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# The Causes and Consequences of Depopulation

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**Session 4: DEPOPULATION AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY**

*Frozen conflicts and depopulation in Eurasia: population processes in de facto states*

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# Goals

- Examine rapid depopulation processes in Eurasian “defacto states”
  - Out-migration, displacement, passportization
  - Alterations in size and ethnic composition
- Prolonged political instability as a cause and effect of depopulation
  - Fertility
  - Health, Healthcare
- Role and motivations of external actors in micro area depopulation

# Eurasia's defacto states and “frozen conflicts”

Grant 2017

*Hostilities between a state and separatists*

*Effective takeover of territory*

*Recognized and stable lines of separation*

*Claims of self-determination*

*Non-recognition of putative state*

*Settlement/re-settlement processes*

- \* Duration

- \* Role of External Actors

- \* Marked by dynamic population change

De Facto States/Conflict	Capital	Independence Declared	Recognized	Local Currency
Abkhazia	Sukhumi	1992-3, Constitution adopted 26, November 1994.	Russia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Nauru, and Syria	Russian Ruble most common, local Apsar minted in Russia
South Ossetia (Republic of)	Tskhinvali	1991-1992, Constitution adopted 29 May 1992. Georgia retreats after 2008 war.	Russia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Nauru, and Syria	Russian Ruble
Artsakh/Nagorno Karabagh	Stepanakert	1991 (after First war), 1994 cease fire (Russian negotiated) gave Armenia control. Azerbaijan regained control of 5 cities, 4 towns, 286 villages and the border with Iran after the 2020 war Russian-led negotiations. Conflict continues.	Transnistria South Ossetia, Abkhazia	Artsakh Dram/Azeri Manat
Transnistria	Tiraspol	1990	*	Transnistrian ruble, Moldovan Lei, Russian Ruble (No ISO code)
LPR	Luhansk	12 May 2014	South Ossetia, Each another, Russia recognizes regional documents	Russian ruble most common
DPR	Donetsk	12 May 2014		

# Conflict and Opportunities for Departure

- South Ossetia
  - 14,000 IDPs GE
- Abkhazia
  - 273,000 IDPs GE (UNHCR 1996)
- Transnistria
  - 130,000 displaced, 51,000 IDPs MD (NRC 2004)
- Donbas
  - Lg part of 1.5 million IDPs (w Crimea), 800,000+ refugees in Russia
- Nagorno Karabagh
  - 684,000 IDPs- AZ
  - 72,000 IDPs-AM (UNHCR 1996)

## Passportization

2002 RF Law for all “Soviet” citizens

By 2021, over half of Abkhazian and Transnistrian residents possessed RF passports

Donbas efforts begin in 2019, as of 2021 500,000 of Donbas residents hold RF passports

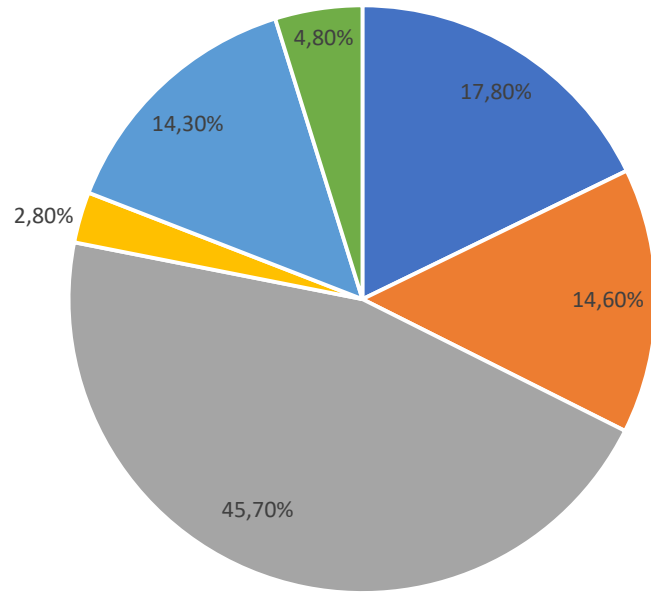


# Abkhazia and South Ossetia



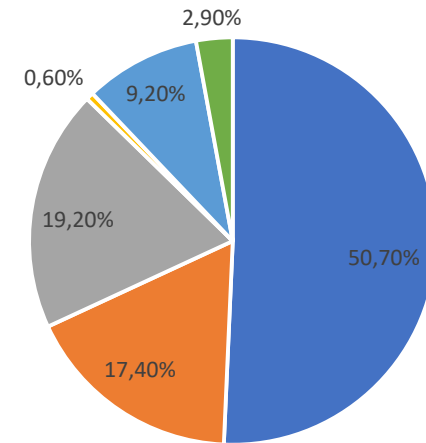
# Changing size and ethnic composition, Abkhazia

1989 Abkhazian ASSR, Population by Ethnicity  
N = 525,061



■ Abkhazian ■ Armenians ■ Georgians ■ Greeks ■ Russians ■ Others

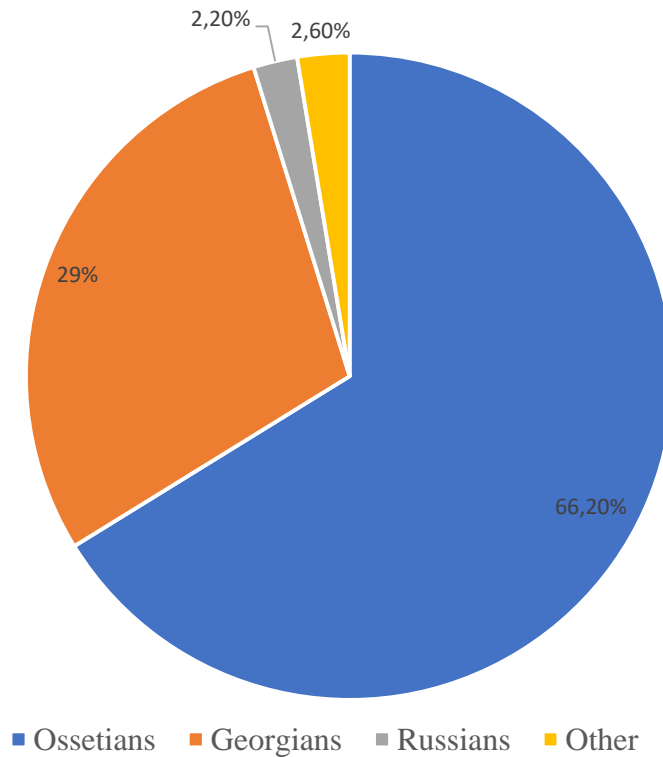
2011 Abkhazian Census, Population by Ethnicity  
N = 240,705



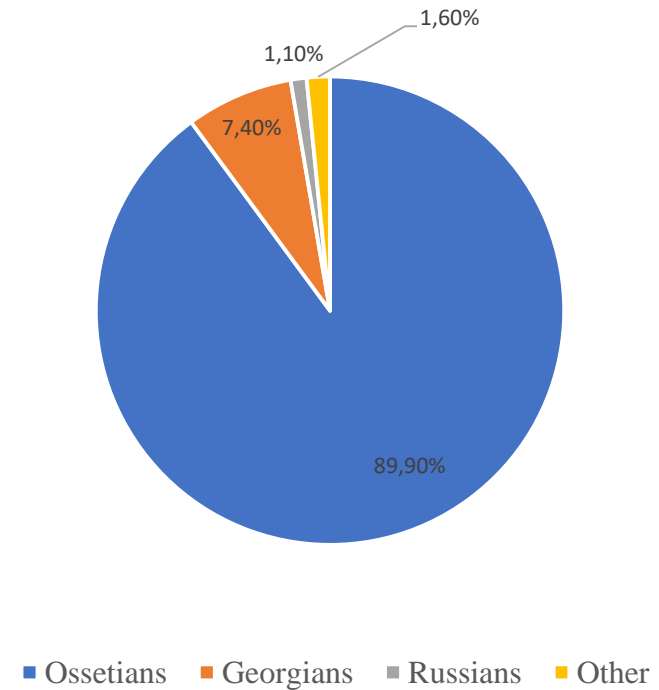
■ Abkhazian ■ Armenians ■ Georgians ■ Greeks ■ Russians ■ Others

# Changing size and ethnic composition, South Ossetia

1989 South Ossetian ASSR, Population by Ethnicity,  
N=97,527



2015 South Ossetian Census, Population by  
Ethnicity  
N=53,532



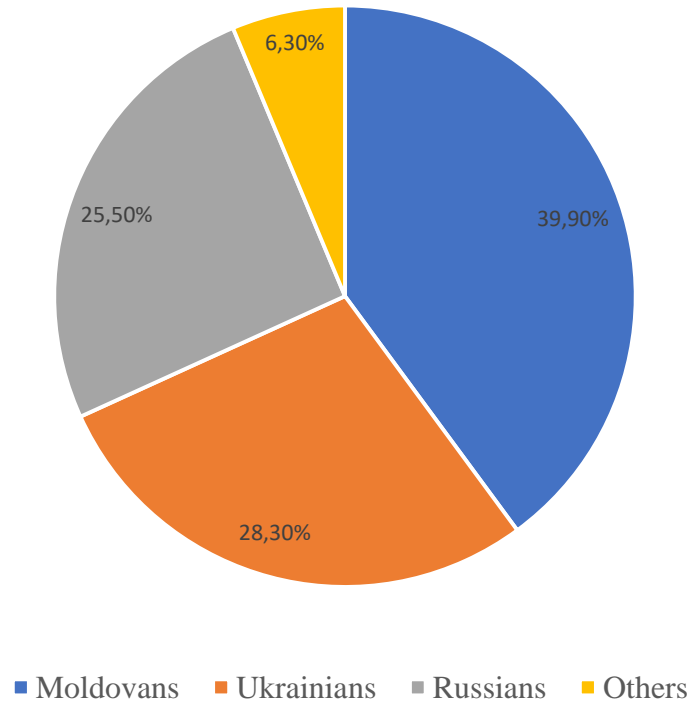


# Transnistria/Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic

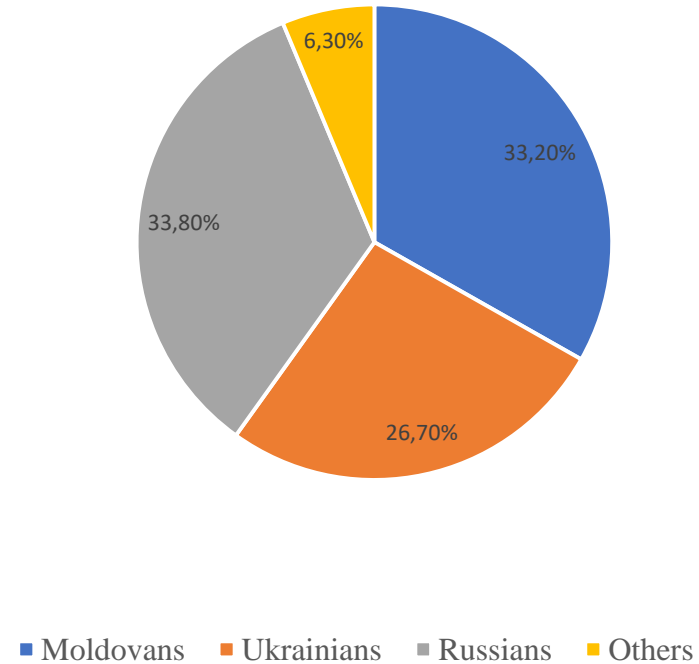


# Changing size and ethnic composition, Transnistria

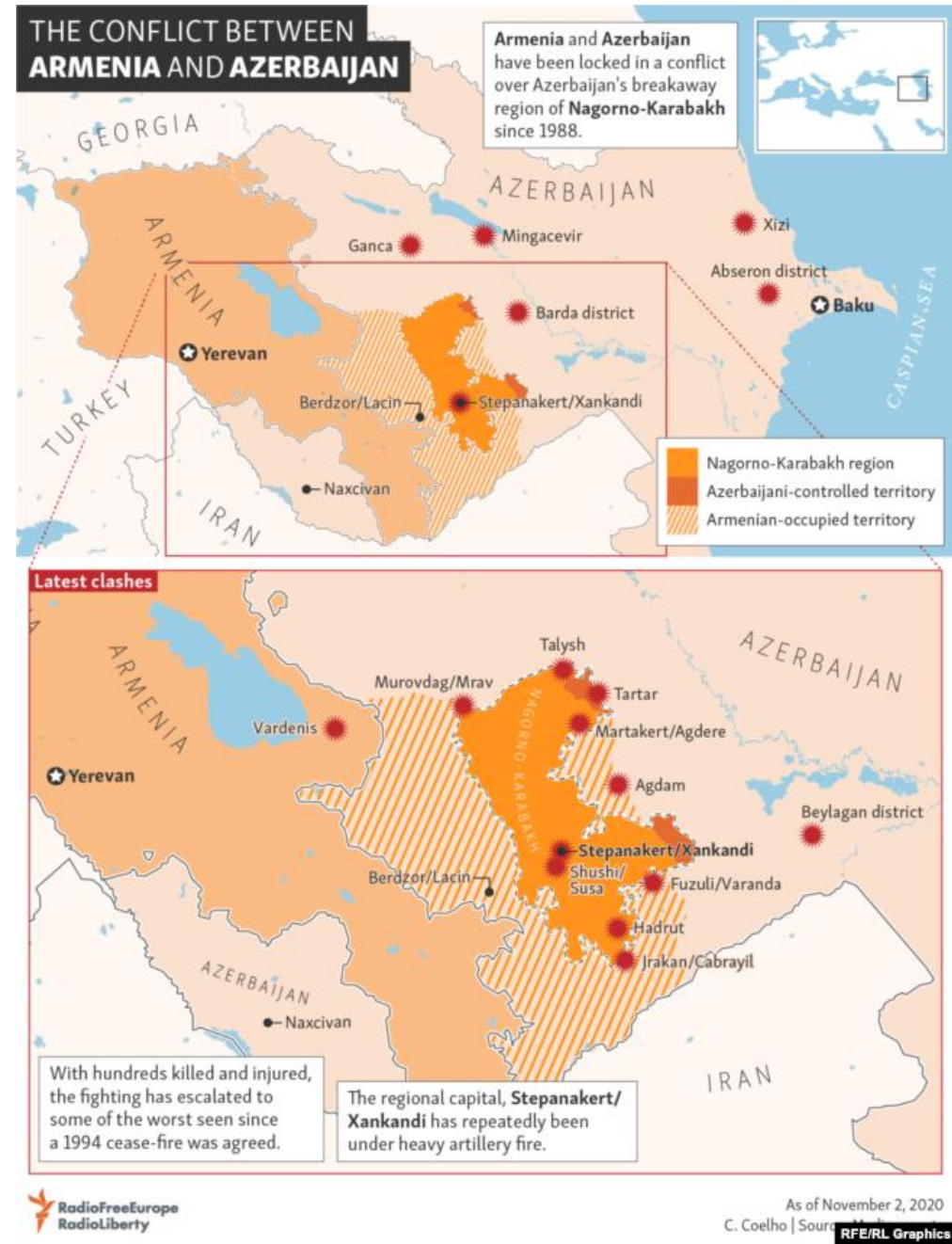
1989 Transnistrian Population by Ethnicity,  
N= 601,660



2015 Transnistrian Population by Ethnicity,  
N=475,373

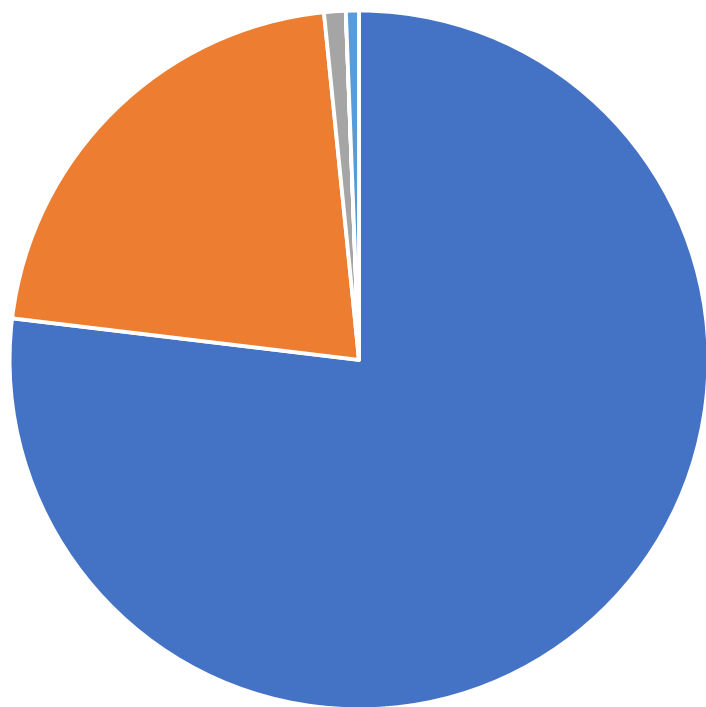


# Nagorno Karabagh/ Artsakh Republic



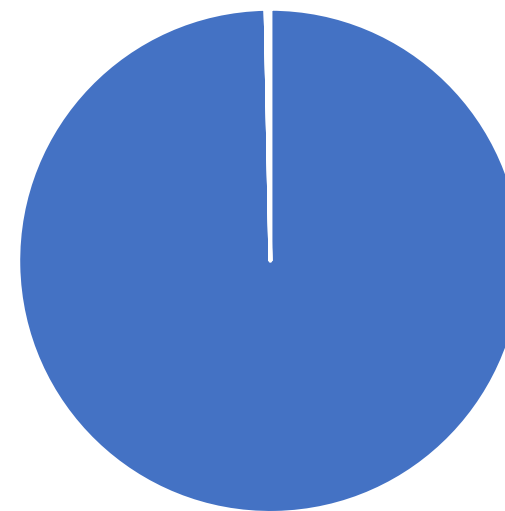
# Nagorno Karabagh/Artsakh Rep.

1989 Nagorno Karabagh\* Population by Ethnicity  
N=390,101



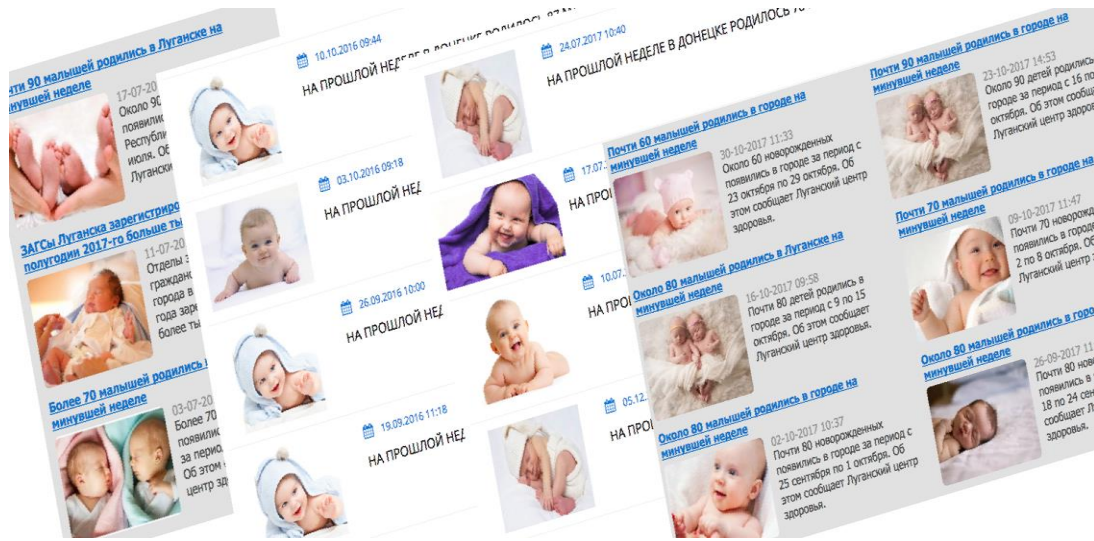
■ Armenians ■ Azerbaijanis ■ Russians ■ Others

2015 Artsakh Republic Population by Ethnicity  
N=145,053



■ Armenians ■ Azerbaijanis ■ Russians ■ Others

# Focus on Fertility



<https://medium.com/dfrlab/suspect-separatist-birth-rates-cad807ae2c92>

- Nagorno Karabagh – mass weddings (2007), child payments
- AZ IDP fertility high, subsidies and/or compensatory behaviors (Torrissi 2020)
- Abkhazia outlawed abortion in January 2016 in attempt to raise fertility
- Transnistria engaging in pronatalist propaganda since 2010

# Health and Health Care

- Data are scarce
- Conflict deaths a minor part of population decline
- Civilian and military disabled
- PTSD/ Mental health issues
- Infrastructural challenges abound
- Reports of massive out migration of health care workers
- COVID challenges, COVAX exempt
- DPR, LPR, Abkhazia and South Ossetia receiving limited SPUTNIK doses

# Roles, Motivations, Conclusions

- Outside actors can assist or provoke depopulation processes
- Depopulation is both a cause of and reaction to low state capacity
- Depopulation alters ethnic compositions, raising possible challenges
- Frozen conflicts generate dynamic population changes, providing unique insights into small area depopulation