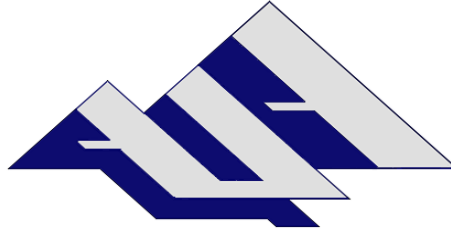


AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA



**THE ETHNIC POLITICS OF THE FORMER SOVIET
UNION: GENERAL PATTERNS AND IMPACT ON
ETHNIC CONFLICT DEVELOPMENT**

**A MASTER'S ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF POLITICAL
SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS FOR
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS**

BY

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DECEMBER 2000

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In my endeavors for collecting and doing analyses of the data regarding to my study I have had substantial support from my faculty supervisor Dr. Vatche Gabrielyan.

My thankfulness and gratitude to Dr. Gabrielyan for the primary idea of how to write Master's Essay about the ethnic politics, inter-ethnic conflict and their relationship. His openhearted character, readiness to give help when needed was especially of great assistance in finding and confirming data, making analyses, as well as editing materials. Dr. Gabrielyan gave me an especially accurate and reflective criticism during the entire study.

My gratitude also goes to the faculty members of the Graduate School of Political Science and International Affairs for providing me with appropriate knowledge and skills to do this study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Tables.....	5
List of Abbreviations.....	6
Abstract	7
 Introduction.....	 8
 Part One.....	 10
Defining the Theoretical Framework.....	10
Peculiarities of Ethnic Conflicts in the Territory of FSU.....	20
Contending Views on Peculiarities of Ethnic Politics Conducted by the Soviet Union Government from 1924-1991.....	29
Operationalization of Research Questions.....	35
Methodology Presented	35
 Part Two	
The Analytical and Historical Foundation of Ethnic Politics Conducted by the SU.....	37
Prehistory of Soviet state formation: 1917-1920.....	39
Karabakh--Azerbaijan conflict development.....	41
Georgia- Abkhazia conflict development.....	42
The SU creation.....	43
1924-1930- Period of Broad Accommodation with Nations. Policy of Nativization.....	45
1930-1941- The Period of Industrialization. The Politics of Titular Nationalities' Identity Construction.....	48
1941-1945 The World War Two. The Politics of Deportations.....	49
1953-1964 Post Stalinist Period. The Politics of Rehabilitation.....	50
1964-1985 Period of Stagnation. Regional Elite Formation.....	51
1985-1991 Period of "Perestroyka." Broad Concessions to the Republics.....	53
Azerbaijan- Karabakh conflict development.....	56
Georgia- Abkhazia conflict development	58
 Comparative Analysis of Characteristics	
Demographic Characteristics.....	61
Ethnofederal Structure of the USSR	65
Politico-Economic Characteristics.....	67
Historical-Cultural Characteristics.....	70
 Conclusion.....	 77
 References.....	 80

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASSR.....	Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
CIS.....	Commonwealth of Independent States
FSU.....	Former Soviet Union
NKAO.....	Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Republic
NK	Nagorno Karabakh
RSFSR.....	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
SU.....	Soviet Union
US.....	United States
USSR.....	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Comparative Framework.....	25
Table2:	Demographic Changes in Ethnic Composition over the Period of Time.....	64

ABSTRACT

The topic of the given MA Essay is the analysis of the ethnic politics of the USSR and its connection with ethnic conflict development on the territory of the former Soviet Union. The purpose of the essay is to explore the logic of Soviet nationalities policy development, to outline general tendencies, patterns of its development and to give the connection of it with the evolution of ethnic conflicts in the territory of the former Soviet Union. The general framework of the characteristics of identified ethnic conflict is provided as well as their comparison.

By arguing that ethnofederal structure of the Soviet Union contributed to the intensification of ethnic awareness of parties of the conflict, such issues as “ethnic identity,” “territoriality,” “elite formation” and their role in ethnic conflict are explored. Being in some sense different and in the other similar to the previous waves of ethnic conflicts in twentieth century, ethnic strifes on the territory of the former Soviet Union occurred in an environment of transition. Hence, the search for legitimacy in newly emerged states undermines many peculiarities of ethnicity question. Nationalities policy in the former Soviet Union left its legacy on the evolution of ethnic conflicts during Soviet rule and in the transition period. The study outlines venues for ethnicity policy and conflict research issues.