

Clans and Families in Ingushetia and Chechnya: Myths and Realities

Chechnya and Ingushetia have won the fame as the most tumultuous republics of the Russian Federation. The survival of primordial institutions, primarily of *Teip* (Clan) is thought to have been accountable for state-building failures, and the argument that any effective policy-making in these should take into account the clan factor has become mainstream.

This section summarizes some of the findings of my fieldwork related to the analysis of the *teip* (clan) as a social phenomenon and its relevance to the social and political life in contemporary Ingushetia and Chechnya. The argument draws on participant observation and in-depth interviews with the residents of Ingushetia and Chechnya carried out during my life and work there in 2003-2008.

Teips in Literature and Political Discourse

The function of *teips* is a widely discussed issue among scholars and political analysts, especially with regards to Chechnya. The argument that *teip* structures play a pivotal role in the political process and that any effective policy-making should take into account the clan factor has become mainstream. Before getting into the field my hypothesis and research questions had been streamlined in accordance with this widely shared perception:

Political process in Ingushetia and Chechnya are shaped by the interaction of primordial patterns of social integration, primarily teips (clans) with the formal state-institutions.

The hypothesis was formulated during preliminary literature research on the issue, which seemed to pose more questions than provide answers as to what the contemporary *teip* really was and how it was relevant to the social and political processes. Intellectuals and public figures of various ideological orientations offered

opposing explanations, some emphasizing the importance of teips, others denying their very existence.

«Chechenia consists of a certain number (about 150) of tribal, i.e. teip units, and a comparable number of kin-neighbor based communities, fragmented into smaller units, lineages (varisses) and united into about nine larger tribal units-tukhums», claims Sergei Aroutunov, a renown Russian ethnologist, head of the Caucasus Department at the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. In Aroutunov's view, the institutional design in Chechnya should correspond to its social make-up, therefore he suggests to divide the republic into two parts, the mountainous and the lowland Chechnya; to introduce Russian government and secular law on the plain and leave the mountainous areas to the rule of the tribal Elders¹.

Some local intellectuals support this standpoint: «The Chechen people consists of tribal communities, regardless of whether this community has its classical completion, measured by origin from one forefather in the seventh generation or exists in a shortened variant - till cousins and second cousins. This is the real social basis of our society, and the problem is in placing the social framework, i.e. institutional organization on this platform. And such a platform can be only the teip system, which would integrate kin-tribal relations... and through them create a united social body» - advocates Khozh-Akhmet Nukhaev, a leader of Chechen traditionalists, a politician and former minister of Ichkerian government².

Other local scholars strongly oppose this view: “There is no such thing as teip”, - said Professor Arsamakov, the Rector of Ingush State University, during a job interview, which I had with him in 2002. “All these myths about clan structures, Elders, customary law are created in order to construct an image of backward, primitive societies, savages, who cannot govern themselves and have to be governed by the strong hand of Moscow”. “Teips, clans – all this talk is for the benefit of those, who want to rationalize repression against the Chechen people, and do not want to accept

¹ Arutounov 2003. *Vpered nazad, k estestvennomu pravu. In: Rossija-Chechnia. Poiski vyhoda.* Zvezda Publishing house. Saint-Petersburg.

the fact that Chechens want and are able to have their own state”, - claimed Ousam Baysaev, a Radio-Free Europe (Chechnya) reporter. This discourse is widely shared by the Ingush political and cultural elite, who since the creation of the Ingush Republic in 1992, adopted modernizing and strongly anti-colonial ideology in their republican nation-building. Conversely, the Chechen anti-colonial discourse was more based on reviving traditional values, such as teip ties, for example.

What I found lacking in this academic and ideological debate was grounding of theory in primary fieldwork. My goal was to start from the scratch and before suggesting political models for relevance of teip to state-building to find ways to explore the disputed social phenomenon itself.

Fieldwork Challenges and Methodology

A few weeks in the field were enough to establish that learning about teips from interviews and surveys was a rather difficult task. Issues related to kinship and family were considered the domain of private affairs which were not eagerly discussed. Moreover, as has been previously mentioned, some local intellectuals and the political elite were reluctant to discuss teips with the outsiders seeing their very interest in this issue as a sign of the scholar’s colonial mindset. Less educated respondents, on the average, had very little understanding or experience of being interviewed about political matters for academic purposes, were suspicious of the interviewer, which made them, on the average, a bad information source.

Participant observation proved more effective. Signs of teips presence were numerous: inquiring one’s teip belonging was often among the first questions people asked once they first met; anecdotes about stereotypical behavior of some teips representatives abounded. Moreover, during interviews about political preferences of Chechen residents carried out before the presidential elections in Chechnya in October 2003 and August 2004 some respondents mentioned teip identity as important for making political choices:

² Nukhaev Kh.A. 2003. *Rossija-Chechnia. Mir po formule “pobeda-pobeda”*. In: *Rossija-Chechnia. Poiski vyhoda*. Zvezda. Publishing House. Saint-Petersburg.

“I will vote for Kadyrov, because I have always supported Benoj³” – said Asma, aged 52, a resident of Grozny.

“We are voting for Movsar Khamidov, he has strong links with the security service and is of the same teip as us”, explained young men at the exit from electoral station in school N 10, Staropromyslovsky district of Grozny, on August 29, 2004.

“Benoj have captured power in Gudermes and Grozny, everywhere are Benoj since the Russians took over”, said Madina, a 26-year old resident of Nozhaj-Yurt: *“But I should say, when Dudaev⁴ came to power, all his people occupied the positions as well”*.

The evidence that teips were a relevant unit of analysis was an important finding, however, it did not bring me closer to capturing the essence of the object itself and its influence on republican public affairs and state-building. Studying personal profiles of statesmen in terms of teip belonging proved inefficient either, especially in Chechnya, where the members of one teip could have different family names, while people with the same family names, were not necessarily relatives.

My methodological choice was to proceed in three directions: first, to study Ingush and Chechen teips as patterns of social integration, identify principles of teip decision – making, channels of mutual support and intensity of teip association. For these purposes 14 “average” families were selected (7 Chechen and 7 Ingush) from different areas of Ingushetia and Chechnya; in-depth participant observation of their family life was carried out, followed by interviews with selected members of their families.

Second, I studied mechanisms of job recruitment in order to see whether teip belonging played a role in career development. For this purpose deep interviews with politically active Chechens and Ingush were carried out.

³ A Chechen teip

⁴ The leader of Chechen separatist movement in 1992-1995, first president of Chechen Republic Ichkeria.

Third, I scrutinized the influence of the teip on the social and political processes. Relevant results of this research are summarized in the analysis below.

Two meanings of the word “Teip”. Teip-1 as an Identity of Common Origin

After a number of interviews it became clear that some of the respondents used the word “teip” in two meanings, 1) clan, i.e. a big “kin”-group, consisting of hundreds of families, originating from certain parts of Ingushetia or Chechnya (teip-1). 2) extended family, which includes all the relatives, with which a person maintains kin relations (teip-2) 2).

Usually, the second meaning was used in colloquial language, the respondents were not aware of this distinction in their usage, or they tried to define it somehow differently, but when asked whether such a distinction was fair, they confirmed.

We do have teips. Peoples who have not yet developed nations should go through this stage. .But inside teips there are clans. Clan is smaller than teip, each teip will have different clans. This clan is very closely integrated. These are up to third cousins, may be further. Muhhamad Gazdiev, Ingush historian, member of national movement

My teip- Mutsolgovs, is too big, it is impossible to know all head of the families. They originate from different settlements- Nasyr-Kort, Surkhakhi, are of different Muslim tariqa - some are Kunta Khadzi, other are K'ala Vird or Khadzi Vird. But teip is also close relatives, brothers, cousins.. Magomed Mutsolgov, leader of Ingush NGO “Mashr”

The primary meaning of the word *teip* is a group identity of common historical origin. In this meaning “teip” is traditionally used in historical and ethnological literature and is likened to what other peoples refer to “tribes” or “clans”.

There exist over a hundred of teips-1 (allegedly about 150), each uniting tens of lineages (*gar*), subdivided into dozens of extended families (*nek*) consisting of nuclear

families (*dozal*). Teip-1 originates from one geographic area (usually one village), sometimes have a linguistic dialect of their own. Some teips have approached very significant numbers, for example Ingush teip “*ozdo*” allegedly numbers over 69,000 members; the Chechen teip “*benoj*” amounts to 15% of the Chechen population. Teips have myths of common decent, a historical motherland (usually mountainous village) and their “architectural heirlooms” – battle towers in the mountains⁵. In this respect the identity of teip-1 member can be likened to the sense of ethnic belonging, with a characteristic feeling of kinship, myth of common decent, and of common history.

Generations of my forefathers lived in Rigahoy, I am the 10th off-spring. Forefathers say that our origin is Arabic. In the beginning of Islamization a religious leader, Ibn Abbaz came from Samarkand. He arrived to Derbent /Dagestan-E.S./ by the Kaspian Sea. From Derbent he went to a Dagestani village of Zhal and from there founded Rigahoy. Ibn-Abbaz had twelve sons and he send them all to spread the word of Islam. Adam, peasant from village of Goragorsk, Chechnya

Similarly to nations, teips-1 are anonymous social units: their members do not know others by name, their face-to –face communication is impossible. Unlike nations, however, teips have no institutional framework for coordination or self-government, no specific channels for circulation and exchange of information, which would help maintain teip as a social group.

Only in some small teips (up to 300 nuclear families), mostly in Ingushetia, face-to-face communication remains possible. A member of Ingush teip “*Tangiev*” explained that he would meet all heads of the extended families at least once a year during Ramadan holidays, when they would visit their family cemetery. “I will see all of them at least once a year for Ramadan, unless, of course, we meet on other occasions like weddings and funerals”. At the same time, this respondent had a difficulty remembering the names of some of his second cousins and most female members of other extended families in his teip, which suggests that in small teips if face-to-face communication occurs, then between adult and older males.

⁵ Towers are traditional vainakh military-architectural constructions, which families used for protection from enemies and for family residence.

In the past, when the *teips* were smaller and tighter entities, they were, in fact social groups. The heads of the families used to know each other, meet up regularly to settle issues of the community, significant part of teip members resided in the village of origin and those who moved maintained close ties with this village. However, anti-colonial wars of the 19th century, which caused major population resettlement, collectivization of 1930s; which largely destroyed mountainous village as an efficient source of family economic subsistence; the Stalinist deportation of 1944-1957⁶, which divided families, dispersed teips and created new diasporas in Central Asia; the subsequent policy of restriction for residence in mountainous villages (where most teips originate from), which resulted in dozens of mountainous villages dying out, were conducive to uprooting and mixing of teips. Moreover, particularly Chechen teips grew in numbers enormously. When resettling from the village of origin, especially if descending from the mountains on the plain teip members tried to settle in a compact manner, forming *teip* enclaves, but maintaining the same intensity of teip cohesion was difficult.

Ingush teips have decomposed in 1940s due to deportation. Previously Ingush lived in a compact fashion. Members of my family name-Patievs lived in the settlements of Kurtat, Malsagovs lived in Altievo, Dakhilgovs in Dolakovo. After the deportation they started to diffuse among different settlements. In order to maintain group cohesion, you need daily communication. In the past we met for good events and for bad. Now I don't see my teip members, I lost them. Its difficult to get people together. Clanship has deteriorated. Yakub Patiev, Ingush ethnologist.

Usually when resettling, Vajnakhs try to find a place where they already know someone, relatives or co-villages. This is thought to be a way of social support before one gets established in a new place, also if there are many close people residing together they feel more protected and have more weight in this locality. With population growth and during the above mentioned historical processes teips branched out to a number of settlements where their members reside.

⁶ On February 23, 1944 the Soviet Socialist Republic of Checheno - Ingushetia was abolished and on the accusation of «cooperation with Nazi occupants» the whole population was deported to Central

In 2005 I witnessed how a high mountainous village of Zumsoy, the historic mother-village of teip *zums* in Itum-Kalinsky region of Chechnya was abandoned by its residents. In 1992 there were 50 families (420 people) in the village, as a result of aerial attacks during both wars most families fled, and in 2005 there remained 11 families. In January 2005 the village was again subjected to heavy bombing by planes, then paratroopers descended, they looted houses and detained three men and a 15-year-old boy. All of them subsequently ‘disappeared’. In February servicemen several times visited the village, looting and desecrating the mosque. Finally, in June 2005 when the head of local administration Abdul-Khalim Yangulbaev was killed by unidentified men in masks, the remaining villagers (11 families) decided to flee.

This happened two years after the war was officially over and the government did not want to recognize these families as displaced, did not provide them with temporary shelter or humanitarian aid. Together with colleagues from Memorial we contacted various organizations trying to provide emergency assistance to Zumsoj people. As a result a German charity decided to sponsor purchase of land slots for 11 families, while UNHCR promised to provide box-tents to put on these slots. Villagers had to themselves find a place to buy land and my job was just to ensure all was done properly with documentation and payments. The process of village resettlement was suggestive.

Just upon descent all the 11 families (38 people) were accommodated in two houses with the nephew of Mukhaev family in a village of Ushkaloy, 15 kilometers below Zumsoy. After the German charity decided to help, for two months the villages were looking for an arrangement to resettle together- negotiating with administrations of various settlements to sell them 11 slots of land together. They did not succeed- no villages wanted such an inflow of tightly integrated strangers. Then they decided to settle each family as they could, and moved to places where they had relatives who had descended earlier. These were the settlements where members of *zums*-teip had already been well represented – villages of Roshni-chu, Gikalo, and Samashki.

Asia. According to various estimates Chechens and Ingush lost 1/5 to 1/4 of their population in the exile.

Having resettled, several times a year villagers would go up to Zumsoj together to visit the village cemetery, usually staying overnight in their abandoned houses, talking, remembering stories of village life. The tradition to bury relatives on family cemeteries plays an important role in maintaining the teip identity: nuclear families would keep returning to their family villages for funerals and commemorating rites of their deceased, which helps maintain attachment to the settlement of origin and the mythology associated with it.

Fragmentation and disintegration of teip as a social organization strengthened symbolic emotional attachment to teip as an identity. Teip was viewed as a national institution, one of national symbols, distinguishing *Vainakhs* from the surrounding peoples (although, in fact, it had ceased being an institution).

Different people attach different significance to teip identity. Some of my respondents insisted that teip mattered. Usually this opinion was shared by ethnocentric men, who paid much respect to tradition and faith, and were bearers of more traditional values.

Chechen social structure is teip-based, everybody should know this. Who does not know this, does not understand anything. Israil Murtazov, teacher of history, Sernovodsk agricultural college

For me any Kodzoeva is a sister, I am obliged to protect her. In this village we have 260 households of Kodzoevs. They are all my kin. Issa Kodzoev, leader of Ingush national movement Nijskho

However, more modernity-oriented Vainaks acknowledged that teip-1 is gone:

Clans have disappeared, there remains only formal identity as an attribute of traditionalism. Youth is not even taking this identity seriously anymore. Teips which are in conflict can now intermarry. Chaps will just abduct a bride and that's it, the teips become relatives. Yakub Patiev, Ingush ethnologist.

Some respondents acknowledged that teips have decomposed, but did so with regret.

Ingush were respected when we had a teip-based society. Each teip had the head. The teip protected each person, down to the smallest boy. And now we do not have teips. If they were teips, would the authorities have dared to violently disperse demonstrations? Teips would have long ago torn this Zyazikov⁷ into pieces. Batarbek Akiev, head of collective farm “Dolakovo”, Ingushetia

An important question now is whether teip-1 is a kin-group. It is generally thought that Chechen and Ingush politics is based on clannish kin relations, this general treatment of teip as a kin group is widespread among Vajnakhs themselves. Whether teip-1 is kin-based or not is crucial to understanding the nature of political process in Vajnakh Republics.

I visited the above mentioned village Zumsoj many times before the village was abandoned, spent time with displaced Zumsoy residents after descent, participated in village cemetery visits in 2006 after the families had already resettled, always staying overnight and having long conversations with the young and the old. This is probably the one Chechen village I know best. All of them are members of one teip *zums*. Some of them have kin relations with others (due to intermarriage), but they are not relatives. Moreover, *Zums* even follow different Islamic tariqa- part of the villagers are followers of Shejkh Kunta-Khadzi, some are followers of Dokka-ustaz. They had nonetheless one village mosque and one imam-Elder Mohadi, who led prayers for members of both tariqa. In the case of teip *zums* I can claim with certainty that it is **not** a kin group, but an *identity based on the locality of origin*.

A similar story was told by a peasant Adam, resident of Goragork town in Chechnya. Adam comes from a mountainous village of Rigahoy, his family was deported from there, before exile there were 2000 people in the village. All of them belonged to one teip- *rigahoy*. Subsequently, the teip members resettled to the towns of Grozny, Zakan-Yurt, Alkhan-Kala and Petropavlovskaya. Rigahoy teip is obviously **not** a kin group, either. “ *Our teip was producing sables, weapon, we originated as a village of craftsmen*”. Adam, 1930, Gogagorsk.

⁷ President of Ingushetia in 2002-2008.

Previously, it was believed that teip is simply kin. Its a great misperception. Chechen teip has lived through great shocks and it has reconfigured. Some teips were more of a social-economic phenomenon, they developed from craft guilds, other teips originated from nek', gar- lineage and are divided into families. There are also new teips, which emerged from incoming populations- a Kabardine teip-cherkzi, Cossack teip-gunoj, djukti- the teip of mountainous Jews. Magomed Muzaev, Chechen historian, Head of Chechen National Archive.

Most of the respondents agreed that learning about somebody's teip provides a person with local intelligence information about one's place of origin and possibly present habitation of parts of their family (villages where the teip branched to). Members of teips originating from certain areas might have a linguistic dialect of their own. This is the reason why inquiring teip identity might be important when people first meet. Many of my interviewees noted, for example, that Dzokhar Dudaev was despised by snobbish plain dwellers for his mountainous dialect of *yalkharo*-teip.

Dudaev spoke a yalkharo dialect, which very negatively affected his image. Educated people would say: "How can you, an educated person, support this lamro⁸. He can't even speak normal Chechen" recalled Khussejn Betelgireev, a Chechen poet, singer and university professor.

Thus, as any large group identity teips are subjects to stereotypes and prejudices. Anecdotes and jokes about some teips are numerous⁹. Prejudiced discourse and anecdotes about teips are very similar to the ones related to national identity:

"What is he like..? Well... like all melkhi¹⁰. Showing off.. " (Ali, 34, Grozny)

Many Chechen anecdotes are about Benoj teip, which is the most numerous and currently very well represented in the governing structures (Kadyrov family are benoj). The benoj anecdotes are very similar to politically incorrect anecdotes about 'stupid' ethnic groups, which abounded in the Soviet Union.

⁸ Mountaineer

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¹⁰ Melkhi- a 'bordering' teip, semi-Ingush, semi-Chechen, half of this teip members calls themselves Ingush, some-Chechens.

In some cases inter-teip hostilities remain relevant– a tribute to memories of the past or present quarrels and vendetta experiences. This is more prominent in Ingushetia, where teips are smaller and all members bearing the same family names are relatives:

“I remember exactly the day when my thyroid gland started to grow, which eventually led to a surgery. It was in the 10th grade of my high school, a couple of months before the finals, a new mathematics teacher came to our school. I was always a straight- 5 student¹¹ in math, especially algebra, but she started to give me 4s and even 3s. I was so stressed about it, I was always weeping at home after school. Later it turned out that this woman hated our entire teip – the Mamilovs. I don’t know for which wrongs. She said bluntly “I really don’t like you, Mamilovs”. I told her that she would not ruin my life or the life of my family with an algebra “4,” and pretended I did not care. But my thyroid was growing by weeks” (Madina, 32)

In Chechnya such prejudiced communication is more difficult, since there are lots of people with the same family names (eg. Ibragimov, Dzabrailov, Kerimov, Akhmadov) which exist in many different teips. This is explained by the fact that until 1940-50s a family names were often given after one’s grandfather’s name (Ibragim, Dzabrail, Kerim, Akhmad). Family names were fixed only during deportation times, when all Vajnakhs we registered, received documents and were closely monitored in their movement. Ingush names since then remained unchanged and given to all the subsequent off springs, Chechens did change names, before during and after deportation especially if someone was repressed as “the enemy of the people” or put in jail. If someone had no sons, and the name was to be lost, other relatives could take it. That is why oftentimes close relatives-Chechens will have different names, while all Ingush of the same family lineage will have the same name. In the Soviet times it was more difficult to change family names, but after Dudaev Revolution in Chechnya many people changed their family names usually to the original ones.

Prejudices and stereotypes about teips have political relevance, which explains why some people mentioned teip as playing a role in their decision of who to vote for, as

¹¹ In Russia there is a 1-5 system of grading at school. 5 being the highest and 1 the lowest grades.

was mentioned above. At the level of individual identity one may be sensitive to teip member's performance.

I am Kostoev and there is a whole lot of Kostoevs in Ingushetia. People say that Kostoev Kazbek¹² was the leading falsifier of these last elections. We do not maintain relations, he does not want to know me, but I feel very embarrassed when I hear it. . Khazdimurad Kostoev, a leader of the Ingush national movement "Nijskho".

In Chechnya, teip-1 can intermarry. In Ingushetia- not. However, in both societies, teip-1 does not exist as a social organization, but to a varying degree matters as a social identity. It is stronger among smaller and more rural Ingush. Its more politicized among politically more ethno-assertive Chechens. Teip-1 identity is a peculiar mix of kin-like identity, ethnicity-like identity and something resembling "zemlyachestvo"¹³.

Teip-2 As An Extended Family

The respondents also used the word teip in another meaning, that of 'extended family'. This usage is colloquial, registered more frequently with Ingush respondents and when speaking about politics.

In its second meaning, "teip" (teip-2) means an extended family, which usually includes a man's:

- 1) parents and their siblings with spouses and children;
- 2) siblings with their spouses and children;
- 3) cousins with spouses and children;
- 4) second cousins with spouses and children.

¹² Headed the Ingush Republican Electoral Committee during the 2007 state Duma elections, which are widely acknowledged to be were a massive fraud.

¹³ Common identity based on the place of origin. Lit. "zemlyak" means a person, who comes from the same land. In big Russian cities "zemlyachestvo" was a principle of self-help and nepotism for people originating from the same areas.

Some respondents noted that they also maintained close relations with third cousins and other relatives, especially if the latter lived nearby. There is a term for cousins and second cousins - *shichoy*, other close relatives are called *myakhch*. Given high birthrates in the region, *shichoy* and *myakhch* amount to a large extended family.

For me my family is first of all my children. Then my brothers and sisters. If a trouble comes, who will help? This is my immediate solidarity group. Then come cousins and second cousins, these are also very close relatives. In our household four generations live together- cousins and second cousins (these are kids of cousins). We all live in as one family household. Khazdimurat Kostoev, a leader of the Ingush national movement “Nijskho”, Ekazevo village, Ingushetia.

A woman, once she gets married becomes part of the husband’s family. In Ingushetia the husband does not keep contact with his parents-in-law and does not show up in front of them. The husband does maintain relations with his wife’s siblings. He should care for the wellbeing of his wife’s extended family as a whole and if necessary has to help his wife’s relatives financially and “pay respect” on important occasions (be present for the funerals, weddings, visit ill family members in the hospitals). Each of such “paying respect” involves financial contributions. Thus, once a man gets married, his family expands by a large number of persons and his obligations increase. The new relatives from the spouse’s side are called ‘*zahlysh*’. ‘*Zahlysh*’ are more distant than one’s own family-teip, but are, however, very important. *Zahlysh* require more of “symbolic respect” than one’s own relatives.

In Ingushetia and Chechnya the intensity of human relations is strongly dependent on the geographical proximity/distance of people’s place of residence. Many respondents claimed that if you want to maintain teip relations, you should live among your relatives. In the villages, where many families of the same *teip* live together, even with distant relatives very close relations are maintained. In rural areas most of the families (teips-2) live in a compact fashion, they build houses next to each other, so that the entire quarter would sometimes belong to them. A bigger extended family might have their own mosque, their own *murid* group¹⁴; *tamada* and *the turk*¹⁵. In

¹⁴ Group doing collective prayers together

¹⁵ Religious leaders, responsible for observing the ritual during collective prayers

this case teips are more closed, organic and tightly integrated social units. All children of such extended family will go to the same school, later often to the same university or college. If a boy is sent to study outside the republic, then most likely with a close relative. Usually a big teip will have due representation in the local Council of Elders and in the Chechen case, where local governments used to be elected, in the local administration. Such teips if moving upward the social hierarchy, are likely to move as a group.

At the age of 16 I finished school and went to Irkutsk to visit my cousin for vacation. Some years before that my cousin went there to work at construction of BAM¹⁶, got married to a Russian, graduated from a Pedagogical university and stayed there. When I arrived my cousin said- why would you go home, ask dad to send us your school certificate, you will take exams to the University here. The documents came late and I could not take exams to the University, so I entered a vocational college. Later my aunt, two of my sisters and my brother joined me in Irkutsk. One sister finished a Pedagogical university, another- College of trade. Our older brother came to Irkutsk in order to find a job and support all of us while we were studying. We bought a flat and all lived there for several years. Then we returned to Ingushetia.
Akhmet Barakhoev, resident of Nazran, Ingushetia

Teip-2 is a real social organization. It has strong solidarity and political relevance.

Mechanisms of recruitment to office

Each child has his own way, but one of them will set the path to all
Ingush saying

In the previous section I have analyzed teip as a social entity in Chechen and Ingush societies. Now I will scrutinize the relevance of teip and family structure to recruitment patterns in the two republics. Interviews carried out with the members of

¹⁶ Bajkal-Amur railroad

the focus group contained a block of questions related to the dominant mechanisms of recruitment to office. In response to the question which mechanisms of recruitment to office were most widespread in their circles, most respondents replied that the predominant channels were through 1) relatives 2) neighbors 3) members of the same Vird (tariqa) 2) friends.

Relatives

Among the primary channels of wealth redistribution and acquiring access to jobs is one's family (teip-2). Most of the respondents either actually found their jobs through the relatives or thought this was the way to look for employment. Using family ties as a dominant path to employment has an easily traceable logic: in the conditions of mass unemployment (over 75% in Ingushetia and Chechnya) and given very close family ties and responsibilities to one's family, if a person gets access to jobs and is able to influence decision-making concerning recruitment, he is likely to lobby his relatives. This is thought to be morally tolerable and practically efficient, and in addition reduces the number of unemployed relatives one has to take care of.

If it had not been for family solidarity, many would have died. During this war all relatives sent money from Russia. My brother has always helped me. If a teip member becomes the head of an enterprise, soon his relatives will appear there, up to night watchman. A relative will not sell you, betray your interests, and if he steals, well, its better if one of your guys steals than a stranger. Israil Murtazov, teacher of history, Sernovodsk agricultural college, Chechnya.

Moreover, both Chechens and Ingush societies are distinguished by specific relations in professional matters. In small closed societies, where everyone knows everyone directly or through a common acquaintance, it is very difficult to get rid of a person once he or she does not meet the demands of the job. Direct lay offs are very rare, moreover, the tradition demands to be polite, show respect and avoid open confrontation, even if one is performing very poorly. In other words, once you hire a person, it is very difficult to get rid of her. Legal regulations are not resorted to in solving professional disputes, thus the mechanism, which can guarantee the quality of performance is recommendation of the potential candidate by his/her relative, who

would subsequently act as a warranty of their protege's adequate work. Should any problems arise, the employer will call upon referent:

"We went way too far with this guy. We allowed him too much. The first time he did it we had to go to his uncle and talk to him. To tell him: Alikhan, bring your nephew back to senses," – Rizvan, 33, explained his position on a professional crisis with one of the employees which broke out in his office.

Some of the respondents noted that in the late years of socialism, when unemployment was high but less dramatic, family channels of office recruitment were not as prominent. When economic crisis became very acute, family solidarity increased, together with family nepotism. In addition, in the conditions of highly militarized and criminalized business and politics, many families thought it to be more secure if relatives "went into" the jobs together. Especially true this was for governmental positions and law enforcement.

"To secure our family, we had to send one brother to work for the government. Soon we realized that it was difficult for him to be there alone, so the second brother had to join him", - Zura, aged 53, explained their family choice.

In Chechnya in the conditions of sharp cleavages and warfare, securing employment in one of the government or pro-government security agencies has been a strategy for many families aimed to ensure the protection of their extended family. Not infrequently members of one family would work in different spheres: for special services, human rights and may be one brother fighting in the hills. Sometimes this happened spontaneously, at other times it was a survival strategy aimed at diversification of risk.

For all the above mentioned reasons, the last decade, in Ingushetia and Chechnya social and especially political mobility was often group based, and family patterned rather than individual. This resulted in a situation, when many relatives could be concentrated in the same sphere of economic or political activity. This effectively gave grounds to claims that vainakh state-building was shaped by kin-based teip structure of their societies.

Neighbors

Together with families, all respondents mentioned neighbors and members of local communities as an important part of their social network, which could help access jobs. Normally a vainakh settlement is divided into smaller sectors, micro-districts - *kuyans*, comprised of several streets or small residential areas. The residents of *kuyan* usually know each other by name, and maintain intense neighborly relations. “A good neighbor is closer than a relative”, claims a vainakh saying. Indeed, neighborly solidarity is very strong, self-help in household, maintaining infrastructure, water/gas/electricity supply, child care, cooking for holidays or funerals are important, especially since the above mentioned services are poorly provided by the state and catering agencies are no-existent.

“If my neighbor has a wedding or a funeral, I take a day off from office and help her cook. If I cannot do so, after I come home after work, I will go to her and help”, said Zina, aged 36, from Grozny.

My personal experience of life in the region shows that my neighbor Tamara and her family have been among my very closest contacts. Tamara visited us several times a week, we have been borrowing money and items from each other, celebrating holidays together, sometimes when I was staying in the office until late, she and her husband Imran would insist on treating me with a dinner. We knew everything about each other’s plans, travel, family affairs. “We almost live in one flat, just have different entrances”, Tamara liked to say.

At night of June 21/22, during armed raid of combatants on Ingushetia, most respondents stayed all night together with their neighbors. In Chechnya when the military operations took place, neighbors spend weeks together in cellars, the entire residential blocks. When the houses were destroyed neighbors were first to offer shelter to victims.

Religious Brotherhoods (Virds)

Another stratum of members of social network named by the respondents as important (mostly in Ingushetia) was *Vird*, or Islamic brotherhood. This type of social integration will be treated in the next separate section, I will mention here that the two smaller and more tightly integrated *Virds*-followers of Batl-khadz *Vird* and of K'ala *Vird* are important in promotion to office.

Friends

Personal networks include friends, who also channel one's access to office. Many respondents maintained close relations with their secondary school mates. University friends and friends from previous employment were important.

Thus, several mechanisms of recruitment to office were identified by the respondents, family networks being just one of them. The influence of family networks is prominent, however, insufficient for making a claim that kin structures shape the socio-political processes in Ingushetia and Chechnya – the picture is more complicated. Kin function should rather be likened to that of nepotism than tribalism.

Teips: relevance to policy-making

The picture will not be complete if I do not touch upon some attempts to politicize teips undertaken by political elites and individual families after the collapse of the USSR.

In Chechnya of 1992-1993 *de facto* independent radically ethnocentric separatist regime of President Dzhokhar Dudaev tried to politicize teips-1 as part of his state-building strategy and the general national revival processes taking place in Chechnya. Dudaev's rapidly collapsing state required integration and institutional mechanisms for efficient control. Having failed in building up a modern state-structure, Dudaev tried to use traditional self-government to enhance the legitimacy of his regime. Councils of teips were called for, which failed to become institutions of any efficiency, since they were not supported by corresponding social structures.

During Dudaev times teips became fashionable. This was a kind of retro-fashion, resurrection of roots, mentality; people started to remember old sufferings, teip structures were romanticized. Lipkhan Bazaeva, leader of Women's anti-war movement, leader of Women's Center Women's Dignity, Grozny.

Councils of teips became trendy within the framework of democratic reforms, we started to use elements of people's democracy. Teips would get together, raise issues of inter-teip borders, divisions inside Chechnya. In May 1992 I was warning that Chechen democracy would die of internal fragmentation. At that time there were strong arguments over teip's interests. There were attempts to collect teip banks for common needs. But there were instances of abuse of these funds, in our teip for example the public bank disappeared somewhere. Since then the enthusiasm for common banks vanished. Khusain Akhmadov, Chair of Chechen Parliament 1991-1994.

After the collapse of the USSR there was a revival of teips, everyone started to speak of clan, kin relations. But until we have tribal views on life we won't have either a state or a nation. Dudaev wanted to get teip councils together in order to influence the opponents of independence. He used to say: everyone has to know who they are, which teip are they from, relatives have to bring these people to senses. Khussejn Betelgereev, Chechen poet, singer, University Professor.

National revival took place in Ingushetia in a much less radical fashion. Attempts to resurrect teips-1 were undertaken, but more as cultural-historical units than the political ones. Roustam Yandiev, 24 told me the following story in 2003:

“ Three years ago our Elders organized a trip to the mountains for all our men. We spent three days in the mountains, restoring our tower, telling stories and legends about our teip. It was much fun. I now know lots of things about my teip. We have a rich history. There are so many of us, I was surprised”

If one visits Targhim, a mountainous region in Ingushetia, where Ingush battle towers are concentrated, they would notice that recently many families have undertaken

attempts to restore their family relics. Some wired electricity and planted orchards. However, teip-1 did not become a relevant social unit in Ingushetia, either.

There was a period, when attempts were undertaken to revive teips. Teips got together in the mountains, in the towers, there was much talk about creating teip banks, for solving certain issues. But it did not get anywhere. Our Evloyevs were even trying to publish a newspaper, issued two edits and that was it. Also when Zyazikov was being elected, our Evloevs got together in Nazran tried to decide whom to vote for. Some were for Gutseriev, others - for Zyazikov. They did not come to a common conclusion. I think this was the time when the split among Evloevs became obvious. Timur Akiev, Nazran.

In both republics plural politics and open political debate, which came with *glasnost*, split politically even teip-2. Many members of the younger generation did not share Elders' views, which fragmented politically the organic family units. When the war started in Chechnya, not only teip-1 members were fighting on different sides, but even many teip-2 members held different opinions about the situation.

“In the Soviet times our Daddy would go vote for the whole family. He would collect everybody's passports and go vote. When we voted in 1992, my older brother took his passport and said he would vote himself. I remember, Daddy was very offended.” (Zarema, 27, Karabulak).

At the same time, many extended families, especially in Ingushetia continued to vote in an organized manner, along the family lines.

“I do not trust the results of the elections /2000 Presidential elections – E.S./ I know my teip /here Teip-2 – E.S./ voted for Yavlinsky¹⁷. I know at least 20 other teips, which voted for Yavlinsky. This already accounts for at least one tenth of the Ingush electorate, but this did not show up in the results”. Alkhazur, 30

¹⁷ Leader of “Yabloko” party

Families, Clans or Political Groupings?

The preliminary results of this research have disqualified the hypothesis that the political process in Ingushetia and Chechnya being shaped by interaction of primordial patterns of social integration, primarily clans (teips) because historical clans have deteriorated. Nonetheless, everyone who closely observes politics in the region, and especially in Chechnya would quickly notice that the political class is fragmented into a number of entities, which compete for access to power at the republican level. These entities I will call *political* or *political-military groupings*.

Political grouping is a political (and in Chechnya also military) unit formed on the principles of personal loyalty, which includes the supporters of an influential public (in Chechnya-military) figure. The nucleus of the grouping may or may not be formed of the figure's close kin (teip-1) (eg. Ingush President Zyazikov - cousins, ex-President of Chechnya Kadyrov - son, ex-President of Chechnya Dudaev- not family based, ex-President of Chechnya Maskhadov- not family-based, Yamadaev-brothers, Baysarov - not family based). The group is then manned by the supporters of this figure, including more distant relatives, neighbors, co-villagers, friends. The group is based on the principles of common interest and personal loyalty to the leader. Resources and support for these groupings are drawn from ad hoc personal networks, and channels of access to the public wealth.

In early 1990s in many cases the families of combatants or politicians were not supportive of the latter's political groups, eventually as the war broke out members of extended families did have to take sides. Such were the cases of two presidents – Dudaev and Maskhadov, their relatives told me very similar stories during interviews:

“The family was unhappy when Dzokhar headed the national movement. When he was accepted to the Higher Aviation school - we were happy, when he became a general- we were so proud, we thought now life will be great he had a good salary, a good position, but when he got into politics our mother and I were crying and brothers tried to talk him out of it.. As if he would listen to us! He had no time for us anymore”, - told Besira, the older sister of Dzhokhar Dudaev.

At the same time she told me that during the two wars 36 men of Dudaev family have been killed, which suggests that many of them subsequently joined Dzekhar in fighting.

In 1996-1999 Aslan Maskhadov's political-military grouping was based on shared political ideals rather than personal loyalty based on kinship, friendship or neighborly relations, which reduced its competitiveness with other groupings. Maskhadov's failure to implement tough decisions against other groups which challenged his state-building efforts is often thought to be a result of him "being alone", not having a private army around him to enforce his will:

"I do not know why did he go into politics. He had to work somewhere when he returned to Chechnya¹⁸, so he went to work with Dudaev. And never got out of this game. We were so scared for him, there were so many indecent people in politics. And he was alone there!" , said Kaipa Maskhadova, Aslan's sister-in-law.

In Ingushetia political grouping of Murat Zyazikov captured power since 2002. The group was corrupt, and dramatically ineffective. When mass protests emerged against this ruling group in the republic, Zyazikov responded with force.

Today Zyazikov is ruling Ingushetyia. Who is behind him? His relatives, friends, close people. In my understanding, what Zyazikov presents as his team is in fact his clan, his associates, this is a union of racketeers of the people, who are stealing from its people in the background of complete lawlessness and impunity.

At the same time one family cannot take over the republic. There will never be one family clan in power. There are relatives of mother's side and wife's side and friends from schools and university, in short - this is an interest group, united by thief's interests. Azamat Nalgiev, MP of Ingush People's Assembly of the 1st calling.

We do have teips. They can play a great consolidating role, without them we would not have preserved our culture, our customs. There's nothing bad about teips, unless

¹⁸ Aslan Maskhadov was a Soviet General, before early 1990s his career mostly developed outside Chechnya

they are used for political means. During Aushev times teip did not matter in state-building. A wise executive should never use this structure in politics, he should only use it for maintaining traditions, culture, customs. If you use teips for good, there will be positive outcomes, if not, you will have disconsolidation. Ayup Gagiev, MP of Ingush People's Assembly, 3d calling.

Since the beginning of the Russian state-rebuilding effort after the end of large-scale warfare in Chechnya in 2003, the society was fragmented ideologically into two camps (pro-federal, anti-federal), each of the camps in its turn was fragmented into a number of groupings. The anti-federal groupings included separatists and fundamentalists. Since these groupings are underground, there is insufficient information about their numbers, structure and orientations. According to a 'family tree' of 'Chechen terrorist networks' posted on the wall inside the main federal military checkpoint 'Kavkaz-1' at the border of Ingushetia and Chechnya, in September 2005 there were three big groups: the group of Sajdullaev, the group of Basaev, the group of Umarov each fragmented into a number of sub-groups. In addition there existed a number of smaller groups, whose chiefs were not known.

According to my respondents among former Chechen fighters, combatant groups are not family-based, but separatists groupings were often locality-oriented, i.e. groups were formed of fighters originating from one region of Chechnya. *"I felt more secure among our local guys. I knew if I am killed, they would bring and bury me home or if I am injured they would carry me and care for me as long as they were able to move themselves"*, Zelim, former Chechen combatant, Sernovodsk.

Islamist combatant groupings strongly oppose divisions along ethnic, locality, kin lines, as everything that fragments the Muslim *umma*. Their groups are more heterogeneous.

The pro-federal groups are more accessible to analysis. The largest pro-federal military group, manned by ethnic Chechens is the so-called Security Service of Akhmat Kadyrov ("SB"), commonly known as "*kadyrovtsy*". Initially created as personal security guard of the Moscow-appointed head of Chechen administration

Akhmad Kadyrov, SB expanded into a powerful paramilitary formation which in the lifetime of Kadyrov-Senior largely remained his private army. In 2000-2004 it was partly legalized as units of patrol service and extra departmental guard of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, which created legal basis for Moscow to finance them and supply them with arms. The group was commanded by Akhmad Kadyrov's son-Ramzan (born in 1976).

Initially SB consisted of relatives and co-villages of Kadyrov and was formed on the basis of personal loyalty. Soon former fighters were "legalized" as part of the group, as a result of informal amnesty under guarantees of Kadyrov- Senior and then younger. Their security both from fighter's reprisals and from prosecution by federal forces depended on Kadyrov's protectionism.

Along with Kadyrov's relatives, co-villages and former rebels the Security Service en masse recruited young men who had previously not been involved in the conflict. In the conditions of mass unemployment for many of them the Security Service was the only source of stable income. However, being employed by pro-federal security services these young men became automatically involved in armed confrontation and became personally dependent on Kadyrov's group.

After Akhmad Kadyrov was killed in a bomb blast on May 9 2004 at the stadium of "Dinamo" in Grozny, the SB was formally liquidated, but Ramzan Kadyrov was appointed vice-prime minister for the security bloc. De facto existing SB received additional financial support and the possibility to expand. 2004 the Second regiment of patrol service PPS-2 named after Akhmad Kadyrov was created consisting of 1,125 men as well as the so-called Oil Regiment numbering 1,5- 2000 men, part of the extra-departmental guard of the republican Ministry of Internal Affairs. They were manned by *kadyrovtsy*, who thus became legalized. Formally the functions of both structures had nothing to do with the conflict – PPS-2 was a police unit aimed to ensure public order in the streets, while the Oil Regiment – was to guard the oil refineries, oil pipes and other industrial sites. In practice, however, both structures were involved in armed operations. In the process of reorganization of the existing structure Ramzan Kadyrov continued to actively recruit new people and open his military units of an increasing number of towns and villages, gradually overtaking the

local police. Eventually former “SB” which numbered according to various estimates 4-12, 000 (the latter is probably an overestimate) of well armed and well trained people was fully legalized as part of Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation. In 2004 Ramzan Kadyrov was awarded the “Hero of Russia” and in 2007 as soon as he turned 30 and became eligible for presidency, he was appointed by Vladimir Putin the Chief Executive of Chechnya.

Movladi Baysarov’s group “*Gorets*” (Mountaineer) was created at the same time as SB, and was manned by residents of town Pobedinskoje¹⁹ where Movladi was from, and controlled this area. The group numbered 200-400 men. Movladi was also one of the founders of SB and in several interviews Kadyrov-Senior said that he had two hands – his right hand was Movladi (Baysarov) and his left hand was his own son. However, until 2005 Baysarov’s group did not have any legal status, and except for several field commanders, his fighters were not officially employed by any power agency of the RF. Since they were not part of any legal structure and had no salary from the federal budget, they made their money themselves, i.e. via control of oil revenues on their territory. Baysarov group participated in military operations against the “terrorists” together with Russian federal servicemen and on their own and were repeatedly implicated in human abductions and summary executions. For some time in 2005 Baysarov men were provided with IDs of FSB (federal security service), but then again lost their status. After assassination of Akhmad Kadyrov, Movladi developed tense relations with his son Ramzan, who was much younger than Movladi, but behaved in an increasingly assertive way, finally their tensions broke into open confrontation, Baysarov gave an interview to Ekho-Moskvy radio station where he called Kadyrov-Younger “a bandit”, after which his group was besieged in Pobedinskoje, and Movladi was shot dead by Chechen special forces in the center of Moscow on November 18, 2006.

The group of Magomed Kakiev, or the so-called “*Gruppa Zapad*” (Group “West”) includes 300-800 men, they control Staropromyslovsky district of Grozny, the area of Turbina, Nadterechny district and the territories adjacent to them. This group

¹⁹ Aslo known as “The 15th milk farm”, a settlement adjacent to Grozny

is legalized and is part of Chief Investigating Department (GRU) and the Russian Ministry of Interior.

The group “East” (*Gruppa Vostok*) is led by Sulim Yamadaev, it used to control mountainous areas of Chechnya and is part of the 42 division of the Ministry of Defense Troops. The groups enjoyed high political standing and Sulim’s brother Ruslan Yamadaev became the MP of the Russian State Duma. In 2007-2008 tensions emerged between Yamadaev brothers and Ramzan Kadyrov, which broke out into an open conflict in April 2008 which started with a traffic quarrel over whose cortege gives the road to whom, and ended in shooting, when two Yamadaev officers were killed. Since then Ramzan Kadyrov started a major campaign against Yamadaev brothers, calling them war criminals and demanding criminal investigation of their activities. On September 24, 2008 Ruslan Yamadaev was shot dead in the center of Moscow, the military group was dissolved, and partly fled, partly joined Kadyrov forces.

Thus, since his father’s death Ramzan Kadyrov used the resources available to make his group the largest, the strongest, and legal. Small group of Said-Magomed Kakiev remains loyal to Kadyrov and is allowed to exist, two other political-military formations based on personal loyalty have been dissolved. Kadyrov built a sultanic regime, has incorporated or destroyed all alternative centers of power, not only military, but political and public.

This section was aimed to outline some results of my field research, investigating the social relevance of clans (teips) and families in the Chechen and Ingush societies. My task was to go beyond the term and “clan” (“teip”) and identify its relevance to the social and political life of Chechen and Ingush societies.

My fieldwork findings are that counter to mainstream opinion, teip, in its traditional meaning of a tribal entity, is not a subject of political process in Ingushetia or Chechnya, that it has little political or social relevance in contemporary Chechen and Ingush societies as a group identity linked to community of origin. Teip-2, as a more integrated extended family group, plays a role in the political process, in the form of widely practiced nepotism. But mostly Chechen and Ingush politics is shaped by the

interaction of political and political-military groupings, based common involvement in shadow economy and the principle of personal loyalty to the leader. These are interest groups rather than kin groups.