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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>De Facto States/Conflict</th>
<th>Capital</th>
<th>Independence Declared</th>
<th>Recognized</th>
<th>Local Currency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artsakh/Nagorno Karabagh</td>
<td>Stepanakert</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Transnistria South Ossetia, Abkhazia</td>
<td>Artsakh Dram/Azeri Manat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transnistria</td>
<td>Tiraspol</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>Transnistrian ruble, Moldovian Lei, Russian Ruble (No ISO code)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPR</td>
<td>Luhansk</td>
<td>12 May 2014</td>
<td>South Ossetia, Each another, Russia recognizes regional documents</td>
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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

2011 Abkhazian Census, Population by Ethnicity
N = 240,705
Changing size and ethnic composition, South Ossetia

1989 South Ossetian ASSR, Population by Ethnicity, N=97,527
- Ossetians: 66.20%
- Georgians: 29%
- Russians: 2.20%
- Other: 2.60%

2015 South Ossetian Census, Population by Ethnicity, N=53,532
- Ossetians: 89.90%
- Georgians: 7.40%
- Russians: 1.10%
- Other: 1.60%
Transnistria/Pridnestrovan Moldavian Republic
Changing size and ethnic composition, Transnistria

1989 Transnistrian Population by Ethnicity, N= 601,660
- Moldovans: 28,30%
- Ukrainians: 39,90%
- Russians: 25,50%
- Others: 6,30%

2015 Transnistrian Population by Ethnicity, N=475,373
- Moldovans: 33,20%
- Ukrainians: 33,80%
- Russians: 26,70%
- Others: 6,30%
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

• Nagorno Karabagh – mass weddings (2007), child payments

• AZ IDP fertility high, subsidies and/or compensatory behaviors (Torrisi 2020)

• Abkhazia outlawed abortion in January 2016 in attempt to raise fertility

• Transnistria engaging in pronatalist propaganda since 2010

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