



Parahyangan Catholic University
Faculty of Social and Political Sciences
Department of International Relations

Accreditation "A"

SK BAN –PT NO: 451/SK/BAN-PT/Akred/S/XI/2014

**The Longstanding Struggle between Russia's Territorial Integrity
and North Caucasus' Secessionism**

Thesis

By

Tanya Lee

2014330103

Supervised by

Yulius Purwadi Hermawan, Ph.D.

Bandung

2018



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Thesis Approval

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Declaration of Responsibility

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hereby declares that this thesis is the work of my own and it is not a work that was ever proposed to obtain an academic degree by others. I make this statement with full conscience and I am willing to accept the consequences in accordance with the rules in writing if in the future this statement is proven to be invalid.

Bandung, 31 July 2018



Tanya Lee

2014330103

Preface

Praise to God Almighty, because of His blessings and grace this thesis could be finished. This thesis is made to fulfill the graduation requirements of International Relations study at Parahyangan Catholic University. With the title of “The Longstanding Struggle between Russia’s Territorial Integrity and North Caucasus’ Secessionism”, this thesis talks about the unique and lengthy phenomenon in the North Caucasus secessionists’ movements. This phenomenon was chosen based on the author’s interests in the field of international security, conflict resolution, and the European study.

Throughout the making process of this thesis, the author is really thankful to her supervisor, Yulius Purwadi Hermawan, Ph.D. for all the guidance, suggestions, responses, and constructive criticism. These helped the author to produce a more comprehensive thesis in a timely manner.

The author hopes that this thesis will contribute to the development of the study of International Relations, especially related to the North Caucasus. Furthermore, the author hopes that her work can be used as a reference for future researches in the same issue.

Bandung, 31 July 2018

Tanya Lee

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1. Author's parents for their emotional and financial support thorough her four years of study,
2. Mr. Yulius Purwadi Hermawan, Ph.D. for his guidance as the supervisor on this thesis,
3. The Members of Media Parahyangan, Angga, and Andrian for their supports and understandings towards the author for the last three years, especially during the making of this thesis,
4. The Members of Lembaga Kepresidenan Mahasiswa for their understandings on meetings author couldn't fully attend since she had to work on her thesis,
5. All lecturers on the International Relations Department for the knowledge they have given me in author's four years of study.

Bandung, 31 July 2018

Tanya Lee

Abstrak

Nama : Tanya Lee
NPM : 2014330103
Judul : *The Longstanding Struggle between Russia's Territorial Integrity and North Caucasus' Secessionism*

Status daerah Kaukasus Utara telah menjadi sumber konflik antara Pemerintah Rusia dan para separatis (*secessionists*) Kaukasus Utara selama lebih dari 200 tahun. Sejak dimulainya gerakan pemisahan diri, Pemerintah Rusia dan para separatis, telah mengadopsi berbagai strategi baik yang menggunakan kekerasan maupun tidak untuk memperoleh kepentingan mereka dan menyelesaikan konflik yang ada. Akan tetapi, usaha tersebut tidak memberikan hasil yang diharapkan, terutama karena Pemerintah Rusia selalu melindungi kesatuan wilayahnya dengan strategi-strategi yang diperlukan sementara para separatis juga melakukan hal yang serupa demi gerakan pemisahan diri mereka. Maka dari itu, skripsi ini akan menjawab satu pertanyaan penelitian yang berbunyi mengapa gerakan pemisahan diri Kaukasus Utara berlarut-larut walaupun berbagai strategi telah dilakukan oleh Pemerintah Rusia untuk mengakhiri konflik tersebut? Untuk memberikan jawaban yang menyeluruh, metode penelitian kualitatif telah dipilih dan akan dianalisis dengan Model *Protracted Social Conflict* (PSC) dari Edward Azar dan Tiga Kondisi Wajib untuk Resolusi Konflik oleh Alan C. Tidwell.

Penelitian yang telah dilakukan menunjukkan bahwa kesempatan yang muncul saat pembuatan *The Accord of Khasavyurt, the Novye Atagi ceasefire*, dan *The 12 May 1997 agreement* tidak digunakan dengan maksimal. Hal ini karena setelah pembuatan perjanjian-perjanjian Perang Chechnya Kedua dan juga Insurgensi Kaukasus Utara masih terjadi. Terlebih lagi, kapasitas untuk berkomunikasi dengan satu sama dengan secara damai yang terlihat saat pembuatan perjanjian-perjanjian tersebut pun tidak digunakan banyak di dalam proses konflik yang ada. Kedua pihak lebih memilih untuk menggunakan strategi-strategi yang koersif untuk mencapai kepentingan mereka. Selain itu, kedua pihak juga tidak mempunyai keinginan yang cukup untuk bernegosiasi satu sama lain terutama karena sejarah diantara kedua pihak telah menciptakan rasa kebencian dan juga persepsi-persepsi negatif terhadap satu sama lain yang menghambat proses resolusi konflik diantara mereka.

Keywords: Kaukasus Utara, *Protracted Social Conflict*, Rusia, *Secession*, Kesatuan Wilayah

Abstract

Name : Tanya Lee
NPM : 2014330103
Title : The Longstanding Struggle between Russia's Territorial Integrity and North Caucasus' Secessionism

The status of the North Caucasus region has been the source of conflict between the Russian government and the North Caucasus' secessionists for more than 200 years. Since the start of the movements, the Russian government and the secessionists, have adopted various strategies, violent or non-violent, to gain their interests and resolve the conflict. However, the efforts were not fruitful as the Russian government always protected its territorial integrity by adopting any strategies necessary while the secessionists were also willing to do the same for their secession. Therefore, this thesis addresses one research question on why North Caucasus secessionists' movements prolonged despite various strategies adopted by Russia to end the conflict? In order to produce a comprehensive analysis, the method of qualitative research has been chosen with the light of Edward Azar's Protracted Social Conflict (PSC) Model and also Alan C. Tidwell's Three Required Conditions of Conflict Resolution.

This thesis found that the opportunity posed in the creation of the Accord of Khasavyurt, the Novye Atagi ceasefire, and the 12 May 1997 were not utilized maximally. This is because the Second Chechen War and North Caucasus Insurgency emerged after the creation of the agreements. Moreover, the capacity to communicate peacefully with each other in the creation of the agreements were not adopted in the conflict most of the time. Both parties rather adopted coercive strategies against each other to gain their interests. In addition, both parties also had lack of willingness to negotiate with each other since the history between them have created hatred and negative perceptions against each other which halted the process of conflict resolution between them.

Keywords: North Caucasus, Protracted Social Conflict, Russia, Secession, Territorial Integrity

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Abbreviations

ETA	: Euskadi ta Askatasuna
IS	: Islamic State
KBK	: Kabarda, Balkaria and Karachay
NAC	: National Antiterrorist Committee
NATO	: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCFD	: North Caucasus Federal District
PSC	: Protracted Social Conflict
UK	: United Kingdom
UN	: United Nations
UNGA	: United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	: United Nations Security Council
US	: United States

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

States will always put any means necessary to maintain its territorial integrity. Therefore, in any kind of secession movements, there are only two possible outcomes, staying within the state's territory or becoming a new state entity. This is why any states will try to end any kind of secession movements as fast as possible to prevent the secessionists from getting their independence or getting support for their independence.

Table 1.1. Resolved Secession

Location	Parties	Period	Result
Sudan	North Sudan- South Sudan Secessionists	1955-2011 (56 Years)	South Sudan's Independence
Indonesia	Indonesia- East Timor	1975-2002 (27 Years)	East Timor's Independence

Spain and France	Spanish Government & French Government – Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA)	1959-2011 (52 years)	Basque stays within the state's territory and ETA dissolved forever in 2018
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Sources: Various Sources¹

As seen in Table 1.1., none of the secession lasted more than 100 years, as both parties tried to end the secession movements as soon as possible since the secessionists wanted to gain their independence within a short period of time while the states also wanted to function effectively with no threats coming from the secessionists. However, there are many lengthy secession movements ongoing in many parts of the world such as Scotland from United Kingdom (UK), Venice from Italy, Catalonia from Spain, and many more.²

¹ “Sudan – First Civil War,” Global Security, accessed on 05 June 2018, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/sudan-civil-war1.htm>.; Susan Harris Rimmer and Juli Effi Tomaras, “Aftermath Timor Leste: reconciling competing notions of justice,” Parliament of Australia, 21 May 2007, accessed on 05 June 2018, https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Publications_Archive/archive/TimorLeste.; Teresa Whitfield, “The Basque Conflict and ETA: The Difficulties of an Ending,” United States Institute of Peace, 09 December 2015, accessed on 05 June 2018, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2015/12/basque-conflict-and-eta-difficulties-ending>.; “East Timor Independence Day,” Latitudes Media, 05 February 2013, accessed 05 June 2018, <https://latitudes.nu/east-timor-independence-day/>.; “South Sudan profile – Timeline,” BBC News, 01 June 2018, accessed on 05 June 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14019202>.; “HD Announces ETA’s Official Final Declaration that It Has Disbanded Forever,” Centre for Humanitarian Dialogues, 03 May 2018, accessed on 05 June 2018, <https://www.hdcentre.org/updates/hd-announces-etass-official-final-declaration-that-it-has-disbanded-forever/>.

² Andrew Henderson, “These countries all have secession movements underway,” Nomad Capitalist, accessed 03 June 2018, <http://nomadcapitalist.com/2014/04/24/countries-secession-movements-from-government/>.

These movements can be dated back to hundreds of years ago and might still erupt massively at some point(s). Nonetheless, from time to time the tension and the violence coming from both parties reduced or ended with specific agreements, adjustments, or negotiations.

As a proof, Catalonia secession can be dated back into the 1600s, however, the movement never truly succeeded. Wider autonomy and wider recognition of their culture from time to time seems to be the answer and could put a hold of the movements for some time.³ Even though the new Catalan government stated that they would stay true to their unilateral declaration of independence, Catalonia is still considered as a part of Spain, as the newly elected government was remarked as the new 'regional' government.⁴

It is true that the Spanish government has not yet able to end the movement completely. However, they have succeeded in putting the movements on hold and opened the opportunity to negotiate with the Catalan government. The new Prime Minister, Pedro Sanchez also stated that he was ready to 'build bridges' with the Catalan regional government⁵ while the new

³ "Catalonia profile – Timeline," BBC News, 14 May 2018, accessed 03 June 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-20345073>.

⁴ Meg Bernhard, "New Catalan leader sworn in, vows to continue effort to secede from Spain," Los Angeles Times, 02 June 2018, accessed on 29 May 2018, <http://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-spain-catalonia-government-20180602-story.html>.

⁵ Daniel Bosque, "Small glimmer of hope in Catalan crisis with new Spain PM," Yahoo, 03 June 2018, accessed on 03 June 2018, <https://www.yahoo.com/news/small-glimmer-hope-catalan-crisis-spain-pm-033751038.html>.

government of Catalonia has also called the central government to negotiate with them.⁶

Despite the examples stated above, the North Caucasus secession in Russia has a different story. After hundreds of years of movements, it has not reached any major breakthrough in negotiation, agreements, or adjustments that could put the conflict on hold for more than a decade since at least the 20th century.

The official resistance from Chechnya in the region of North Caucasus dated back to 1785,⁷ meaning that the conflict between the two has been ongoing for more than 230 years. The violence in the North Caucasus in the 20th until 21st century itself started in 1994, three years after the Soviet Union was dissolved.⁸ These acts of violence are then followed by the First Chechen War (1994-1996), the Second Chechen War (1999-2009), and the Insurgency of North Caucasus (2009-now).

Throughout the conflict in the 20th century, at least five agreements were signed between the parties. The first one was The Accord of Khasavyurt. It was signed on 25 August 1996 by Aleksandr Lebed, Russian plenipotentiary general, and Aslan Maskhadov, the Chechen head of staff. In

⁶ Meg Bernhard.

⁷ *Chronology for Chechens in Russia*, 16 July 2010, University of Maryland, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=36504>.

⁸ Emil Aslan Souleimanov, *The North Caucasus Insurgency: Dead or Alive?* (2017 Report, Title 17, United States Code, Sections 101 and 105), (Ashburn, Pennsylvania: United States Army War College Press, 2017), x.

this accord, both parties agreed that they would find a solution to their conflict by 2001.⁹

Besides the Accord of Khasavyurt, in the same year, both parties also signed the Novye Atagi ceasefire agreement and another agreement on economic relations and compensation for Chechens affected by the previous war.¹⁰

The next agreement signed was the 12 May 1997 agreement. The agreement aims to reassure the willingness of the secessionists and the Russian government in ending their hostility. The agreement also became the foundation of both parties in establishing firm, equal, and mutually beneficial relations. This agreement contains five short terms and was considered important as it rejected the use of force completely.

However, the agreement was then thought to be too simple as it did not specifically mention how the relations between the parties would be governed. It also was seen as ambiguous as the agreement did not specify the status of Chechnya, opening different interpretations.¹¹

Both parties also did not meet each other's expectations regarding the 12 May 1997 agreement. Russia failed in delivering economic aid and

⁹ Christoph Zürcher, *The Post-Soviet Wars: Rebellion, Ethnic Conflict, and Nationhood in the Caucasus* (New York and London: New York University Press), 84.

¹⁰ Salome Asatiani, "Chechnya: Why did 1997 Peace Agreement Fail?" RadioFreeEurope RadioLiberty, 11 May 2007, accessed on 12 February 2018, <https://www.rferl.org/a/1076426.html>.

¹¹ Ibid.

rebuilding the republic, causing widespread poverty, and unemployment. This then caused Maskhadov's failure in keeping the peace in the region.¹²

Even though these agreements were not effective, a glimpse of hope came as the violence between the two were thought to be declining after the Russian Counterterrorist Committee declared the retrieval of its troops in Chechnya, ending the Second Chechen War in 2009. Ramzan Kadyrov, the president of the Chechen Republic at the time, also stated his optimism by promising peace and economic growth in the republic. Nonetheless, Grigory Shvedov, a liberal Russian journalist, called the optimism as a fairy tale.¹³

Shvedov's statement was proven to be right when the violence started to spread in the region by the end of 2009 and early 2010. The violence extended to some republics of the region, such as Dagestan, Ingushetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria. The region also saw extra 300 percent on the number of serious terroristic attacks in the first eight months of 2010 compared to the same months in 2009.¹⁴

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Emil Aslan Souleimanov, 1.

¹⁴ Ibid, 2.

In 2010, the number of those killed reached 754 and 956 wounded (1,710 in total). While in 2011, there was a significant decline in the number of those who got wounded, 628 people, while 750 people were killed.¹⁵

The tension between both parties has not yet ended over centuries of fighting and waging war against each other. The agreements that were signed were not effective for the conflict resolution. Furthermore, with no more breakthrough in conflict resolution, the conflict is being waged between two parties who were not willing to negotiate in order to resolve the conflict. This situation then prolongs the conflict between the two.

1.2. **Research Problem Identification**

1.2.1. **Research problem description**

The conflict between the North Caucasians and the Russian government is definitely a unique case, with the situation that exists, it seems that Russia shall be able to end the conflict with its military forces in a short amount of time. Their total military personnel is 3,586,128 with 1,013,628 of them are active. The Russia army also has thousands of tanks, armored fighting vehicles, self-propelled artillery, towed artillery, and rocket projectors.¹⁶

¹⁵ Saferworld and the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russia Academy of Sciences, *North Caucasus: views from within, People's perspectives on peace and security* (2012 Report), (United Kingdom: Saferworld, 2012), 5.

¹⁶ "2018 Russia Military Strength," Global Fire Power, accessed on 31 July 2018, https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country_id=russia.

Russian military superiority has also been proven when they won against Islamic State (IS) in 2017 or two years after Kremlin stated that this was their objective.¹⁷ On the other side, the secessionists had only estimated 400 until 1,500 members who joined the Caucasus Emirate.¹⁸ Nonetheless, such superiority in military forces is still not able to end the conflict between Russia and this uniqueness will be highlighted in this thesis especially since both actors have tried to reach their interests but none succeeded.

For Russia itself, in order to defend their territorial integrity, they have adopted various strategies. As proofs, during the year 2005 until 2010, Kremlin has appointed four leaders to govern Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Ingushetia. The appointment was conducted after Putin ended regional elections in 2004. Nevertheless, the move was ineffective since bloodshed, unprecedented militant activity, the growth and the proliferation of the secession movements, and instability occurred in the North Caucasus during the term of the appointed leaders.¹⁹ Moreover, in 2009 Russian Counterterrorist Committee also decided to retrieve its troops from Chechnya. The move ended the Second Chechen War but started the wider

¹⁷ Alina Polyakova, "Russia is Great Power Once Again," *The Atlantic*, 28 February 2018, accessed on 31 July 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/02/russia-syria-putin-assad-trump-isis-ghouta/554270/>.

¹⁸ "Caucasus Emirate," National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, January 2015, accessed on 31 July 2018, <http://www.start.umd.edu/baad/narratives/caucasus-emirate>.

¹⁹ Huseyn Aliyev, "Socio-Political and Socio-Economic Causes of Conflict Escalation in the North Caucasus," *Ethnopolitics Papers* No. 25 (June 2013): 17-18.

movements, as the North Caucasus Insurgency, started to spread to Dagestan, Ingushetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria.²⁰

Another effort made was the re-establishment of regional elections in 2012 by Dmitry Medvedev, Russia's-then president. The decision was suspected as a sign of central government frustration of the instability in the North Caucasus since violence in the region escalated after the regional elections being called off.

Putin also extended Kadyrov's term for five months as the Chechen leader, the center of the conflict, to control the situation and the movements in the North Caucasus. Nevertheless, clashes still happened at least twice a month, especially during April and May 2016.²¹

However besides peaceful strategies the Russian government also conducted coercive strategies. In 2011 until 2012, besides kidnapping, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Memorial stated that government forces have conducted tortures, unlawful detention, lawlessness treatment, extrajudicial executions to those who supported the secession.²²

Russia has also adopted various strategies to handle the secession of the North Caucasus in its foreign activities. As proofs, Russia started to intervene

²⁰ Emil Aslan Souleimanov, x.

²¹ Franklin Holcomb and the Institute for the Study of War Russia-Ukraine Team, *Russia in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Institute for the Study of War (ISW, 09 June 2016), http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Russia%20in%20Central%20Asia_0.pdf, 2.

²² Ibid, 13-14 and 17.

in Syrian Civil War in September 2015.²³ Putin stated one of the reasons for the intervention was to prevent Russian foreign fighters in Syria, fighting alongside IS and other groups, to come back to Russia. He believed that they were a threat to Russia and it was better to fight them in the Syrian territory. The presence of the threat from Russian fighters in Syria was proven to be true as Jaish al-Muhajireen wal-Ansar declared that their members would return and retaliate to Russia.²⁴ This group was led by Omar al-Shashani or Omar the Chechen, who was once the overall battlefield leader of IS' military operations and thought to be one of the best fighters among the Islamist rebel groups.²⁵ The group's threat needed to be taken seriously since this group of 3000 fighters from the Caucasus was considered as the most violent and the toughest amongst the rebels. Other Chechen-led groups such as Ajnad al-Kaykaz, Junud al-Sham and Tarkhan's Jama had also vowed to attack Russia.²⁶

The Russian government also have refocused its diplomacy to understand and solve the prolonged crisis in the Caucasus. The current

²³ Paul Iddon, "Assessing the Russian intervention in Syria, one year on," RUDAW, 26 September 2016, accessed on 11 November 2017, <http://www.rudaw.net/english/analysis/26092016>.

²⁴ Kim Sengupta, "Russia in Syria: President Putin's Middle East adventure exposes terrorist threat now facing Moscow," Independent UK, 09 October 2015, accessed on 11 November 2017, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-in-syria-president-putins-middle-east-adventure-exposes-terrorist-threat-now-facing-russia-a6688661.html>.

²⁵ Adam Taylor, "Why being Chechen is a badge of honor for Islamist militants," The Washington Post, 03 July 2014, accessed on 11 November 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/07/03/why-being-chechen-is-a-badge-of-honor-for-islamist-militants/>.

²⁶ Kim Sengupta.

president, Vladimir Putin, traveled to Iran, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Turkey to discuss peace in the Caucasus. The talks didn't only include the Caucasus, but also the Syrian civil war, since it affected the situation in the Caucasus through IS. Nonetheless, Sergey Markedonov considered these efforts as unsuccessful, since the three biggest actors; Russia, Turkey, and Iran had different approaches and priority towards the issue.²⁷ Also, Armenia and Azerbaijan couldn't unite to solve this issue, especially after the territorial dispute tension of Nagorno-Karabakh was escalating again.²⁸

On the other side, in order to secede, the secessionists have also adopted several strategies. The terroristic attack has been a very consistent strategy from the secessionists. Sporadic bombings in public places and government institutions' offices or spots have been their prominent strategy. Since the end of Second Chechen War until 2016 there has been 577 bombs, explosives, and dynamites attacks in Russia where at least 44 of the attacks have been proven to be related to North Caucasus or Islamic movements and at least 27 of them were conducted by IS or Caucasus Province of IS or Caucasus Emirate. The others 531 attacks' perpetrators are not yet known.²⁹

²⁷ Sergey Markedonov, "Russia searches for pragmatic solutions in the Caucasus," Russia Direct, 12 August 2016, accessed on 27 August 2017, <http://www.russia-direct.org/opinion/russia-searches-pragmatic-solutions-caucasus>.

²⁸ Franklin Holcomb and the Institute for the Study of War Russia-Ukraine Team.

²⁹ Global Terrorism Database, Russia Bombs, Explosive, Dynamite Attacks 2009-2016, http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?expanded=no&casualties_type=b&casualties_max=&start_yearonly=2009&end_yearonly=2016&dtp2=all&success=yes&country=167&weapon=6&ob=GTDID&od=desc&page=1&count=100#results-table.

The next prominent strategy from the secessionists is mobilizing international support. Many North Caucasian fighters joined Syrian Civil War to take out Putin's ally, Bashar al-Assad.³⁰ The allegiance of the secessionists to IS also made their struggle for independence global, especially since their attacks also did not occur in the territory of Russia only. In 2015, IS attacked a Russian jet flying over the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula by detonating a smuggled bomb killing all 224 passengers and crew members and this was suspected to be related to North Caucasus.³¹

Beside gaining international acknowledgment, by joining the IS, the North Caucasus fighters enhanced their fighting skills. These skills learned in Syria or Iraq would be used when they return to Russia in order to increase local support, expand their recruitment network, and obtain resources from local businesses.³²

The complexity of the tension between Russia and the North Caucasus region is undeniable. The anomaly is shown in this conflict since both parties have adopted various strategies from time to time but none of them have been able to fulfill their interests completely.

³⁰ Kim Sengupta.

³¹ Alene Tchekmedyan, "A timeline of deadly attacks in Russia," Los Angeles Times, 03 April 2017, accessed on 11 November 2017, <http://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-terrorist-attacks-russia-20170403-htmstory.html>.

³² Jean-Francois Ratelle, *The North Caucasus Insurgency: a Potential Spillover into the Russian Federation?* (Caucasus Analytical Digest No. 93, 04 April 2017), 3.

1.2.2. **Research focus**

This thesis focuses on how the conflict between Russia and North Caucasus' secessionists is still unresolved despite various strategies from both sides. Russia has adopted various strategies to deal with the secession. The secessionists have also adopted many strategies to get the upper hand against Russia and gain their independence.

Nonetheless, this thesis limits its period within 2009 until 2016. This period is chosen because in 2009 the Second Chechen War ended and the North Caucasus Insurgency began, while in 2016 Russia refocused its foreign diplomacy and tried to find the solutions for the problems in the Caucasus region.

On the other hand, this thesis also puts historical context prior to the end of the Second Chechen War as it would help this thesis to give a more comprehensive analysis.

1.2.3. **Research question**

The process of the North Caucasus Insurgency leads to one main research question, which is; why North Caucasus secessionists' movements prolonged despite various strategies adopted by Russia to end the conflict?

1.3. Research Purpose and Contribution

1.3.1. Research purpose

This research aims to explain the causes behind the prolonged secession movements in the North Caucasus region even though both sides have adopted many strategies against each other in order to fulfill their interests.

1.3.2. Research contribution

Upon the completion of this thesis, this thesis will have two contributions. The first contribution of this thesis is to enrich conflict resolution and international relations studies, especially regarding the North Caucasus region. The second contribution of this thesis is as a reference for future researches in order to understand the instability in the North Caucasus region.

1.4. Literature Review

Many scholars³³ have identified the causes of the North Caucasus' struggle for independence. For example, Gordon Hans believed that the Chechen's radical movements are inspired, influenced, and funded by foreign terrorist ideologies and groups, such as Al-Qaeda.

³³ Gordon Hans, Emil Aslan Souleimanov, Robert Schaefer, and Huseyn Aliyev.

Robert Schaefer also agrees that the Islamic beliefs had an influence on the secession. He wrote that 1,400 years ago, Islam penetrated the region. After the entrance of the belief, Russia invaded the North Caucasus in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The campaign aimed to get rid of non-Russians in the region and caused the Chechens to flee.

The hostile and desperate situation made Chechens put Islam as the medium to channel their dedication, secession, and resistance to Russia. The situation then escalated to where the secessionists were eager to establish an ancient political system that was practiced in their belief's golden age. The eagerness can also be referred to as a revenge to the Russians (mainly the government) for destroying their life and unable to control their region from time to time. Besides that, Schaefer also stated how the Russian government over the centuries have been undermining the importance of identities, the strength identities-based movements, and the movements' development.³⁴

Emil Aslan Souleimanov also describes how identity can influence a conflict through the communal grievance. Souleimanov believes that the concept of grievance might be the main cause of North Caucasus secession. Grievance might have rooted from the violent Chechen deportation in 1944 which brought shame, injustice, and trauma to the Chechen for years and generations. This then put Russia as the "ethnic enemy" who caused them to

³⁴ Robert W. Schaefer, *The Insurgency in Chechnya and the North Caucasus: From Gazavat to Jihad* (United States of America: Preager Security International, 2010), 161 and 239-241.

suffer and drove the motivation to unite and fight with the enemy in order to gain their own welfare.³⁵

Besides grievance, Souleimanov also describes social injustice, unpopular elites, and the erosion of traditionalist values as the second approach besides grievance to understand the causes of North Caucasus' secession. The corrupt and incompetent elites in the North Caucasus were not chosen by the locals but merely appointed by Moscow. Therefore, the elites were not so popular amongst the locals.

Souleimanov also believed that unemployment contributed to the causes of secession. The high unemployment of educated middle-class youths is believed to create a way for Salafi jihadism to enter their mind and created the motivation to go against Moscow.³⁶

Another scholar, Huseyn Aliyev described socio-political and socio-economic factors which influenced the secession of the region. The first socio-political factor was lawlessness and violation of human rights. It was conducted by both parties which caused fear and hostility in the region. The second socio-political factor was lack of political representation. The violence in the region grew as Putin ended the popular elections and appointed leaders for the North Caucasus within the year 2005 and 2010, therefore this factor cannot be ignored.³⁷

³⁵ Emil Aslan Souleimanov, 17 and 22-23.

³⁶ Ibid, 25-26.

³⁷ Huseyn Aliyev, 14-18.

Aliyev then described two socio-economic factors which affect the escalation of the North Caucasus conflict. The first socio-economic factor is high rates of unemployment. In 2012, the Ingushetia, Chechnya, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Dagestan had above Russia's 6.6 percent average rates of unemployment. Ingushetia had the highest unemployment among the four with 48.8 percent and Kabardino-Balkaria had the lowest rate with 10.8 percent. Furthermore, the high-level of nepotism and collusion made it harder for the youths to find jobs in the North Caucasus.

The second socio-economic factor is corruption. The North Caucasus region has one of the highest numbers of corruption in Russia. The residents of the North Caucasus also considered corruption to be the second most important problem in the region. The law enforcement sector was named as the most corrupt sector in the region.³⁸

Every literature reviewed above shown that Aliyev and Souleimanov focused mostly on the internal factors. On the other hand, Schaefer focused mainly on the Islamic identity of the region. Moreover, they didn't emphasize the importance of external factors in the complexity of North Caucasus Insurgency, other than the Islamic ideology.

Furthermore, Souleimanov focused more on the causes of the North Caucasus' secession and not on how the process is ongoing. While Aliyev didn't emphasize the emergence of the new actors into the conflicts since the conflict started and focused more on how the Russian government affected the conflict's tension. Also, Schaefer put mostly Islamic beliefs and

³⁸ Ibid, 21-25.

incapability of the Russian government on the spotlight and did not emphasize other influences. Moreover, the three authors did not emphasize the prolong trait of the conflict despite government and secessionists efforts to reach their interests.

This thesis will explain this unresolved conflict by the light of Edward Azar and Alan Tidwell's frameworks, different than any works of literature reviewed above. Moreover, this thesis will consider the lengthy duration of the conflict or what Azar as called as a Protracted Social Conflict (PSC). This is important to be done as it is necessary to understand that a PSC can't be assessed as other social conflicts especially because a PSC will not end in a zero-sum game, it will end with two weary parties surrounded by damaged environment, supporting them to fight each other further.

1.5. Theoretical Framework

Scholars such as James Crawford and Michael Hechter have tried to define the term of secessionism. Crawford identified secessionism as an activity of territory withdrawal which the functioning state does not approve. On the other hand, an act of territory withdrawal within a disintegrating state is not classified as secession. While Hechter defined secessionism as a situation where a state tries to maintain its power as a state over a territory which demands withdrawal.³⁹ To summarize, secession can be defined as an

³⁹ Aleksandar Pavković, *Secession and its Diverse Definition*, Macquarie University, accessed on 27 June 2018, https://www.auspsa.org.au/sites/default/files/secession_and_its_diverse_definitions_alexandar_pavkovic.pdf, 1.

activity when there are two big components, namely territory withdrawal and also disapproval from the state of that withdrawal.

A secession in a state can be a protracted process or a protracted conflict and this kind of conflict shall be analyzed different from the others. Edward Azar then offers a more comprehensive model to explain why some conflicts tend to be protracted. He offers the model of Protracted Social Conflict (PSC). To be characterized as a PSC a conflict not only shall lengthy (usually more than 10 until 25 years) but also experiences repetitive periods of time where the tensions are higher than others with the same issue(s) and it has conflictual dyadic relationships.

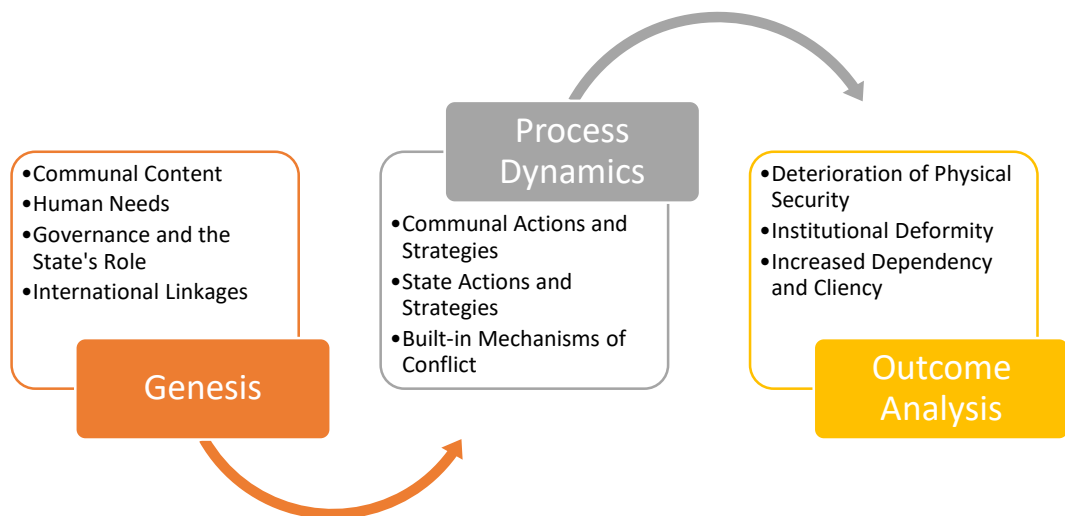
However, a PSC does differ from another form a protracted conflict which is called enduring rivalries. The first distinction is that a PSC focuses on the non-state actor as primary unit of analysis, while enduring rivalries consists of states competing with one another.

The second distinction is the necessity of violence. PSCs include direct violence between the parties while in enduring rivalries not necessarily violent, it can be in a form of competition.⁴⁰

Furthermore, Azar explains his PSC model. His model consists of three phases namely genesis, process-dynamics, and outcome analysis.

⁴⁰ Mellisa M. C. Beaudoin, *Protracted Social Conflict: A Reconceptualization and Case Analysis*, Submitted as a Dissertation in University of South Carolina, 01 January 2013, accessed on 27 June 2018, <https://www.mobt3ath.com/uplode/book/book-2325.pdf>, 7-9.

Figure 1.1. Edward Azar's PSC Model



The genesis variables are responsible for transforming non-conflictual situations into conflictual ones. There are four variables of genesis or preconditions of PSCs. The first variable is communal content, the most important analysis unit in PSCs. Communal content is defined as race, ethnic, language, religion, and others as a group identity.⁴¹

Azar also adds that these groups will be politically active by two factors. The first one is colonial legacy, where states are composed of various communal groups or where a nation is divided into several states. This happens as in the past the colonialists practiced the divide and rule principle. The second factor is the historical pattern of rivalry and contest among communal actors, where one or several communal groups dominate the states and maximize their needs at the expense of others.

⁴¹ Edward Azar, *The Management of Protracted Social Conflict: Theory and Cases* (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1990), 7.

The second variable of genesis from the PSC model is human needs which are different than interests, needs must be fulfilled, vital, and non-negotiable. For example, as a human or a community, survival and well-being are fundamental. Nevertheless, the scarcity of goods causes uneven distribution. Unfulfilled needs will eventually create collective grievance which will lead to PSC when the states can not handle it correctly. In another hand, the access to social and political institutions is seen as important since these should provide a fair distribution and exchange system of basic needs. The access shall be equal for all various identity groups because the group might get violent as they are unable to fulfill their basic needs through the social and political institutions.⁴²

The third variable of genesis is governance and the state's role. Azar emphasizes that the inability to fulfill society's needs is a result of states' political mechanism. States have the roles to protect, govern, and distribute resources to its society, preferably lawful, equal, and without force. When a state is incapable and unable to fulfill their roles, it will likely lead to a PSC. It is also stated:

“Most states which experience PSC tend to be characterized by incompetent, parochial, fragile and authoritarian governments that fail to satisfy basic human needs.”

In these states, one or several identity groups will use the state as their apparatus to pursue and maximize their goals, pay less attention to the need of others, and reduce the social-political access of other identity groups. This

⁴² Edward Azar.

situation minimizes state's capability of equal and unbiased governance. The society will also see the government authority as illegitimate.

The fourth variable of genesis is international linkages. It affects PSCs as international system affects the establishment of local social and political institutions along with their impact on states' roles. There are two types of international linkages which deprive the satisfaction needs of one states' society. The first type, economic dependency, can worsen community access to state's political-economic system and limits states' authority. The second type, political and military client relationships can potentially give protection. Nonetheless, when a state maintains a political and military cliency with strong states, the strong states expects 'the client' to be their ally as it gives protection. The client might pursue goals against their own public's interests to prove their alliance or loyalty. These preconditions showcase that PSCs are caused by the situation between and within states. Nonetheless, states have big roles in keeping their territory safe by fulfilling their roles lawfully and thoroughly. The preconditions also mean that the international actors have an influence on pushing the conflicts to the way that it will satisfy their interests or their ally's. The settlement of PSCs does not lie only in the hand of the states but also the international community since the length of conflicts will be long enough to attract new external actors in it, whether to solve or to intensify it.⁴³

⁴³ Ibid, 10-12.

In addition, the four variables of genesis might not lead to an overt conflict. Azar's process dynamics explains which conditions will turn these preconditions into an overt conflict.

Azar describes three variables of process dynamics, namely communal actions and strategies, state and strategies, and also the built-in mechanisms of conflict. Therefore, it is important to first understand the definition of strategies. There are two definitions of strategy that will be explained since the strategy which was used in the conflict between the Russian government and the North Caucasians was different from time to time.

The first strategy is the sovereignty strategy. Sovereignty strategy itself is defined as the bridge between using military force or conducting large-scale civilian assistance. Sovereignty strategy consists of a set of actions adopted to;

*“helping internal actors establish or restore a core set of governance systems or institutions, building the legitimacy of the state over time, winning the trust and meeting the needs of the people, reducing the reliance of the country on external support, and contributing to the resolution of conflicts between them became violent.”*⁴⁴

This strategy itself aims to resolve the conflicts by fulfilling the needs of the conflicting parties and earning trust from the civilians. By doing so, the state also fulfills their international obligations.⁴⁵

While the second definition of strategy will be combined from Liddell Hart and Colin Gray. Hart classified ‘the art of distributing and applying

⁴⁴ Claire Lockhart, “Sovereignty Strategies: Enhancing Core Governance Functions as a Postconflict & Conflict-Prevention Measure”, *MIT Press Journals*, 2018, accessed on 25 June 2018, https://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/DAED_a_00476, 90-91.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 91.

military means to fulfill the ends of policy' as strategies. While on the other hand, Gray states strategy as 'the bridge that relates military power to the political purpose; it is neither military power per se nor political purpose.' Therefore, to summarize the two definitions of strategies, Thomas M. Kane and David J. Lonsdale classified strategy as;

*"the process that converts military power into policy effect."*⁴⁶

After understanding the definition of strategies, the communal actions and strategies needs to be explained. As the first variable on process dynamics, this variable is the situation where groups failed to maintain trust and communication between them. A turning point might be present to escalate the situation, usually in the form of recognition that they have been treated unfairly and then lead to collective protest. The protest will widen its center to not only the recent event but also to state's inability to fulfill their collective needs. This situation will escalate to guerrilla warfare, civil disobedience, and secession. As the states try to reduce the intensity by coercive actions, the movement will seek external economic and military help, most likely from the neighboring countries.⁴⁷

Azar then also explains the state and its strategies as the second variable of process dynamics. This variable concentrates on the decision making process and situation of the government collectively or individually, to use or to not use force, in order to solve the conflicts. Therefore, it is important

⁴⁶ Thomas M. Kane and David J. Lonsdale, *Understanding Contemporary Strategy* (Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 10 and 13.

⁴⁷ Edward Azar, 12-14.

to first know the meaning of policies as it is used to formulate state's strategies. The policy itself is a set of principles utilized by an entity, such as the government, or an individual to guide their actions.⁴⁸

States are usually asked to accommodate the communal needs and grievances in the first place through its policies and strategies which would reduce the intensity of the conflict or resolve it completely. Nonetheless, often states choose coercive actions, considering the political and economic costs, the principle of 'winner-take-all', and seeing accommodation as a sign of a setback or weakness. This will result in violent clashes between the state and the communal groups. States then would deploy the containment strategy to keep the conflict domestically by minimizing the communication between the communal groups and the external actors. The state would consider and seek external assistance once the containment does not work.

Lastly, Azar explains built-in mechanisms of conflict as the last variable of process dynamics. He states that historical conflict experience(s) and communication between the conflicting groups will affect the process of the PSCs. These would set perceptions and motivations against each other. The perceptions will often be driven by fear, closed-mindedness, and negativity against each other. Every effort for solutions will be viewed as an attempt to gain power and control over the opponents.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ "What is policy?" The University of Sydney, accessed 21 March 2018, <http://sydney.edu.au/legal/policy/what/index.shtml>.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 14-15.

After the genesis and the process dynamics, Azar then describes outcome analysis of a PSC. PSCs do not have a result of a zero-sum game. All the actors are worn down during the process. This kind of conflict does not have a termination point (such as agreements, pact, etc) because it can not fulfill vital needs and will then create another conflict. The process of the PSCs itself made the member of the communal groups pessimistic towards peace, prone to conducting violent actions, and traumatized.

There are three situations where PSCs are continuing or reinforced. First, deterioration of physical security where the process of PSCs will cause infrastructural damages and reduces the quality of the communal groups' lives, as the states fail to plan and execute systematic development, especially regarding its budget.

Second, institutional deformity happens when states are unable to accommodate good functioning social and political institutions as the process of the conflict might have reduced the states' ability to function and fulfill their roles. In another situation, the institutions might still be functioning and trying to solve the conflicts. These efforts might be fruitless as the conflict protracts, then the lack of communication will occur between the conflicting groups.

The third possible outcome is increased dependency and cliency. This happens when communal actors depend more on the external support to continue their lives. The decision over these groups will then be decided by the external actors. Therefore, PSCs cannot be handled with conventional

approaches as it would fail to provide all the needs and diminish the traits of the PSCs. PSCs are a challenge for domestic and international actors.⁵⁰

However, it is also important to understand the prolonged trait of an international conflict through conditions required to resolve a conflict. The existence of the required conditions of conflict resolution will help to comprehend why a conflict prolong. According to Alan C. Tidwell, those required conditions are capacity, will, and opportunity. The first condition is opportunity, where all parties take their time to try to solve the conflict. The time can be used to discuss the problem between the contracted parties. The opportunity to solve the conflict is also depending on the surroundings where the parties are having the conflict. If the surroundings are not supporting or giving the time and place for a discussion, the chance of conflict resolution is slim or does not exist.⁵¹

The second condition is capacity. The conflicting parties need to have the ability, the skills, and the resources to resolve the conflict. The parties need to have the ability to communicate in a non-conflictual way with their opponents.

The last condition is will or volition. The parties conflicting need to have the desire to resolve the conflict that they are involved in. They do not need

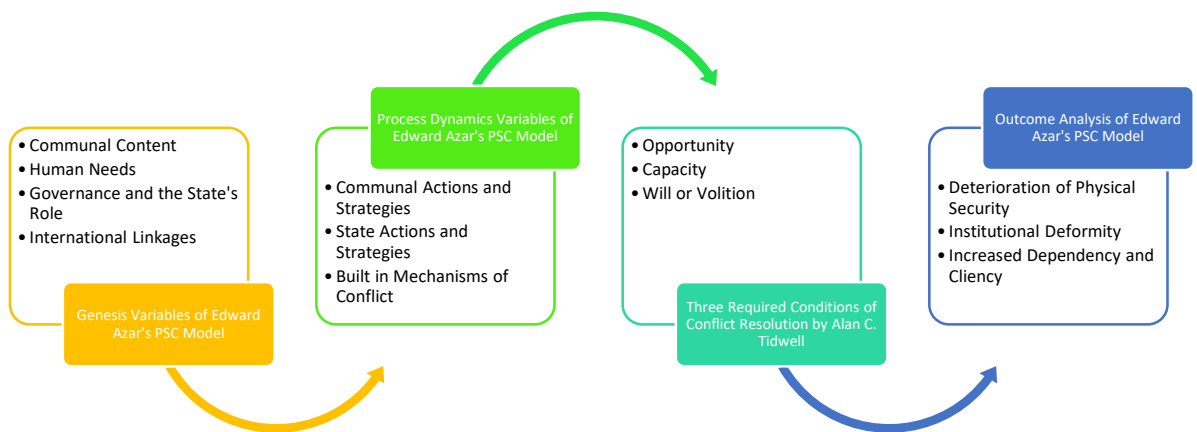
⁵⁰ Ibid, 15-17.

⁵¹ Alan C. Tidwell, *Conflict Resolved? A Critical Assessment of Conflict Resolution* (Great Britain: Continuum, 2004), 3-4.

to be like each other or have goodwill, they may just be wary of being in a conflict.⁵²

The work of Azar and Tidwell can be combined to produce a more comprehensive framework to understand the instability in North Caucasus.

Figure 1.2. Theoretical Framework of Azar's PSC Model and Tidwell's Three Required Conditions of Conflict Resolution



In this framework, a PSC conflict must be assessed with the genesis and process dynamics variables from Azar's PSC Model. However, it is important to scrutinize if throughout the process of the conflict both parties had the three required conditions of conflict resolution. The absence of three required conditions of conflict resolution will show that this conflict indeed

⁵² Ibid, 4-5.

will prolong. Therefore, the outcome analysis of Azar's PSC model can explain what will be the future of this conflict.

1.6. **Research Method and Data Collection Technique**

1.6.1. **Research method**

This research applies qualitative research method which John W. Cresswell defines as a research that starts with assumptions. The assumptions are then followed by inquiries in order to find the meaning of social interactions as the center of the research. During the process, the assumptions will be viewed through theoretical lenses. Cresswell also stated that essential action in this method is extensive data collection from multiple sources. The data collected then got organized and analyzed in order to give meaning to them.⁵³

1.6.2. **Data collection technique**

This research collects its data through the technique of extraction and secondary data sources. Margaret C. Harrell and Melissa A. Bradley describe the first technique as finding, sorting, and organizing desired data from archival sources, such as documents and records. Furthermore, Harrell

⁵³ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design Choosing Among Five Approaches* (United States of America: SAGE Publications, 2013), 44-52.

and Bradley define secondary data sources as utilizing existing data and combining the data gathered to produce new data.⁵⁴

1.7. Thesis Structure

This thesis will be divided into five main chapters. Chapter I is an introduction to the outline of this thesis and the North Caucasus' secession. The chapter starts from the background, problem identification, research purposes, research contribution, literature review, theoretical framework, research method, data collection techniques, and ends with thesis structure.

Chapter II describes the historical context of the tension between the Russian Empire and the people in the North Caucasus region. In addition, this chapter will also describe different strategies adopted by the secessionists in order to gain secede from Russia.

Chapter III describes Russia's responses towards the North Caucasus' secession. It will outline both restraining and normalization strategy to defend Russian territorial integrity.

Chapter IV puts the North Caucasus' secession and its historical context under the lenses of Edward Azar's PSC Model and Alan C. Tidwell's Three Required Conditions of Conflict Resolution. This is conducted to explain how the conflict is not yet to be resolved despite efforts from both parties.

⁵⁴ Margaret C. Harrell and Melissa A. Bradley, *Data Collection Methods; Semi Structured Interviews and Focus Groups* (Prepared for the U.S. Government), (California: RAND Corporation, 2009), 6-7.

Chapter V contains the conclusion of this thesis. It summarizes the answer to the research question of this thesis.