to reestablish Circassian culture, reform agriculture, and combat environmental issues; they also advocated for the reunification of all the Circassian peoples living in the former Soviet Union and repatriation of Circassians abroad, the descendents of those exiled by the Russian Empire (Richmond, 2008).

Karachay

Karachays often trace their history in the Caucasus back to the 11th century, after the Turkic Kipchaks migrated there from Central Asia and Siberia. Although they are closely related to the Balkars, another Turkic group in the North Caucasus, Karachays have historically

preferred to live in highland areas, and have thus remained relatively isolated relying on hunting and mining as opposed to agriculture (Richmond, 2008).

WWII and its aftermath resulted in a great set of challenges for the Karachays after Stalin labeled them a “traitor nation” due to alleged collaboration with invading Nazi forces in the Caucasus. In 1943-1944 almost the entire Karachay nation (along with the Balkars) was forcibly deported to a series of camps in Soviet Central Asia. During the ordeal, members of these groups were forbidden to exhibit many elements of their cultures, including use of their native languages and social customs. Thirteen years later, the Karachays were granted permission to return to the North Caucasus. They faced new challenges of discrimination in their home republics after their return, but the deportations did serve to solidify separate identities between the two groups (Richmond, 2008).

The question of how to treat Stalin’s deportation of the Karachays is still relevant in the region’s contemporary politics. On April 26, 1991, Yeltsin signed the “Law on the Rehabilitation of repressed Peoples.” This policy officially recognized all acts against the repressed peoples of the RSFSR by the Soviets as criminal. The official Russian policy thus became the re-establishing of material, territorial, and cultural integrity of all nationalities that had been deported, back to the standards existing before the “unconstitutional politics” that destroyed their Soviet recognized autonomous political units. Although the law dictated the reestablishment of territories for those nationalities formally repressed, it also stated that no peoples who had not been deported, and who were currently residing in these territories, were to be disturbed (Richmond, 2008). This policy is quite contradictory in that it essentially advocates for ethnic cleansing of former Karachay territory without authorizing such actions.

In 1993, the “Republican Commission for the Rehabilitation of the Karachay People” demanded compensation for historical injustices which totaled over 4 billion rubles. On October 30, 1993, a resolution that pledged to support economic and cultural development in the republic, especially for Karachays, was passed in Moscow. Another act by Yeltsin in May of 1994, outlined allocation of funds for Karachays, and these two pieces of legislation proved to calm the separatist feelings (Richmond, 2008).

Nogai

The Nogai are a Turkic people native to the steppe lands of the Northern Stavropol Krai and the territories surrounding it. They are thought to be a remnant of the Mongol Golden Horde, having split off around 1400. According to the Russian Census of 2002, 20,680 Nogais lived in Stavropol Krai, and 14,870 lived in Karachay-Cherkessia. Unlike the Karachays who have traditionally been highland dwellers, the Nogais traditionally practiced pastoralism and were semi-nomadic. Nogais constituted just 3% of Karachay-Cherkessia’s population in 1989 and at that time were underrepresented in government. They suffered from environmental problems, particularly from a water treatment plant located in the territory in which many Nogais resided (Richmond, 2008).

“Birlik” (Nogai for “unity”) was founded in March, 1990. The organization lacked members, but it had aspirations of uniting with another Nogai organization of the same name that existed in other areas of the North Caucasus. Birlik advocated for the autonomy of Karachay-Cherkessia from Stavropol Krai. However, some members wanted a completely autonomous Nogai territory, while others wanted to remain an autonomous region within Karachay-

Cherkessia and maintain ties with Nogai communities in Stavropol Krai. The group did have some success with getting Nogai language taught in a few Karachay-Chekessia schools but accomplished little else (Richmond, 2008).

Abazin

Abazins were also among those deported to Ottoman lands by the Russian Empire after the Caucasian War. Originally native to Abkhazia (Northwest Georgia), they remain an ethnolinguistic relative of the Abkhaz. Abazins have some autonomy in Karachay-Cherkessia, a response to protests in Cherkessk (Karachay-Cherkessia's capital city). However, Abazins are the only compactly settled historical population of the North Caucasus without a national territory or any kind of titular territorial status (Stepanov, 2000). The 2002 census cites the Abazin population in Stavropol Krai to be 3,300 with an additional 32,346 in Karachay-Cherkessia.

Abazins formed a nationalist group called "Apsadg'yl" (Land of Abaza) in 1992. The group sought to create stronger links between Abazin Diasporas and eventually achieve repatriation. Another goal was to take back farmland that had been collectivized under the Soviets. Having this land was seen as important for preserving ethnic cohesion, as Abazin youth who were migrating from rural areas to Cherkessk and strongly assimilating (Richmond, 2008).

Russian (Cossack)

Cossacks, known as "warriors at the service of the Tsar," began settling the Terek region in the 17th Century. They were the first Slavic peoples to inhabit the North Caucasus on a

permanent basis and are still viewed by contemporary Russians as a sub-ethnic group. Some Russians simply think of them as mountain Russians or Slavs of the Caucasus.

Cossacks' living areas were called *stanitsas*. They lived in these areas by militaristic democratic principles and Orthodox Christian values. Adherence to Orthodoxy fueled the Cossacks general religious dislike for local Muslims, which meant that the Tsar could effectively use them to gain more territory (Yemelianova, 2005). Modern Cossacks have gained ethnic recognition and have begun to take seriously their role as “the guardians of ‘Christian’ Russia” (Richmond, 2008). A policy called “On the Settlement of the Foothills of the Western Caucasus” was a plan in which indigenous peoples were resettled by Russian Imperial forces to make room for Cossacks settlers (Richmond, 2008). Cossacks were favored by the Russian government, but the government also wished to destroy the militaristic aspects of their society.

Under the Soviets, Cossack populations suffered territorial loss. Favored by the Tsar, Cossacks had been given control of the best land in the lowland areas of Karachay-Cherkessia, having displaced the indigenous populations (Richmond, 2008). Early Soviet territorial policies sought to rectify these actions, perhaps motivated to punish the Cossacks for their participation in the White Army during the civil war of the 1920s.

In today's context, Slavic nationalist organizations claiming Cossack identity have emerged in Stavropol and Karachay-Cherkessia, and the increased militarization of these organizations has become a source of tension (Stepanov, 2000). Two main groups have emerged: “Rus” and “the Slavs of Karachay-Cherkessia.” The Slavs of Karachay-Cherkessia sought to rehabilitate completely all who suffered repression under the Soviets. They lobbied for interethnic cooperation, particularly with the Karachays. Rus' in contrast was a very pro-

Russian group that objected to the Republic being named for Karachay and Cherkess. They gained strong support in 1992, speaking out against discrimination of Slavic peoples in the republic in education and the workforce. After the passing of the Law of the Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples, Cossack populations sought both to get their land back, and to reestablish some of the military aspects of their culture, their solution was the formation of local militia units. These militias have set up training facilities and recruited some ultra nationalist members but remain relatively small in number. It is unclear whether or not the particular groups have been involved in any legitimate hate crime activity.

Important Processes and Identity Markers

Language

Geographical isolation is often cited as a major reason not only for the Caucasus' ethnic diversity but also for its linguistic diversity. Today's non-Russian population in Stavropol and in Karachay-Cherkessia is largely bilingual, speaking their historical native languages and also Russian which serves as the lingua-franca of the entire North Caucasus. Russian has linguistic hegemony in the North Caucasus. It is the language of contact and commutation among all ethnic groups and is the native language of half the population of the North Caucasus and 84% of the Stavropol Krai (Lazarev and Pravikova, 2005). Russian is designated as the official language of the Russian Federation, and has always been a medium of communication among different groups throughout the country.

In the 1970s government-sponsored education programs resulted in the rise of bilingualism and fluency in Russian language among non-Russian groups of disadvantaged

status in the Soviet Union including the non-Russian groups in Karachay-Cherkessia (Jones and Grupp, 1984). In the Republic (as of 2005), 42.4% of the population are native Russian speakers, and the non-Russian population exhibits what Lazarev and Pravikova (2005) refer to as “a symmetric titular-Russian bilingualism” (p. 1326). In this situation, members of the titular ethnic groups are usually bilingual, both in their traditional native language, and in Russian.

Good command of Russian is essential to social mobility beyond village life throughout the North Caucasus. However, retaining knowledge of one’s native language is also important for non-Russians as an identity marker. In social situations, members of the same ethnic group often prefer to communicate in their native languages when in social situations, especially when intermixed amongst groups of Russians. Using non-Russian languages may help to preserve ethnic heritage and strengthen social ties within the groups, but it also isolates these individuals as “others” in mainstream Russian society. Thus, non-Russian native languages, and choosing their use, can be important for recognizing one’s own group and also in labeling individuals as “others.”

Migration

Stavropol Krai is relatively large and stable. It is also the major financial and agricultural center of the North Caucasus region (Vendina, Belozarov, and Gustafson 2007). The North Caucasus is one of the only regions in Russia that is not experiencing a decline in population. Migration has had a large effect on this fact, as both forced and voluntary migrations have had a great impact on the ethnic populations in the North Caucasus territories. Migration has also promoted the growth of urban centers.

Typically, the population of the North Caucasus has been measured by three main ethnic classifications: Russians, Caucasian nationalities, and non-Russian groups considered non-indigenous to the region, such as Armenians, Germans, and Greeks (Vendina, Belozarov, and Gustafson 2007). Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, three major trends in population dynamics have taken place. Russians have seen their numbers decline, due to ethnic violence and ethnic policies of the republics that put them at a disadvantage. Wars in Chechnya have created large populations of refugees (Russians and non-Russians) in many areas. As titular nationalities within the Republics have grown along with other non-Russian populations, they have begun to migrate into territories that have traditionally been inhabited by Russians.

The population can also be described as being lowland or highland. Lowland areas are better for agriculture and are home to all of the region's major cities as well as many of the larger villages. Karachays have traditionally occupied the highland areas, while Cherkess, Nogais, Abazins, and Russians have remained in the lowlands; however, after Stalin's deportations in the 1940s, the Republics' lowland population was around 95% Russian until deported nations were repatriated after Stalin's death (Richmond, 2008). Significant economic differences between lowland and highland areas remain, and these patterns are similar to the discrepancies between urban and rural areas (Vendina, Belozarov, and Gustafson 2007).

Economics

Economically, Stavropol Krai is better off than all of the North Caucasus republics, although monthly incomes there are still just around 65% of the national average (Vendina, Belozarov, and Gustafson 2007). Likewise, Russians remain the overall dominant group in terms

of economics in the North Caucasus government subsidies play an important part in the regional economy in each political unit of the North Caucasus. Subsidies from Moscow constitute over half of the regional governments' revenues in the republics; these funds are distributed directly to local authorities. In Stavropol, government subsidies are distributed through several banks, including state-owned Sberbank (Vendina, Belozarov, and Gustafson 2007). Perhaps unsurprisingly, Russian economists estimate that the informal sector of the economy in the republics accounts for between 60% and 80% of the republics' economic activity while only constituting 30% of Stavropol's. The city of Stavropol itself has also become known as the regional center of money laundering (Vendina, Belozarov, and Gustafson 2007).

Heritage and Family

Human settlement in the North Caucasus traditionally spread throughout the many valleys in the region which are relatively isolated. These geographical conditions have historically presented challenges for trade and communication among populations and many scholars have cited this fact as a reason for the region's great ethnic diversity. This diversity has also resulted in some groups taking on tribal (clan) identities and alliances (Richmond, 2008.)

The family unit has historically been viewed as a source of stability in the Caucasus and the identities of young men and women are often built on family ties and kinship. This is true for all ethnic groups to some degree, as is the idea that one's blood relatives determine the identity of the individual; identifying one's-self within a group is secondary to keeping ancestral blood lines intact, prompting avoidance of mixed marriages (Rogozin, 2008). North Caucasian society also tends to be extremely patronymic, perhaps partially due to local Islamic beliefs.

The Role of Islam in the North Caucasus

The North Caucasus has historically exhibited great religious diversity through the widespread presence of Paganism, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. However, since the 19th century, Sunni Islam has become the North Caucasus's major religious movement having been strengthened by 18th century incorporation of Islam into a platform for political independence (Aliyev, 2004). Although there are some Shiite populations in the region, primarily those in closest proximity to Azerbaijan, Sufism has proven more influential along with Sunni beliefs. Sufism, unlike Shia and Sunni Islam, is not centered on the mosque. Therefore, practicing Sufism was advantageous during the Soviet period when many mosques were destroyed, and Sufism therefore served to spark religiosity among the North Caucasus's national groups (Aliyev, 2004).

Potentially, religiously based violence in the North Caucasus might have a wider effect because there are many regions in Russia with large Islamic population. The Russian government finds it difficult to deal with a situation in which it does not control the Caucasus. Its largely unsuccessful military campaign in Chechnya from (1994-1996) and the call for more military action yet again in 1999 has become a national embarrassment. It has likewise given hope to other would-be separatists, and also to militant Islamic extremists who might have aspirations of manifesting their goals and philosophies in the Caucasus (Baran, 2001).

Russia has over 14 million Muslims, with increased nationalist propaganda by pro-Slavic groups against them. A potential reaction by organized nationalist movements presents a serious security concern not only for the Caucasus but for all of Russia's Islamic territories (Dunlop and Menon, 2006). However, most Muslims in the North Caucasus hold their local cultures in high

regard, and they are not likely to seek contact or identification with broader Islamist movements abroad. An “isolated Muslim elite” has not effectively promoted any kind of serious Islamic mobilization (Alyiev, 2004). Perhaps the most imminent danger in the region is a strong weapons market, since the dealing of weapons is relatively well tolerated by local authorities (Stepanov, 2000). It is also possible to find mercenary soldiers from the local population without recruiting militants from foreign Islamic countries (Stepanov 2000).

The assimilation of Caucasian Islamic populations into the Russian imperial fold was a complex process in which Russian leaders utilized various military, social, and territorial elements to maintain control over the region. Usually, Russian policies involved some preservation of Islamic society while at the same time promoting local leaders that were easily monitored. Having Russian-backed local elites in place provided stability. Since Russians had a real say in who was chosen to become local Islamic clergy, this situation allowed them to keep tabs on the emergence of anti-Russian Mullahs (Richmond 2008). For example, Russians favored Sharia courts (as opposed to Russian Imperial courts) because they could be administered by local elites who were endorsed and monitored by Russian authorities. Russian military control was also exercised in the Caucasus. Russians would also often take hostages, convert them to orthodoxy (similar to the Ottoman’s Janissary core), and then use them in local administrative positions, in military command, or as translators (Khodarkovsky 2008). Another primary tool of assimilation used by the Russian Empire, and also later by the Soviets, was education. However, some Islamic leaders were opposed to the Russian educational processes. Russian influence was against their way of life and Islamic schools outnumbered Russian schools until the Soviet period (Richmond, 2008).

After the Revolution in 1917, the Bolsheviks attempted to reach out to the Islamic populations of the former Russian Empire by labeling them equals in the workers' paradise. Muslim ethnic groups were even glad to see the Soviets come to power because of their promise of national self-determination (Hunter, 2006). The Soviets established the Muslim Religious Board of the North Caucasus as a main center for local languages and culture. The Board favored mosque worship and discouraged Sufism, but these elites remained relatively disconnected from the actual population. This disconnect has proven advantageous for preventing nationalism and has been a common practice in the North Caucasus (Aliyev, 2004).

Islam in general served as a common identity factor among most of the Caucasian ethnic groups. It was therefore viewed as a potential road block for implementing Soviet anti-religious and nation-building policies. These policies ultimately sought to undermine a shared sense of Caucasian Muslim identity thus continuing Russia's historical struggle against organized Islam (Khodarkovsky 2008). Having a shared sense of religion in a situation where there was supposed to be no religion was thought by the communists to lead to nationalism. Soviet Muslims were the descendants of those who had been classified as enemies of Russia for centuries, and thus remained an element which marked Muslims as different from the majority population (Gorenburg 2001).

National-Cultural Autonomy

What various Russian scholars, such as Tishkov, refer to as "national-cultural autonomy" is essentially the principle of self-determination and self rule of an ethnic group over its own

territory (a titular group), while still being under the federal jurisdiction of Russia. According to Tishkov (1994),

national-cultural autonomy, so conceived, allows us to realize this principle (all must benefit from the national-cultural arrangement, both titular and non-titular) to overcome limited possibilities for nation state organization (p.36).

Thus, Republics, such as Karachay-Cherkessia, serve as quasi-nation states, allowing titular groups the right to rule themselves to some extent, while protecting the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation.

Tishkov states that Tsarist Russia and the early USSR were somewhat successful in providing national-cultural rights on an “extra-territorial” basis. This process consisted of national institutions such as schools, print media, and religious organizations. In 1920, national groups gained representation in state organs of power, including the highest executive entity, the People’s Commission on Nationalities, over which Stalin presided. Despite a torrid history with various invocations of the concept, national-cultural autonomy is regarded by contemporary scholars and statesmen as a way to solve ethnic problems at their core. It allows for the satisfaction of cultural and religious demands from different groups and allows them to develop and preserve components of their ethnic identities (Tishkov, 1994).

Another reason why National-cultural autonomy has historically been seen as favorable is that fact that it addresses problems of inter-ethnic rivalry such as territorial or border disputes (Tishkov, 1994). However, in Karachay-Cherkessia, where we see two titular nationalities presiding over one territory with several other national groups are also present. In this case, national-cultural autonomy has not been successful in preventing ethnic conflict and has even promoted it. The roots of many conflicts in the North Caucasus go back to opposing principles

(which the Soviets exploited): the right to self-determination versus the sacredness of territorial integrity (Hunter, 2006).

Methodology

To explore issues of identity, place, and homeland among the younger generation (individuals 16-30 years of age), I utilized a three part mixed methodology using both quantitative and qualitative data. I collected survey data from 357 individuals in Stavropol and Cherkessk in which they ranked various factors of ethno-national identity regarding importance. I then analyzed group responses for significant differences using multivariate analysis of variance. In the same two locations, I collected 322 free recall sketch maps. These maps provided insight into participants' mental images of their homelands. I coded the maps in terms of scale and content and used a chi-squared test to identify significant correlations between variables. Finally, I conducted interviews with 40 participants regarding their opinions on issues of place identity and homeland.

Data Collection

I chose two locations for data collection. The first is the city of Stavropol, which is the capital of Stavropol Krai. The other was Cherkessk, the major urban center of the Republic of Karachay-Cherkessia. I chose these areas for two main reasons. First, urban areas provide the best pool of potential participants for my study due to their many universities which attract many young people from around the North Caucasus region. Urban populations also tend to be more

educated, have had ample contact with other ethnic groups, and are often more aware of their identity in general (Botev, 2002). Although rural residents of the region often make trips to the city, urban dwellers rarely leave it. With limited time and means of travel, collecting data in the city provided me with the opportunity to collect data from both urban and rural participants. Additionally, because I used Russian for data collection, which is the lingua franca of the region, I was able to communicate with all of the participants directly.

Second, my previous work experience provided me with connections and contacts through friends, my employer, and through our company's clientele. These individuals included faculty and students at four local universities: Stavropol State University, Stavropol Medical College, Stavropol State Agrarian University, and the State University of Karachay-Cherkessia. By utilizing these contacts, I used a data collection strategy called "snowballing" (Rivera, Kozyreva, and Sarovskii, 2002). Also called a "referral sample," snowball interviewing or snowballing relies on personal contacts and introductions from participants. New participants are referred to the interviewer by other participants, thus establishing contacts and credibility. This technique has been cited as the most efficient way to sample data in Russia (Rivera, Kozyreva, and Sarovskii, 2002). There are several reasons for its effectiveness: there is a lack of access to information in Russia which makes locating respondents difficult, many Russians are apprehensive toward foreigners and interviews in general, and Russians tend to be suspicious of demographically-based questions (Rivera, Kozyreva, and Sarovskii, 2002). Using snowball sampling, I was able to personally interview 40 participants. Several of my contacts, including two university professors, allowed me to conduct my project with their students, providing me with a large amount of participants, especially non-Russians. Several other contacts served as proxies, distributing surveys to individuals whom they knew to be in the target age group for the

study. In addition to utilizing my contacts and going through proxy sources, I also personally gathered data from over 100 individuals directly through my company's clientele base and from public interactions in parks or around Stavropol and Cherkessk.

Because issues of identity are multifaceted, it is impossible to devise a methodology that would expose all of the factors that are involved in identity formation. To understand the widest range of factors, I proposed a mixed-methodology approach for collecting them and conducting the analysis. I collected data in three parts: a survey, interviews, and a cognitive mapping exercise. All participants with whom I conducted an interview also took part in the mapping and survey exercises. Surveys and mapping exercises were distributed and collected by proxy sources until December, 2009. Participants having taken part in the study after July, 2009 responded only to the survey and or mapping exercise. During my time in the field, I conducted all three parts of the study with any person willing to take part and was 16-30 years of age. The interviews were digitally recorded, unless the participant was uncomfortable with being recorded. In such cases, notes were taken.

Interviews

Speaking with participants one-on-one provided me with the opportunity to gain insights into why they answered survey questions and drew their maps as they did. Interviews also provided information about national identity in the context of the North Caucasus that could have been missed by the standardized survey and mapping exercise. Interviews yielded qualitative data that was useful in explaining the quantitative data. I conducted all of the

interviews in Russian. I speak Russian fluently and hold a B.A. in the language from Michigan State University.

Interviews were given only after participants had completed the survey and mapping exercises. I then asked them to elaborate on why they had chosen the values than they did, and why they had sketched their maps in the particular fashion that they had. I also posed two additional questions to them. I asked them whether or not a member of their nation could be born outside of Russia and still be considered to be the same as the participants in ethno-national terms. I also asked whether or not one could choose his or her ethno-national identity.

Survey Data

I gathered quantitative data through surveys, which were I distributed myself during the summer of 2009 and throughout the first part of the 2009-2010 academic year with the help of colleagues in universities located in the study area. Surveys and maps were collected by these individuals who took an academic interest in the project and agreed to help in data collection.

In the surveys, I asked the participants to identify themselves in terms of nationality, gender, religion, native language, and place of birth and residence (appendix B). They also indicated similar information regarding the background of each of their parents. Participants were asked to use a Likert style scale (5-point), to identify their feelings regarding the importance of ten dependent variables to their conception of ethno-national identity (*natsionalnost*). Assigning a value of “1” indicated a response of “absolutely not important” to “5” which mean “very important.”

I selected the following non-placed based factors for national identity: Religious Belief, Native Language, Nationality of One’s Ancestors (Heritage), Living Among Representatives of One’s Own Nationality, and Living Among Representatives of Different Nationalities. I based these selections on the works of several sociologists that identified these elements as the overriding factors important for making individual and group decisions regarding national identity. Both Weber (1922) and Smith (1986) recognize the importance of language, heritage and the perceived ethno-national identities of one’s ancestors, and the effects of religion on group identification and mentality. Living Among Representatives of One’s Own and Other Nationalities was important to include based on Brubaker’s (1995) conception of the nationalizing state. Living among Russians might help spread the culture of “the nominally state-bearing nation,” while living among members of one’s own ethno-national group could be important for fostering group solidarity and preserving cultures of national minorities.

Table 1: Independent Variables and Categories

Territory:	Stavropol and Other Territories (N=212)	Karachay-Cherkessia (N=143)
Nationality:	Russian (N=145)	Non-Russian (N=212)
Gender:	Male (N=96)	Female (N=261)
Titular-Status:	Titular (N=245)	No Titular Status (N=111)
Religion Type:	Islamic (N=194)	Non-Islamic (N=163)
Practice of Religion:	Practicing (N=76)	Non-Practicing (N=281)
Birthplace:	Urban (N=97)	Rural (N=260)
Living Place:	Urban (N=186)	Rural (N=166)
Parents’ Birthplace:	Same (N=180)	Different (N=177)
Mixed Marriage:	Mixed (N=30)	Traditional (N=327)

Based on the biographical information collected from the participants, I divided them into ten binary data categories (0,1), which translated into ten independent variables: Territory

(Stavropol and Others vs. Karachay-Cherkessia), Nationality (Russian vs. non-Russian), Gender, Titular Status, Religion-Type (Islamic vs. non-Islamic), Practice of Religion, Birthplace (Urban vs. Rural), Living Place (Urban vs. Rural), Parents' Birthplace (same as participant's vs. different), and Mixed-Marriage (parents of different nationalities vs. parents of the same). If participants did not complete the biographical information in all categories, their responses were not counted in these categories.

“Territory” is an independent variable, dividing the participants into those from Stavropol and other territories (N=212) from participants from Karachay-Cherkessia (N=143). The purpose of this category was to examine differences in responses from participants living in a republic, with autonomous status, to those living in a *krai*, which is under more direct federal control. I included respondents who were from territories other than Stavropol or Karachay-Cherkessia with those from Stavropol in order to keep the data form consistent and because their responses were gathered in Stavropol.

The variable “Nationality” was designed to examine differences in responses from Russians and non-Russians. Self-identified Russians, regardless of any other factor were labeled “Russian” (N=145), while members of any other ethno-national group were labeled “non-Russian” (N=212).

The variable “Gender” was divided simply between males and females. There were 96 male respondents and 261 female respondents. Gender is an important societal and geographical factor in the North Caucasus, primarily due to the emphasis of patriarchy in local non-Russian cultures (Rogozin, 2008) and due to the widely accepted gender roles in Russian society.

“Titular Status” was a variable designed to test differences between those living in a territory that is officially considered to be their “homeland” in terms of current Russian policy, as well as through historical legacies. Individuals with “Titular-Status” (N=245), were defined as those currently residing in their home areas: Karachay and Cherkess in Karachay-Cherkessia, and Russians in Stavropol Krai. Although whether or not Russians can ever really be considered a “titular group” is debatable, I chose to include them because the principle is the same; they are living in a territory considered to be their homeland, which has been designated for them through the ethno-federalist system. Those individuals with “No Titular-Status” (N=111), are participants who do not live in their designated homeland territories. These individuals included, for example: Russians in Karachay-Cherkessia, Cherkess in Stavropol Krai, or Abazins, Armenians, and Nogais in any territory.

“Religion Type” was divided into “Islamic” (N=194), and “non-Islamic” (N=163). I divided the data in this fashion due to the fact that the overwhelming majority of participants were either Orthodox Christian or Muslim; however, although a small number of participants self-identified as atheists, pagan, or another religion, all of them were Russian. Therefore, for the purposes of consistency, the non-Islamic category includes Christians (95%) and others (5%).

“Practicing Religion” was divided into “Practicing” (N=76) and “non-Practicing” (N=281). These divisions were based on whether or not participants indicated going regularly to their respective places of worship, in this case either to a church or a mosque.

“Birthplace” was divided into “Urban” (N=97) and “Rural” (N=260). For the purposes of this division, those participants born in the study area were considered urban if they were born in Stavropol or Cherkessk. Those participants born outside of the study area were considered

urban if their birthplace held the status of a regional capital (Elista for example), or if their city was larger than Stavropol (Volgograd for example).

“Living Place” was also divided into “Urban” (N=186) and “Rural” (N=166), based on the same criteria as the previous variable. The reason for including this variable in addition to birthplace was the hope of accounting for the fact that a large number of urban residents throughout the North Caucasus have migrated from rural areas (Belazorov, Tinkov, and Panin, 2008).

“Parents’ Birthplace” was divided into participants who were born in the same local vicinity as their parents (N=180), and those who were not (N= 177). I included this variable because I wanted to explore whether or not having previous generations of one’s family (historical connections) from the same location influenced participants’ opinions regarding place-based identity factors in particular.

The variable “Mixed-Marriage” was divided into those who had parents of different nationalities (N=30) and those who did not (N=327). The goal of creating this variable was to test whether or not having a mixed-ethnic background was important for how one considers both place-based and traditional identity factors.

I analyzed the data collected from the surveys in two ways. First, I compared the average mean scores of the entire sampling group regarding their responses to each dependent variable. This simple strategy allowed me to rank the various identity factors in terms of their overall importance in the context of the entire study area. Noting the mean differences between each category among the independent variables also allowed me to see which groups prioritized which dependant variable and to what degree. I expected to find higher mean scores regarding Russian

territorial constructs, namely “Living in the Russian Federation” and Living in the Southern Federal District” from Russians. I expected non-Russians to prioritize the North Caucasus because of the large non-Russian population and prevalence of Islam. I expected Native Language to be higher for non-Russians as well as Heritage and Religion because these factors serve as distinct identity markers that differ from Russian dominance. Also, I expected that Religion would be more important to those who practice, and that Living in a Particular Krai or Republic would be more important to those with titular status, especially in Karachay-Cherkessia.

Second, I evaluated the data using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), which is useful when testing for significant differences between group responses in situations where there are multiple dependent variables, in this case there are ten (Mertler and Vannatta, 2005). I first considered utilizing MANOVA after seeing it used in previous studies to measure variables for multi-group identity (Dunbar, 1997). I performed the MANOVA analysis using the program SPSS. The null hypothesis for MANOVA testing is that there is no statistically significant difference between group responses. Because I deemed each independent variable important enough to include in the study, I anticipated possibly rejecting the null in the case of each one. However, I most expect to observe significant differences between Russians and non-Russians regarding the importance of “Living in Russia” and “Living in the North Caucasus.” I also expected Islamic participants to significantly favor the nationality of their ancestors. I was also expected that titular groups would favor their republics more than non-titular groups.

In order to perform MANOVA, data must meet several assumptions. One of these assumptions is that they are normally distributed (Rogerson, 2001). I checked the distribution of each of the variables for normality based on their standardized skewness scores (skewness

divided by standard error). Any variable's distribution having an absolute standardized skewness score of greater than 3.09 ($p < .001$, two-tailed) was considered not to be normally distributed and therefore needed to be transformed in order to conduct analysis.

The distributions of "Birthplace" showed positive skewness, while the distributions of all of the other variables exhibited negative skewness. The variables "Birthplace," "Living in the Southern Federal District," and "Living among Representatives of Other Nationalities" were all normally distributed. The other (non-normally distributed) variables were transformed so as to improve normality. The square root transformation was applied to "Living in The Russian Federation" and "Living in a Particular Krai or Republic." The logarithmic (base 10) transformation was applied to "Living in The North Caucasus." "Living Among Representatives of One's Own Nationality (Living Among Own)" underwent the inverse transform. The variables "Religious Belief (Religion)," "Native Language (Language)," and "Nationality of One's Ancestors (Heritage)" were dichotomized because no mathematical transformation could normalize these data's distribution.

Cognitive Mapping Exercise

The third element of data collection in my project utilized a technique known as "free recall sketch mapping." Free recall sketch mapping is a participatory mapping exercise in which research subjects are given a blank sheet of paper and asked to draw a cognitive map that is prompted by a question or instruction (Pocock, 1976). Participants in my study were given this instruction: "Schematically sketch your homeland, and label within it the three places that are most important for you and those close to you." I expected to collect information on the territory

that a participant considers to be his or her homeland. In total, I collected 322 sketch maps. This number differs from the number of survey participants due to the fact that not every participant chose to draw a map.

I coded the maps in terms of 11 binary categories (“included” vs. “not included”) that occurred commonly or seemed to explain participants’ conception of homeland. The percentages of maps that included examples of each category were graphed compared to the percentage that did not include the same elements. These percentages were then categorized according to the same list of independent variables used to analyze the survey results.

First, I coded the sketches in terms of how they represented homeland. If participants provided some kind of map with borders, thus thinking about homeland in terms of bounded territory, I considered that to be a map. Other responses that did not include bounded territory showed various places, but not any certain territorial boundaries. I also coded for cartographic accuracy, that is, whether or not participants those participants who sketched maps with bounded space made an attempt to draw descriptive borders, not just simple circles or squares.

The next three groupings were based on borders. I coded the maps for borders at three different scales: Federal, Regional, and Local. Federal Scale borders are those of the Russian Federation. Regional borders were those that represented either a concrete regionally administered territory, such as a *krai*, republic, or federal district, or a sub-regional border, such as “The South” or the North-Caucasus region. Local borders were bounded space around a city, village, or neighborhood.

I also coded for places using the same three scales. Federal places, or places important to The Russian Federation, not located in the study area, such as Moscow and St. Petersburg were

noted in this category. Regional places were places located within the study area, such as Stavropol, Cherkessk, or particular villages. Local places were those denoted within city of village settings. These places included schools, places of work, and parks.

The next three categories reflected certain kinds of places that appeared on the sketch maps. Religious places were noted when the participant depicted a church, mosque, or holy site. Physical features in the landscape were coded for important places like mountains, rivers, and forests. Finally, ethnic symbols were coded as either places important to national heritage that were not religious, such as monuments or memorials, or national symbols included in the sketches, such as a Russian flag, or the flag of Karachay-Cherkessia.

I then conducted a chi-squared test, using SPSS to cross tab the same categorical variables I used for the survey data: Territory, Nationality, Titular-Status, and so on, with the eleven coding classifications of the sketch maps: “Map,” “Cartography,” “Russian Federal Border,” “Regional Border,” “Local Border,” “Federal Place,” “Regional Place,” “Local Place,” “Religious Place,” “Landscape Feature,” and “Ethnic Symbol.”

I selected a chi-squared test because I wanted to test for significant correlations between groups in including the examples of these various categories in their sketch maps. The data, being entirely binary in this case, met all of the assumptions for conducting a chi-squared test (Rogerson, 2001). I conducted the analysis with SPSS, reporting not only significant chi-squared values, but also the Mantel-Haenszel Common Odds Ratio Estimate, which describes the likelihood of one categorical sub-group including one of the mapping categories on their sketch versus the other. For example the likelihood of Russians including the borders of the Russian Federation as opposed to non-Russians.

Territory:	Stavropol and Other Territories (N=195)	Karachay-Cherkessia (N=127)
Nationality:	Russian (N=131)	Non-Russian (N=191)
Gender:	Male (N=219)	Female (N=103)
Titular-Status:	Titular (N=88)	No Titular Status (N=234)
Religion Type:	Islamic (N=148)	Non-Islamic (N=174)
Practice of Religion:	Practicing (N=76)	Non-Practicing (N=246)
Birthplace:	Urban (N=97)	Rural (N=225)
Living Place:	Urban (N=174)	Rural (N=148)
Parents' Birthplace:	Same (N=155)	Different (N=167)
Mixed Marriage:	Mixed (N=29)	Traditional (N=293)

Overall, I expected that Russians would draw the borders of the Russian Federation more often than non-Russians because Russians can logically invoke both the concepts of civic and ethno-national identity when considering federal scale conceptions of Russia as homeland. I expected non-Russians to be more focused on regional or local constructs. Regarding the differences between Stavropol Krai and Karachay-Cherkessia, I expected to see participants from the republic to be focused more on Karachay-Cherkessia than on Russia, and I expected non-titular groups to focus on the landscape, rather than on political borders. I expected participants from urban environments to use borders and cartographic accuracy more than rural participants. I also expected non-Russians, especially Islamic participants, to include symbols and landscape features more than Russians and expected to see religious places appear more frequently on the maps of those who practice their religion.

Chapter III:

Examining Factors of Ethno-National Identity in the North Caucasus

In this chapter, I highlight and discuss various elements of ethno-national identity as they were considered by the participants in my study. One of my main objectives in this study is to explore how place-based identity markers (birthplace, and living in Russia, the Southern Federal District, a particular territory, or the North Caucasus region) factor into the participants' conceptions of ethno-national identity. Another goal is to examine how place-based elements compare with other, non-place-based (language, heritage, religion, living among one's own and different groups) components of ethno-national identity. I asked respondents to rank each element in terms of its overall importance to his or her personal conception of ethno-national identity (*natsionalnost*) on a five-point scale. The scale measured importance with an answer of "one" meaning "absolutely unimportant," to "five," meaning "very important." Choosing to rank an element with a score of "three" showed that it was neither particularly important nor unimportant. I compared the mean average rankings of all the elements so as to present an overall ranking of them in terms of the entire study area.

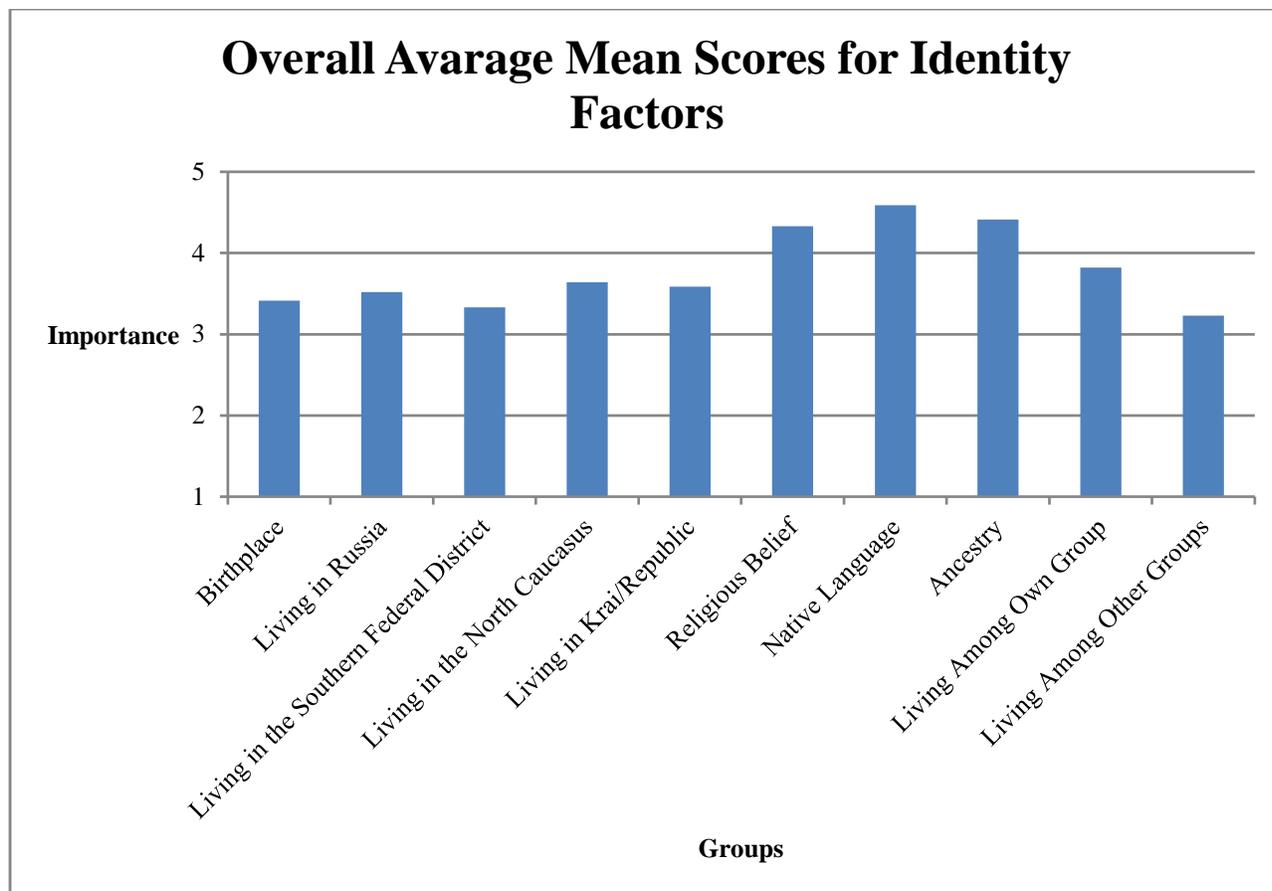


Figure 9: Average Means Scores Regarding the Importance of Each Dependant Variable.

I wanted to examine place-based elements of ethno-national identity in terms of how they form a spatial or territorial context for ethno-national identity. Being from somewhere is a potential component that everyone can consider regarding how one self-identifies. I intended to explore what living in certain places meant to participants in terms of their own personal and perceived group attachments. I also wanted to check whether some territorial distinctions were more meaningful than others. Political boundaries for example reflect scales of territory and authority in Russia, therefore different territorial delineations (the Russian Federation, federal district, krai or republic) hold potentially different meanings among the various groups in the

study. All boundaries are constructed to include some and exclude others, the scales to which participants ascribe points to territorial scales at which they consider themselves included.

Elements of ethno-national identity that are not based on place, such as language, religion, and heritage, cannot be completely separated from it. All of these components exist in some spatial context but are also able to transcend territorial boundaries. However, by asking participants to rank them using the same scale as place-based elements, it is possible to compare how they factor into conceptions of ethno-national identity. Non-place-based elements, especially language and religion, are important for one's moral character, and even how one thinks. Heritage is important because it factors into one's conception of his or her historical homeland, as well as providing historical justification for associating with a particular ethno-national group.

Using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), I was able to identify several statistically significant differences in how various groups of participants ranked elements of their ethno-national identity. Through interviewing participants regarding their responses, I gained insight as to why these differences may have occurred. I also attempted to prompt participants to consider ethno-national identity in the context of homeland. I did so to explore their views on whether one who exhibits non-place-based identity factors alone constitutes a member of their group. I now present the results of the MANOVA analysis and show how they relate to important theoretical concepts in political geography.

Place-Based Elements of Ethno-National Identity

In Knight's (1982) discussion of identity and territory, he writes of territorial regulation, suggesting that society has different meaning at different scales. He claims that the main aspect for territorial acknowledgment is the establishment of authority over social order. All of the places with which people can identify have their own positions in the Russian federal system, but can be inclusive or exclusive to certain groups of people. Karachay-Cherkessia has meaning because authority exists over its space and social order. However, whether Moscow actually represents a higher form of authority in the minds of the populace there may be disputable. This is not to say the residents of the Stavropol Krai, a Russian territory, automatically recognize Moscow. There are many place-based elements that an individual or group could factor into their conceptions of identity. I identified five such factors that are important to consider in the context of Russian ethno-federalism, and specifically in the North Caucasus: Birthplace, Living in the Russian Federation, Living in the Southern Federal District, Living in a particular Krai or Republic, and Living in the North Caucasus. These places all constitute possible territorial contexts to which an individual or group could relate.

The meanings of spatial scales can differ greatly. As Kaplan (1999) suggests, people in a given region form hierarchies of geographically based identities. Such hierarchies are important in the North Caucasus because it constitutes a distinct physical and cultural region that exists among various political territories. Some groups might be more likely to affiliate with their birthplace rather than with their Federal District, while others might consider their identity in a federal sense, as having an overall Russian civic identity before associating with their city or region.

When considering identity in terms of place, it is important to remember that all other factors of identity, whether they are language, religion, or any other, exist within some kind of spatial context. This notion is especially true when considering the idea of a nation. As Herb (1999) reminds us, territory provides tangible evidence of a nation's existence. One's living place also provides a set of environmentally-based perceptual filters that can influence all of the other elements of identity. Therefore, whether or not place-based identity factors are as highly regarded as traditional non place-based factors, it is helpful to consider place, scale, and spatial context when considering identity.

Birthplace

Birthplace is perhaps the most intimate and concrete place-based identity factor. Where one is born often determines his or her citizenship, and therefore his or her civic identity. Being from somewhere automatically puts a person, to draw from Staeheli (2003), "in-place" or "out of place." This designation depends on particular meanings of the place in which someone was born and also on characteristics of the individual. People are likely to carry with them the stereotypes associated with their birthplace, and perhaps also its accents, and customs, and even mentality. Birthplace can bring with it social expectations especially in a cultural crossroads like the North Caucasus.

Birthplace received an overall mean average of 3.42, making it the seventh most important factor of identity and the fourth most important factor out of the five place-based identity factors. Differences in how groups responded regarding birthplace were significant between those with titular status (including Russians in Stavropol and other Russian territories)

and those without. Significant differences also existed between those born in the same place as their parents and those who were not.

Participants with titular status, meaning that they are living in a territory designated for their group, reported an average mean score of 3.52, while those without titular status reported an average mean score of 3.17. One reason for the importance of birthplace to those with titular-status might be linked to old system of internal passports in Russia, where an individual's nationality is listed in his or her official documents noting the importance of civic identification. This theme appeared common throughout the interviews. Participant 146, a Russian man from Stavropol, said:

Birthplace is very important. For example, if you were born in the territory of a European country, you would have citizenship in the EU, if you had Russian parents, you would get dual citizenship. If you were born in the Russian Federation, but then live in any other country you would continue to be Russian.

Participant 144, a Russian woman from Stavropol, said:

The nationality of one's parents is a more important factor than birthplace, but by law, if you are born outside of Russia, you are not Russian. Well, you are not Russian by passport, but you are by nationality.

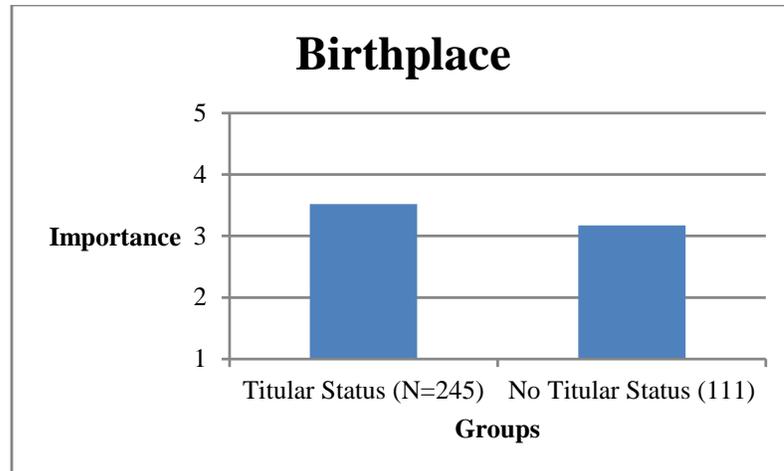


Figure 10: Average Mean Scores Regarding the Importance of Birthplace between Titular and Non-Titular Participants.

Considering birthplace important for the purposes of documentation, citizenship or titular-status supports the idea that one is born into a particular nationality. Having the right birthplace can thus provide someone with all of the civic elements of nationality important for membership in most nation-states. While some participants admitted that they saw one's nationality as a choice, others stated that everyone is born into a certain nationality, seeing it as something that cannot be changed. This variety of opinions illustrates the confusing issue of civic identity versus ethnic identity and how in the Russian context these two ideas are easily confused. Some participants also equated being born into a certain nation as having both physical and metaphysical importance. According to participant number 38, a Russian woman from Stavropol:

People do not pick their nationality, it is from God. We do not have a choice, our nationalities are predetermined.

According to participant 32, an Armenian woman born in Armenia but living in Stavropol:

Well, maybe the soul of a person can become someone else, but physically, by one's roots, one cannot change his or her own history. If one's grandfather is an Armenian or a Greek, he cannot change that. Maybe God can change it, but people cannot!

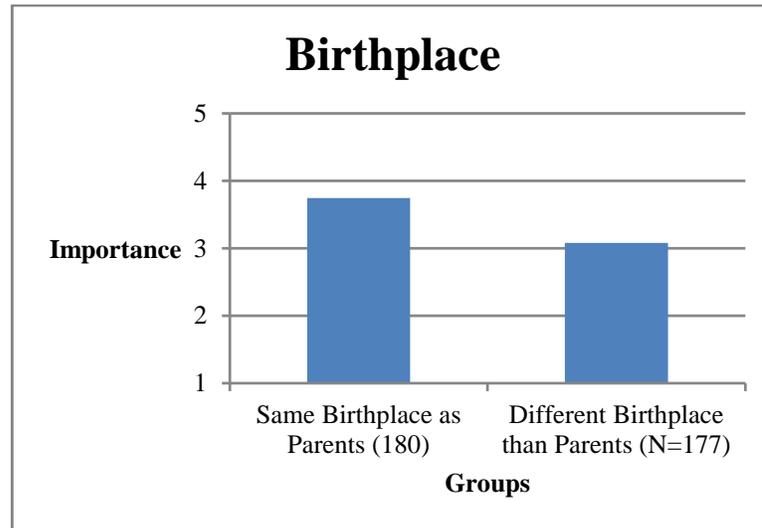


Figure 11: Mean Averages Regarding the Importance of Birthplace between Participants Born in the Same Place as Their Own Parents and Those Not.

There was also a significant difference between participants from the same place as their parents ($M=3.74$), and those born in a different place ($M=3.08$). The interviews echoed this theme, as being born in an ethnically Russian territory possibly served as a determinate for one's nationality. Participant number 40, a Russian woman born in Stavropol said:

Birthplace in my view completely matters for my nationality and for my behavior. I am Russian. Well, my dad was born in Stavropol Krai, in the city of Stavropol, but all of his family has roots native to the republic of Mordovia, so therefore you could technically designate his nationality as Mordvin. He does not use their language, he can only slowly pronounce a couple of words.

Participant number 41, a Russian woman from a small village in Stavropol Krai, said:

I believe that one's birthplace is important not only for distinguishing his or her nationality, even more so than by living in another place. Even if a Russian person is born outside our borders, if he were born here, he is Russian.

Something important to consider regarding one's birthplace is that many of the participants were in fact born not in the Russian Federation, but in the Soviet Union. Because all of the participants' parents were born in the Soviet Union, their parents' conceptions of birthplace fall into a different territorial and political context. However, many of the territorial boundaries and places names within the former RSFSR remained the same after the collapse, allowing Soviet Stavropol to be considered as the same entity as contemporary Stavropol. The discrepancy between Soviet and post-Soviet birthplaces was a concern primarily to those who were born outside of the RSFSR. Participant 57, an Armenian born in Baku, said:

I was born in Baku, part of Azerbaijan, but when I was born it was still the Soviet Union, so it (nationality) did not matter very much.

According to Participant 36, a Russian:

I was born in Kazakhstan, in the Soviet Union. So, it does not bother me to live in a federal district, or abroad. It is not important where one lives in order to have a Russian soul.

Here Participant 36 has been forced to consider her ethno-national identity more in terms of non-place-based factors due to the fact that she sees herself as not having been born in Russian space.

Living in the Russian Federation

Living in Russia as a place-based identity factor relates to recognition of Russian society at the state-level, representing what Knight (1982) would call a high level of authority over social order. Federal authority is the highest level of social order within the Russian state. Living in Russia also matters in terms of human-security. As O’Lear (2007) suggests, state authorities are ultimately responsible for making policy and decisions that will directly affect that human security of the populace of the state. In an area prone to ethnic violence like the North Caucasus, security constitutes a legitimate concern. The deployment of *OMON* (special purpose police unit) security forces, a federal service, is a typically response to such threats. Moscow is also responsible for providing economic security in the North Caucasus, as half of the republics’ income is received in the form of federal subsidies (Belozorov, Tinkov, and Panin, 2008). Therefore, protection and economic welfare provided from Moscow might work to solidify the conception of Russia as being important for the well being and security of one’s ethno-national group. However, participants ranked living in Russia as one of the lowest overall identity factors.

Despite being the only identify factor to which every participant in the study could relate, “Living in Russia” was only the sixth overall most important identity factor with an average mean score of 3.52, and it ranked third in importance among overall place-based identity factors to “Living in the North Caucasus” (3.64) and “Living in a Particular Krai or Republic” (3.58). Russia has borders, print-media, national broadcasting, currency, law, and citizenship. Perhaps more importantly, the Russian Federation represents space that is not hostile to Russians, suggesting Passi’s (1996) concept of meaning in terms of “cultural shape” and Staeheli’s (2003)

being “in place” or “out of place.” Theoretically, Russians could likely feel “in place” in Russia, where their cultural shape exists. Non-Russians may not recognize their own cultural shape in all of Russia, causing them to be “out of place.” Republics in Russia and the concept of national cultural autonomy constitute a territorial and political compromise on this issue.

The possibility of equating one’s own sense of ethno-national identity with the grandeur of the state is clear. The extent to which state symbols and propaganda in the Russian Federation are targeted toward ethnic Russians (*Russkiye*) as opposed to the entire citizenry is contentious. However, most scholars agree that in post-Soviet space, the abundance of exclusive nationalist movements has increased, and many critics have accused government figures of playing into the hands of the pro-ethnic Russian agenda. Therefore, when thinking about Russia as an entity and a place at the federal level, ethnic Russians have the possibility to fuse their nationality and their citizenship, while non-Russians must rely solely on their status as citizens of the country. It is perhaps not surprising that the analysis showed a significant difference in the responses of Russians and non-Russians regarding the importance of living in The Russian Federation to their sense of national identity. Russians, with a mean value of 3.89, prioritized living in Russia to non-Russians, with a mean of 3.26.

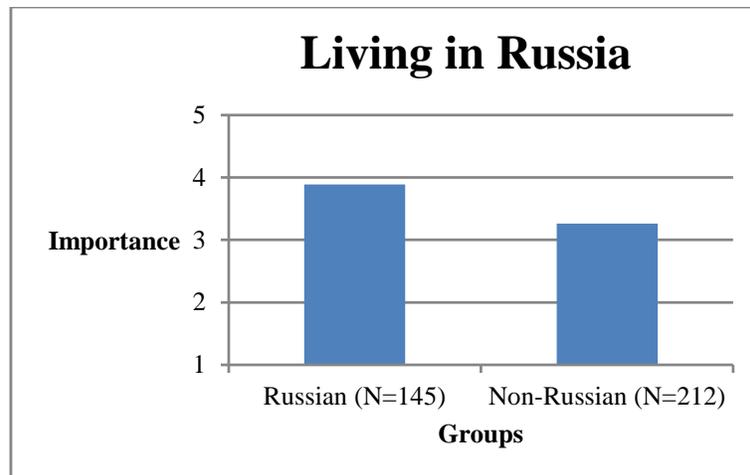


Figure 12: Mean Averages Regarding Living in the Russian Federation Between Russians and Non-Russians.

Russian interview participants provided much insight into how they relate to the role of living in Russia regarding identity. Many respondents prioritized Russia at the federal scale to regional or local scales in terms of importance. Participant 176 said,

“To be Russian, a person has to be born precisely in Russia. A person must also be raised here in order to be considered Russian.”

Participant 154 commented:

For the purposes of national identity, I think it is important to live in a particular country, different regions are interchangeable. Many people change regions for work, or to study, so that is why living in a particular region is not so important.

According to Participant 146,

“Local places are completely unimportant, Russia is big.”

These comments emphasize size and mobility. Russia’s territory is the most expansive in the world, and Russian citizens are for the most part free to move around within it, meaning that any part of Russia is their potential living place and thus part of their “imagined community”

(Anderson, 1983). Participant 151 stated:

Homeland plainly singles out nationality. Living in the Southern Federal District also does not really mean much. I have lived in Moscow. Living in the North Caucasus is the same, and living in a particular Krai or Republic also. What is important is that it is in Russia.

Many Russians indicated that it is imperative for a Russian to live in Russia, suggesting that someone who was born outside of the Russia was not completely Russian. This emphasis on the territory of the Russian Federation shows that the idea of Russia as a nation-state is taken seriously in terms of identity. Herb (1999) reminds us that defined territory is an important identity marker for a nation because it provides tangible evidence for the nation's existence. Not being born in Russia may already be grounds for being an "other," lacking the specific cultural context of Russia and not being connected to Russian territory as a tangible entity. Participant 34 commented on the Russian cultural context by saying:

Living in Russia helps a person understand the traditions and culture of Russia, especially in the middle of Russia, in the villages where they can get their information.

Participant 76 said:

It is more important to socialize with Russians, even outside the border... but then, well they [Russians abroad] lose something Russian (*Rossiskoe*).

His use of the term *Rossiskoe* indicates that he is referring to a sense of civic belonging in the Russian Federation, rather than belonging to the Russian ethnic group. In other words he feels as though Russians outside of Russia, although having similar identity factors, religion, language, are lacking a social and cultural context that is exclusive to the Russian Federation as a country, and therefore to Russia as a tangible place. Participant 42 added:

Living in the Russian Federation plays a role, Russians in America for example are not completely Russian.

All of the non-Russian participants in the study are either members of nations that exist primarily within the Russian Federation, have large Diasporas in Russia, or have republics within Russia. All of them have had historical experience with both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. Therefore, living in Russia could have some meaning to their ethno-national identities. However, non-Russians preferred to identify more closely with regions that were closer to their particular nation's perceived native land.

Another significant difference appeared among Islamic and non-Islamic respondents. Non-Islamic participants averaged a mean score of 3.75, while Islamic participants had a mean score of 3.13. The similarities between Islamic and non-Islamic and Russian non-Russian are great in this study due to the fact that these groups only differed by 18 individuals, most of whom are Armenians living in Stavropol. Nevertheless, it appears that living in Russia is an element favored by those who do not claim Islam as opposed to those who do. This distinction reminds us that the North Caucasus not only demarcates Russian space from non-Russian space, but also Islamic space from non-Islamic space.

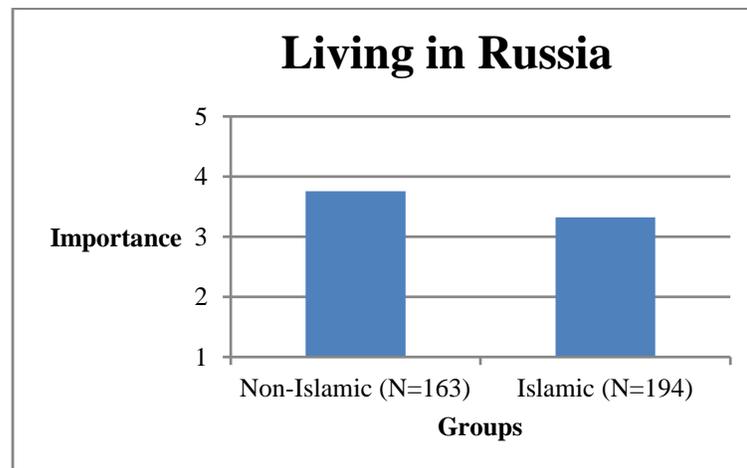


Figure 6: Average Mean Scores Regarding the Importance of Living in Russia between Islamic and Non-Islamic Participants.

“Living in Russia” was also significantly more important to those individuals born in the same region as their parents and previous generations of their family. These participants averaged a mean of 3.67, while those with parents born in places different than their own averaged 3.37. As was the case with all of the place-based identity factors, those with previous generations of relatives from the same regions as themselves averaged a higher mean than those who did not.

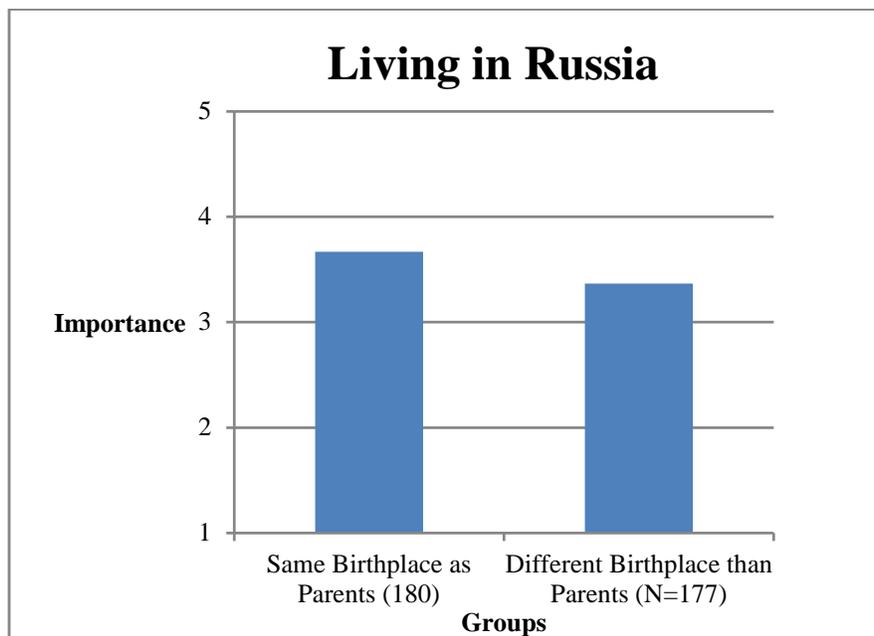


Figure 7: Average Mean Scores Regarding the Importance of Living in Russia between Participants Born in the Same Place as Their Parents and Those Not.

Living in the Southern Federal District

The Southern Federal District (SFD), or *Yuzhniy Federalnij Okrug*, is one of the seven sub-regional administrative units created by Putin’s reforms of the mid-2000s. At the time

when I was collecting data in 2009, both Stavropol Krai and Karachay-Cherkessia were part of this district. However, in the Fall of 2009, Russian president Dmitry Medvedev announced the formation of a North Caucasus Federal District to which both Stavropol and Karachay-Cherkessia were assigned. Perhaps the fact that the SFD was a relatively new construction, and as stated by the actions of the Russian government, not a particularly useful one, explains why this was the identity factor that the participants found least important overall. Living in the SFD received a mean score of only 3.33. However, an average over 3.00 does indicate that more participants found it relatively more important than unimportant, showing they were not neutral regarding even the least important place-based identity factor.

Some of the interview participants responded to the SFD mostly in aesthetic terms, most likely equating this category to “The South of Russia,” rather than with this particular political entity. Participant number 64, a Russian woman from Stavropol, said:

It [the SFD] is not really important because there are many beautiful places in the North and in Central Russia.

Participant 65, another Russian woman from Stavropol, said:

I look at living in the south not from the viewpoint of living among many nationalities, but in terms of comfort factors. We have better weather here (than in the North).

Most of the interview respondents seemed indifferent about living in the Southern Federal District. However, one participant, number 10, noted a spatial divide in Russian culture by saying:

The Southern Federal District is important because someone who has lived here long enough understands how southern culture differs from other regions of Russia.

Despite its poor ranking compared to the other identity factors, there were two significant differences between groups regarding living in the SFD. Islamic participants ($M=3.64$) favored it over non-Islamic participants ($M=2.97$). Interestingly, the difference between Russians and non-Russians was not significant regarding this factor. The differing opinions of Islamic and non-Islamic respondents might reflect how each group views the SFD as a political and or territorial entity. Because it is a federal district the SFD is under the direct subordination of Moscow, acting as the first line in the regional chain of command post-Putin. Therefore, if the SFD were recognized in terms of authority it is more likely that Russians would have prioritized it higher than non-Russians. However, the reasons why Islamic respondents found the SFD more favorable are likely linked to the fact that the entire North-Caucasus sub-region was located within the SFD, giving this district a relatively high percentage of Islamic residents compared to some other Federal districts. Population dynamics may have lead to The SFD being viewed as Islamic space, within Russia. The cultural shape of this territory is more important to Islamic participants in terms of federal political territories.

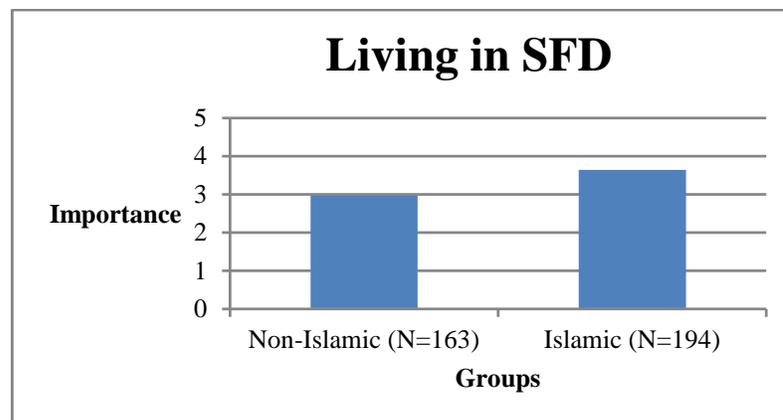


Figure 8: Average Mean Scores Regarding the Importance of Living in the Southern Federal District between Islamic and Non-Islamic Participants.

Living in a Particular *Krai* or Republic

The identity factor “Living in a Particular *Krai* or Republic” received the second highest mean average (M=3.58) of the place-based identity factors and it was the sixth most important of the ten total factors. Although there were significant differences among two of the dependent variable groupings, Islamic versus non-Islamic and Same Birthplace as Parents versus different, there were no significant differences between participants from Stavropol Krai and Karachay-Cherkessia. This lack of a significant result is important because it shows no significant difference in how the residents of these two different federal territories view Stavropol Krai and Karachay-Cherkessia in terms of ethno-national identity. In other words, the participants’ responses from Stavropol Krai did not differ from those taken from Karachay-Cherkessia, suggesting that living in either a Krai or a Republic significantly differ to their respective populations in terms of importance.

Being born in the same place as one’s ancestors is significant. Such participants averaged a mean of 3.83, while participants not born in the same place as their parents answered with an average of 3.34. Participant 65 commented

“Here (Stavropol Krai) is important because my family lives here, my ancestors lived here.”

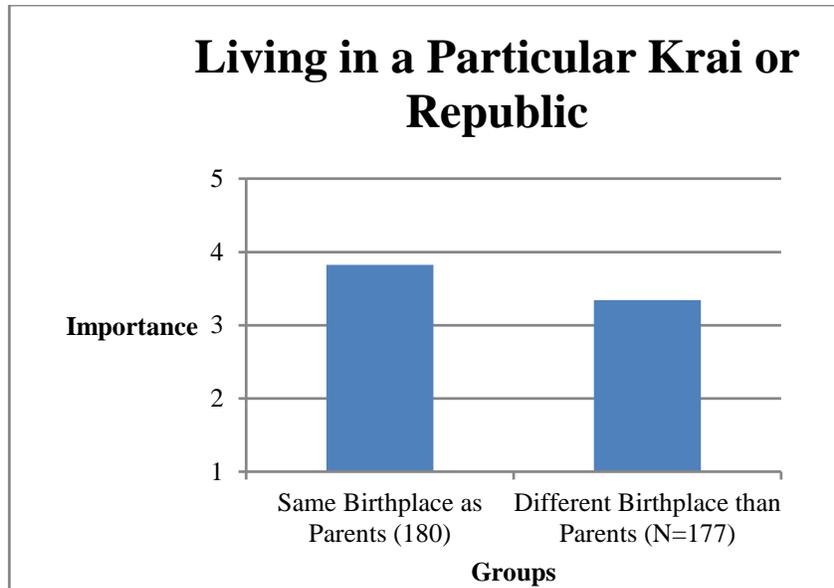


Figure 9: Average Mean Scores Regarding the Importance of Living in a Particular Krai or Republic between Participants Born in the Same Place as Their Parents and Those Not.

There was also a significant difference between Islamic and non-Islamic participants. Islamic participants favored living in their krai or republic, averaging a mean of 4.13, to non-Islamic participants, who averaged a mean score of 2.97. The fact that a significant difference appeared in this variable in accordance to religion and not to ethnicity again reinstates the concept of the break between Christian and Islamic space. There are perhaps enough non-Russians in Stavropol to skew the results away from a significant finding for either the variables “Nationality” or “Territory,” but not enough Russians or other Christians from Karachay-Cherkessia to sway the data from the republic. The non-Russian titular groups in republics have a very limited amount of territory that they can officially claim as “their own,” making them likely to associate themselves with their republic. Minority groups with no titular status technically have no territory to claim, leading them to associate with non-place based identity factors. In this case, the association is with their religion, specifically Islam.

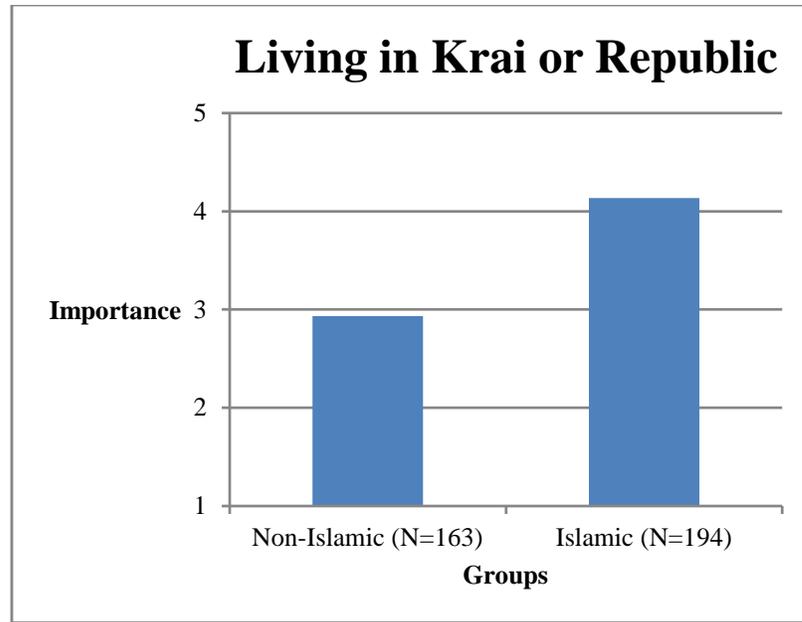


Figure 10: Average Mean Scores Regarding the Importance of Living in a Particular Krai or Republic between Islamic and Non-Islamic Participants

Russians were rather indifferent in their answers regarding this factor. In fact, living in a particular *krai* was the second least important factor for Russians as a group, more important only than living in the North Caucasus. This result is perhaps not surprising because Russians have many federal territories in which they are the majority ethnic group and which are officially considered Russian territory: *krais* and *oblasts*. Participant number 64 commented:

I could easily live comfortably in any place in Russia, like Krasnodar Krai, or Moscow, in St. Petersburg, in Kamchatka.

She emphasizes here that the particular type of territory is not important, as long as it is some kind of Russian federal territory. Participant number 66 said:

Living in Stavropol Krai is important to me, but to our brothers elsewhere in the country it would not make a difference. A Russian could come from any given krai or republic.

Here, republics are grouped together with other territories under the term Russian, implying that it is not important whether a Russian comes from “Russian territory.”

Although Russian respondents tended not to care about being from Stavropol Krai, except for family connections and aesthetic elements, several respondents did make clear distinctions between Stavropol (and other Russian territories) and Republics. According to Participant 59:

Russia is a very big country, I am proud that I was born in Stavropol Krai. Therefore, it is important to me. If I had been born in another Krai or Republic, like in Karachay-Cherkessia for example, it would make a difference. The differences would be primarily physical. They are darker there. In Stavropol Krai, people are different. I think Karachay-Cherkessia and the republics are Russian. Actually, The Caucasus region is Russian.

The opinion of this participant definitely illustrates the opinion that physical characteristics are part of one's nationality, suggesting a primordial meaning, not separating place from physical characteristics of certain ethnic groups. He also believes that growing up within the context of Stavropol had an effect on who he is. His response also demonstrates an opinion held by many Russians: the Caucasus region is part of Russia, including the "dark-skinned" nationalities that live there.

Participant 78 is a Russian from Karachay-Cherkessia. Having lived 17 years of her life in the republic and only 3½ years in Stavropol, she had this to say:

I am from Karachay-Cherkessia, but I do not really like it there. I like it here better, in Stavropol. I was born in Stavropol, but we moved to Karachay-Cherkessia when I was half a year old, so I actually consider myself to be from Stavropol.

Hesitating to claim that one is fully "from Karachay-Cherkessia" is not uncommon among Russians in Stavropol. Because Karachay-Cherkessia was under the administration of Stavropol during most of the Soviet Period there remains a sense among Russians that the republic is still theirs, more so than other republics. However, being from a non-Russian territory is seldom glorified. Russians from Karachay-Cherkessia were either indifferent about issues of national identity or eager to draw on links to "Russian territory," such as Stavropol.

Living in the North Caucasus

With an overall average mean score of 3.64, “Living in the North Caucasus” was the most important place-based identity factor. It was the fifth strongest identity factor overall. Association with the North Caucasus region illustrates Kaplan’s (1999) notions of border identity. According to Kaplan, unique identities are found in areas where a dominant nationalist identity meets other distinct identities. In such situations, members of all national groups can ascribe to the border identity. The North Caucasus is a borderland as it marks the break between Russia’s federal borders to the south, encompasses several autonomous republics and two *krais*, and demarcates where majority Russian and Christian populations end and majority non-Russian and Islamic populations begin. Here we see the dominant identity, Russian, meeting other identities. We indeed observe members of all ethno-national groups eager to associate with the North Caucasus before other territorial contexts.

There were two significant differences between groups regarding the importance of living in the North Caucasus: Islamic vs. non-Islamic and titular status vs. non-titular individuals. Both of these differences indicate the tendency to associate with a wider sub-region than with definite territorial constructions with defined borders, such as the Russian Federation, the Southern Federal District, or a *krai* or republic.

Living in the North Caucasus was more important to Islamic participants, who averaged a mean score of 4.29, than to non-Islamic participants, who averaged a score of 2.88. The distinction between religious groups illustrates again the concept of Islamic vs. non-Islamic space. Living in the North Caucasus was the highest place-based identity factor among Islamic participants. It was the lowest among non-Islamic participants. Additionally, non-Islamic

participants' mean average below 3.00 indicates that living in the North Caucasus is actually unimportant. This fact is further evidence of the region's overall cultural shape, and how Islam may be considered "in place."

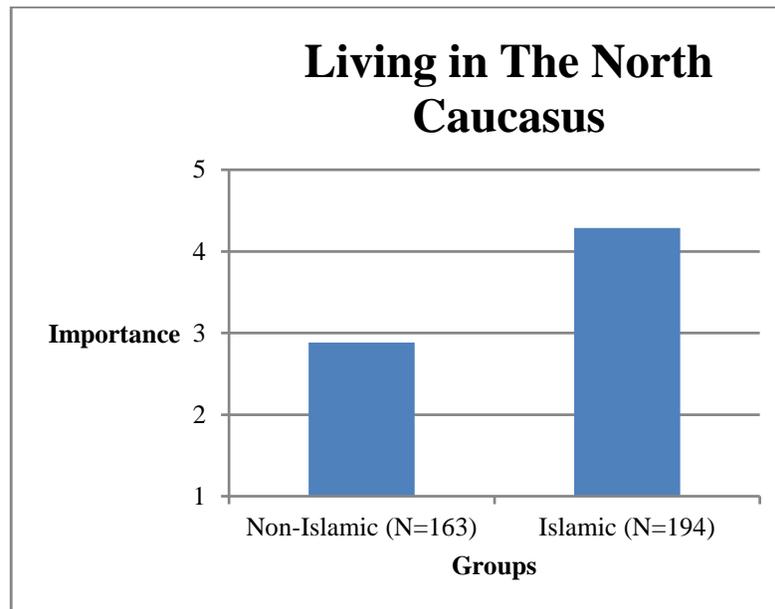


Figure 11: Average Mean Scores Regarding the Importance of Living in the North Caucasus between Islamic and Non-Islamic Participants.

Russian interview participants consistently rated living in the North Caucasus lower than the other place-based identity factors. The typical response to this issue was exemplified by participant 66:

"I do not think that living in the North Caucasus indicates that I am Russian."

Participant 34 stated:

Living in the North Caucasus does not play a very important role in the makeup of a Russian person.

Such an attitude toward the North Caucasus, as shown by Russians giving more importance to Birthplace, Living in Russia, Living in a *Krai* or Republic, and Living in the SFD, suggests that they prefer to relate to concrete federal territories rather than to a somewhat ambiguously defined sub-regional construct. However, some Russians gave this particular factor higher rating stating often that the region's diversity leads to a social environment in which people become more tolerant of other nationalities, and less focused on their own. According to participant 38:

The North Caucasus is important to me first of all because I live in a region where many diverse cultures exist. It causes you to become more tolerant, you meet people of many different mentalities here, of different cultures. It is all very interesting and it results in one treating other nationalities with tolerance, therefore it seems very important to me.

Participant number 40 rated living in the North Caucasus 5 because she felt that the idea of the Caucasus was often used in local culture, society, and government. She said:

The North Caucasus is important because everyone emphasizes this fact here. They always say that we are in the Caucasus. This is our place... where we live.

Some Russian participants also associated with living in the North Caucasus due to aesthetic preferences, particularly a love of the area's nature. Participant 20 said:

I love the mountains, nature is beautiful there (Dombay). I really like to relax, and Dombay is a very relaxing place.

For Islamic participants, the North Caucasus often represents not only a strong-hold for Islam, but also an environment in which their ancestor and ethno-national groups have an established history. Islamic participants on the whole associated more strongly with the wider North Caucasus region than even with a particular republic. This fact might show a prioritization

of family and social connections that exist throughout the region, as opposed to borders or political territorial units. Participant 192, a Muslim woman from Stavropol, said:

For me, it is really important where I was born, but living in the Russian Federation is not so important. The Southern Federal District is also not very important, but living in the North Caucasus is very important! It is where my family is from, and I have got a large circle of acquaintances there.

It is important to note that she considers living in Stavropol to mean living in the North Caucasus. Although this fact is not often debated, it is interesting that living in “non-Islamic space” does not seem to factor in to her feelings about Stavropol. She instead prioritizes family connections.

Participants without titular status, including non-Russians in Stavropol Krai, and non-Karachay/non-Cherkess in Karachay-Cherkessia, prioritized living in the North Caucasus ($M=3.83$) to those with titular status ($M=3.57$), who prioritized territories with precisely defined political borders. Examining the responses from three groups in Karachay-Cherkessia further illustrates differences between titular and non-titular groups. Here, non-titular participants ranked living in the North Caucasus the highest ($M=4.17$), as they have no special status, or official claim to homeland, in any particular politically defined territory. Russians, with an average mean of 3.00 were indifferent, treating it as any other region of Russia. The titular nationalities in Karachay-Cherkessia are both considered to be North Caucasian nationalities, thus they are able to relate both to their Republic and to the sub-region averaged in-between the other groups ($M=3.79$).

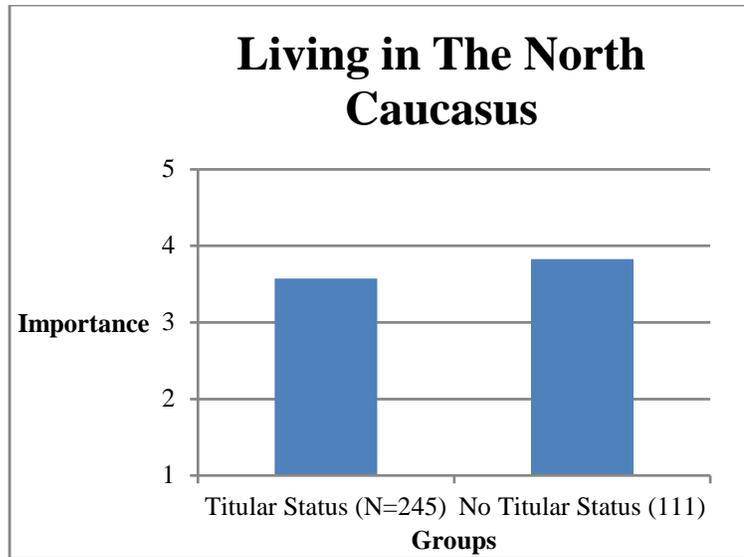


Figure 12: Average Mean Scores Regarding the Importance of Living in the North Caucasus Between Titular Status and Those Without.

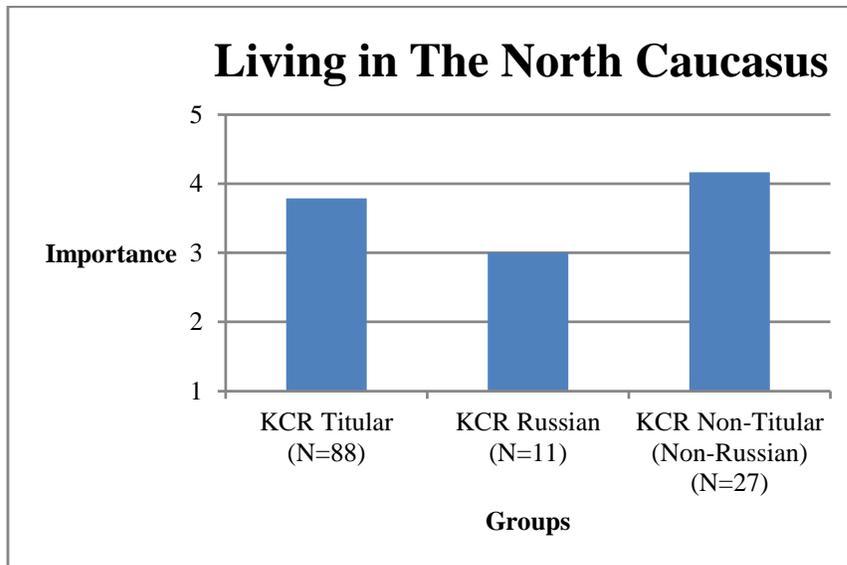


Figure 13: Average Mean Scores Regarding the Importance of Living in the North Caucasus among Groups in Karachay-Cherkessia.

When comparing these three place-based identity factors among participants from Karachay-Cherkessia, we first note the inverse relationship in the pattern between Russians and

non-Russians. Russians from Karachay-Cherkessia favored the Southern Federal District, the territory that should be considered to be the most “Russian,” perhaps due to its direct political subordination to Moscow. Next, Russians identified with the North Caucasus, which is a sub-region having some ambiguity in terms of its status as Russian vs. non-Russian. Finally, their lowest scores went to living in the republic where they do not have titular status. Non-Russians from the republic both prefer living in the North Caucasus and living in a republic to living in the SFD, showing preference to areas that could be considered to be more non-Russian. However, those with titular status give a higher score to their defined territory, whereas the non-titular individuals prefer to relate to The North Caucasus as a sub-region.

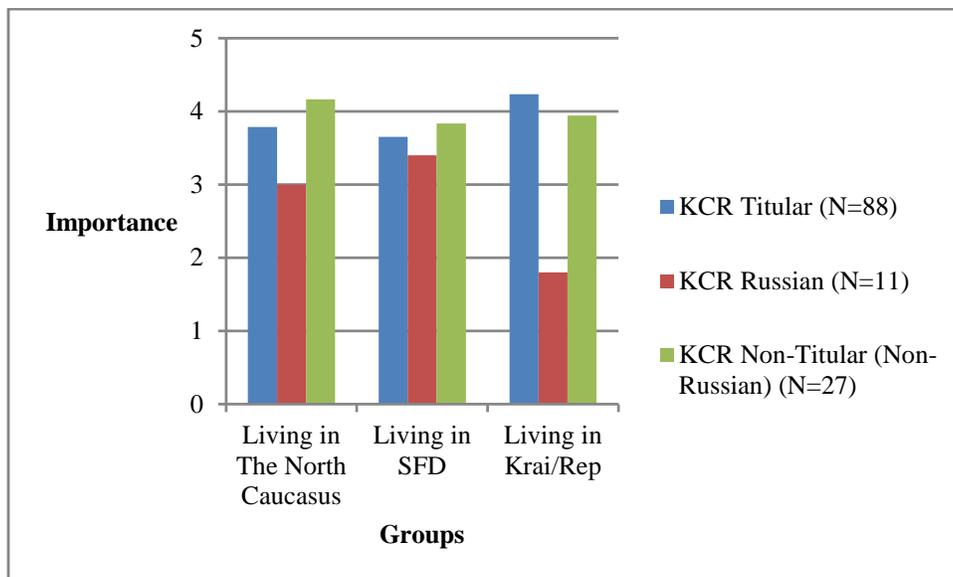


Figure 21: Comparing Average Means Regarding Three Place-Based Identity Factors Among Groups from Karachay-Cherkessia.

Other Identity Factors in Context of the North Caucasus

Native Language

The identity factor “Native Language” was given the highest overall rating on the five-point scale, receiving an overall mean of 4.59. This result is perhaps not surprising. Anderson (1983) states that since the use of vernacular languages in print media became common, native language has replaced religion as the simplest way for people to identify members of their own ethnic groups and members of other groups. Participant number 158 stated:

A person could be Russian without Orthodoxy and without the Russian language, I think that in our times it is possible.

High regard for native language was exclusive to no individual group in the study. Participant number 61 said:

I believe that any person of any nationality has to have command of his own language, it is obligatory.

According to Participant 32:

I believe that every Armenian must have command of his or her own language.

Participants stated several many reason for giving their native languages a high rating among the list of identity factors. A pronounced idea was that one’s native language puts restrictions on his or her thought process. That is, if one speaks Russian, he or she is essentially forced to think like a Russian, thus Russian language would have an effect on one’s mentality. Participant number 40 noted that:

Not having Russian language would be very problematic, it is connected to one’s mentality. Russian language, in my view, is a designating factor.

Because Russian is the lingua franca in the North Caucasus, non-Russian languages are important for identification and preserving one's national culture more than for communication. Groups of non-Russians often gather in Stavropol and converse in their native languages, sometimes for the purposes of excluding non-group members. Russians, however, rarely have this luxury, as nearly all of the area's population speaks Russian. Therefore, non-Russian languages also work to identify non-Russians as "others" in Russian society. In Karachay-Cherkessia, Russian persists due to the fact that there are many ethnic Russians living there, but also due to the fact that the native languages of the local population, with the exception of Karachay and Nogai (both Turkic languages) are not mutually intelligible. In areas where populations are mixed, such as in Cherkessk, Russian becomes the language of communication, not only for non-Russian to Russian interactions, but also for interactions between members of different non-Russian groups. Areas that are more ethnically homogeneous, like the *auls* (villages in Karachay-Cherkessia), tend to favor non-Russian languages.

All of the non-Russians that I met in Stavropol were bi-lingual, at least to some degree. Additionally, when a person was of mixed ethnicity with one Russian parent, they always self-identified as Russian if they identified their native language as Russian. Use at home and use with members of one's own ethnic group provide the only opportunities for non-Russians to utilize their native languages. Participant number 21, a Cherkess woman from Stavropol, said:

We speak Cherkess at home, but it is about half and half. We also use Russian.

Scenarios such as this one seemed to be common. This case also seemed to be the norm regarding Stavropol Armenians who are more isolated from their national areas than are the

nationalities of Karachay-Cherkessia. Participant number 57, an Armenian living in Stavropol, said:

My native language is Armenian, but I can speak Russian. I know them both the same, I just cannot read Armenian.

Participant number 56, an Armenia woman living in Stavropol, said:

My first language was Armenian, but I speak clean Russian. I can tell you that I do not really know which one is my native language.

Language was also considered by many to be important for the preservation of culture and national ideas able to transcend place. Traditions and national histories all exist in the native languages of the North Caucasus' nationalities, regardless of whether or not they were influenced by other forces, namely Soviet nationalities policies. Such cultural elements definitely exist in the context of the North Caucasus, in wider Russia, and where ever a Diaspora of a particular group of speakers presides. Participant number 193 explained these ideas:

I consider native language to be more important than living somewhere. Native language is the language of one's ancestors and a way to keep one's culture. It is the language of one's national literature, in which ancient stories and poems are written. We have got a huge number of great writers who wrote in Russian. As far as I know, there are more great writers from Russian than anywhere else.

Although native language is often considered requisite for belonging to a national group, it is not the only important factor. The concept of "the Russian Soul" is very important in Russian traditions. It is widely believed that without the Russian language, it is impossible to possess this crucial element needed to be Russian due to the necessary understanding and expression of the Russian language. Participant 193 added:

To be Russian, one must speak Russian. However, one can speak Russian without being Russian. If someone immigrates from abroad and learns Russian language, it

does not make him Russian just due to language. One's soul needs to be Russian. If he has Russian language and a Russian soul, and considers himself Russian, then he can be. It does not matter even if he is black or white.

Religious Belief

Religious beliefs are often important when considering identity, but such beliefs are especially vital within the context of the North Caucasus because the region serves as a religious borderland between Christianity and Islam. Religion is often important to identification with a certain ethnic group or nationality throughout all of Russia. For example, Russians are an Orthodox Christian people, Karachays are Muslims, and Kalmuks are Buddhists. Such opinions can be noted by the fact that even non-religious participants rated religion well above 4 on the 5-point scale. Participant 177 stated:

By nationality, I am Russian. That means my religion is going to be Orthodoxy, and my language Russian.

The data indicated that religious belief is more important to residents of Karachay-Cherkessia than residents of Stavropol. It is also more important to non-Russians than Russians, and to those born in an urban area to those born in rural areas. However, a statistically significant difference between group responses regarding the importance of religion appeared only between those who claim to practice religion (M=4.47) and those who do not (M=4.29).

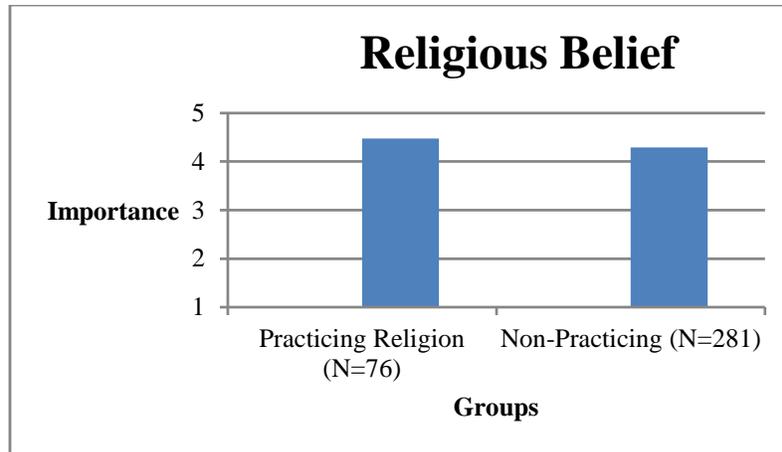


Figure 14: Average Mean Scores Regarding the Importance of Religious Belief between Participants who Practice their Religion and Those who do Not.

Religion and place are intertwined in the North Caucasus, and just as the area serves as a break between Russian and non-Russian space, it can serve the same role in terms of differentiating Christian and Islamic space. Participant 158 offered:

I do not consider myself to be very religious. Orthodoxy is not important if someone lives in Russia and has the mentality of Russian (*Rossiskiye*) people.

For Participant 16 and many others, religion was a factor about which they thought when defining their national identity, but it was one of many important factors found within the Russian cultural environment. That is, living in Russia is most important for being Russian, but Orthodoxy can serve as a path toward getting the Russian mentality if one is not in Russia.

The fact that only 23 % of Russians said that they went to church regularly suggests being Orthodox does not play a major role in the personal lives of the majority of young Russians. It does however allow them to feel a connection to a greater sense of belonging and gives them a sense that is facilitated by religious places throughout the landscape. Churches and other holy sites serve as a constant reminder that they are in “their own” (Orthodox Russian) space. The only mosque in Stavropol has been turned into a museum, but there are many churches. Despite

the fact that there is a significant Islamic population in Stavropol, Muslims there must leave this Christian-dominated environment in order to worship. Christians in Karachay-Cherkessia do not face this problem, as there are both many mosques and many churches in the Republic. Being part of Russia means that Russians in Karachay-Cherkessia can be connected to the greater sense of Christian Space, they can also lobby to Moscow for funding support in building churches.

Islamic participants in Stavropol provided insight into the issue of Christian vs. Islamic space. Participant 21 said:

I am a Muslim and I think I could live in some other countries. Because of my Religion, living in Russia's not that important. I could live in the United Arab Emirates or in Turkey for example. As far as living in Russia goes, it's better to live in the Southern Federal District, because of all the regions, it is the best for my religion.

Here Participant 21 is clearly thinking about Russia in regional terms and in terms of where she is mostly likely to find the cultural environment friendliest to her religion. She is also thinking about where her religion can be facilitated. Islam in Karachay-Cherkessia is present in the landscape, as Mosques dot the mountain sides. However, the sense of Islamic identity is much more focused on personal connections to god and to the family unit than in Orthodox Christianity, which is heavily dependent on the Church hierarchy (Aliev, 2004). According to Participant 128, a Karachay man from Karachay-Cherkessia:

My belief in Islam is important for who I am. It is important for who my family is, and for determining what kind of man I will be. I know who I am, and I do not need to go to a Mosque to find out.

When is membership in a religion obligatory for membership in a nation? This question has been a common one throughout various currents of Russian thought (especially in the Tsarist

period). Various scholars and writers have asked: can a person truly be Russian without being Orthodox? In the context of the North Caucasus, where there are several major religions, all of whose members suffered serious persecution under 70 some years of Soviet rule, one might expect varied responses. However, the resurgence of religious institutions in both popular culture and in politics have exposed the young generation to much religious material. Participant 158 said:

A person could be Russian without Orthodoxy and without Russian language. I think that in our times it is possible.

I posed the question to the interview participants of whether or not one can be Russian without Orthodoxy and their responses were varied. Some believed quite strongly in the obligatory status of Orthodoxy for being Russian. Participant 43 offered:

A person has to be Orthodox to be Russian. Lots of people have different understandings, but to be Russian you have to have our understanding.

This comment suggests the effects that Orthodoxy has on one's mentality, therefore if Orthodox mentality is synonymous with Russian mentality, the two cannot be separated. Participant 40 echoed this belief saying:

It is very doubtful that I could ever change my religion...It (being Russian without Orthodoxy) is not possible, however a person can be orthodox and not be Russian.

When I asked participant 64 if a person could be Russian and not Orthodox, she replied:

No, not really, but they could maybe be of another nationality.

Because different religions have different rites of passage, participating in religious rituals, educational institutions, and social gatherings act as a homogenizing force that may work to solidify links either between members of a single nationality, or between several nationalities that adhere to the same religion. This way of shaping the cultural landscape is what Paasi (1996)

has termed “spatial socialization.” Differences in religion are an easy way to differentiate some groups and their places from others. For example, Christian Russians may see divisions between themselves and the North Caucasian nationalities, the majority of whom are Muslim Karachays, Cherkess, Nogais, and Abazins, may see a shared adherence to Islam as a reason for potential unification and cooperation. It also means that these groups are likely to relate to Islamic features in the landscape, namely mosques.

Although many of the participants in the study indicated that they did not attend a place of worship on a regular basis (78.7 %), only .02 %, seven out of 357 respondents self-identified as atheists. This observation suggests that identifying as a member of a particular religion is important for identity. According to Participant 176:

Religion is very important for me, because I myself am Orthodox, and it is important for me to support it for my own self understanding. However, every person has their own understanding of religion, and everyone can choose what they believe. Religion does not necessarily dictate how someone is, everyone reacts to religion differently, and it does not matter which religion.

Religion may also be considered important for ethno-national identity because of the role it can play in the family unit. Religion is associated with a value system, and if one is raised to adhere to these values, his or her upbringing will influence relationships with others, as well as self-identification. According to participant 34:

Of course, the number of true believers here is small, but it plays an important role because it matters for the interworking of the family and relationships among family members.

Still, some participants maintained that Orthodoxy was not critical to their sense of ethno-national identity at all. Participant 67, a Russian man from Stavropol, said:

As for religion, a Russian can be a Muslim.

This is an interesting comment because it goes against established stereotypes and links that exist between ethno-national groups and specific religions. It backs the idea that religion is a personal choice and is not determined by one's nationality.

Ethno-National Heritage (The Nationality of One's Ancestors)

The identity factor that received the second highest overall mean score was “The Nationality of One's Ancestors,” or ethno-national heritage, with a value of 4.41. Unlike native language, with which there were no significant differences in how the various groups responded, there were three significant differences regarding heritage. Heritage was significantly more important to non-Russians than Russians, to males than to females, and to participants having the same birthplace as their parents.

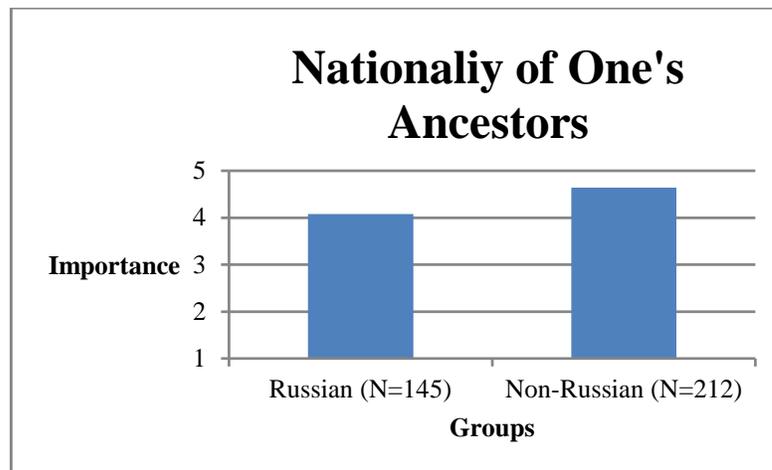


Figure 15: Average Mean Scores Regarding the Importance of Heritage between Russians and Non-Russians.

Non-Russians (M=4.64) considered ethno-national heritage to be significantly more considerable to their identity than did Russians (M=4.08). The interviews provided some insight in to why the difference between Russians and non-Russians may have occurred. First, Russians in general recognize the effects of a widespread imperial history on the Russian Federation's contemporary ethnic geography, acknowledging their populations' mixing with other ethnic groups. Most of the Russians that I interviewed said they were either unsure of the nationality of their ancestors, or were fairly certain that they were not all Russians. According to Participant 177:

Speaking about the nationality of my ancestors, pure blooded people never occur among us. There will of course be different nationalities amongst our ancestors. Therefore, it does not play the most important role.

Participant 65 said:

In principle, the nationality of my ancestors is not so important, in general they were Russian, but there were some Ukrainians.

According to Participant 67:

Nationality of one's ancestors is important, but not one hundred %. If I were to have ancestors that were Jewish, or Tatar, who knows I might... but I was born here and speak Russian, so I consider myself Russian.

Participant 172 commented:

If someone has Ukrainian ancestors for example, then they can be Russian in some sense, but not through historical lineage.

Participant 64, who rated this factor 5 out of 5 said:

I relate to my ancestors because they were Russian.

When I asked her if her ancestors had all been Russian, she replied:

Well, I do not think that there were only Russians. We have got Russians, but also other nationalities.

However, she did not label certain nationalities by name. The fact that she is not aware of which other nationalities exist in her own ethnic background means that a Russian identity is her only logical choice based on her ancestry. I then asked her if all of her ancestors to her knowledge had lived in Russia, and if that was important to her. She confirmed that to her knowledge that they all had, and that because they lived in Russia, she considered them to be Russian.

The North Caucasus's ever changing historical geographies have resulted in remnants of many different civilizations left throughout the landscape. Participant 58 said:

My distant relatives were from some kind of Persian country, but it was a long time ago, very distant. But after that, they were all Russian.

For many self-identified Russians, other ethnicities appear in their lineage in only the previous generation. People who are of a mixed-ethnic background, with one parent who is Russian and the other non-Russian, claim Russian as their nationality but do not use ancestry as the deciding factor in determining their own ethno-national identity. Participant 151, a woman from Stavropol with parents of different nationalities said this:

My father is Armenian and Mother Russian, but the deal is that my father's family speaks in Russian and finished Russian school. Therefore, I see myself as Russian.

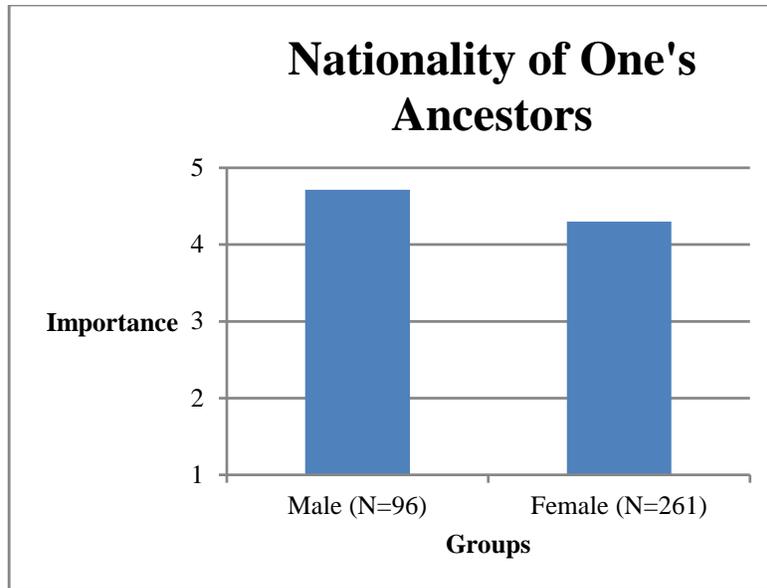


Figure 16: Average Mean Scores Regarding the Importance of Heritage between Males and Females.

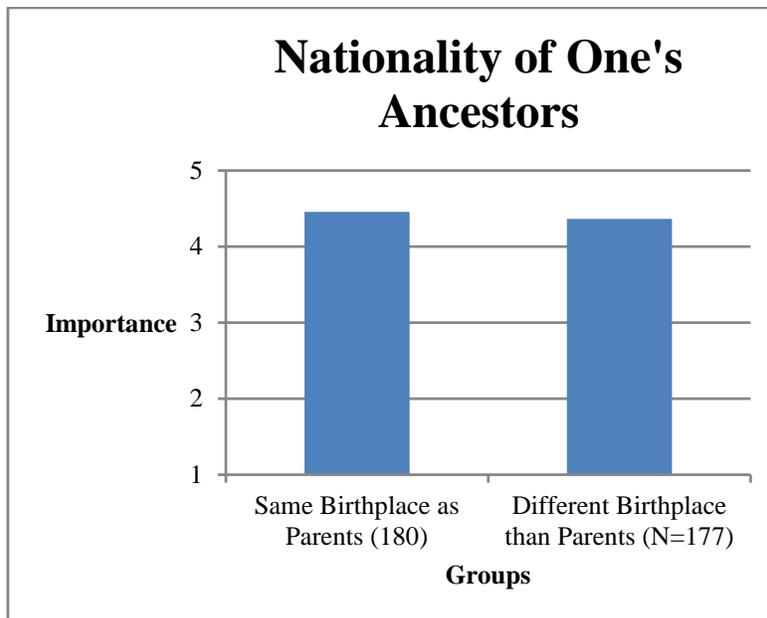


Figure 25: Average Mean Scores Regarding the Importance of Heritage between Participants Born in the Same Place as Their Own Parents and Those Not.

Non-Russians, especially males from Karachay-Cherkessia, tended to be extremely self-aware of their ethnic heritage in terms of ancestry. Participant 128, a Karachay man from an aul in Karachay-Cherkessia, had this to say in regard to ancestry:

We Karachays consider that to be one of us, a person needs to have seven generations of Karachay ancestors, this is with no exception. For example, I know for a fact that for at least seven generations of my family, we have been fully Karachay. This is the reason why it is very important for me to marry a Karachay woman. I want my children to be Karachay like me. It is very important to me and to the rest of my family.

The response of Participant 128 also suggests why males may have prioritized ancestry significantly higher than females: patriarchic traditions. Such traditions are rather common throughout the Caucasus region, and especially among Islamic populations (Rogozin, 2008). For example, needing to find a Karachay wife in order to preserve his ethnic family legacy implies that his selection of possible choices is rather limited, and may be a factor in his preferences regarding his living place. Males were significantly more likely to prioritize ethno-national heritage over females and averaged a mean score of 4.72, to females' 4.30. Those participants with the same birthplace as their parents' also gave ethno-national heritage significantly higher scores, averaging 4.46 to 4.37. These differences indicated that the individual most likely to equate ethno-national heritage to national identity is a non-Russian male from the same place as the previous generations of his family.

Among nationalities with relatively small consolidated populations, like the Karachays, the availability of ethnically acceptable spouses can become an issue. Fathers and husbands also have a say in where their daughters will study and eventually live, and because of the cohesiveness of their family units, young women are likely to stay in the North Caucasus at least until marriage. Therefore, leaving Karachay-Cherkessia or the North Caucasus region creates

problems for young and unmarried people encouraging those who value the ethnic purity of their family lines to stay in the republic or migrate somewhere not far from their ethnic base.

Living and Socializing among Representatives of One's Own or Other Nationalities

The notion that being either around other members of one's nationality, or around members of other groups, might make someone more aware of their national identity were explored with two categories in the survey. Living among members of one's own nationality could be considered important because a common culture is represented, meaning that someone would learn the cultural mannerisms of his or her own nationality. Living among members of other nationalities might be important in terms of measuring one's national identity compared to others. For example, a Karachay might feel especially Karachay around a group of Russians, in which he stands out.

Living among members of one's own nationality received the fourth highest overall means score (3.82) among all participants, while living among others received the lowest overall mean score of all the categories (3.22). In terms of significant group differences regarding these categories, only the practice of religion made a difference when comparing living among others. This difference may be due to the fact that religion is an especially clear and exclusive identity marker. That is to say, non-Russians often speak Russian, but they are very rarely members of the Russian Orthodox Church. Even Armenians, also Christians, belong primarily to the Armenian Apostolic Church, which differs in structure and hierarchy and dogma.

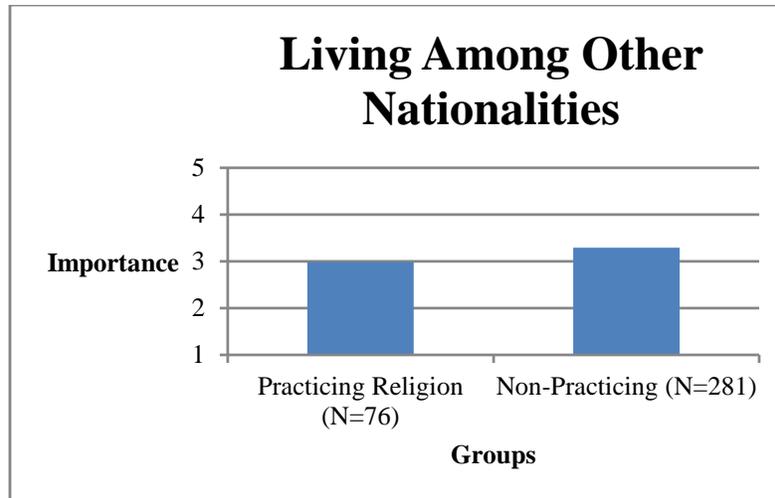


Figure 17: Average Mean Scores Regarding the Importance of Living among Representatives of Nationalities Other than One's Own Between Religious and non-Religious Participants.

In the context of the North Caucasus, interaction among many nationalities is common place. Therefore, many of the interview respondents commented on this aspect of their environment. Participant 193, as Russian from Stavropol, stated:

We live in a region where there are many nationalities. As long as they behave civilly, it makes no difference for me who they are.

The idea that personality is considered more important than nationality in terms of choosing a friend-base or social interactions was also common among interview participants. Participant 33, an Armenian living in Stavropol said:

Living among my own or other nationalities is not important to me at all. It is not important who or where. I interact with absolutely different circles, Russian, Armenians, Muslims. For me it is absolutely not important. It is important that a person be a person.

Overwhelmingly, the participants stated that they did not care whether or not their friends were of their own nationality. I asked participant 64 if being around other nationalities made her feel more Russian and she responded:

Well, not really. I have actually thought a lot about this question, but in general, it is not really important... someone's nationality. It does not bother me, it is more important that they are a good person. It is not important whether they are Russian, Abkhazian, Georgian, Karachay, or anyone in particular.

Self-identified non-Russians tended to show a bit more longing for being around representatives of their own group but still did not regard being around others to be particularly important for making them aware of their own national identity. Participant 32, an Armenian from Stavropol, stated:

If I had a good circle of friends of my own nationality, it would be good, but if not, well, I feel neutral about it.

I then asked her if she felt more Armenian when around non-Armenians and she replied:

No way, I am not a nationalist. I have friends of many different nationalities. Being a particular nationality does not depend on with whom someone socializes. You do not become another nationality just because you are friendly with them. You do not just become Karachay if you socialize with them.

Most non-Russians did agree that being around members of their own nationality was important, and although not statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, non-Russians did favor the category "Living among Members of Your Own Nationality" ($M=4.07$) to Russians (3.44).

Participant 57, an Armenian said:

It is important to converse with members of my national group to support my language and not forget it.

This line of thinking is especially key for those who do not live among many representatives of their own nationality, living instead in a majority Russian population. Participant 151, and

individual from Stavropol of mixed Russian and Armenian descent, gave this statement regarding her Armenian heritage:

I truly do not feel Armenian because I was born here (Stavropol) and have never socialized with Armenians at the appropriate level that would be needed. And at home we all spoke Russian language and all of our traditions were Russian.

Comparing Place-Based Identity Factors and Other Traditional Factors in a Hypothetical Situation

A question that I posed to the interview participants was: “If a person is born abroad to parents of your nationality, and he speaks your native language at home, is he the same nationality as yourself?” This question was designed to prompt participants to take place-based identity factors into consideration when evaluating a situation in which other identity factors would potentially remain the same. Responses were varied, with emphasis paid either to environment or upbringing. Those participants who valued environment answered that someone born abroad would not be the same as members of their nation born in their homeland.

Participant 154 said this:

He (a Russian born in America) will not be fully Russian by his environment, by how he thinks, or by his mentality. Even if he returned to live in Russia, it would be hard for him to live here. It would be hard to adapt to Russian traditions and norms. But in my view, he would not be native to America either. His children would already be fully American, but he is something in the middle. He is certainly non-Russian.

According to Participant 149:

No, he (a Russian born abroad) is not Russian. If he is born abroad he lives with different values. A different country means different values... different people, different laws, different everything. I think he would be a citizen of that country, with primarily that mentality.

According to Participant 41:

I think if you have to classify factors regarding their importance to one's nationality, the first two would be the nationality of one's ancestors and one's birthplace. Language is already less important. Religion is also not as important. For example, in Germany there a lot of "Russian-Germans," as they call themselves. They have Russian parents, who had them here. However, they moved to Germany. Their native language is Russian just the same, but they socialize and study now in German. They work using German and they live in Germany. However, they consider themselves Russian first of all, and at home they communicate in Russian amongst themselves. But about religion, many of them are already Catholics because of being there. But all in all they are Russian. They have Russian parents and from the start, Russia was their homeland.

There were some opinions that took the Russian environment into consideration in terms of Russia's historical influence. Participant number 62 considered a Russian born in Ukraine to be Russian, due to the fact that the idea of Russian space extends even into contemporary Ukraine. He said:

He (a Russian born abroad) is Russian; it is absolutely unimportant whether or not he was born here (in the Russian Federation). This is because during different time periods, Russia had different territories. Suppose a person were born in Ukraine (*v Ukrainye*)... well in the Ukraine (*na Ukrainye*) as it is called... that territory might have been Russian, so I consider him to be Russian.

Some Russian participants seemed to prioritize upbringing and the role of one's parents in determining one's national identity. These individuals claimed that Russians born abroad would be the same as themselves, dependant not only on the fact that they received the non-place based identity factors from their parents, but also on whether or not the individual felt Russian and considered him or herself to be Russian. Participant 38 said:

Everything depends on upbringing. It is possible to raise a child so that he forgets his roots. It is not even so much about the culture, or about the language, but whether or not he considers himself Russian. I think it would be possible to raise a child in America so that he orients himself to Russian culture. All of this is very important, and it comes from one's parents first of all.

According to Participant 40:

I think it all depends on his family. If his parents live abroad, but consider themselves Russian, then the child will also consider himself Russian. It depends on how he regards himself. A lot of different situations occur, many he was born in some other country, or his parents are from another country. He must take one come kind of culture and some traditions. Naturally, he may choose them for himself.

All of the non-Russian participants seemed unconcerned with place-based identity factors regarding a member of their nation being born abroad. They preferred to focus again on the role of parents and upbringing, and also on nationality transferred through ancestry.

According to Participant 192:

I think someone could be Nogai, having been born abroad. I also think that someone can choose their nationality.

Participant 21 added:

I think a person needs to feel his or her nationality most of all. I am Cherkess not only because my parents are Cherkess, but rather because I hold our principles myself. I think that is the most important.

Participant 21's comment emphasizes the importance of personal connections to an ethno-national group. Having all of the other factors might not make someone belong to a given group. It is also necessary for that person to believe that he or she belongs.

Conclusion

The first significant trend that stood out in the MANOVA analysis was the fact that people born in the same place as previous generations of their family were more likely to hold place-based identity factors in higher regard than those who were born in different areas than their ancestors. These individuals also prioritized heritage. This group was the only one to

significantly favor four of the five place based elements at the 95 % confidence level and the other element, “Living in the North Caucasus” was significant at the 90 % confidence level. The trend of favoring such elements illustrates the importance of family connections and historical lineage in terms of place and identity. Sense of place is also an important aspect for people born in the same area as their ancestors. Spending the formative years of one’s early life in a particular place provides an environment out of which they gather their first sense of place. Although one will likely establish his or her own sense of place, he or she also takes information and perceptions for family members. Those with an established history in an area are likely to hold very deep feelings regarding their environment, including those memories and pieces of information they have received from previous generations. Thus, having family members from the same place helps to cement one’s feelings of historical lineage in a particular place. The fact that this trend proved significant suggests that sense of place can transcend political boundaries, as all of the participants ancestors were born in the USSR, not in Russia.

Another commonly recurring theme throughout this project was the idea of being in place or out of place, particularly regarding Russian space. The idea that Russians are in place in Russian space is especially important in terms of one’s birthplace. Because citizenship plays a role in the Russian federal context, being born in Russia is important for ethnic Russians. Again, it is interesting to note that even though most participants were born in the RSFSR during soviet times, they equate this political territory with the Russian Federation in contemporary context. If being born within Russian space is important and Russian participants believe that they were born in Russian space, then the USSR constituted Russian space. Living in a territorial context that one considers to be his or her own is important. Russia represents a safe place for Russians, a territorial context in which their culture is prevalent and considered to be normal or even

preferable to others. Thus, ethnic Russians are more apt to prioritize living in Russia. For some, living in Russia provides a context that is necessary for being Russian. Here again we see the importance of Russian civic (*Rossiskaya*) identity. Everyone born in the Russian Federation, or in a territory that would become it, has this legal Russian citizenship. However, Russians tend to factor this civic element into their overall sense of ethno-national identity more than non-Russians. The facts that ethnic Russian culture, language, and Orthodox Christianity are all dominant in the Russian Federation, and that the country's leaders and federal authority figures consistently self-identify as ethnic Russians, mean that the idea of Great Russian power extends to civic identification with the Russian Federation as a state.

In terms of being raised as a Russian, most ethnic Russian participants mentioned that upbringing and parents' attitude would make the most difference in their child's self-identification. Although, when asked to evaluate situations where all of the non-place-based elements of identity were present, participants overwhelmingly signified that without the cultural context found specifically in Russia, the child would not be the same in terms of nationality. This trend suggests that there is something about being *Rossiskoye* that is important for their conceptions of being fully *Russkii* in the minds of many young Russians.

It is also important to consider the idea of Russian versus non-Russian space when examining non-place-based elements of ethno-national identity. Language, heritage, and religion, were the three overall most important identify factors in the study. Elements such as language and religion were especially important to those individuals who considered them in terms of their influence on one's mentality. Indeed, Orthodox Christianity and Islam provide particular guidelines for morality, as do many religions. Believing that such a moral code is necessary for being Russian makes Orthodoxy vital. Having a particular native language

presents a similar argument. The logic here is that one is restricted in his or her thought process by the linguistic limits of his or her native language. Therefore, since all people think within the parameters of their languages, they share a common mentality. However, many participants were of the opinion that identifying someone with a particular ethnic group due to their language and religion was an outdated concept. They also noted that it is possible to change some elements of one's nationality by converting religions or choosing to speak another language. Although, simply changing some elements of nationality would not change one's nationality.

Heritage was important for Russians and non-Russian but in different ways. Russians, unlike non-Russians, tended not to be focused on blood lines in terms of their ethno-national identity. They generally recognize the fact that throughout the history of the Russian empire, many different ethnic groups merged together and that claiming to be purely Russian through blood is rather meaningless. However, territorial heritage was important to Russians. The sense of Russia and Russian space as one's historical homeland is a way to justify ethno-national identity through a form of lineage. Although one's ancestors might not have been ethnically Russian, they lived in Russian space and in a Russian cultural context, therefore they became Russian and their ancestors would also be Russian if they remained there. Living in the same region as one's ancestors especially facilitated this line of thinking. It is possible to draw connections to lineage in a particular place through receiving information from previous generations.

The trends for Islamic and non-Russian participants showed that these groups felt stronger than Russians about all the elements of identity except for "Living in Russia." Most of the participants who self-identified as non-Russian and non-Islamic were Stavropol Armenians, who tended to draw on previous territorial associations in Armenia and Azerbaijan when

considering place-based identity factors. Other non-Russians, who overwhelmingly self-identified as Islamic, preferred to associate with smaller scale territories, especially the North Caucasus region. Just as the idea of Russian space is important, so is the idea of Islamic space. Islamic participants tended to see the North Caucasus, Karachay-Cherkessia, and the Southern Federal District as more conducive to their religion and for their ethnic populations than The Russian Federation in general. This trend is likely due to the fact that all of these ethno-national groups are either native to the North Caucasus region or have the majority of their ethnic populations currently in this region. Also, the republics' populations are majority Muslim.

Finally, one point on which almost every participant commented was the fact that the entire North Caucasus region is extremely ethnically diverse. This diversity, in their opinion, leads to tolerance and a multi-national landscape. Most agreed that living around representatives of their own ethno-national groups was important for preserving their cultures. This trend was especially true for non-Russians. Being from the North Caucasus meant different things to different people. There was a definite sense among Russians about the distinctiveness of the North Caucasus. Although many of them said that the region was Russian overall, many also noted that the republics were somewhat different than the rest of Russia. While some ethnic Russians spoke favorably about the republics, they did so primarily about the region's aesthetic qualities rather than its culture. Most of the positive comments related to the mountains and resort areas, as opposed to villages and cities in the republics. Russians from Cherkessk also tended to mention connections in Stavropol or other parts of the country, and if they said they liked Cherkessk, they were often at a loss to explain why. Cherkess and Karachay participants also noted the region's beauty and resort areas but they also focused more on family connections and historical lineage both in Karachay-Cherkessia and throughout the region. They were also

more positive about Cherkessk as a city, saying that they enjoyed living there, emphasizing that despite its violent reputation, it is actually a very peaceful and beautiful place to live. Life in Karachay-Cherkessia, especially in the *auls*, is more traditional. Heritage and family blood lines are more important to these groups than to non-Russians. Even those not from Karachay-Cherkessia still felt connections with the republic because of their roots and their family histories.

Chapter IV:

Cognitive Images of Homeland and Their Meanings in the North Caucasus

The purpose of having participants sketch mental maps of their homeland was to explore the areas with which they identify in terms of scale, content, and symbolism. The term homeland can have various meanings, which is why the maps I collected vary so greatly. However, when examining the idea of identity in terms of place, one's conception of homeland is vital. Homeland's importance becomes especially clear when exploring the identity of a nation, as it provides tangible evidence for a nation's existence (Herb, 1999). I expected participants to consider both their personal experience and ideas of ethno-national territory when sketching their maps.

Although the conception of homeland can be complex, everyone has an idea of his or her homeland in some sense. Homeland, *rodina* in Russian, can have multiple meanings. *Rodina* with a capital *R* refers to one's country, specifically the Russian Federation, but *rodina* with a small *r* can be translated as birthplace, or homeland in an individual or personal sense. That is not to say one is not able to think of his or her *rodina* and *Rodina* in the same light.

When examining the concept of homeland, it is important to think about Agnew's (1987) concept of subjective territorial identity, where one factors in location and sense of place to determine meaning and feelings about a place. When examining sketch maps in order to view participants' mental images of homeland, it is important to understand that although they have been prompted by a question, each participant processes the conception of homeland through his or her own unique set of perceptual filters, value systems, and aesthetic preferences (Pacione,

1977). Homeland is a subjective place. When homeland is considered, one cannot help but draw on sense of place when defining it.

The sketch map is a way to measure one's conception of homeland (Pocock, 1976). Participants provided windows into their own mental images by drawing the territory to which they most strongly associated. By sketching their homelands, participants were forced to consider many options: scale, individual places, borders, aesthetic features, and so on. Although each individual's sketch map is different, it is possible to compare the maps of participants from similar groups, so as to analyze common themes and trends (Raitz and Ulack, 1981). To draw their sketches, participants must apply filters, such as the ones I have identified in this study: "Territory," "Nationality," "Gender," "Religion," "Birthplace," "Living Environments," and "Heritage." Examining group characteristics based on these variables provides insight into Paasi's (1996) conceptions of "cultural shape" and "identity narrative" regarding homeland. It is also shows what Herb (1999) calls "collective consciousness in homeland."

Free recall sketch mapping was the appropriate technique for this project because it prompts participants through instructions to think in terms of an important concept when sketching their responses. In this case the concept was homeland. Participants were forced to evaluate their own personal ideas about where they and those close to them would be "in place." Evaluating where one feels "in place" involves establishing limits concerning boundaries of otherness in terms of selecting comfortable territory to which one can personally associate. If one can associate with all of Russia, then he or she will logically draw the entire country. If one feels that his or her boundaries of otherness lay at the edge of a particular city, then he or she will emphasize the local scale.

I was interested in evaluating various elements of geographical perception, namely seeing if some participants would draw conventional maps with borders, as opposed to displaying their mental images of homeland in the form of landscape-style drawings. Whether or not one decides to include bounded territory sheds light on ideas of scale and borders. Drawing a large territory as a landscape is not possible. Therefore, participants that strongly associated with their local environments could depict their homelands without borders, allowing them more freedom to include important landmarks and symbols. I was expecting to see monuments, parks, popular local places, and landscape features, such as the Kuban River or the mountains. I also expected religious participants to include their respective places of worship.

I also wanted to see the degree to which established political borders appeared on the sketch maps. Political borders are often represented through maps and are therefore familiar. I wanted to discover which political borders participants selected for the sketch maps, and if there were any particular patterns between group affiliations and the borders that group members selected. I hypothesized that Russians would draw federal borders more frequently than non-Russians because they can think of this space in both civic and ethno-national terms. Non-Russians would have to rely on civic notions of homeland rather than ethno-national territory when drawing Russia's borders. I also expected the residents of Karachay-Cherkessia to draw the republic's borders. I thought that Karachay-Cherkessia's borders would be more common than those of Stavropol Krai or other regional territories. I also expected urban participants to draw large scale maps because cities constitute larger local communities than villages, meaning that participants' experience would be focused in a larger setting.

Individual places, like political borders, can be conceived in terms of scale and I also wanted to see if places important to the federal, regional, and local scales would be included. I

was expecting Russians and people from Stavropol to include cities that are important to their ethno-national history and to the country in terms of governance and economics, namely St. Petersburg and Moscow. I expected Islamic participants and non-Russians to focus their attention on places at smaller scales, like Stavropol, Cherkessk, and other places in the study area.

Maps (Bounded Spaces) and Cartographic Detail

A distinctive feature of the sketches was whether or not participants included borders. While 71 % included an overhead representation of their homeland with traditional elements of a map, others drew sketches that more resembled a painting. These representations showed a scene with no clear detail to the amount or type of territory they were including in their sketches. Because participants were instructed to schematically sketch their homeland, they were free to represent their mental images however they saw most appropriate. For instance, if a sketch represented a landscape seen and was labeled “Russia,” I considered it to show the federal scale, otherwise such sketches were considered local.

Sketch maps were counted as having cartographic detail if they represented bounded space (all of these sketches were also counted as maps) and the participant attempted to shape the borders in a fashion resembling typical cartographic representations of the given territory. 48 % of the participants attempted to draw an accurate border, rather than drawing a standard shape, like a circle or square, or a scene with no bounded space.

Results of the chi-squared analysis showed that there is a significant association between Russians vs. non-Russians and drawing a map with some kind of bounded space ($\chi^2 = 5.41, p <$

.05), as opposed to a picture with no clearly defined borders. More specifically, the odds of drawing a federal place are 1.81 times higher for Russians than for non-Russians. 77.86 % of the sketches drawn by Russians represented some type of bounded space, while 65.97 % of non-Russians did so.

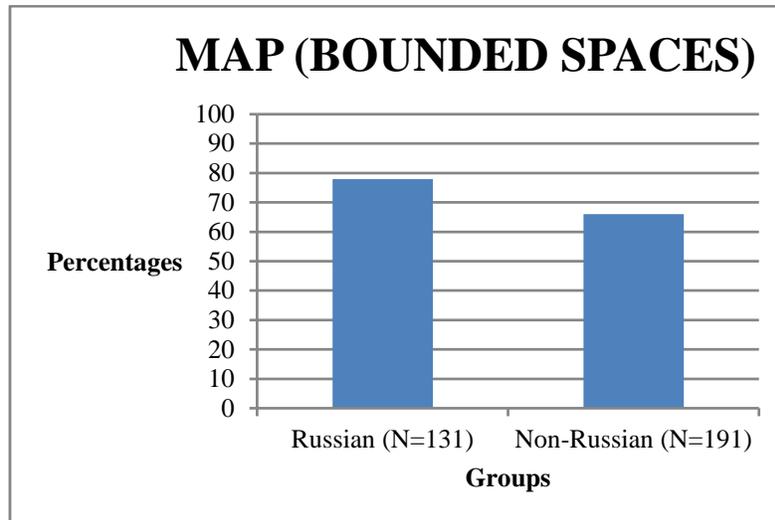


Figure 18: Percentages of Russians and Non-Russians that Included Borders in their Sketch Maps.

There was a significant association between nationality (Russian vs. non-Russian) and drawing a map ($\chi^2 = 7.35, p < .01$). Russians were 1.86 times more likely sketch a map with attention to cartographic detail than were non-Russians. 57.25 % of Russians attempted to use some element of cartographic accuracy, as opposed to 41.88 % of non-Russians. These differences are likely due to the fact that Russian tended to focus on federal scale borders and places more so than non-Russians. Because images of Russia are often portrayed through media in the form of maps, people are more familiar with the shape of Russia itself than with various other territorial delineations. Also, if participants chose to identify with some arbitrary portion

of territory, at the local scale for example, they would likely not have been exposed to cartographic representations of it and find it simpler to represent it with standard shapes and labels.

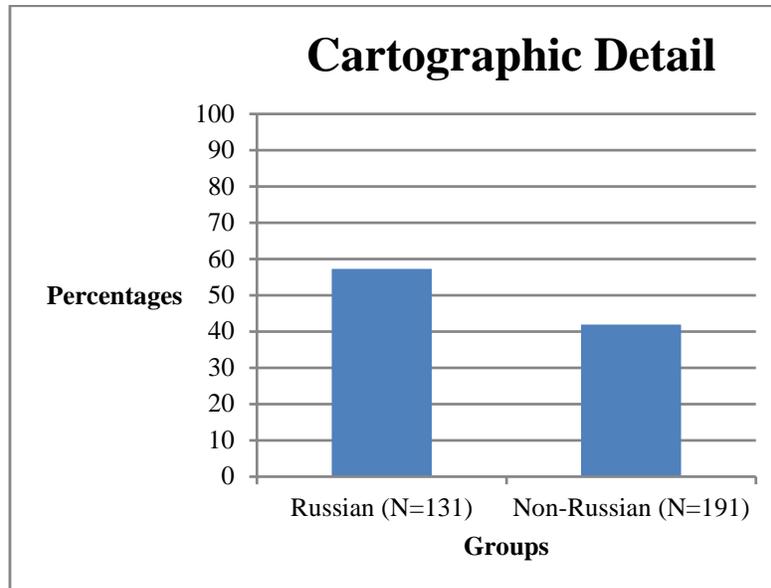


Figure 28: Percentages of Russians and non-Russians that Attempted Cartographic Accuracy in their Sketch Maps.

Conceptions of homeland representing large amounts of territory were sketched both in great and poor detail. Participants that attempted to accurately draw the shape of the Russian Federation, or even a regional border, did so by recalling maps and images of these territories while those who kept their responses on a more local scale were able to rely on their own perceived experiences and perceptions of their daily realities.

Both cartographic detail ($\chi^2 = 4.07, p < .05$) and the propensity to draw a map ($\chi^2 = 6.92, p < .01$) are significantly associated with Religion Type (Islamic vs. non-Islamic). Non-Islamic

participants were 1.65 times more likely to draw a map than were Islamic participants, with 76.35 % of non-Islamic respondents drawing a map and 66.09 % Islamic participants sketching one. Non-Islamic participants were also 1.81 times likelier than Islamic participants to attempt cartographic detail, rather than a basic shape such as a simple circle. 56.08 % of non-Islamic sketch maps displayed this element, 41.38 of Islamic maps did as well. Again, because Islamic participants were less likely to associate with federal scale constructs and were more locally based, their spatial awareness regarding areas they chose to represent is better done through landscapes rather than borders.

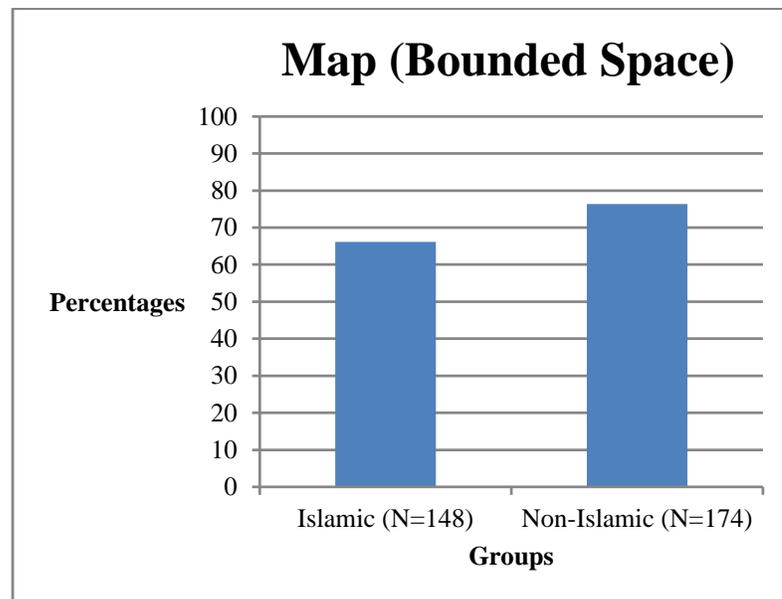


Figure 29: Percentages of Islamic vs. Non-Islamic Participants Including Bounded Spaces in their Sketch Maps.

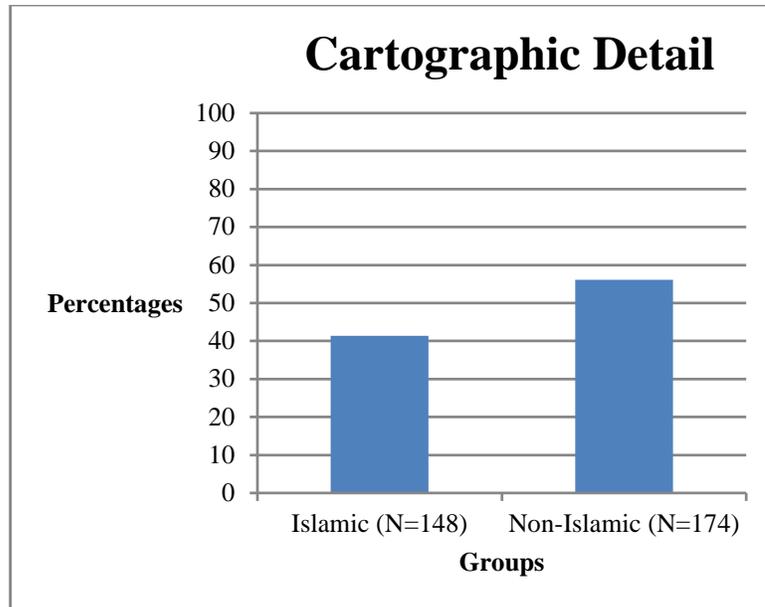


Figure 30: Percentages of Islamic vs. Non-Islamic Participants Attempting Cartographic Detail.

There is a significant association between being the child of two different nationalities that is, being of mixed-ethnicity and using borders to detail one's map ($\chi^2 = 4.55, p < .05$). Participants of mixed ethnic heritage were 2.33 times more likely to attempt accurate cartography on their sketch maps than were participants having parents of the same nationality. While 83.33 % of the participants from mixed-marriages drew a map with bounded space, only 69.52 % of those with parents of the same nationality drew maps. Again, individuals from mixed-marriages were likely to associate with federal scale constructs. This trend is perhaps due to the fact that they consider their Russian citizenship to be more important than their ethnic affiliations in terms of homeland, favoring a larger scale territory rather than a smaller scale ethnic-homeland.

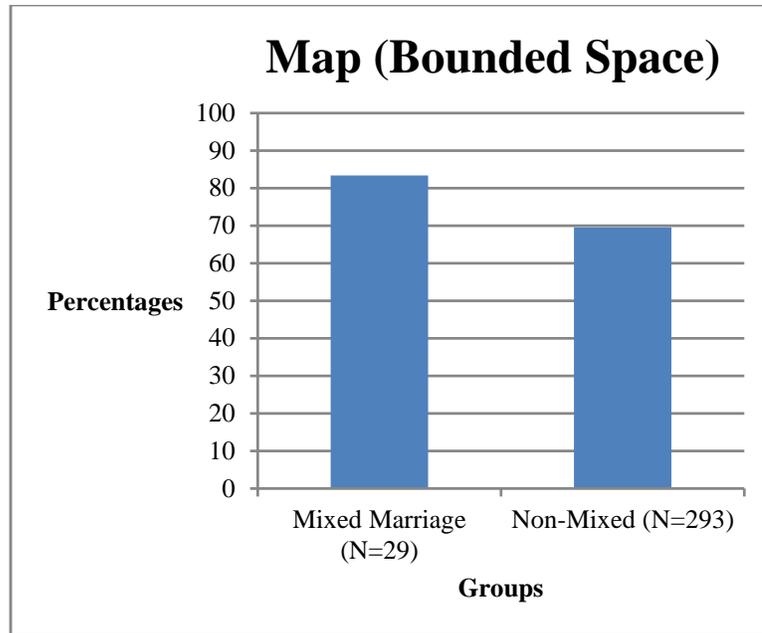


Figure 31: Percentages of Participants of Mixed vs. Traditional Marriages Including Bounded Spaces in their Sketch Maps.

There is a significant association between being from a particular territory and the propensity to use a map with bounded space rather than an artistic drawing ($\chi^2 = 7.51, p < .01$). More specifically, participants from Stavropol and other territories were 1.97 times more likely to draw a map than those from Karachay-Cherkessia. Maps from Stavropol appeared 76.41 % of the time, while maps from Karachay-Cherkessia appeared at a rate of 62.20 %. Since Stavropol is a *krai* and not a republic, this territory is fully integrated into the Russian political system, suggesting yet again that participants from Stavropol would be more likely to associate with Russia at the federal scale, and would have been exposed to a wider range of cartographic images regarding the shape of Russia's borders.

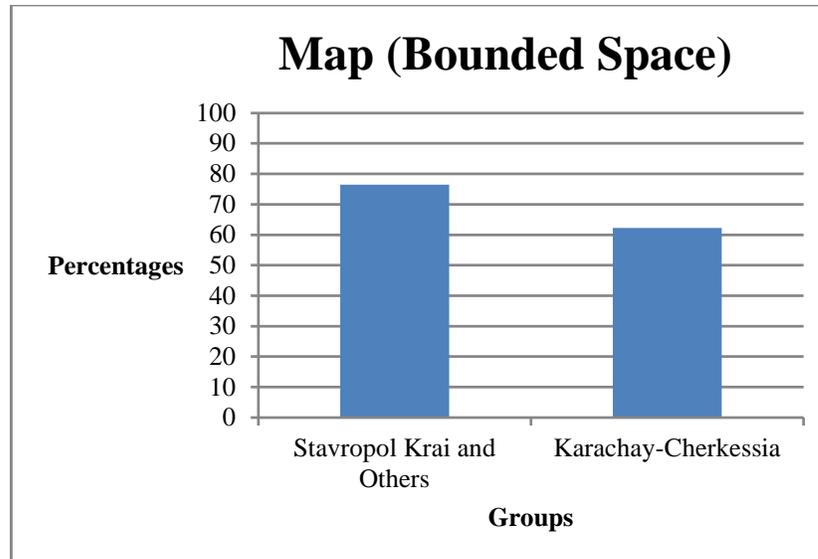


Figure 32: Percentages of Participants from Stavropol Krai vs. Karachay-Cherkessia Including Bounded Spaces in their Sketch Maps.

As expected, there is a similar significant association regarding the propensity to use cartographic detail and being from a particular territory ($\chi^2 = 15.29, p < .01$). Participants from Stavropol and other territories were 2.49 times more likely to pay attention to cartographic detail than those from Karachay-Cherkessia. Stavropol maps showed this detail on 56.92 %. Karachay-Cherkessia maps showed it on 34.65 %.

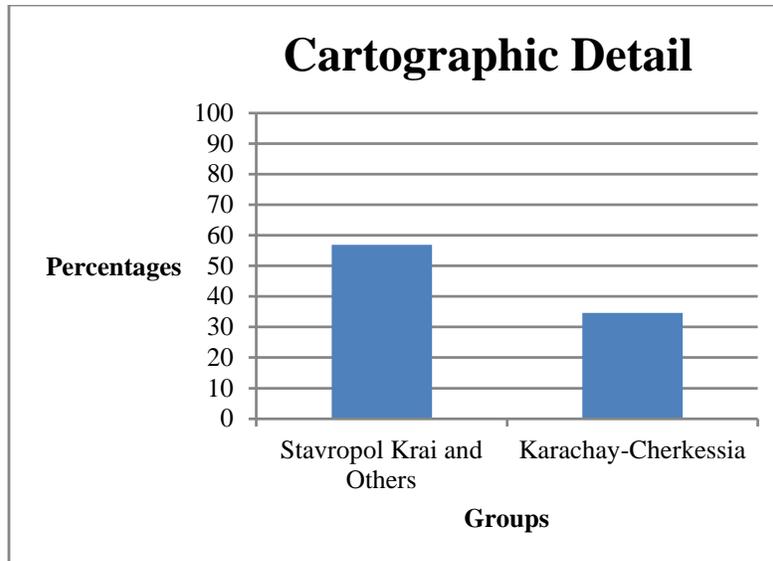


Figure 33: Percentages of Participants from Stavropol Krai vs. Karachay-Cherkessia Attempting Cartographic Detail.

The Federal Scale

The borders of the Russian Federation were sketched by 31.31 % of the participants. Russia's borders mean different things to different people, but based on the instructions of the exercise, including them on one's sketch map illustrates recognition of Russia, not only as an entity, but also as homeland. When examining Russian borders, we should draw on Paasi's notion of "lines of exclusion and inclusion." Russia's borders serve the purpose of defining *Rossiyani*, Russian citizens, from *inostrantsi*, or foreigners. Here Russian citizens are included; foreigners (even though they might be ethnic Russians themselves) are excluded. Ethnic Russians might be apt to see the ideas of *Rodina* and *rodina* as the same concept, as they could perhaps logically draw claims to all of Russia as their own. This feeling could exist for two reasons. First, Russians are far and away the largest nationality in the Russian Federation and their population extends throughout the country's territorial divisions. That is to say, a Russian

could go anywhere in the Russian Federation and find both other Russians and also Russian style institutions and symbols. In contrast, non-Russian populations typically exist in large numbers only within their designated homelands. Therefore, non-Russians are not likely to find their own specific cultural shapes apart from their specific territories and are likely to identify their homeland on regional or local scales.

The association between nationality and including the borders of The Russian Federation on one's map was significant ($\chi^2 = 23.89, p < .01$). Ethnic Russians were 3.29 times more likely to draw federal scale borders than ethnic non-Russians. This large discrepancy illustrates the connection between Russians and the Russian Federation and being a positive environment for them as an ethno-national group. Russian Federal borders appeared on 47.33 % of Russians' sketches and on 21.47 % of non-Russians' maps.

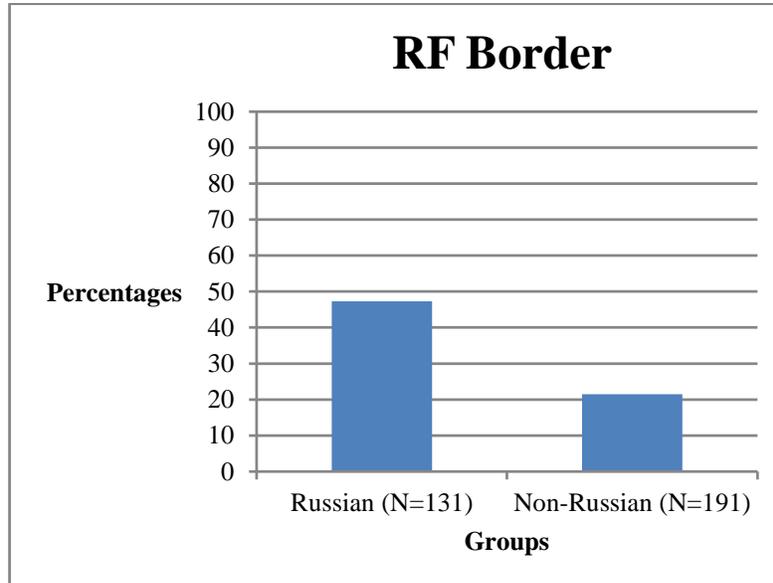


Figure 34: Percentages of Russians vs. Non-Russians Drawing Federal Borders.

The association between religion type and drawing the borders of the Russian Federation was also significant ($\chi^2 = 24.53, p < .01$). Non-Islamic participants were 3.37 times more likely to signify Russia's borders than were Islamic participants. This difference mirrors those between Russian and non-Russian participants. Just as Russia can be seen as Russian space in ethno-national terms, it can also be seen as Christian space in religious terms. Islamic participants are not likely to see Russia as a space of inclusion in regard to their religion.

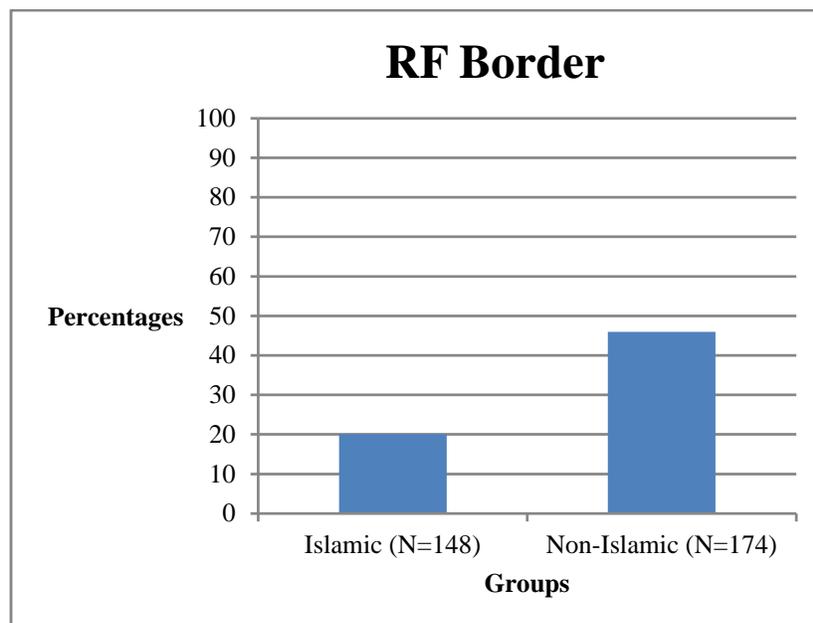


Figure 35: Percentages of Islamic Participants vs. Non-Islamic Drawing Federal Borders.

There was also a significant association between being born in an urban environment and drawing the borders federal borders ($\chi^2 = 8.46, p < .01$). Those participants born in a city, rather than in a village, an *aul*, or in the country side were 2.06 times more likely to include Russia's borders. Urban-born participants drew Russia's borders on 42.86 % of their sketches, while those born in rural areas drew such borders on 26.73 % of their sketches. The two large urban centers in the study area, Stavropol and Cherkessk, are both regional centers of commerce that

do business with other cities in Russia, particularly Moscow. This experience with places in other regions of Russia could have influenced participants' decisions to include all of Russia in their sketch maps.

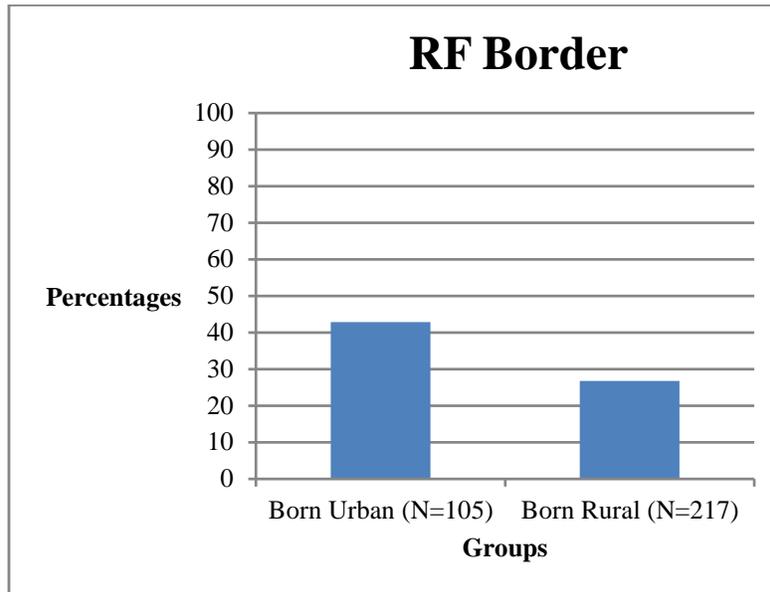


Figure 36: Percentages of Urban vs. Rural Participants Drawing Federal Borders.

There was also a significant association between living urban and drawing a federal scale border ($\chi^2 = 7.39, p < .01$). Urban dwellers are 1.95 times more likely to draw such a border than those participants currently not living in cities, as they included the borders of Russia on 38.51 % of their sketches, while those living in rural areas did so on 24.32 % of their own.

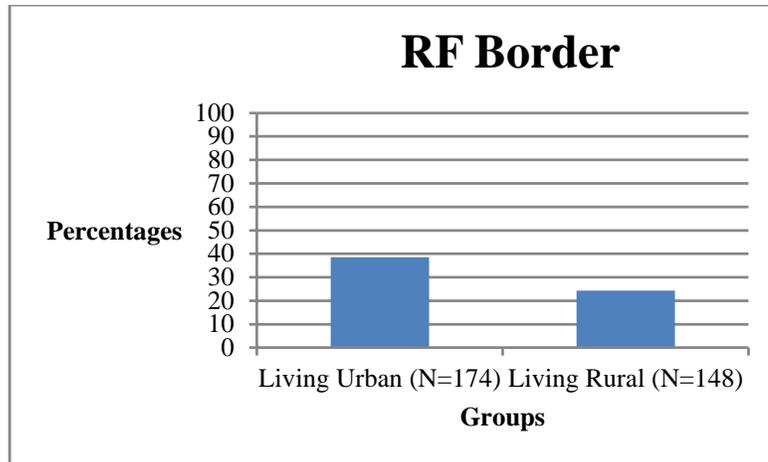


Figure 37: Percentages of Urban vs. Rural Living Environments Regarding Russia's Borders.

Having parents of different nationalities and drawing a federal scale border are also significantly correlated ($\chi^2 = 4.93, p < .05$). Participants of mixed-ethnicity were 2.32 times more likely to draw the borders of Russia than those who were not of mixed-ethnicity. While 50% of those respondents from mixed marriages drew Russia's borders, 30.14% of non-mixed participants did so.

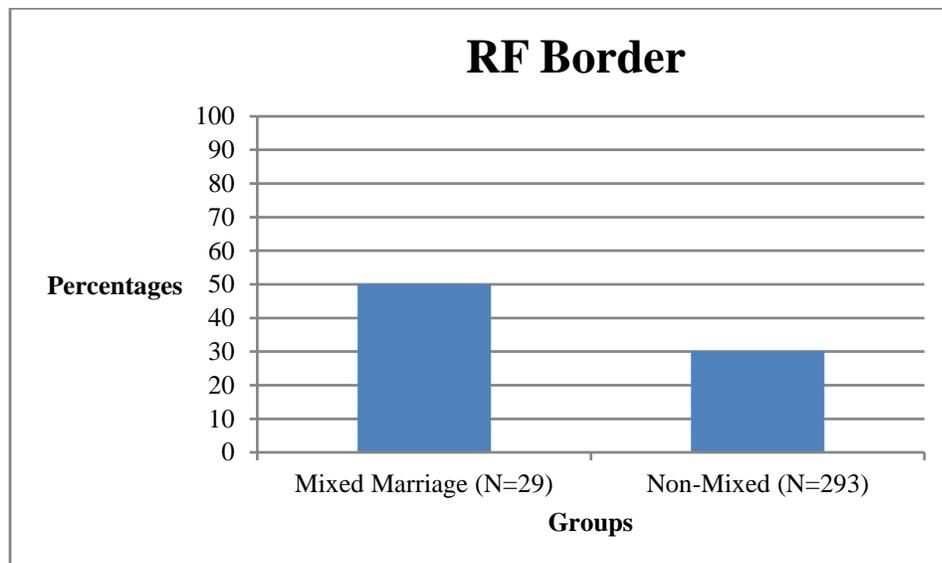


Figure 38: Percentages of Mixed vs. Traditional Marriages Regarding Russia's Borders.

When thinking about homeland in ethno-national terms, individuals of mixed ethnic background essentially have a choice as to which territories they could associate. We see here that when they have the opportunity to choose, they choose Russia. I suggest that this trend is due to the fact that most of these participants were born in Russia and have been raised in the Russian social context.

Being from Stavropol or Karachay-Cherkessia and the inclusion of Russia's borders are also significantly correlated ($\chi^2 = 16.52, p < .01$). Participants from Stavropol and other territories were 2.92 times more likely to include borders of the Russian Federation than those from Karachay-Cherkessia. While participants from Karachay-Cherkessia drew the borders of Russia on 18.90 % of their sketches, participants from the other territories drew them on 40.51 % of their own.

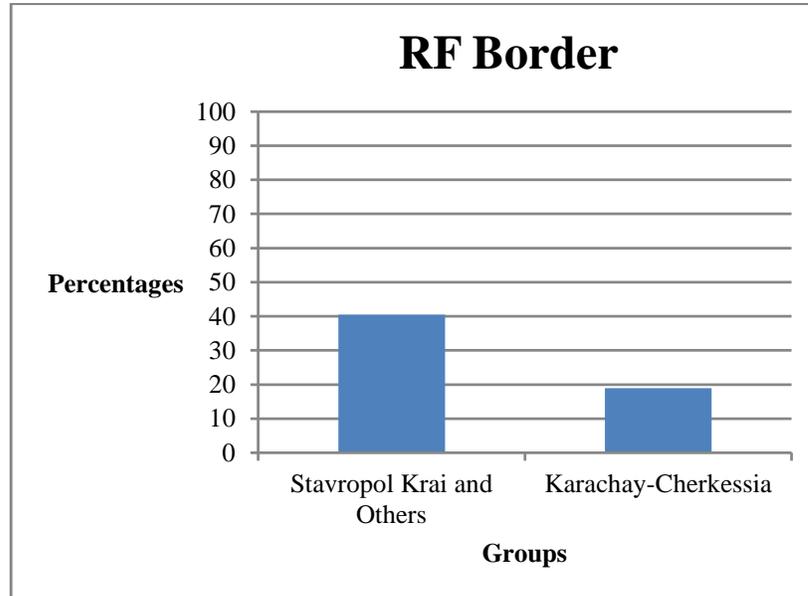


Figure 39: Percentages of Participants from Stavropol Krai and Karachay-Cherkessia Regarding Federal Borders.

Again, we see the reoccurring theme of Stavropol being connected to the rest of Russia, or being within Russian space. Although participants in Karachay-Cherkessia could also claim the entire country as their homeland due to their Russian citizenship, they tend to choose to associate with their ethnic homeland at the regional and local scales instead.

Federal Places

Federal places are those important for the Russian Federation, but not located in the study area. Moscow and St. Petersburg were two popular federal places chosen. Association with them could mean a variety of different things. Some might sketch Moscow due to the fact that it is the country's capital city or because they spent time there or have family and friends there. Both Moscow and St. Petersburg are popularly associated with power and money. They are also considered to be important historical places for the Russian nation, as well as beautiful examples of Russian's grandeur and glorious past. Including such places in one's homeland represents respect for Russia as a state, much like drawing federal scale borders.

There was a significant association between nationality and including places important to Russia at the federal scale ($\chi^2 = 38.16, p < .01$). Ethnic Russians were 4.78 times more likely to draw federal scale places (primarily Moscow and St. Petersburg) than were ethnic non-Russians. Russians sketched federal places on 48.09 of their maps, while non-Russians sketched such places on 16.23 % of their own.

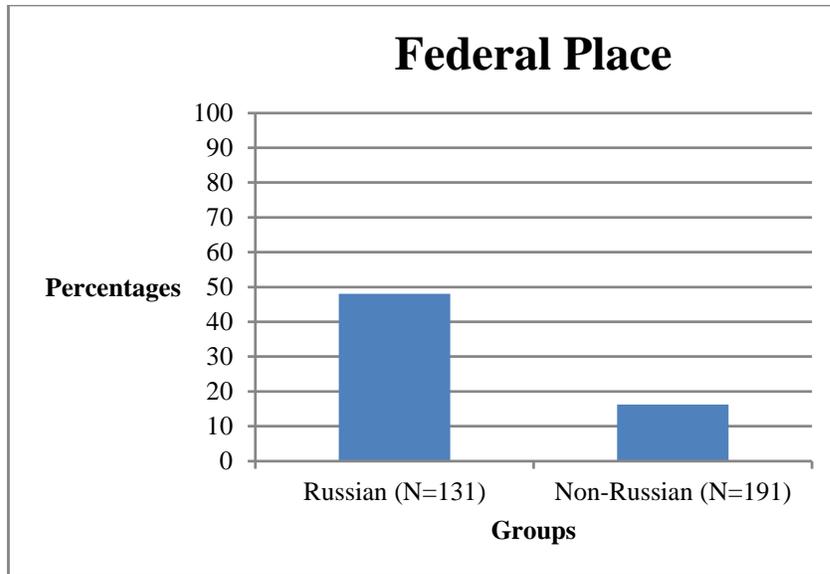


Figure 40: Percentages of Russians vs. Non-Russian Including Places Important to Russia at the Federal Scale.

Places important to Russia at the federal scale, like Moscow, are arguably familiar to every participant in my study. Moscow serves as the country’s major media and political outlet as the capital of the Russian Federation. Regardless of whether they had spent time in Moscow or not, each participant has been exposed to Moscow, be it through education and media devices or through personal experience gained through travel. Moscow represents power in the Russian context. It, along with St. Petersburg, also represents wealth and opportunity.

Other cities appearing on the sketch maps are more likely there due to a given participant’s given family connections or personal history. The cities Perm and Arkanglsk both appeared on sketch maps, but these two places are both far from the North Caucasus. The fact that such connections exist helps to emphasize the notion that Russian civilization exhibits continuity on the federal scale. According to Raitz and Ulack (1981), mental maps are likely to include the areas with which people are most personally familiar. The more people travel or

migrate, the more new impressions and experiences they gather and the more diverse their mental maps become. Someone who has lived in many different regions of Russia is likely to feel at home in all of them and thus at home in the Russian Federation. To invoke Anderson's (1983) concept, travel and experience in different areas can work to develop one's sense of his or her "imagined community."

Perhaps logically, there is a similar association between Religion type and the propensity to include a place that is important to Russia at the federal scale ($\chi^2 = 34.25, p < .01$). Non-Islamic respondents, a majority of whom are Orthodox Christians, were 4.50 times more likely to include a federal scale place than were Islamic participants. Places important at the federal level were included by 45.95 % of non-Islamic participants and by 20.11 % of Islamic participants.

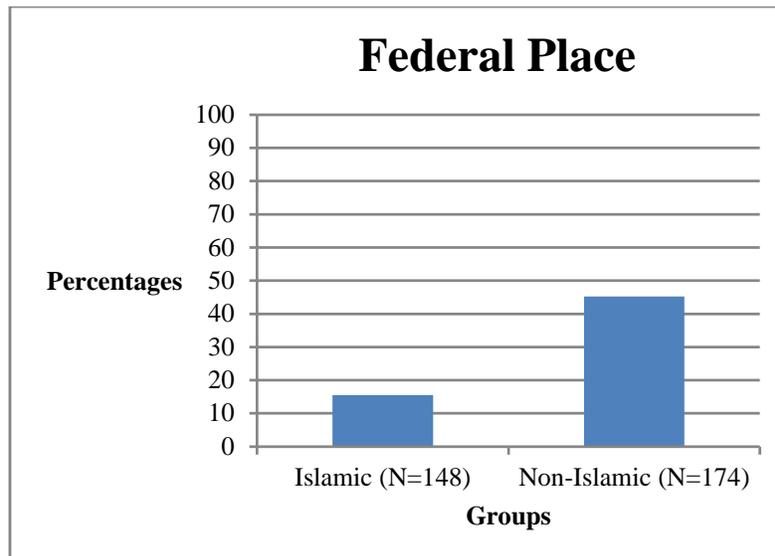


Figure 41: Percentages of Islamic Participants vs. non-Islamic Including Places Important to Russia at the Federal Level.

One explanation for this difference is the fact that for Russian Orthodox Christians, most of their holy places are located within Russia. Moscow serves as important religious place since it

houses many important churches and holy sites. Islamic people in Russia do not associate with federal cities for religious purposes. However, several Islamic participants did include religious places outside of the Russian Federation in their homelands, including Mecca in Saudi Arabia.

Participants in urban and rural environments also approached federal places differently. There was a significant association between being born in an urban environment and drawing a place that is important to Russia at the federal scale (χ^2 12.18, $p < .05$). Those born urban are 2.41 times more likely to include a place like Moscow or St. Petersburg within their perceived homeland than those participants who were not born in the city.

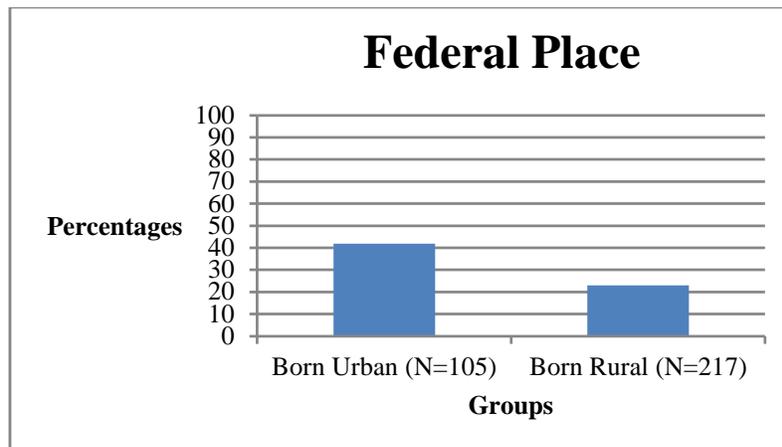


Figure 42: Percentages of Urban vs. Rural Participants Including Places Important to Russia.

The inclusion of federal level places is also significantly related to territory ($\chi^2 = 25.35$, $p < .01$). Participants from Stavropol and other territories were 4.22 times more likely to include places important to the Russian Federation than those from Karachay-Cherkessia. Participants from Karachay-Cherkessia included a federal scale place in 13.38 of their maps. Participants from the other territories included such places on is 39.48 % of their own maps. Again we see

evidence that people in Stavropol see themselves as more integrated into the Russian Federal system than in Karachay-Cherkessia in terms of homeland.

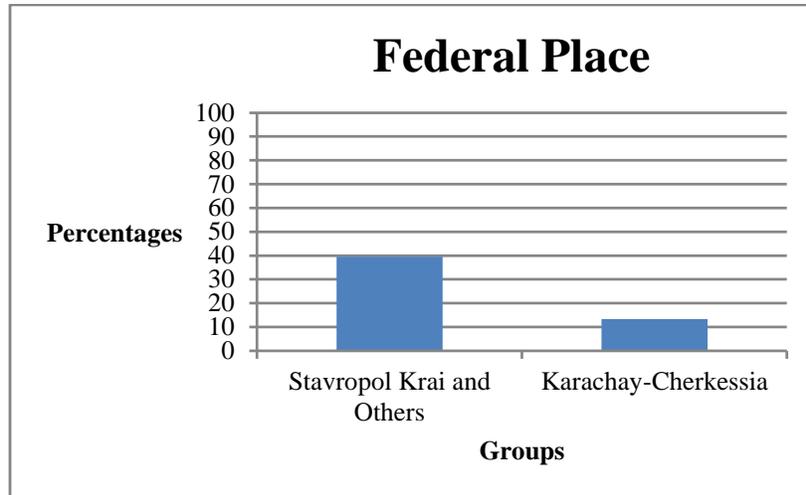


Figure 43: Percentages of Participants in Stavropol vs. Karachay-Cherkessia Including Places Important to Russia.

The Regional Scale

The regional scale in this study includes all areas within Stavropol Krai and Karachay-Cherkessia and those in reference to The Southern Federal District or to the North Caucasus region in general. Borders of any of these territories were counted as regional borders and places within these territories were counted as regional places. Such places, like Stavropol and Cherkessk, were the most popular element included on the sketch maps, as 75.08 % of them showed some regional place. Regional borders were the second most popular element, appearing on 43.77 % of the sketch maps.

The only significant difference between groups on the regional scale was an association between being born urban and including a regional place ($\chi^2 = 5.48, p < .05$). Urban participants were 2.02 times more likely than those not born in the city to include such places. 83.81 % of those born urban included regional scale place, while 71.98 % of rural born participants did so.

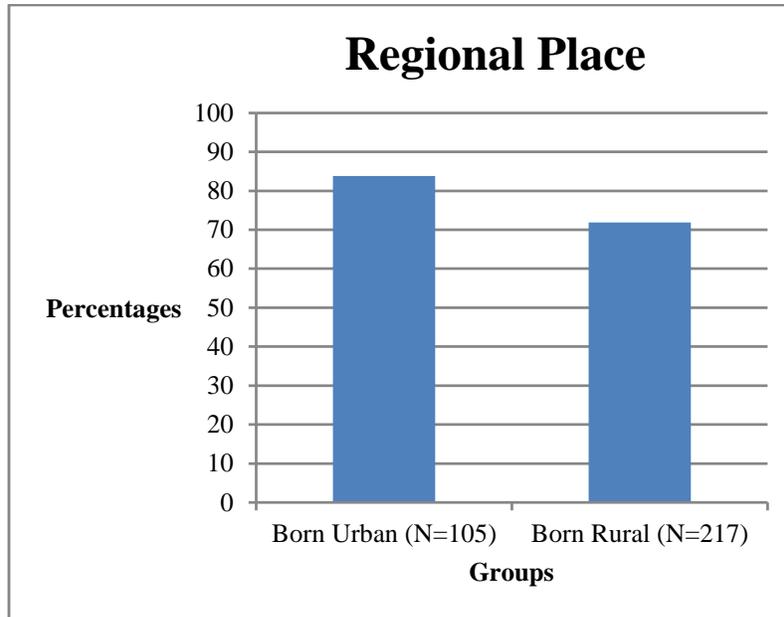


Figure 44: Percentages of Urban vs. Rural Participants Including a Place Important to the Region.

The overall lack of significant differences on this scale shows that Russians and non-Russians view their regions and territories with the same importance. Although Russians are more likely to associate with federal scale constructs, regional scale constructs are also important to them. Regional scale places and borders are also more personally familiar to participants than those on the federal scale, but they provide a larger scale than local.

The Local Scale

The local scale refers areas or features within cities, villages, auls, and parts of the countryside. These places could be schools, buildings, parks, and other local establishments. 15.65 % of the participants provided a local border, enclosing their local scale sketch with a boundary. 37.39 % made some reference to a local place without necessarily including a border.

Gender and drawing of a local scale border were significantly associated ($\chi^2 = 5.29, p < .05$). Men were 2.08 times more likely to draw such a border than were women. 22.7 % of male participants drew a local border. 12.39 % of female participants drew a local border.

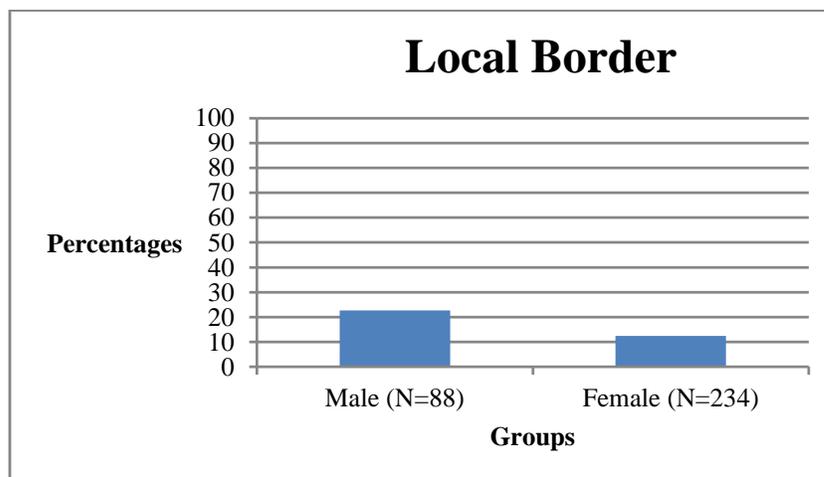


Figure 45: Percentages of Male and Female Participants Including a Local Border in their Sketch Maps.

There was also a significant association between being born in the same place as one's parents and including a local scale place on one's map ($\chi^2 = 4.06, p < .05$). Those born in the same place as their parents are 1.60 times more likely to designate a local scale place on their sketch maps than those whose parents were born in a different place. Participants with the same

birthplace as their parents drew local places on 42.58 % of their maps, while those who were not drew local places on 31.73 % of their own.

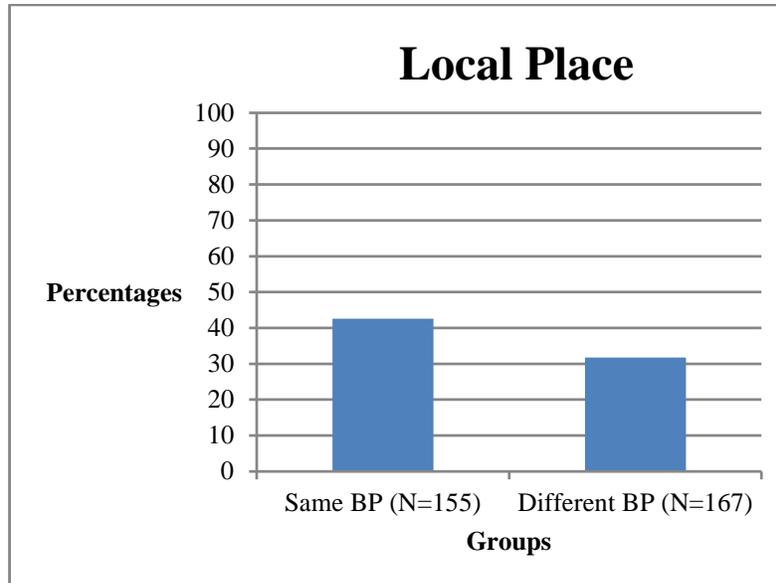


Figure 46: Percentages of Participants with Parents of the Same Birthplace as Themselves vs. Different Birthplaces Including Local Place.

This difference demonstrates how familiarity and ancestral legacies affect one’s sense of place. When someone has connections to a place through multiple generations, they are likely to be exposed to a deeper knowledge of that place’s geography and history. When one is born in a place different to that of his or her parents, he or she would be exposed to their parents’ sense of place, which already be a secondary situation, rather than where they grew up.

There was also a significant relationship between territory and the propensity of including places on the local scale ($\chi^2 = 6.83, p < .01$). Participants from Karachay-Cherkessia were 1.85 times more likely to draw local scale places, including them on 45.67 % of their sketches,

participants from Stavropol and other territories included local places on 31.28 % of their own sketches.

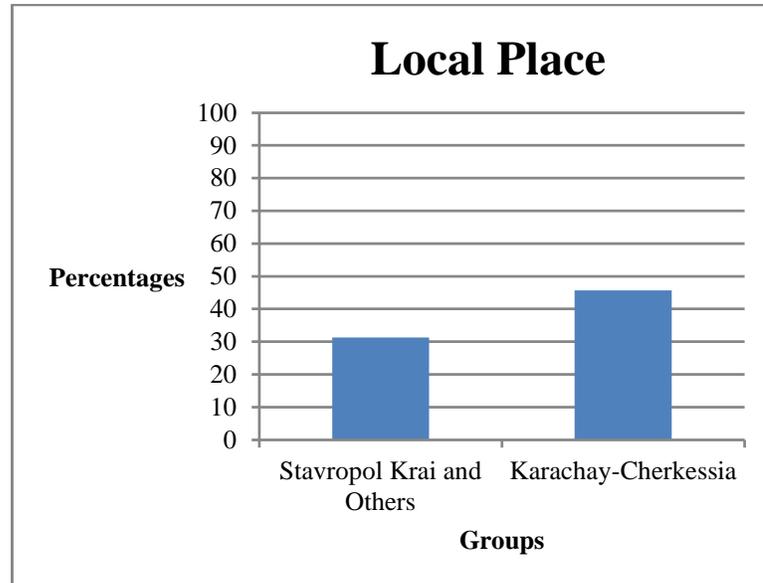


Figure 47: Percentages of Participants in Stavropol vs. Karachay-Cherkessia Including Places Local Places.

Landscape Features

Landscape features are defined as any kind of attribute found in nature, such as rivers, mountains, and forests. As Gould and White (1974) claim, mental images of homeland often contain positive environmental factors such as pleasant landscape. The North Caucasus is considered to be one of Russia's most beautiful places and has long been a popular destination for tourists from the north due to its mild climate, mountain vistas, and mineral water springs. Many of the participants expressed their appreciation for their natural environment in the

interviews saying that they regarded the south of Russia to be favorable to the north due to its climate and natural environment. The mountains are important in the cultures of both Russians and non-Russians. Many famous writers spent time in the Caucasus including Lermontov and Tolstoy. The Karachays have traditionally settled the slopes of Mt. Elbrus, which holds a special place in their culture.

The association between nationality and including a physical feature from the landscape in one's map was significant ($\chi^2 = 5.08, p < .05$). More specifically, non-Russians were 1.76 times more likely to include a landscape feature in their maps than were Russians. While 36.32 % of non-Russians included a landscape feature, only 24.43 % of Russians did.

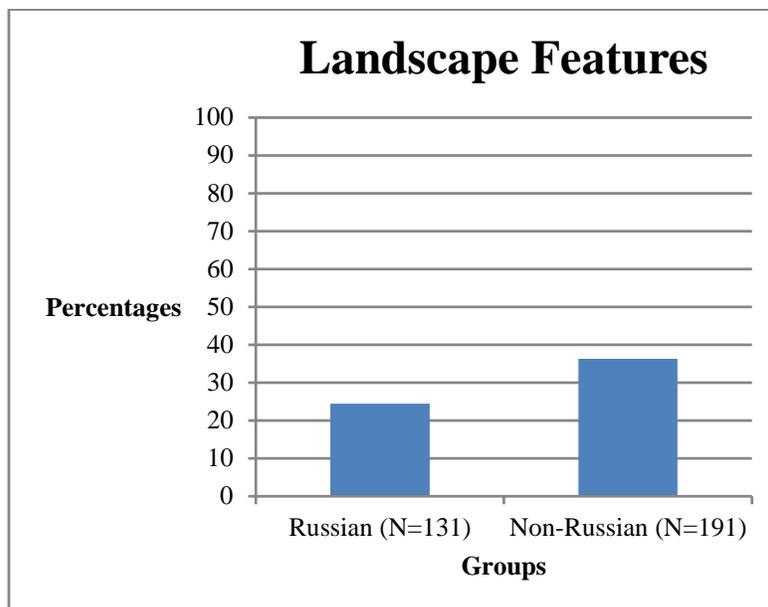


Figure 48: Percentages of Russians vs. non-Russians including Landscape Features.

Aesthetic values of the North Caucasus region are important regarding one's conceptions of homeland. Many participants, especially those who did not provide concrete borders on their

sketch maps, included elements of nature and landscape. Although both non-Russians and Russians could logically include landscape features in their conceptions of homeland, almost the entire non-Russian population lives within mountainous or semi-mountainous areas. Most of the Russian participants live within an environment where they are exposed to flat steppe lands or rolling hills rather than dramatic mountain landscapes.

There is also an association between religion type and the drawing of a landscape feature ($\chi^2 = 4.27, p < .05$). Islamic participants were 1.66 more likely to include a landscape feature in their maps than were non-Islamic participants. 36.42 % of Islamic sketches included a landscape feature as did 25.68 % of non-Islamic offerings.

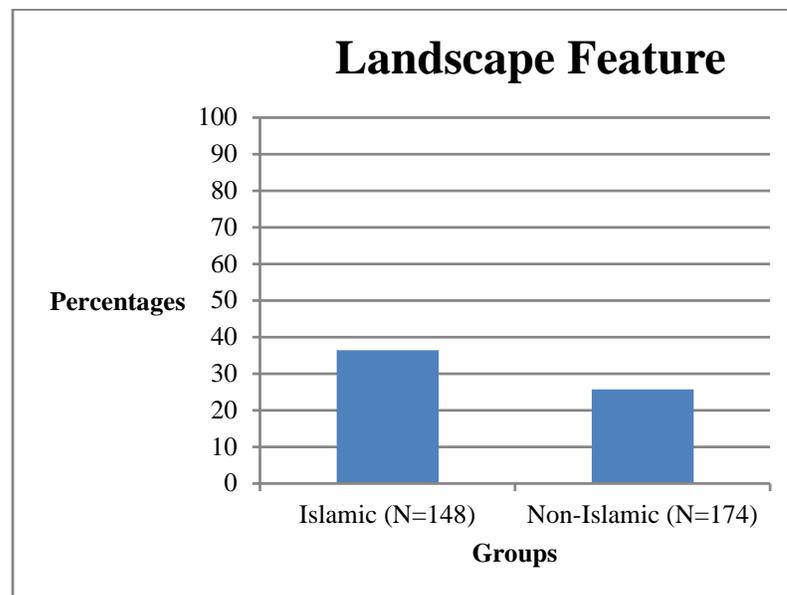


Figure 49: Percentages of Islamic vs. non-Islamic Participants Including Landscape Features.

Gender and the propensity to include physical features in the landscape were also significantly associated ($\chi^2 = 9.46, p < .01$). Women were more likely to include a landscape

feature (most often images of mountains) by 2.53 times. Women sketched physical features important to their idea of homeland on 36.32 of their drawings, while 18.39 % of men did so.

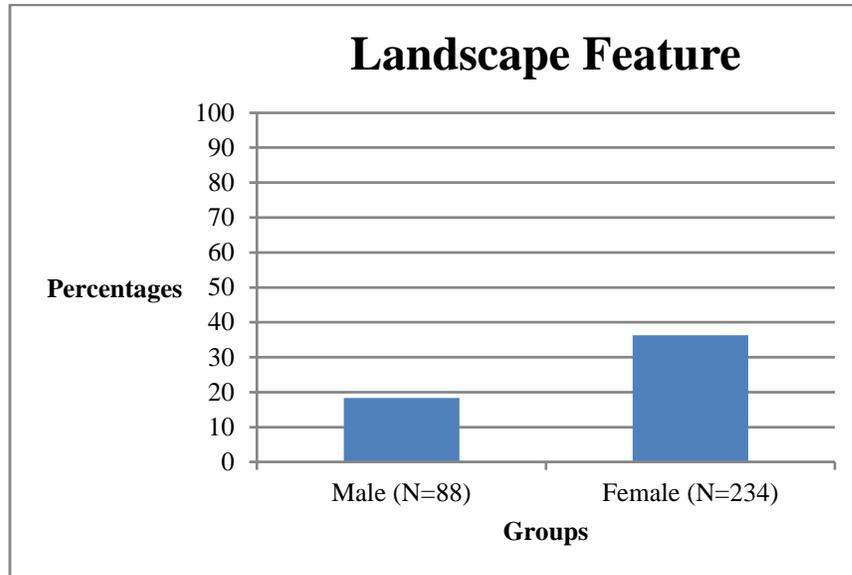


Figure 50: Percentages of Male and Female Participants Including Landscape Features.

Religious Places and Ethnic Symbols

Places important specifically for religious purposes were the second least popular appearing on only 8.63 % of the sketch maps. Only elements representing ethnic symbols, which appeared on 7.76 % of the maps, were fewer in number. Although these categories were not extremely popular, they were still present. Also, the fact that there were no significant associations between the group designations and these elements shows that all of the various groups considered them to be of equal importance.

Religious places included churches, mosques, and holy sites. Stavropol has many churches and several Orthodox Christian holy sites, but no mosques. However, Christians have

multiple churches in Cherkessk. The presence of these religious places in the landscape is likely not to be cause for their sparse appearance on the on Christian participants' maps. Their absence is more to do with the fact that over 70 % of the participants indicated that they did not attend a place of worship regularly. Islamic participants in Stavropol lack religious places, but there are Mosques in Karachay-Cherkessia. Their lack of religious places maybe due to the fact that such places are not of personal value. Aliyev (2004) notes the influence of Sufism in the North Caucasus, which emphasis personal spiritual expression rather than the mosque. He notes that Muslims who practiced this strain were more successful during the Soviet period, when mosque worship was often not an option.

Ethnic symbols consist of monuments to writers or national heroes and of images that are traditionally associated with a particular ethnic group including specific landscape features, such as a birch tree, or Mt. Elbrus. A possible explanation for the lack of such elements on sketch maps would be that they are difficult to include beyond the local scale. Another reason could be that most of the monuments in the study area were constructed in Soviet times and represent Soviet achievements. The young generation may not relate to these symbols as much.

Map Descriptions from Interviews

The following maps are all examples collected during the summer of 2009. I chose to include these maps because I feel that they represent typical elements exhibited by many of the participants and because these participants also provided interviews explain their maps. The idea of homeland is complex, but several key themes stand out in these participants' sketch maps.

First, participants drew territory in which they felt the most comfortable or they considered to be comfortable for their ethno-national groups. Non-Russians rarely represented their conceptions of homeland on the federal scale with no mention of other places or parts of Russia. Islamic participants often included places outside of the Russian Federation that were important for Islam. Many Russians were comfortable incorporating at least some part of The Russian Federation beyond their immediate surroundings but not all of them considered the entire country to be their homeland, citing differences in regional culture. Second, family connections are very important. Participants often commented on ideas of their historical homelands, from where their ancestors originated, in addition to their contemporary conceptions of homeland. They also tended to draw places that were important to family members, such as their mother's birthplace, to which they had no direct association themselves. Third, scale is important in terms of borders and places, and how people related to them politically. Participants who chose to use political borders on their sketch maps more often than not drew the Russian Federation, and thus included places like St. Petersburg and Moscow. These two places appeared on many maps when participants had no personal connections to these cities. They were included as symbols of Russia and because they are economically prosperous. Fourth, natural sites and landscape features were prominent along with cities in the region that are commonly associated with beautiful nature or resorts. Positive environmental factors, like the sea side or sunny weather, also prompted participants to include places to which they had no personal connections. Finally, attention to everyday life was important for many participants. These people tended to see their homeland on the local scale, preferring to association with familiar environments with which they have intimate personal experience.

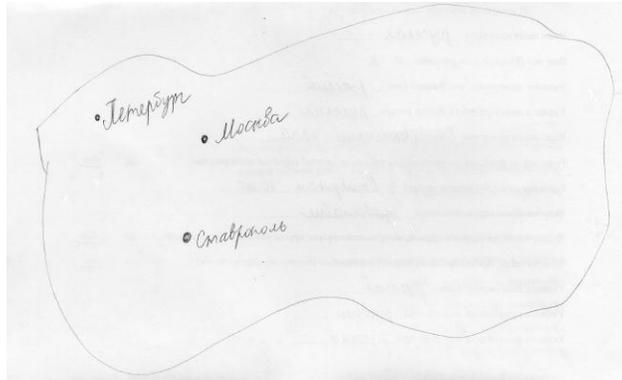


Figure 51: Map of Participant 65.

This sketch by participant number 65, a Russian woman from Stavropol, shows a clear attempt to include all of Russia in her map. She included three cities, Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Stavropol, in their relative geographical proximities. When I asked her if her map included all of the Russian Federation, she confirmed it. She then confirmed that most important place of the three was Stavropol, saying “

because it is where I was born, and where I live.”

Moscow was included “

Because it is the capital.”

She then said that she had included St. Petersburg:

Because it is a very beautiful city and is considered the pride of Russia. I would like to live there if it were possible.

Map number 65 exemplifies several important trends. First, as was the case with 75.08 % of the sketch maps, the participant included a place that is significant at the regional scale. In this

situation it was Stavropol, which is also important because it happens to be this participant's place of residence. Stavropol is also the regional capital of her home region. Her choice to include Stavropol was motivated both by familiarity and by symbolism.

Drawing the border of the Russian Federation indicates affiliation with the entire territory of the country and including Moscow and St. Petersburg suggests that the participant used a similar thought process to select federal scale places they are both widely familiar and symbolic. While Moscow may have been selected due to its administrative power and as a symbol for Russia, St. Petersburg was selected due the participant's affinity for the city. This choice is in keeping with what Gould and White (1974) propose regarding place affinities: people's mental maps are more likely to contain places with which they associate positive attributes.

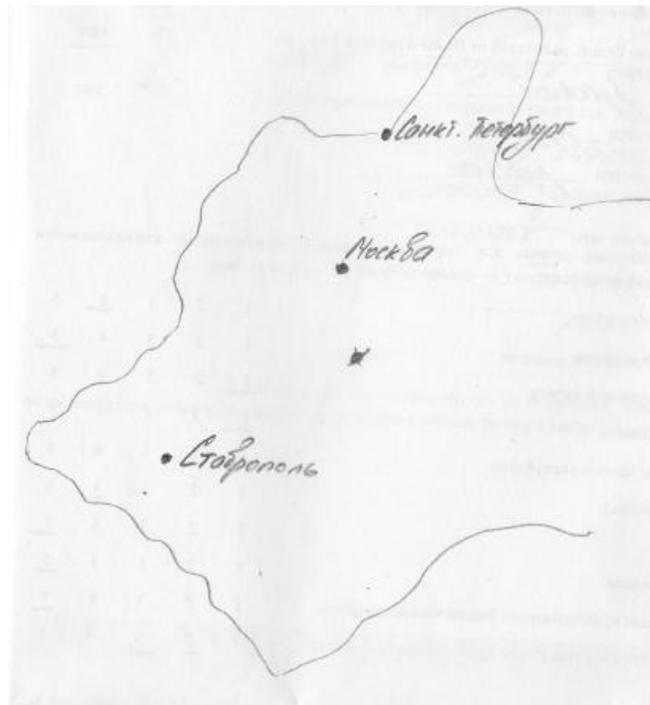


Figure 52: Map of Participant 66.

Participant number 66 self-identified in almost an identical fashion to number 65, except for the fact that she practices her religion: Orthodox Christianity. Although she included the same three cities (Stavropol, Moscow, and St. Petersburg) on the map, her map differs in that she did not draw the entire border of the Russian Federation when attempting to represent the territory that she considers to be her homeland. Regarding this decision she said:

I did not draw in all of Russia, although it is all important for Russians. I included Stavropol because I was born here and have lived here my whole life, Moscow because it is central to Russia, being the capital, and St. Petersburg because it is also a powerful city. I consider my homeland to be all of Russia of course, but if I have to choose the places most important to me, there are all here in central Russia.

This map is an example of where one's own sense of homeland is not consistent with his or her imagined homeland in terms of political borders. A lack of geographical familiarity for the eastern part of Russia means that this participant did not include this area in her map. However, she acknowledges that this area is important for Russians as an ethno-national group, of whom she considers herself. Another notable element in this response is that participant 66 used the term "Central Russia," rather than "Western Russia" (which is essentially what she drew with an attempt at accuracy: Russian territory west of the Urals), illustrating her lack of familiarity with Siberia and the Russian Far East. For most people, neither Stavropol, which is part of the North Caucasus, nor St. Petersburg, which is located in the northwestern corner of the country on the Gulf of Finland, would be considered Central Russia.

This sketch map says something about Participant 66's sense of core and periphery. Although St. Petersburg is not central to Russia's geography, it is central in importance to Russian identity. Since this participant considers herself Russian, placing Stavropol centrally

within Russian space and including it along with the major centers of power in the country emphasize territorial affiliation on the federal scale and association with traditionally Russian space and Russian places.

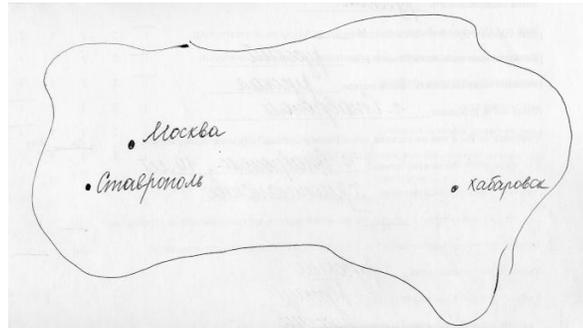


Figure 53: Map of Participant 64.

Participant number 64's background differs from the previous two examples in that she indicated spending part of her life far away from The South of Russia and from The North Caucasus region in the Russian Far East. In addition to including Stavropol on the map, she also drew Moscow and Khabarovsk. When asked why she chose these two cities, she responded:

I have many relatives in Moscow, and it is important because it is the capital of Russia. Khabarovsk is there because I lived there, and that is where I grew up.

In this response we again see connections to family and personal experience factor into one's choices regarding important places in his or her homeland. An attempt at cartographic accuracy is also present in the Russian Far East, presumably due to the fact that participant number 64 has direct experience with this region. Another point of interest in this map is that Stavropol is equidistant to Moscow and the Southern border. Khabarovsk is also located firmly inland, not

presumably in close proximity to China. Again, we see spatial preferences leaning toward the core as opposed to the periphery.

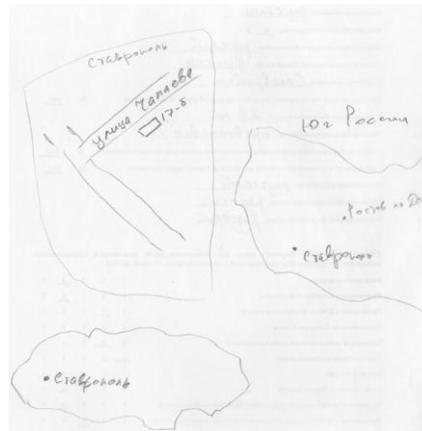


Figure 54: Map of Participant 67.

Participant number 67, a Russian man from Stavropol, drew three map units, representing three separate examples of bounded space at different scales. We see part of Stavropol, with his home street and his apartment building. He also chose to identify the south of Russia with two cities: Stavropol and Rostov-on-Don. Rostov-on-Don is the largest city and the capital of the Southern Federal District. He explained:

I drew Stavropol because I live here. I have lived here for 25 years. And here is The South of Russia... well, the Southwest, also the sea, and The Caucasus. The North Caucasian Republics are not here, I do not consider them to be my homeland. I do not really consider all of Russia to be my homeland. But, this is just for me...this is what I call homeland.

The fact that Participant 67 includes places in the Caucasus, but does not consider the republics part of his homeland shows his awareness of the break between Russian and non-Russian space in the cultural landscape. This distinction is more important to his conception of homeland than the political boundaries that indicate that these territorial units are indeed part of Russia. The break is notable due to his rather accurate depiction of Stavropol Krai and accurate positioning of Stavropol within it indicate that he has a good awareness of political boundaries in the Region.

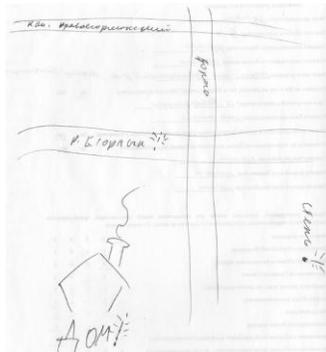


Figure 55: Map of Participant 76.

This map, drawn by Participant number 76, shows a common theme exhibited by rural respondents who were born in the same place as previous generations of their family. Participant 76 is Russian male from the village of Novotrostkaya. His emphasis is on a very local area, with little attention paid to scale beyond his own neighborhood. When asked to describe his map, he said plainly:

It is my countryside. Well, you could call this a street... it is more of a road. This place is called Novotrostkaya, it is in Stavropol Krai. It is nearby here.

Outside the village, he wrote the word “steppe” and added an exclamation point. This indication shows an affiliation with the local landscape. Although Novotrostkaya is technically located in the North Caucasus region, this area is some of the last steppe land before one reaches the rolling hills that lead to the Caucasus to the South. Identifying with the steppe, rather than with the Caucasus exemplifies place affinity, as it points out a choice to associate with regions to the north, which extend far into Russia and into Kazakhstan. The steppe is also important for agriculture, and therefore its presence might be due to its role in village livelihood.

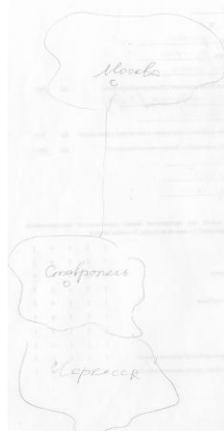


Figure 56: Map of Participant 78.

Participant number 78 is Russian woman born in Stavropol who grew up in Karachay-Cherkessia. The three places that she chose to include on her map, Moscow, Stavropol, and Cherkessk, are all bounded by territory on a greater scale presumably their oblast, krai, or republic borders. I make this assumption because these cities are all the capitals of their respective territories. This is how she described her map:

On my map, I drew Moscow, Stavropol, and Cherkessk. I am from Karachay-Cherkessia, but I do not really like it there. I like it here better in Stavropol. I was born in Stavropol, but we moved to Karachay-Cherkessia when I was half a year old... so I actually consider myself to be from Stavropol. My parents live in Stavropol, but my dad is in Moscow now. I am often in the Moscow Oblast.

One particular point of interest on this map is the fact that Moscow and Stavropol are connected with a line, again showing the connection between Stavropol and power federal cities. Also, the territory that is presumably Karachay-Cherkessia appears to have been included on the map after the Stavropol territory was drawn. Here we see a good example of one's decision making regarding a mental map. Stavropol is where she would like to associate, but she cannot leave out Karachay-Cherkessia due to her life experience there.

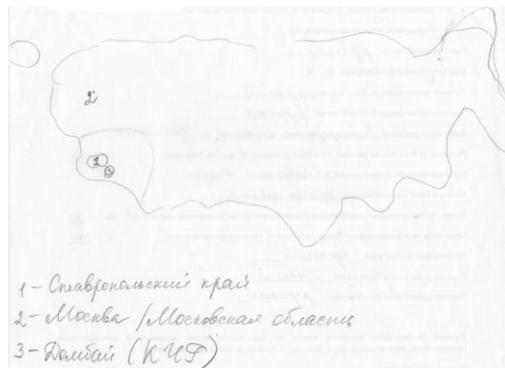


Figure 57: Map of Participant 20.

The map drawn by Participant number 20, a female from a small town in the Volgograd Oblast, does not specifically depict the area where she was born. She indicated that she has lived in Stavropol for four years, and Stavropol Krai (as an entire territory) is the most important place to her in terms of homeland. She clearly identifies with all of Russia because she managed to include what appears to be Kaliningrad Oblast, which is a Russian exclave in Europe between

Poland and Lithuania. Moscow and the Moscow Oblast also appear on her map. Another point of interest on her map is the town of Dombay, which is a popular resort area in Karachay-Cherkessia. She stated in regard to Dombay:

I love the mountains, nature is beautiful there (Dombay). I really like to relax and Dombay is a very relaxing place.

Here again, we observe place affinity due to positive environmental factors. It is especially important to consider that participant number 20 is relatively new to the North Caucasus region. Living in Stavropol, she has likely had little first-hand experience either with Dombay or Karachay-Cherkessia. In general, her map displays factors of power, familiarity, and aesthetic value all influencing her mental image of homeland.

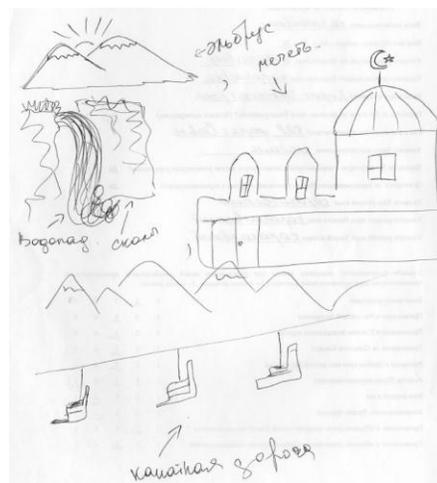


Figure 58: Map of Participant 87.

Participant number 87 self-identified as a Karachay female born in Karachay-Cherkessia. Her sketch represents a popular approach taken by many participants, especially from the mountainous regions of Stavropol Krai and Karachay-Cherkessia. In this drawing, we do not observe a map per se, as there are no borders delineating specific territories. What we do observe however are several places important to this participant's conception of homeland: important physical features in the landscape, one of which (Mt. Elbrus) is a symbol of particular importance to the Karachay people. There is a mosque, which is significant for the Karachays' Islamic heritage. The mosque serves as an identity marker, showing the area as Islamic space.

Because there are no borders included in this sketch, one is left to consider the entire page as the participant's homeland and is thus forced to interpret the participant's idea of territoriality through the symbols and individual places included. She said:

When I think about homeland, I think about the Republic of Karachay-Cherkessia (not Russia). All of these things I drew are important to me. Here is Elbrus, which is very important, so is the waterfall, and even so is the cable car line.

In this sketch, we see essentially no connection to the idea of "Russia." All of the place-based elements that Participant 87 included are either local, or specifically linked to Karachay-Cherkessia, rather than to overall Russian Federal identity. Even the cable cars are actually very important because they are a means by which people are able to explore the mountains, and thus better connect with them. Elbrus, too, is drawn in a very particular fashion, resembling the garb in the center of the flag of Karachay-Cherkessia.



Figure 59: The Flag of Karachay-Cherkessia. Source: www.circassianworld.com

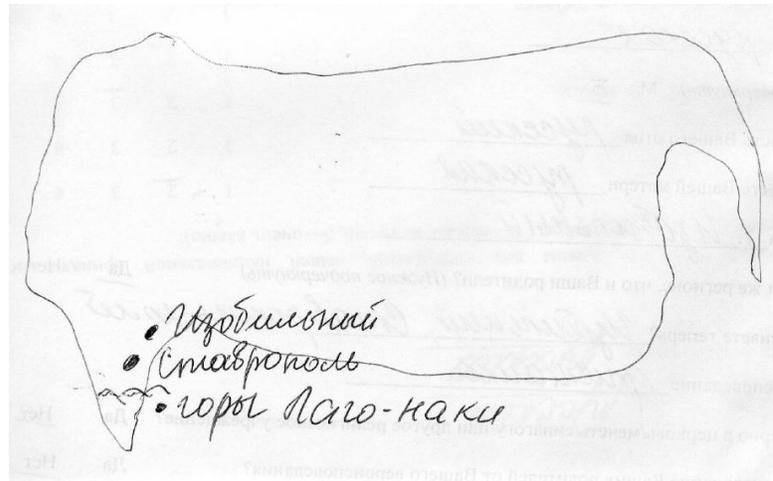


Figure 60: Map of Participant 86.

When I asked Participant 86 to explain her map, this is what she said:

I drew all of Russia, the borders of the country. I drew Izibilni (a small town in Stavropol Krai) because I live there and I was born there, and I drew Stavropol, the other city where I live... I drew the mountains of Lagonaki because I often go there with my parents on vacation. It is important that it is warm here, I like the conditions in the Southern Federal District.

Like many others, Participant number 86's image of homeland has also been influenced by pleasant environmental factors and through family connections. Here we see elements of power and a sense of overall Russian identity through including all of Russia. I found it interesting that she did not include Mt. Elbrus on her map but rather some lower mountain nearby. When I asked her why she left out Mt. Elbrus, she told me that she had not drawn it because it was not Russia. I asked her why she thought this and she replied:

Well, because it is not located in Russia... is it? I do not really know, I am not really sure.

This response points again to the importance of identity and place as we see the concept of “non-Russian space” dictate this woman's perception of Mt. Elbrus. Mt. Elbrus is in fact fully within the borders of the Russian Federation, but the area is inhabited primarily by Karachays (on the slopes in Karachay-Cherkessia) and Balkars (on the Mt. Elbrus's slopes in Kabardino-Balkaria) (Richmond, 2006).

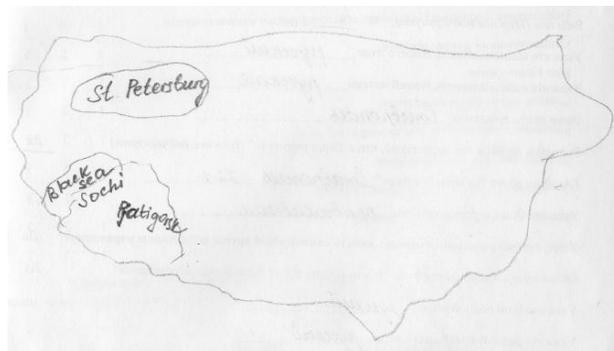


Figure 61: Map of Participant 38.

According to Participant 38:

For as much as I live in the North Caucasus, I prefer to relate to the Black Sea. I like to relax there, and I have got a lot of good memories there from my childhood. It is all because it is close to Krasnodar Krai. Pyatigorsk because my grandma and grandpa are from there and so is my dad. My childhood memories are also connected to Pyatigorsk. I am obsessed with Sochi, everything is happening there now. Soon we will have the Olympics there in 2014. And here is St. Petersburg. I have got many friends there. It is the second capital of Russia, and it is really the cultural capital of Russia. It is a symbol of Russia, it is everything for us!

Participant number 38, a woman from Stavropol, demonstrates how one can filter place-based identity factors to construct a conception of homeland that is more idealistic than local. Rather than including her birthplace or the area in which she lives, she chose to draw three places that are all fairly universally considered to be romantic by the Russian people: The Black Sea, St. Petersburg, and Pyatigorsk. Pyatigorsk holds importance in the literature of several famous 19th century Russian authors. The local landscape around it is also quite beautiful, its name literally meaning “*five mountains*.” The Black Sea also appears on the sketch. Interestingly enough, the sea is almost entirely enclosed by the borders of the Russian Federation. Sochi, too, is referenced, as it is one of the few areas (along with Moscow and St. Petersburg) to greatly benefit from the Putin era’s economic reforms. St. Petersburg is also present on the map: well within Russia’s borders and not near the Gulf of Finland.

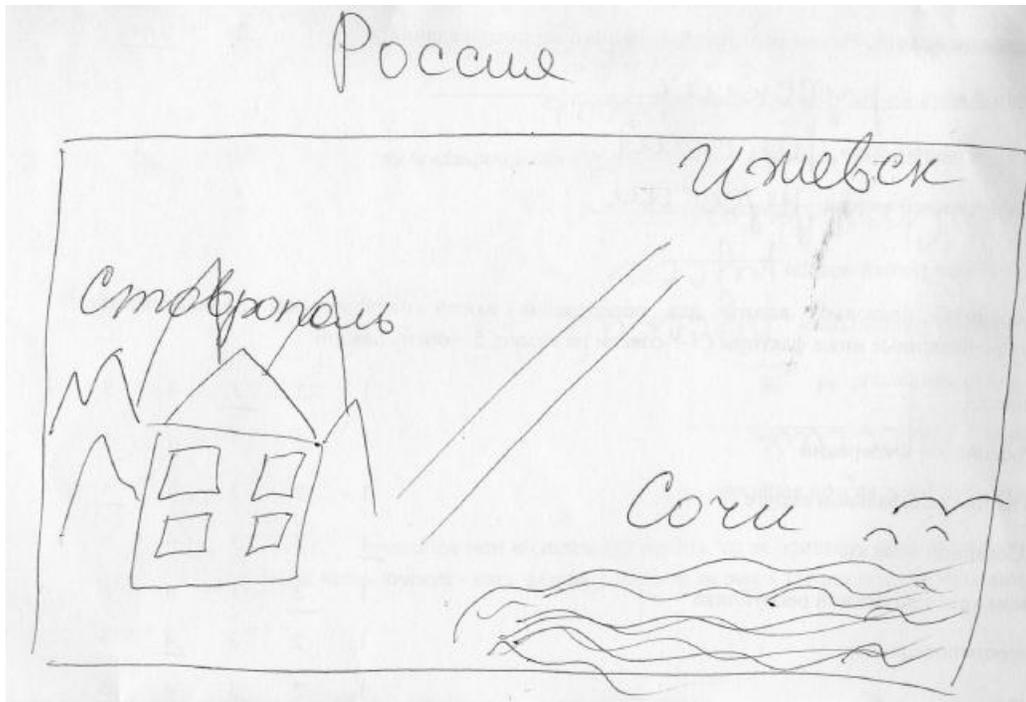


Figure 62: Map of Participant 34.

Participant number 34, a woman from Stavropol, sketched a small box, labeling it “Russia” paying no attention the idea of the mountains of the sea as something inherently “non-Russian.” She explained that:

This is Russia, with Stavropol, the mountains, and my house. Stavropol, my home, and the mountains are all connected to me. I was born here and have lived here all my life. This is Znersk. My dad lives there and I like that city. Here is Sochi on the black sea. My aunt lives nearby there and I cannot live without the sea!

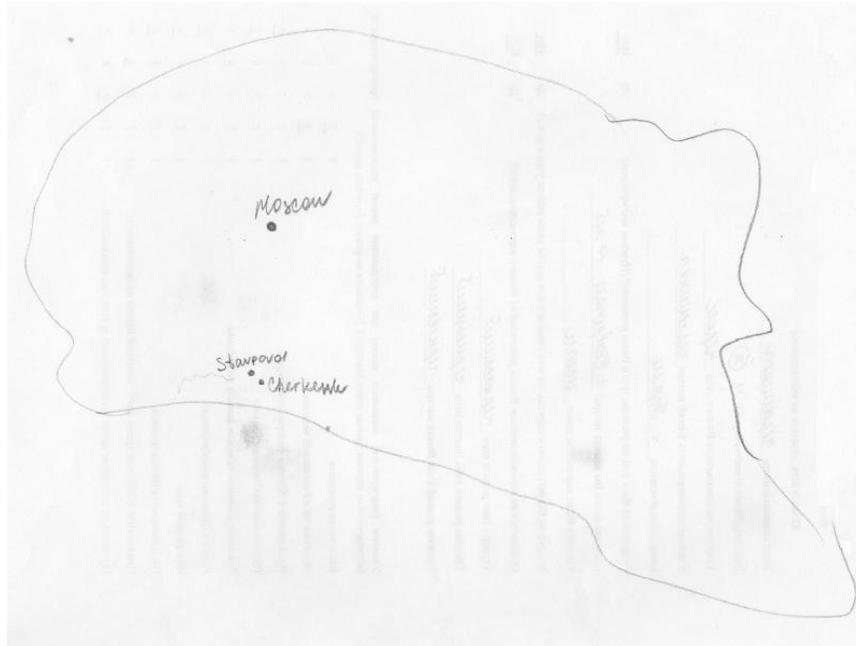


Figure 63: Map of Participant 21.

Participant number 21 is Cherkess, but she was born in Perm, a city near the Ural Mountains.

Interestingly, the places in her map are focused on the south. She correctly points out the close proximity of Cherkessk and Stavropol and distances them both from Moscow. When I asked her why she chose these three places, this was her reply:

I drew Stavropol because I have lived here the longest. Cherkessk is here because I am there a lot. You could say that my roots are from Cherkessk, although I have basically never lived there. Moscow, I simply love that city, and I hope that it will be my future living place.

I then asked her what she thought about Karachay-Cherkessia in terms of being “Russian” (*Rossiskiy*). She answered:

I consider Karachay-Cherkessia to be part of Russia, why would it not be? Well, actually I probably feel that way because I have lived in Stavropol Krai for so long, around a predominantly Russian population. I have really gotten used to it here, so when I go back there, I do not notice any huge differences.

Clearly, she is aware of the effects of living around representatives of another nationality in terms of national mentality. She was born in Russian space and has lived her entire life in Russian space. In fact, individuals such as this are becoming more common among the young generation from Karachay-Cherkessia, as their parents have moved away for economic reasons, but kept ties with the Republic. Leaving Karachay-Cherkessia is sometimes an option for the young generation, especially university students. Being exposed to Russian culture and having command of the Russian language can open doors of social mobility in other regions, and not considering “Russian space” to be foreign or somehow uninviting means that out-migration is an option. This woman’s description of Moscow does not glorify it as a symbol of Russia, but rather as an economic or aesthetic goal. She later explained to me that she wanted to live in Moscow especially for the material advantages, the higher salaries, and the city night life. These elements are simply not available in the North Caucasus on a scale grand enough to satisfy her.

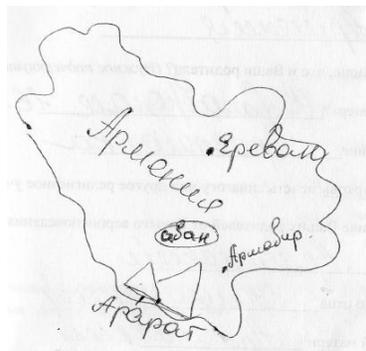


Figure 64: Map of Participant 32.

Participant number 32 is an Armenian woman. Although she was born near Yerevan, she spent most of her life in Russia, having moved to Stavropol after the collapse of the USSR. Stavropol’s Armenian population is quite pronounced. The local airport for example offers two

direct flights: Moscow and Yerevan. The Armenian population is somewhat divided however. Some of the Stavropol Armenians are from Armenia proper, such as participant 32, while others are from Baku, having immigrated to Stavropol as refugees due to the unstable conditions relating to the Nagorno-Karabakh war in Azerbaijan. Although they recognize each other as Armenian, they tend not to socialize with one another. Yerevan Armenians in Stavropol have retained a strong sense of homeland regarding all that is Armenia. This is what Participant 32 said about her map:

Ah, we can say a lot about the map! Well first of all, Mt. Ararat is ours! Wherever it stands makes no difference (it is currently within the borders of Turkey), I consider it to be ours. Also Servan is very important, it is the only place that is really left... well were we can really go to sit in the sun. Then there is Yerevan, I do not know if I drew it right, maybe it is supposed to be over here... it is where my dad was born, and where I spent my childhood... well, a part of my childhood...summers.

Here we see a great sense of pride for one's birthplace and historical conception of homeland. Even though this woman has spent the majority of her conscious life in Russia, she does not consider it her homeland. Ararat is also important, just as Mt. Elbrus is for the Karachay. However, like with most of the other examples, family connections and environmental aesthetics influence her decision.

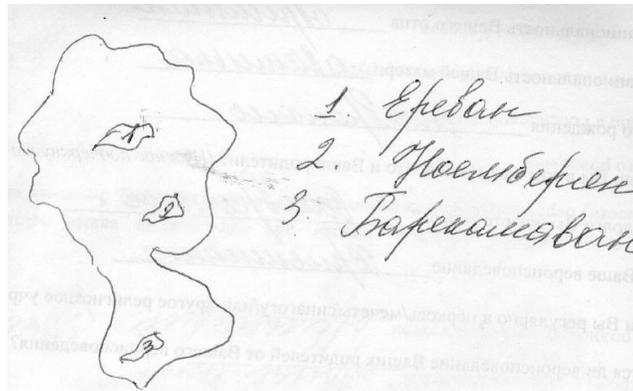


Figure 65: Map of Participant 33.

Participant number 33 also considers herself to be a “Yerevan Armenian,” but was born in Stavropol. This is how she described her map, a map of Armenia:

Yerevan is my favorite city in Armenia. This is Nebryan, that is where my relatives live from my father’s line. Berekomovan is a village where I spent my childhood, where my father was born.

I mentioned to her that I was curious as to why she drew Armenia, not Russia, as her homeland.

This was her response:

That’s my homeland. I have never really lived there, but all the same my homeland is Armenia.

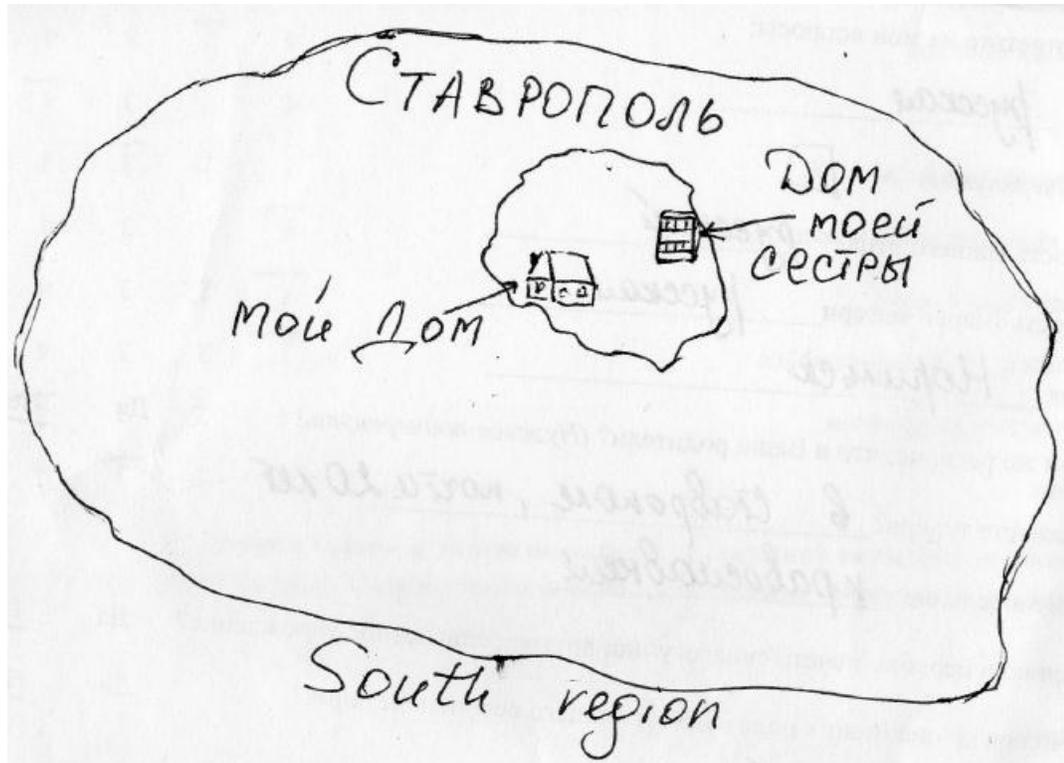


Figure 66: Map of Participant 132.

Participant number 132, a Russian man, drew the border of the Southern Federal District as his homeland. I found this to be particularly interesting because the Southern Federal District, as a political entity is a relatively new concept having appeared as one of the seven federal districts created during Putin's federal reforms of the mid-2000s. In describing his map, he said:

This is my homeland, the Southern Federal District. In it there is Stavropol, one of the places that very important to me... and in Stavropol, here is my house and my sister's house, they are very important to me...I have never been anywhere. I was born in Norilsk, but I was there two months. I do not really know anything about the rest of Russia. I consider that for me, the south is really the end of Russia.

On this map we observe both the regional and local scales. When asked to choose three places, this participant seems to have relied heavily on familiarity rather than an imagined sense of

greater Russia when defining his own image of homeland, including his birthplace, with which he is not familiar, nor Moscow (St. Petersburg) with which he is also not familiar.

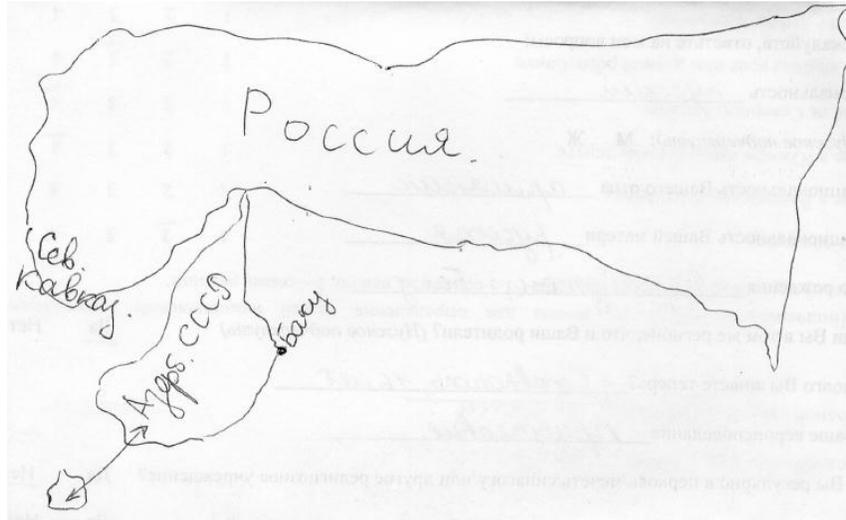


Figure 67: Map of Participant 152.

On this map, Participant 152, a self-identified Russian male from Baku, having an Armenian father and a Russian mother, relies on both political borders and personal familiarity when considering his homeland. He explained:

I drew Russia because it is the place where I live now, and because my language is Russian. The Azeri SSR is the exact place where I was born. The North Caucasus is where I am currently living.

His connections to Azerbaijan, Russia, and the North Caucasus are all present on the map, however Azerbaijan is drawn in detail, including the Azeri exclave of Naxcivan. Although he is half Armenian, like many Baku Armenians in Stavropol, he shows little reverence or affection

for the Armenian state, nor did he mention anything to do with the Armenian nation further in his interview.

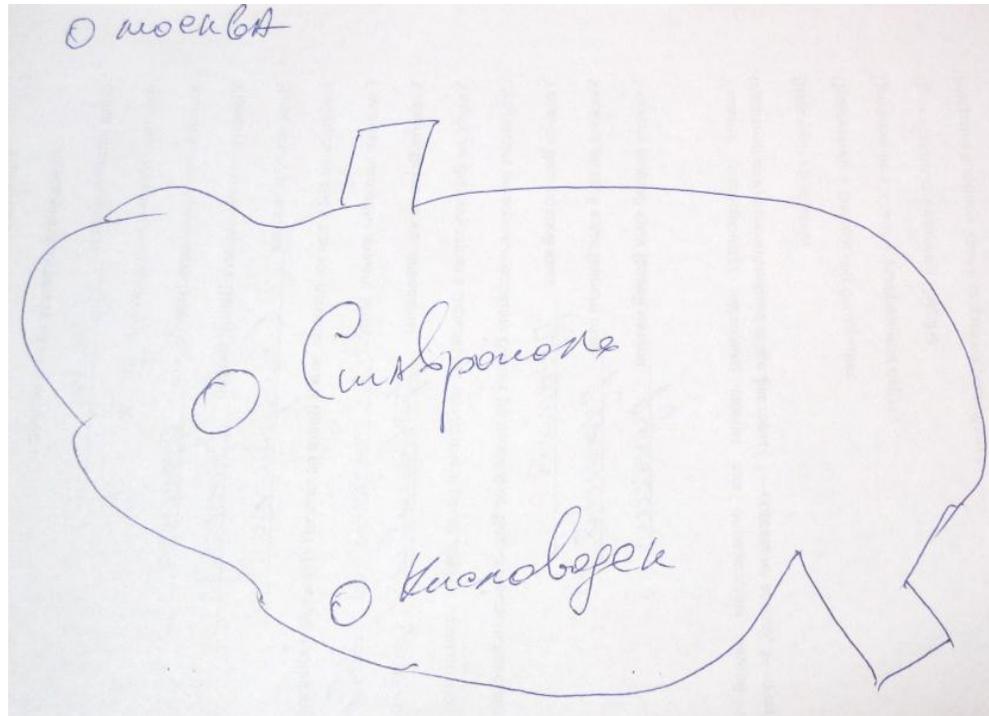


Figure 68: Map of Participant 149.

Participant number 149 is a Russian man from Stavropol. He drew the Stavropol Krai with good detail, including the city of Kislovodsk, a mountain resort town in Stavropol Krai. I also included Moscow on the map, but made sure to let me know that it was outside the borders of his homeland. He said:

This here is the Stavropol Krai. And here is Moscow, but I just thought to draw it actually. It is of course a small homeland, yes. Stavropol Krai is a small homeland. Moscow is there because it is the capital. It [Moscow] is not my homeland. From there they rule! Homeland is here. We could talk about the city of Kislovodsk. They have great weather there and beautiful mountains, it is possible to relax there.

Clearly this man views Moscow as an important source of authority, but not as somewhere he feels a personal connection in terms of homeland. However, its appearance on the map is important as he recognizes its connections to Stavropol Krai, the area that he does consider to be his homeland.

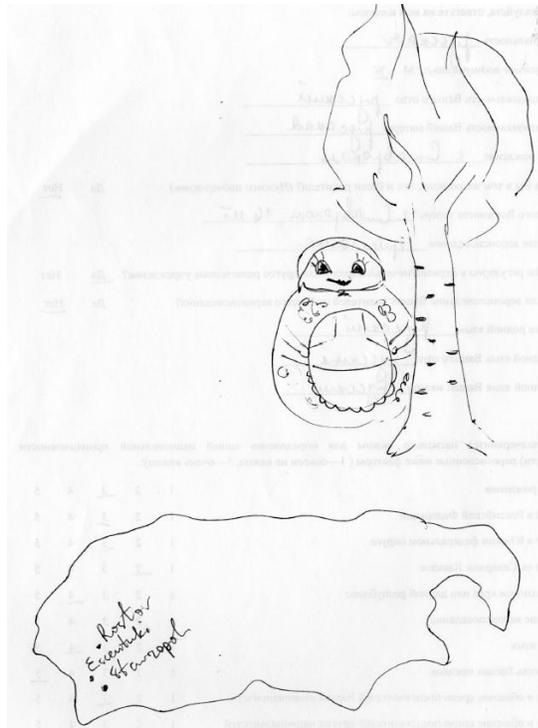


Figure 69: Map of Participant 144.

Participant number 144, a Russian woman from Stavropol, included two very important ethnic-Russian symbols in her sketch: the *matryoshka* (nesting doll) and the birch tree. She also very clearly provided the borders of the Russian Federation in her map. Her main criterion for defining homeland was birthplace, as she explains:

This is Stavropol, it is my birthplace. This is Yessentuki, it is my dad's birthplace and a large portion of my relatives live there. And Rostov is my mother's birthplace.

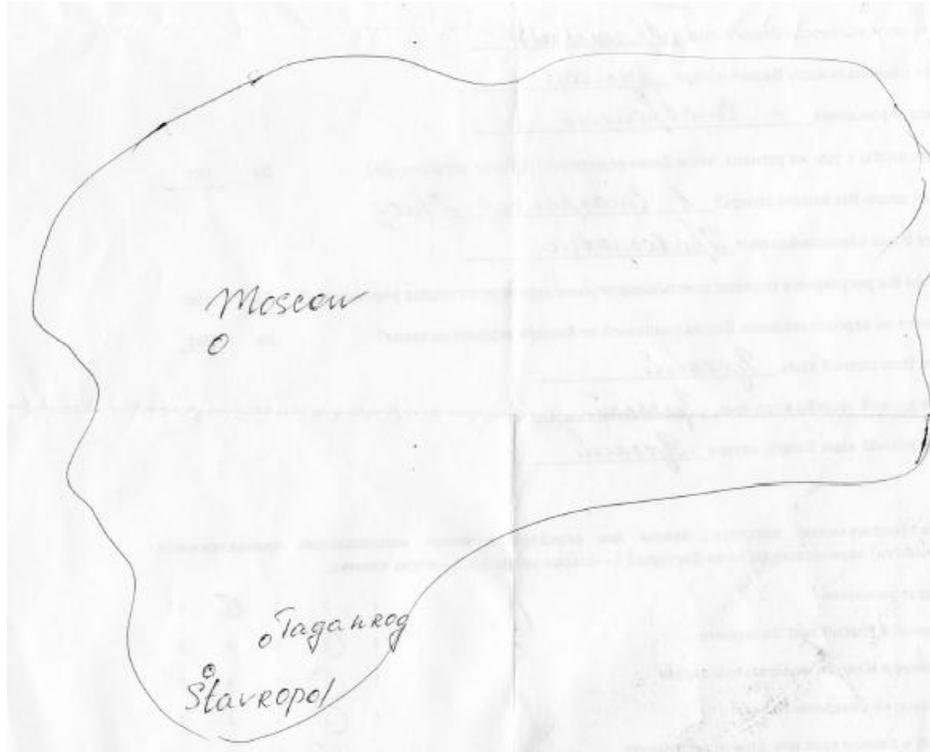


Figure 70: Map of Participant 151.

Participant number 151, a woman from Stavropol, also self-identified as Russian, having a Russian mother and an Armenian Father from Baku. Although she was sure of his Armenian roots, she doubted his connections to Armenian culture, saying that he was basically Russian.

This is how she described her map:

Here is the map, it is supposed to be a map of Russia, but three places that are important to me and those close to me are Stavropol, where I live, Moscow, it is the capital and the administrative center of the country, and the city of Taginrog, because my parents are divorced and my father lives there. My Grandma lives there...that is the majority of the relatives from my father's side. So, naturally I often end up in

that city, therefore it is important to me... In general I have got no connections to Armenia... I have got some very distant relatives there, but I have never been there. Again, we see personal experience with a places and connections with family members emphasized over possible conceptions of homeland based on notions of national historical territory.

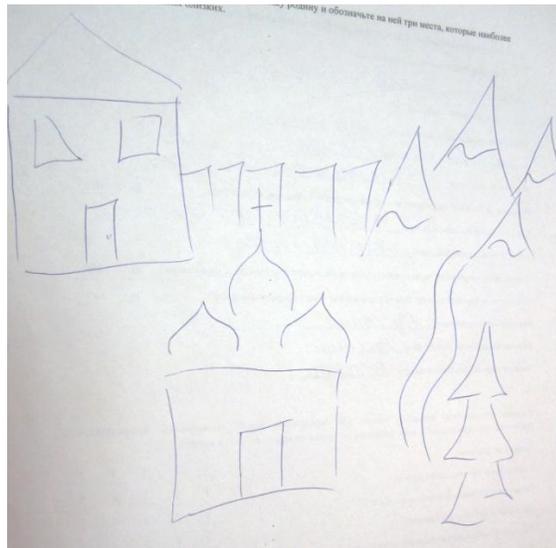


Figure 71: Map of Participant 42.

This sketch was done by participant number 42, a woman born in the town of Mineral Waters in the mountains of southern Stavropol Krai. Note her use of the entire page to represent her homeland, similar to the example drawn by participant number 87. However, rather than a Mosque in front of a mountain landscape, we see very clearly an Orthodox Church. She noted:

This is my homeland, the Caucasus. I love the Mountains.

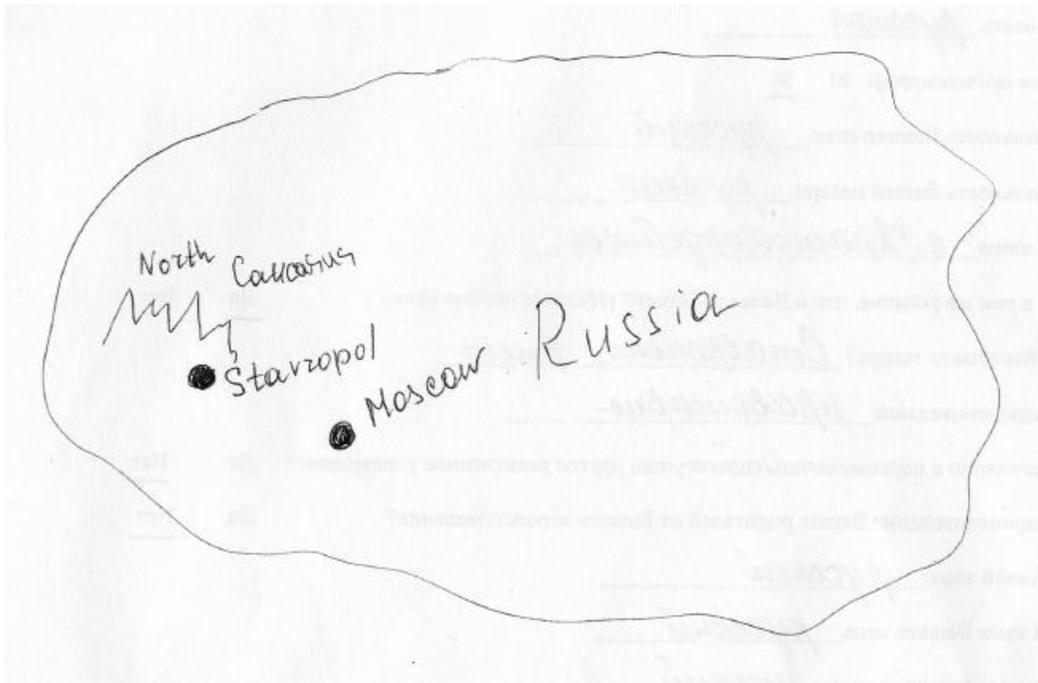


Figure 72: Map of Participant 41.

Note Participant 41's (a woman from Stavropol) placement of the North Caucasus and Stavropol above and to the west of Moscow. This participant sketched the map from top to bottom, first sketching the border of the Russian Federation, next drawing the mountains, then Stavropol (which in reality is north of the mountains), then Moscow as her third choice.

Here is the North Caucasus, Stavropol, and Moscow. The North Caucasus is here because I was born here, I imagine myself here. Moscow because it is a symbol of Russia, it is the capital, there is Red Square and all of that. And Stavropol because I live here... There are many other places that also symbolize Russia. One could include the Orthodox Church, the Golden Ring, St. Petersburg... even Lenin, oh yes Lenin, everyone needs to see him.

It is also notable that she included the Mountains completely within Russian Federal Borders, representing either a break between the North and South Caucasus, or seeing all of this territory as Russian space.

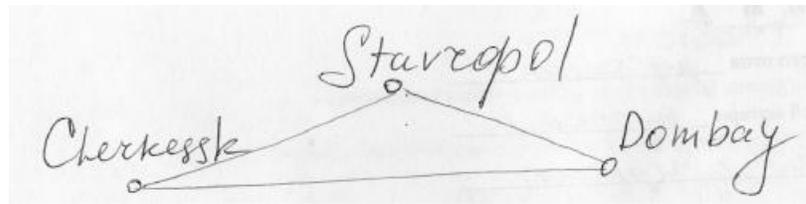


Figure 73: Map of Participant 162.

Participant number 162 is a Russian woman who was born in Cherkessk, studied in Stavropol, and returned to live in Cherkessk. Her sketch shows a triangle of important places. Again, she selected them based on familiarity and aesthetic value.

Stavropol, Cherkessk, and Dombay are my most native places. I studied at Stavropol State University, I like to rest in Dombay, and I live in Cherkessk, I love this city. I do not know why, but I love it.

This is a Russian from Karachay-Cherkessia. She has had little personal experience with areas Russia outside the North Caucasus. Thus, understandably she does not associate with Russia on the federal scale and she chose to represent her homeland on the regional level, but without designating specific territorial borders. Putting Stavropol, Cherkessk, and Dombay together in a triangle presents them as one contiguous spatial unit, demonstrating that Russian vs. non-Russian space did not factor into her mental image enough to merit such delineation in her sketch. It is also important to note that regarding her nationality she is basically indifferent, having married a non-Russian and considering her own child's nationality to be non-Russian.

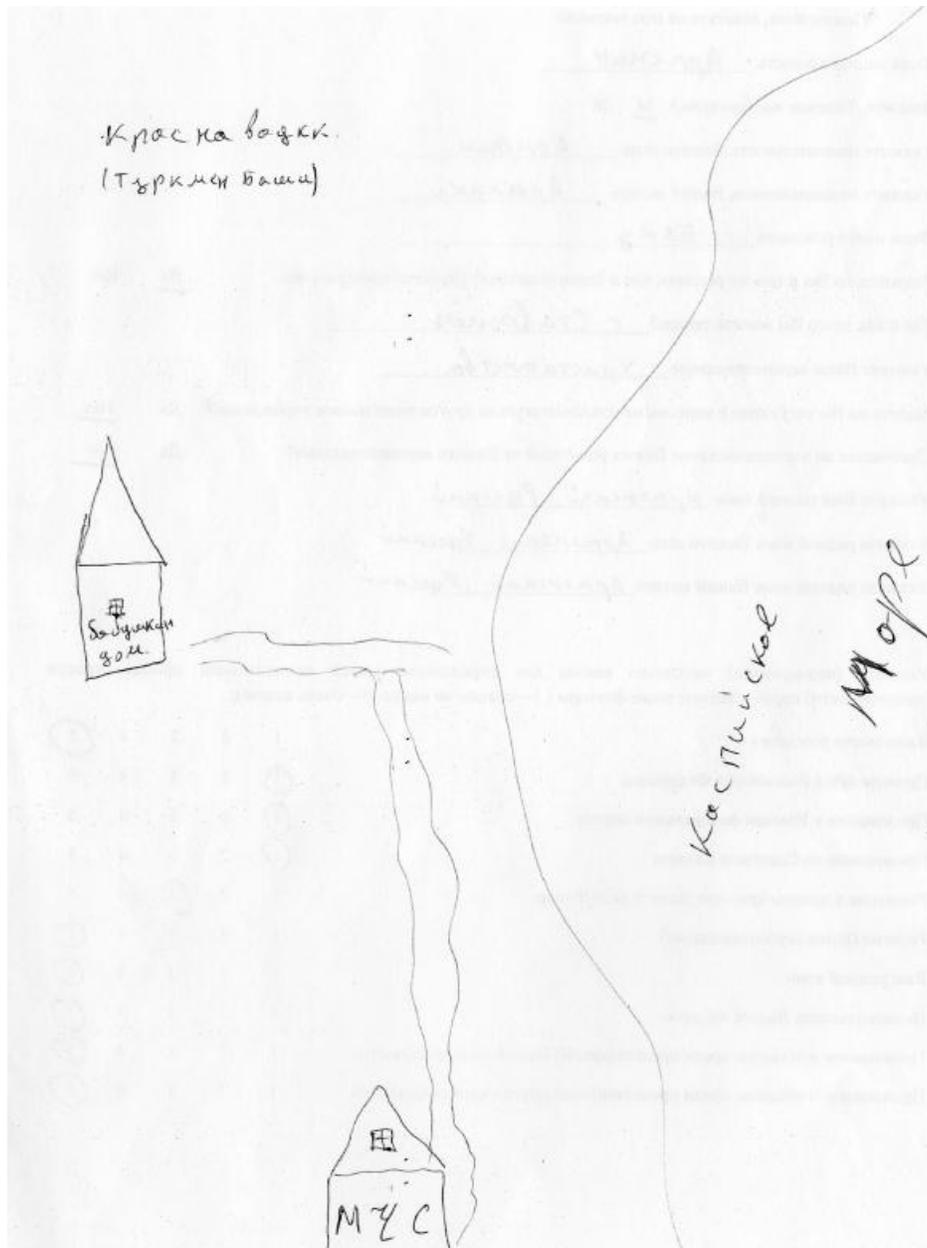


Figure 74: Map of Participant 57.

Participant 57, an Armenian man from Baku, chose to sketch the environment in which he spent the early years of his life, rather than either his birthplace, or his living place. Here we

Participant number 62 is a Russian man born in Nalchik, the capital of Kabardino-Balkaria. He does not include Nalchik on his sketch map, favoring instead three distinctly Russian places, two of which are important symbolic places beyond the regional level. Cartographic accuracy is good, showing his conception of homeland includes all of Russia, including the Sakhalin Islands in the Russian Far East. However the south is slightly out of proportion, indicating familiarity.

This is the Russian Federation. I want to go to Lake Baikal. It is beautiful It is a symbol of Russia's nature. There are lots of beautiful ancient sites there. Moscow is the capital of our country. Stavropol is the capital of my small homeland. I also could have drawn Nalchik, which is my birthplace. I consider Moscow to be more important to me than Nalchik.

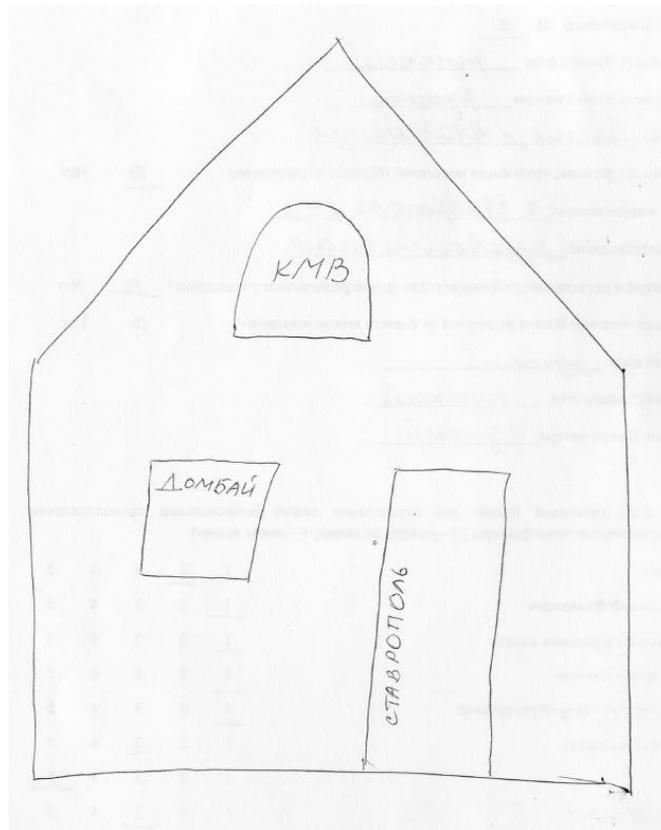


Figure 76: Map of Participant 61.

Participant number 61, a woman from Stavropol, sketched an interesting diagram. She depicted her homeland as a house, with three places serving as a door, and two windows. Again, her focus was on familiarity and comfort. She explained:

This is Stavropol, the city where I was born. It is where I live. It is where I study. You could say that it is my small homeland. Dombay has mountains, it is one of the most beautiful places. There is also this group of cities called Mineral Waters. Pyatigorsk, Kislovodsk, Zheleznovodsk... I like them, I like the rhythm of life there, I like their size. It is very calm there. They have got mountains and it is very peaceful. I really like it there. I would live there if I had the possibility to leave... I feel the same about the Caucasus as I do about Russia.

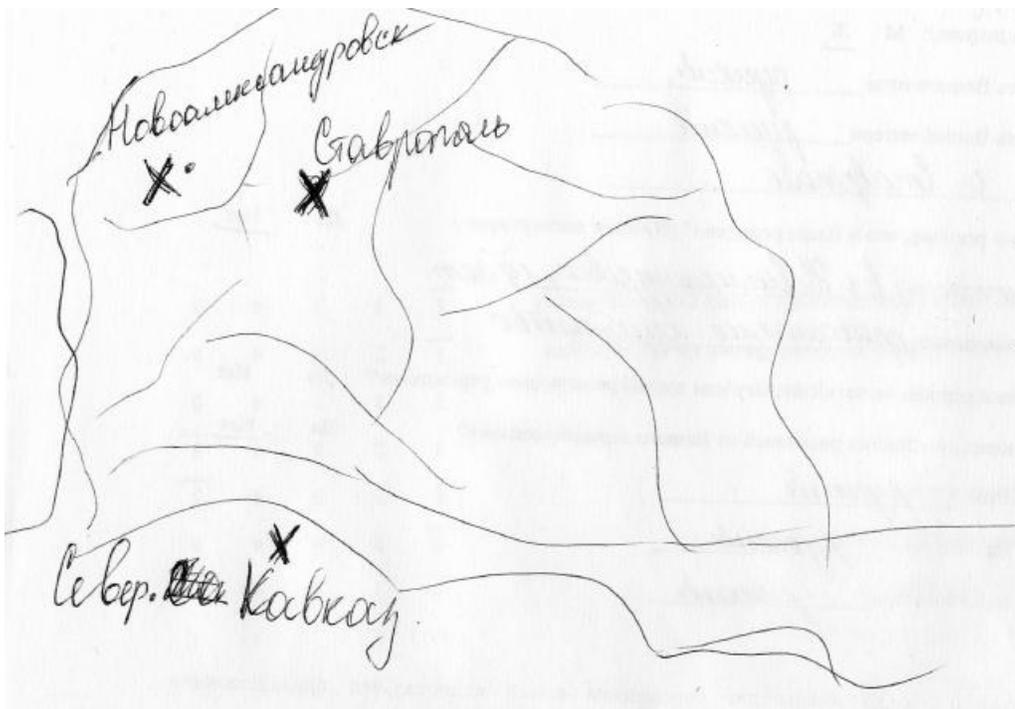


Figure 77: Map of Participant 30.

Participant number 30 sketched an interesting map of Stavropol Krai, as part of the wider North Caucasus region. She is from a village called Novoalexandrovsk, which she detailed on the map. She also delineated Stavropol Krai into its various regions, demonstrating her awareness of Novoalexandrovsk's place within this sub-regional structure. She is also quite certain about this area's belonging to the North Caucasus in terms of political rather than cultural geography:

I do not have any relatives right in that region... well, in the republics anyway, I do not have any relatives there, but more or less it is a very important place for me. I completely identify with this region, although it is actually not a Russian place. I was born in the North Caucasus [in Stavropol]. Despite there being many nationalities in The North Caucasus, and I consider that Russians do not exist there in great numbers. There are rules and weight (*prav* and *vesa*) in this region, so I consider it to be my homeland also, the North Caucasus... I drew Novoalexandrovsk and the city of Stavropol. They are my two home cities, despite the fact that I live in Novoalexandrovsk, Stavropol is also native to me, I was born here.

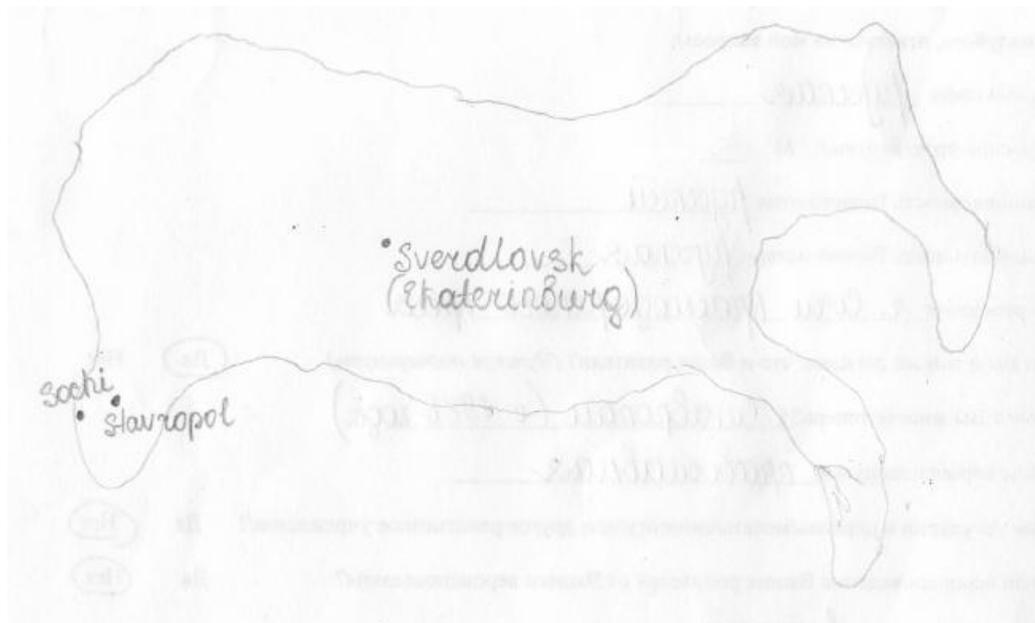


Figure 78: Map of Participant 174.

The Soviet legacy is still present in conceptions of homeland among the young generation in Russia, especially in terms of identifying birthplace. Participant 174, a woman from Sochi, bases her sketch on her own birthplace and those of her parents. She explains:

We have got all of Russia, Sverdlovsk, and Stavropol. Now, it is called Yekaterinburg. I drew it because my mother was born in Yekaterinburg. I drew Sochi because I was born in Sochi. My parents lived in Sochi. My dad was born not far from Sochi. I drew Stavropol because I live here now.

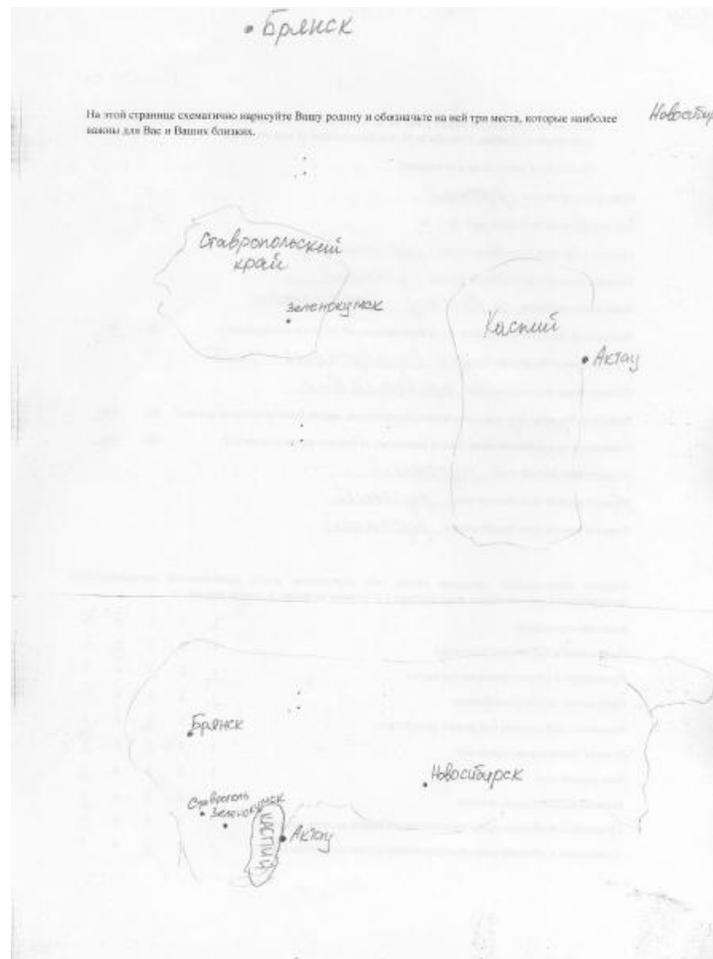


Figure 79: Map of Participant 171.

People born in former Soviet republics other than Russia often include all, or part of these territories in their mental images of homeland. Participant number 171 is a Russian woman who was born in Kazakhstan during the late Soviet period. She identifies fully with Russia, using the word “ours” when describing Russia, showing that her national identity is associated with her ethnic group rather than with her birthplace which is located outside Russia’s borders. She explained:

Here is Russia, and a little bit of Kazakhstan. Of course in comparison to our country it is small, but every country is small compared to Russia! Here is the Caspian Sea. I was born in Aktau. I included Stavropol Krai because my parents live here, and my grandma lives here. It is an important place in my life at this moment. Novosibirsk and Bryansk, these are the homelands of my parents, and their parents. I have got lots of relatives there. We have got a very friendly family. We often visit each other.



Figure 80: Map of Participant 170.

Participant number 170 is a woman from Stavropol who left to study in St. Petersburg, but was visiting for the summer. Familiarity with Russia’s important federal cities does not

guarantee that Russians from the North Caucasus will automatically associate with them in terms of homeland. Although participant 170 has had experience in a city important to Russia at the federal level, she thinks about her homeland in local terms. She explains:

This is Stavropol, it is my homeland. I live in St. Petersburg now, but I consider Stavropol to be my home. This is my house on Dvortetsev Street. These are the hills where we walk, this is the forest where I meet with my friends.

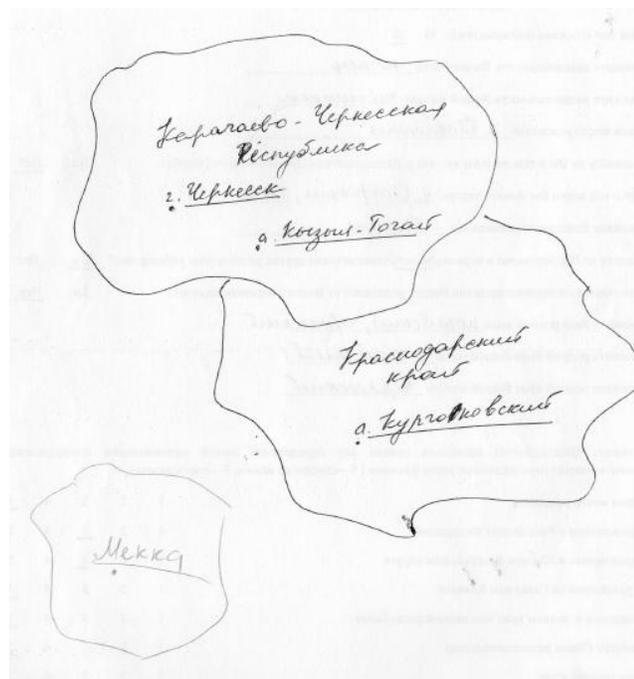


Figure 81: Map of Participant 192.

Participant number 192, a woman born in Stavropol, self-identified as both Nogai and Cherkess. She delineates three territories on her sketch map which happen to be where her parents were born: Karachay-Cherkessia and the Krasnodar Krai. She first drew Karachay-

Cherkessia, the added Krasnodar Krai in. When I asked her to describe the map, she first asked to use the pencil with which I was taking notes, sketching something else and saying:

Here I showed you three places. The Republic of Karachay-Cherkessia, and the *aul* where my father was born. I showed you Krasnodar Krai because that is where my mom was born. The third place that is important to me is Mecca. It is a place that is sacred to all Muslims, so therefore it is very important to me too.

Participant number 192 was not the only Islamic participant to include Mecca in his or her sketch map. However, what is perhaps most interesting about this map is that she regarded her parents' birthplaces as her homeland without paying any attention to her own birthplace, Stavropol.

Based on the order in which she sketched her map, and lack of attention to geographical accuracy, the non-Russian Republic Karachay-Cherkessia was in fact the first place she drew, followed by Russian Krasnodar Krai, followed then by Mecca.

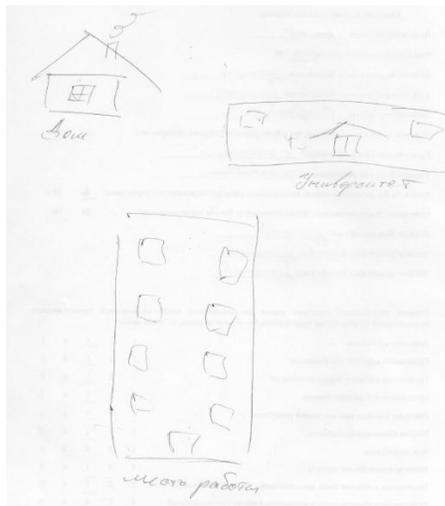


Figure 82: Map of Participant 193.

Participant number 193, a Russian man from Stavropol, paid close attention to the local scale, labeling three local places. He explained:

This is my house where I live. I live with my family, it is where those close to me often gather. This is my university, where I study. It is a place that I find smart and appealing. And here is my work place. It is not my favorite, but it is important because it is where I earn money and I spend a lot of time. It does not even really matter that these places are in Stavropol, they could be anywhere in Russia.

The most important elements of homeland to participant 193 were those with which he had much personal experience. He also signified the importance of the Russian context, saying basically that the individual places in his homeland are generic and could exist anywhere in Russia.

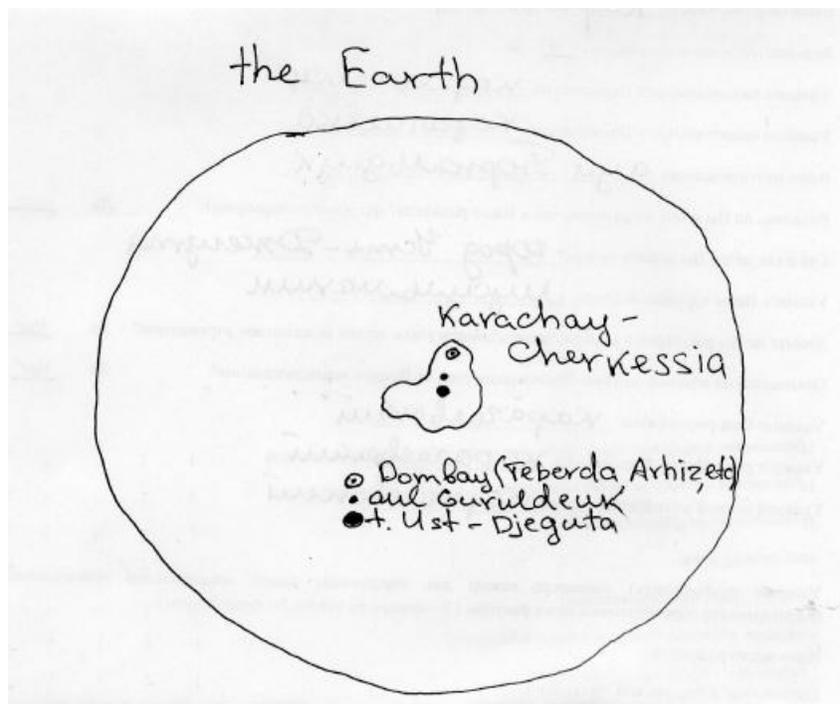


Figure 83: Map of Participant 128.

Participant number 128 is a Karachay from an aul in Karachay-Chekessia. This is how he described his sketch map:

This is the Earth, and this is Karachay-Cherkessia. First of all, I am a human being, and The Earth is the homeland of all humans together. Second, Karachay-Cherkessia is my homeland, it is the most important place for members of my nationality and several other nationalities. I was born here in *aul* Guruldeuk, I live in Ust-Djeguta, Dombay is our most beautiful example of nature. Karachays are of course the most populous nationality in our Republic, but there are also Russians and other Caucasian nationalities. It is not so important to me that Karachay-Cherkessia is part of Russia. I for example am an educated person, and I know both English and Turkish. As for me, I think I could do alright in a place where those languages are spoken, but Karachay is spoken only where there are Karachays, no one learns our language, so our homeland is important in this regard, it is ours.

Although several participants drew a depiction of the earth with their conception of homeland within it, they all included other areas along with their countries or territories. The view point of participant 128 is interesting notably because he feels a connection the entire planet; however he does not include other territories along with Karachay-Cherkessia. There is no reference to The Russian Federation, and his opinions indicate that Karachay-Cherkessia is a separate entity, as he does not associate with any kind of place or territory that is inherently Russian.

Conclusion

Perhaps the most important theme in the sketch maps was the frequency at which places important at the regional scale were included. Regardless of the group breakdown, regional places were always the most popular element sketched. I suggest that this trend is due most of all to familiarity with particular places. Despite the fact that Stavropol and Cherkessk were the home towns of many of the participants, the two are important cities in the North Caucasus region because they are the capitals of their respective territories and the main centers of

economic commerce. They present a sense of importance due to their political and economic status, however, they remain not as far removed as Moscow and St. Petersburg in terms of most participants' personal experience. Most of the participants have spent the majority of their lives in the study area and over half of them have lived in one of these cities for an extended period of time at some point in their lives. These two cities are also large population centers, meaning that participants not living there are likely to have relatives there. As we can observe from the interviews, family connections are often considered when people from this area think about their homelands.

Those who emphasized the importance of Russian space tended to see regions, and local environments for that matter, as equivalent and interchangeable. Using federal political borders to define one's homeland usually meant that participants did not put much emphasis on regions themselves. Some said that living in the south was not particularly important because they could live the same way in any region of Russia. Here, the idea of Russian space is important. This notion also holds true for those who heavily favored local scale conceptions of homeland. I expected people to choose local places due to the fact they felt intimately connected with some aspect of them, whether it be nostalgia for their birthplace or their family, or a variety of other sentimental reasons. However, place affinity seemed not to be the main reason why they chose to associate with the local scale. Instead participants made these choices based on familiarity and experience gained from everyday life. Some said that they believed another Russian city would provide the same opportunities and an equivalent conception of homeland for its residents. What mattered in the end was that they were in Russia. This opinion was notably present among male participants, who often favored local scale elements.

Those who did favor a regional conception of homeland did tend to factor in aesthetics, usually showing an affinity for the regions climate or natural beauty. Some had a problem associating with all of Russia due to its sheer size and many participants' lack of experience with the entire country was evident in their maps, as Siberia and the Russian Far-East were usually either not included or not sketched with the same attention to detail as European Russia. Participants favoring a particular krai or republic, The south of Russia (references to the Southern Federal District on maps were extremely rare), or the North Caucasus as their homeland usually commented on the unique culture of the region, saying that southern culture differed from in the north, particularly from culture in Moscow. If participants from Stavropol claimed the North Caucasus as their regional homeland, they usually praised the areas great cultural diversity. If participants from Karachay-Cherkessia claimed the North Caucasus, it was because the area was friendly to their ethnic groups and to Islam, and because of family connections.

Although Stavropol and Cherkessk were often included on the sketch maps by participants from their respective territories, the differences in the sketches from Stavropol Krai and those from Karachay-Cherkessia differ in other elements. Most importantly, maps collected from Stavropol Krai were much more likely to include multiple scales, namely the federal scale. Many Russians included Moscow in their sketches, while leaving out Karachay-Cherkessia, a bordering territory. In fact, some Russians were unsure whether or not to include the republics in their maps, as they questioned whether or not these territories were indeed Russian. Maps from Karachay-Cherkessia were focused more on the republic than on all of Russia. If the maps exhibited multiple scales, they were likely to show the regional and local scales, rather than the federal scale. Republic status means something in terms of homeland for participants from

Karachay-Cherkessia, allowing them to separate their territory from the federal scale more clearly. However, Stavropol Krai was also presented as homeland by some of its residence, but this line of thought was less common. Federal borders appeared on maps of ethnic Russians more than did regional borders, whereas regional borders appeared on over twice as many maps from Karachay-Cherkessia as did federal borders.

I also noticed a correlation between Islam and drawing territory that is, as some participants put it, “friendly to Islam.” Islamic participants did not often include Moscow on their sketches. Those who did associated with it probably for material rather than philosophical reasons. Mecca appeared on several maps, as did the moon and crescent, a symbol of Islam. Some said that they would be comfortable living in other Muslim countries if they had to leave the Caucasus. Due this emphasis on Islamic space, it is logical that Muslims preferred to associate with the North Caucasus and with Karachay-Cherkessia more than with the Russia. Again, family connections and ancestry play a part in this trend as well.

I expected titular status to play a larger role than it did. I was surprised that the chi squared test did not indicate any significant trends between titular and non-titular groups. The majority Russian population in Stavropol Krai did not yield the most meaningful results due to the fact that titular status is really more important in Karachay-Cherkessia because Russians have many territories. Thus, I examined trends in Karachay-Cherkessia. My original thought was that non-titular groups would focus less on the regional scale in terms of places and borders, since Karachay-Cherkessia is not their official homeland. I also expected them to associate with the Caucasus in terms of including physical features. Non-titular individuals did favor the federal scale, as titular participants were heavily favored the regional and local scales. However, titular participants also favored landscape features in their maps. Perhaps titular groups associated with

the mountains and other physical features because they ascribed these elements as their own. If this is the case, non-titular individuals seem to agree. It is also important to note that neither Karachays nor Cherkess have large populations of their own ethno-national groups outside of Karachay-Cherkessia.

The results of this study indicate that there are many conceptions of homeland among people in the North Caucasus. However, certain elements are usually factored into one's sense of homeland. First, personal familiarity is important. Participants included (with greater attention to detail) borders, symbols, and places with which they had either personal experience, or about which they gained knowledge through media, maps, and education. Second, family connections and historical roots are important. Often people included territories where family members live or were born, even though the participants themselves had little personal connection to them. Third, different territories have varying meanings in the context of the North Caucasus. Stavropol Krai has different meaning to its residents than does Karachay-Cherkessia in that it represents Russian space, a majority Russian/Orthodox Christian population, and direct subordination to federal power. Karachay-Cherkessia and the other republics represent non-Russian space, where Islam is the norm, and where traditional cultures exist with autonomy from Russian influences. Finally, there is a great love of the local landscape that is held by all groups. Perhaps it is the dramatic landscape of the North Caucasus that lead to the region's great diversity and free spirited reputation, but the landscape also constitutes something that the people of the North Caucasus have in common. Being from the North Caucasus has definite potential to influence one's sense of ethno-national identity.

Appendix A

This survey will not take longer than 5 minutes to complete. It is very important for my research in ethnic geography. Thank you for answering my questions.

Please answer the following questions:

Your ethnicity _____

Your gender: M F

Your father's ethnicity _____

Your Mother's ethnicity _____

Your birth place _____

Were you parents born in the same region that you were? _____

Where do you live now, and how long have you been living there? _____

What is your religion? _____

Do you attend your place of worship on a regular basis? _____

Does either of your parents practice a different religion than you do? _____

Your native language _____

Your father's native language _____

Your mother's native language _____

Please indicate how important the following factors are to your personal ethnic identity (1- absolutely not important, 5—very important)

Your place of birth	1	2	3	4	5
Living in the Russian Federation	1	2	3	4	5
Living in the Southern Federal District	1	2	3	4	5
Living in the North Caucasus	1	2	3	4	5
Residing in a particular Krai or Republic	1	2	3	4	5
Religion	1	2	3	4	5
The ethnicity of your ancestors	1	2	3	4	5
Living amongst people of your ethnic group	1	2	3	4	5
Living amongst people of different ethnic groups (not your own)	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix B

Significant Results from Multivariate Analysis of Variance Test (MANOVA)

For the combined dependent variables, using the Wilks lambda criterion, there were significant multivariate effects on four of the independent variables: “Nationality” (multivariate $F [10, 322] = 2.75, p < .01$), “Gender” (multivariate $F [10, 322] = 1.91, p < .05$), “Practicing Religion” (multivariate $F [10, 322] = 2.26, p < .05$), and “Same Birthplace as Parents” (multivariate $F [10, 322] = 3.19, p < .01$).

Effects of Nationality (Russian vs. non-Russian) on the dependent variables were further investigated in a univariate analysis. There were significant nationality based differences between groups regarding “Living in the Russian Federation” (univariate $F[1, 331] = 8.95, p < .01$) and “Heritage” (univariate $F[1, 331] = 3.88, p < .05$). Russian participants ($M = 3.89, SD = 1.67$) ranked living in the Russian Federation significantly higher than non-Russian participants ($M = 3.28, SD = 1.35$). The scores regarding heritage were higher for non-Russian participants ($M = 4.64, SD = .86$) than for Russian participants ($M = 4.08, SD = 1.24$).

There was a significant difference in how participants of the different genders answered in terms of the importance of heritage. “Heritage” (univariate $F[1, 331] = 13.10, p < .01$) was more important for male participants ($M = 4.72, SD = .72$) than for females ($M = 4.30, SD = 1.16$).

The type of religion that participants follow also matters in terms of how they responded to the dependent variables “Living in the Russian Federation,” “Living in the Southern Federal District,” “Living in the North Caucasus,” and “Living in a particular Krai or Republic.” “Living

in the Russian Federation” (univariate $F[1, 331] = 4.44, p < .05$) was considered significantly higher non-Islamic participants ($M = 3.64, SD=1.45$) than by those who are Islamic ($M = 2.97, SD =1.65$), indicating that Islamic participants think living in the Russian Federation less importantly than non-Islamic participants. Living in the Southern Federal District (univariate $F[1, 331] = 7.16, p < .01$) was also more important to Islamic participants ($M = 3.64, SD = 1.47$) than non-Islamic ($M = 2.97, SD=1.46$). Islamic participants ($M = 4.29, SD =1.25$) favored Living in the North Caucasus (univariate $F[1, 331] = 6.23, p < .05$) to non-Islamic ($M = 2.89, SD =1.48$), as was the case regarding living in a particular Krai or Republic (univariate $F[1, 331] = 7.73, p < .01$) as Islamic participants ($M = 4.13, SD =1.34$) favored this factor to non-Islamic ($M = 2.93, SD =1.48$).

Significant differences regarding the “Practice of Religion” in terms of the importance of religious belief an in terms of living among other ethnic groups were noted. “Religious Belief” (univariate $F[1, 331] = 6.09, p < .05$) was more important to practicing participants ($M = 4.47, SD =1.07$) than to non-practicing participants ($M = 4.29, SD =1.27$).

Regarding “Living Among Other Ethnic Groups” (univariate $F[1, 331] = 4.829, p < .05$), practicing participants ($M = 2.99, SD =1.07$) responded that this factor was significantly less important to them than non-practicing participants ($M = 3.29, SD =1.27$).

“Titular Status” mattered significantly in terms of “Birthplace” and “Living in The North Caucasus.” Those participants who were Titular ($M = 3.51, SD =1.67$) placed more importance on “Birthplace” (univariate $F[1, 331] = 6.45, p < .05$) than did non-Titular participants ($M = 3.17, SD =1.72$). The same was true regarding “Living in The North Caucasus” (univariate $F[1,$

331]) = 4.22, $p < .05$), as Titular participants ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 1.50$) ranked this factor significantly higher than did non-Titular participants ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.55$).

Having the same birthplace as one's parents was also significant in terms of how participants felt about place-based identity factors. Birthplace (univariate $F[1, 331] = 17.18$, $p < .01$) was given significantly more importance to those born in the same place as their parents ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 1.55$) in comparison to those who were not ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 1.55$). Living in the Russian Federation (univariate $F[1, 331] = 4.44$, $p < .05$) was also favored by those with the same birthplace as their parents ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 1.51$) compared to those born in a different place ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.63$). Living in the Southern Federal District (univariate $F[1, 331] = 8.713$, $p < .01$) was significantly less important to those not born in the same place as their parents ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.58$) when compared to the responses of participants who were ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.42$). The same was true regarding Living in a Particular Krai or Republic (univariate $F[1, 331] = 7.36$, $p < .01$), where those with parents born in different regions than their own ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 1.59$), noted this factor with significantly less importance compared to those born in the same place as their parents ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 1.41$). Responses from the two groups regarding heritage (univariate $F[1, 331] = 4.75$, $p < .05$) showed that this factor was significantly higher for those born in the same place as their parents ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 1.08$) compared to those participants who were not ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 1.06$).

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