

Russians' Love-Hate Relationship with Secession in the North Caucasus

Valery Dzutsati *vdzutsati@asu.edu*

Arizona State University

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Moscow's success and failure

- By 2000s, Russia successfully regained control over its secessionist territory of Chechnya
- In 2010s, however, growing number of Russian activists started to advocate for ridding Russia of Chechnya
- What explains the discrepancy between Russian government's success in bringing Chechnya back under Moscow's control and many Russian people's wish to get rid of it?

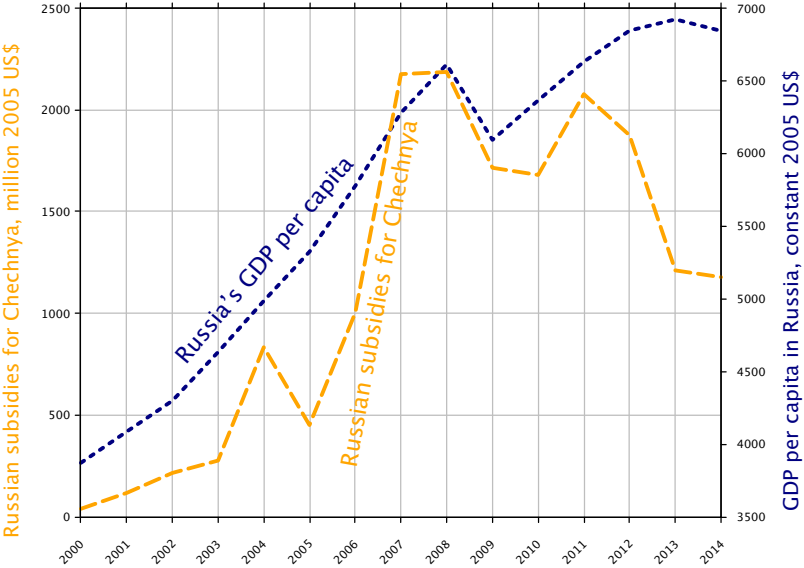
Moscow's efforts to reconquer Chechnya

- Losses of the Russian military personnel during the first Russian-Chechen war (1994-1996) comprised estimated 5,000-14,000 servicemen
- Losses of the Russian military personnel during the second Russian-Chechen war (1999-2003) comprised another 6,000 servicemen
- According to some estimates over 100,000 civilians died in both Russian-Chechen wars

Winning the war, losing the citizens?

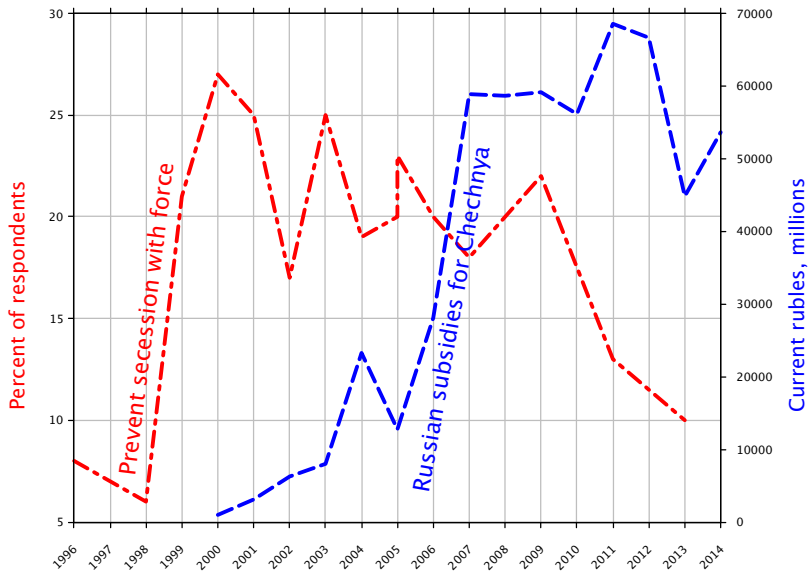
- 1 War brutalities and rise of religion widened the cultural gap between Russians and Chechens
- 2 Rise of lavish handouts for Chechnya angered many Russians
- 3 Non-participatory political regime in the country, however, prevented disgruntled Russians from acting upon their political preferences
- 4 Russia's rocky relations with the outside world diverted the spotlight to foreign policy issues

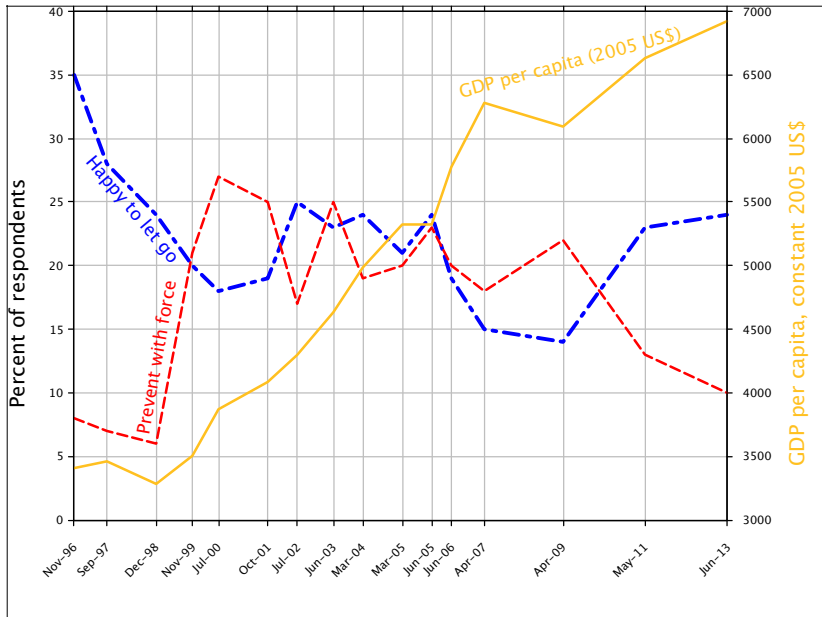
Growth of Russia's GDP and subsidies for Chechnya



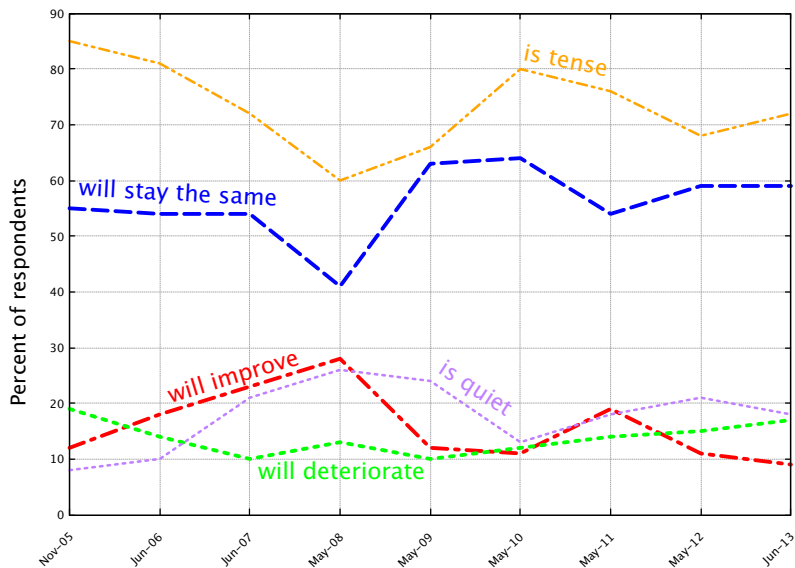
Russia's growing wealth and nationalism

- “Enough feeding the Caucasus!” became the primary slogan of the Russian nationalists by 2011
- Several large scale pogroms against ethnic non-Russians took place in Moscow and in other ethnic Russian-majority regions of the Russian Federation





Situation in the North Caucasus



Government crackdown on Russian isolationists

- In 2013, Russian government criminalized “calls to break the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation”
- Russian nationalists and opposition leaders came under renewed pressure by the government

International security of Russia

- During the war in Ukraine, Russian media's attention was diverted to other issues
- As Russia became embroiled in a conflict with the West, calls among Russians for Chechnya's secession gradually dissipated

Hate Crimes Monitoring Results (Sova Center)

Year	Hate crimes (murders)	
2004	50	
2005	49	
2006	66	
2007	97	
2008	116	
2009	94	
2010	44	Manezhnaya riots
2011	26	
2012	19	
2013	20	Biryulyovo pogrom
2014	27	

Conclusions

- Information about large subsidies for culturally alien territories was crucial to rally Russians against potential secessionists
- Increasingly non-democratic regime in Russia cracked down on the popular movement
- Precarious international security allowed the Russian government to use the “rally around the flag effect” to stem the tide against recalcitrant region(s)

The End

