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E Pluribus Unum?

Ethnicity, Islam, and the Construction of Identity in Azerbaijan

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In multinational states, developing a strong sense of civic nationalism among minorities is critical to creating social order. Countries that fail to cultivate civic nationalism among minorities can face persistent problems of separatism on the periphery. This article investigates the role of three factors that may explain the variable loyalty of individuals from minority groups to the state—inter-ethnic networks, in-group solidarity and religiosity. Drawing on an original survey of Lezghin and Talysh minorities in Azerbaijan, the analysis suggests that individuals with a stronger Islamic identity and more interethnic networks were more likely to identify with state-promoted civic nationalism, due to their ability to cut across ethnic identities. Against our expectations, group solidarity did not influence an individual's degree of attachment to civic identity.

Building a strong sense of civic nationalism among minority groups is vital to successful state formation (as in the motto *E pluribus unum*), but how can a state transform parochial identities (ethnic, tribal, regional, religious) into a new superordinate identity linked to the civic nation-state? This is an important theoretical and practical question for most multiethnic countries, since states that fail to cultivate such an identity among minorities can face persistent separatism on the periphery and potential fifth columns, which divert resources that could be directed toward more productive ends.

The literature has conventionally associated civic nationalism with the "West," with industrialized economies, and with liberal democratic values inspired by the Enlightenment, whereas ethnic nationalism has been tied to the "East," to economic backwardness, and to political tyranny (Horowitz 1985, 18–20; Kohn 1944, 329; Smith 1991, 11–12; Smith 1995, 59).[1] In its ideal form, ethnic nationalism is a view of individual attachments as the product of birth, a fictive "superfamily" (Smith 2000), whereas civic nationalism is a conceptualization of the individual as free, within reason, to choose an identity (Kohn 1944). A civic nation is a community defined by citizenship—regardless of ethnicity, race, language, or religion—and united in attachment to the state, which creates the nation, rather than the reverse (Ignatieff 1993, 7–8). Ignatieff characterizes it as a community of equal, rights-bearing citizens united in patriotic attachment to a shared set of political practices and values (ibid.). Switzerland, eighteenth-century Britain, France, and the United States are considered examples of civic nations, whereas Japan, Israel, and (until recently) Germany are given as examples of ethnic nations.

More than 70 years later, we are still grappling with the distinction that Hans Kohn (1944) made between ethnic nationalism, defined as nationhood and citizenship based on descent and ancestry, and civic nationalism, where membership in the group is determined on the basis of adherence to legal norms (Bjorklund 2006). Brubaker (1992) famously used it to characterize the descriptive civic identity in France and the ascriptive ethnic identity in Germany, but these identities are not static—recently Germany has abandoned its *jus sanguinis* citizenship laws (Joppke 2007; Minkenberg 2003)[2]—and there is little consensus on which elements define civic or ethnic conceptions of citizenship (Brubaker 2004, 137).

There is now a large literature focused on the accuracy and utility of this distinction for states (Bjorklund 2006;

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Ceobanu and Escandell 2008; Shulman 2002), and many recent studies consider Kohn's original categorization as too crude to capture heterogeneity *within* states and over time. We take seriously these critiques (Kuzio 2002, 20; Yack 1996). Building on scholars who have questioned the use of a dichotomous conceptualization (Kymlicka 2001), we classify ethnic and civic nationalism along a continuum, and measure it at the individual level (Janmaat 2006; Zubrzycki 2001). Just as there is nuance and variation within the "West" and the "East," and over time, there is also a range across individuals within minority groups that typically express a mix of ethnic and civic identities. To advance this literature, we therefore move from the macro-level of classifying states as either civic or ethnic, to the micro-level, which means investigating what determines which *individual* members of minority groups identity more or less with the civic nation state.

Minority groups in multiethnic countries, and the individuals within those groups, differ radically in their degree of attachment to their country of residence, and thus it makes little sense to characterize entire countries as civic or ethnic much less entire groups within those countries. Some identify strongly with the nation-state and attempt to assimilate into the majority (usually higher-status) culture, whereas others retain a largely distinct identity based upon their ethnicity, tribe, or region, living almost exclusively among their own kind and interacting little, if at all, with the majority culture. The individual-level nature of the problem we analyze in this article has been frequently overlooked in macro-level studies.

It has become clear through numerous studies over the past twenty-five years that an exclusive focus on ideal types eclipses important variation across countries, groups, and individuals (cf. Reeskens and Hooghe 2010). Our reading of the literature concurs with Calhoun's (1997, 89) conclusion that states almost invariably contain components of *both* ethnic and civic nationalism, and reinforces Shulman's (2002, 559 and 583) conclusion that there is no clean "East–West" divide. There is plenty of civic nationalism in the "East" and ethnic nationalism in the "West." The key question, in this article, is what determines which *individuals* exhibit greater loyalty to the nation-state than other individuals within a given country. Bringing the focus down from ideal theory and cross-group cleavages to the level of the individual within minority groups living in multiethnic countries, which predominate the modern world, is necessary to understanding the micro-level determinants of civic nationalism.[3]

Many of the states from the former Soviet system serve as excellent test cases for the theories studied here because they embody the contradictions between the aspirations of civic nationalism (at least among some state builders) and the reality of multiple, competing ethnic identities (Smith 1995, 59). As Beissinger (1997), Bunce (1999), Roeder (1991), Gorenburg (2003), and other scholars of the former Soviet Union have argued, ethno-federalism persuaded most minority groups to believe that they should have their *own* political unit (Beissinger 1997, 166–67; Bunce 1999; Roeder 1991). Since ethno-national identities were the only non–class-based identities in the public sphere that became significant, with religious identities being largely suppressed, ethnicity and politics became very closely intertwined (Schopflin 1996, 153). As a result, core ethnic groups in this region (usually majorities) have tended to see the state as belonging to themselves exclusively (i.e., as an ethnic state rather than a civic state), and continue to view members of other groups as "guests," thus embodying a strongly primordial conception of nationhood.

New survey data from minority regions allows us to shed new light on this important issue in Azerbaijan, and potentially on broader theories of nationalism and state formation, by bringing fine-grained empirical evidence to bear on the micro-level determinants of civic nationalism. This article investigates the role of three factors: interethnic networks, group solidarity, and religiosity. Based on our reading of the literature, each of these factors has been hypothesized to help account for some significant portion of the variation in individual or group attachments to the nation-state. In the next section, we explain the logic by which we derive our hypotheses. To test these conjectures, we draw on historical materials and on an original survey conducted among Lezghin and Talysh minorities in the four largest minority areas of Azerbaijan: Lankeran, Astara, Khachmaz, and Gusar.

Our analysis indicates that there are at least two distinct pathways to a stronger civic identity—one ethnic and one religious. We find that individuals (ethnic Talysh and Lezghins) with more interethnic networks in Azerbaijan (i.e., more ethnic Azeri contacts) were much more likely to identify with the nation-state (over their own group). Similarly, more religious individuals (both predominantly Sunni Lezghin and largely Shia Talysh) were much more likely to identify with the nation-state than with their own ethnic group. Against our expectations, however, we find that group solidarity did not diminish, and education did not enhance, an individual's degree of attachment to civic identity.

The rest of the article proceeds in three stages. The first develops the theoretical justification behind each of our hypotheses and situates them in the literature and in the context of the campaign to construct a new Azerbaijani identity. The next section discusses our new micro-level data on civic nationalism and the main results of our analysis. The final section concludes with potential implications, and important limitations to the range of valid inferences that can be drawn from the available data.

THEORIZING THE DETERMINANTS OF CIVIC NATIONALISM

In developing our theory, we build on three main lines of argument from the literature. The first logic focuses on the role of interethnic networks. Networks with members of the out-group shape one's identification with that group by increasing information about the reliability of ethnic others, and provide unofficial channels of communication that can ameliorate ethnic conflict. In India, for example, Varshney has highlighted the role of interethnic civic networks in regulating and containing Hindu–Muslim violence (Varshney 2002, 5–9). In places where such networks were dense, interethnic violence was minimal, but where interethnic networks were sparse, collective violence was endemic.[4] We extend Varshney's approach from the group level to the individual level, and from the issue of collective violence to civic nationalism. Specifically, we conjecture that ethnic minorities with sparse interethnic networks (few friendships with members of majority ethnic groups) will express *less* civic nationalism (and more ethnic nationalism) than those individuals with denser interethnic networks.

A key causal mechanism linking civic life with ethnic conflict is informational in nature. The lack of information about members of the other group reduces the likelihood that an individual expresses a civic identity. Ethnic segregation in the workplace and in residential patterns permits the emergence and persistence of out-group prejudice by reducing communication opportunities, whereas interaction implies more accurate information about the out-group, *potentially* facilitating a stronger civic identity (Varshney 2002, 9).[5] Interethnic networks can create incentives for interethnic cooperation by increasing information about the *reliability* of ethnic others (Horowitz 1985, 598). This information about ethnic others can reduce in-group bias and out-group stereotyping, thereby undermining parochial identities and preventing the formation of rigid group boundaries (Hechter 1978).[6] To examine the importance of interethnic networks for an individual's propensity to express a civic identity (over his or her ethnic group), we posit the first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Individuals (from minority groups) who have more interethnic networks are more likely than individuals with sparser interethnic networks to express a civic identity than an ethnic identity.

A second stream of scholarship has emphasized the role of group solidarity (Hechter 1987). According to many scholars (e.g., Whitmeyer 1997), one of the best measures available for the degree of group solidarity is endogamy (the practice of marrying within one's own group). The institution of marriage has historically been a key mechanism to preserve in-group identity and maintain in-group purity for ethnic groups, religious groups, castes in India, the aristocracy in Europe, immigrant groups in the United States, and many primitive groups (Drachsler 1920; Wirth and Goldhamer 1944). Endogamy serves multiple social functions and reinforces group identity, norms, and values. Leaders of distinct cultural groups have long recognized this fact, and have therefore forbidden (and even punished) intermarriage, while encouraging and rewarding endogamous relations (Brudner and White 1997; Levi-Strauss 1969; Robertson 1991; Schneider 1984). The cost of transgression for exogamy (the opposite of endogamy) differs over time and across cultures, but can include death by various means for some highly strict sects, and social exclusion among less strict groups.

The prevalence of endogamy, and attitudes toward it, can also be seen as an indicator of the strength of ethnic identity and the lack of social integration (Iannacone 1994; Levi-Strauss 1963; Lieberson and Waters 1988; Light 1981; Whitmeyer 1997). Endogamy may be a natural process in the sense that people from the same group are likely to interact with one another more often due to the spatial concentration of certain groups, which increases the baseline probability of an endogamous marriage. Endogamy may also be more "social" than "natural," in the sense that it is encouraged and sanctioned by third parties such as family, local kin, religious authorities, and sometimes by the state itself. Especially among minority groups, it is often believed that intermarriage threatens the group's homogeneity, and possibly even the group's survival, if the children of mixed marriages are less likely to identify with a minority group, or more likely to seek assimilation to the higher social status group (Kalmijin 1998). Whitmeyer (1997) famously argued that endogamy (a group-level characteristic) is a fundamental cause of pro-ethnic behavior (an individual human-level characteristic).[7] Using attitudes toward endogamy among ethnic minorities, we therefore propose the second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Individuals expressing attitudes against interethnic marriage (exogamy) will be less likely to articulate a civic identity than an ethnic identity.

The third line of reasoning emphasizes religiosity. Durkheim's classic definition of religion stresses its capacity to unite the members into a system of mutual obligation, loyalty, and social control (Durkheim 1971, 45). As recent scholars have noted, "religion, like nationalism, supplies existential answers to individuals' quest for security by essentializing the product and providing a picture of totality, unity and wholeness" (Kinnvall 2004, 759). Historically, religion has played a vital role in the formation of nations. In the case of Judaism, for example, religion held a nation together and defined it, although distinct "ethnicities" or "tribes" emerged from within. Christianity similarly defined

and bound certain nations, such as Armenians, Ethiopians, the Irish, and the Poles (Hastings 1997, 198). Islam is no different in this regard, as can be seen in the identities of Saudis, Iranians, Pakistanis, and others. Religion also has the important characteristic of being able to cut across ethnic identities, as many state builders are undoubtedly aware. In Islam, which is the religion of both of the minorities studied in this article (Shia Talysh and Sunni Lezghins), the aim is to establish the *umma* (the Islamic community or nation, which is based on religious rather than ethnic unity), and for all Muslims to obey the *Khilafat* and the *khalifa*, the head of the *umma*.[8] Islam emphasizes the unity of all Muslims (at least within sect) over differences along ethnic lines; since Muhammed is recognized as the *imam* (leader) of all Muslims, all of his followers belong to his *umma*, regardless of ethnicity, at least in theory (the terms *umma* and *imam* have the same root). In practice, of course, some of the most brutal repression and violence in the modern world has transpired between Shia and Sunni sects of Islam (e.g., Shia Persians vs. Sunni Balochis in today's Balochistan, or Shia vs. Sunni in present-day Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa).

Muslims refer to three passages to underscore this belief in an Islamic community that transcends ethnic differences. The first is the *surah* that states all Muslims are a single community and there is no supremacy of one nation or tribe over others (Al-Muminun, Ayah 52; Al-Hujurat, Ayah 13). The second is that all Muslims are brothers: "The believers are nothing else than brothers. So make reconciliation between your brothers, and fear Allah, that you may receive mercy" (Al-Hujurat, 10). The killing of one Muslim by another is one of the greater sins in Islam (Surah an-Nisā', 93). The third is, "we have made you a just community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you" (Al-Baqarah, 143). In theory, these "rules" create a single community, a brotherhood, and a common identity among all Muslims that transcends ethnic differences.

In Azerbaijan, Islam was introduced in the seventh century and continued to play a dominant role until the establishment of Soviet rule.[9] Even during this period, people engaged in informal resistance by preserving some attributes and rituals, for example holding Ashura rituals during Maharram month (Mammadli 2015). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Islam was again tapped as a resource in Azerbaijan, this time for the formation of a new national identity for Azerbaijanis. Today, identification of Azerbaijanis as "Muslims" is more of a cultural marker than an indicator of religiosity—indeed, Azerbaijan is one of the most secular Muslim societies in the world (Wiktor-Mach 2012, 209). Around 94 percent of the population consider themselves "Muslim," but at the same time, according to the 2012 statistics from the Gallup religiosity index, only 44 percent of the Azerbaijani population consider themselves to be "religious." This actually represents a remarkable increase compared to the last survey, in 2007–2008, which classified Azerbaijan as one of the least religious countries, with only 21 percent considering themselves "religious."[10] Although identifying oneself as a Muslim is still more of a cultural marker than an indicator of religiosity, the strength of religiosity does appear to be on the rise in Azerbaijan.

It is also important to discuss the existence of both Shia (Talysh) and Sunni (Lezghin) Muslim minorities in Azerbaijan. Traditionally, the majority of Azerbaijanis are Shia Muslims, but the number of Sunni Muslims has increased remarkably in the last few decades (Goyushov 2012, 75). Although there are no reliable statistics on the exact share of Shias and Sunnis in Azerbaijan, the majority of the population in the southern part of the country (near Iran) is Shia, and the northern part (near Russia) is mainly Sunni. The Talysh, who are Shia and live in the south, are considered more religious than other ethnic groups in Azerbaijan, including Azeris and Lezghins. The head of the Caucasian Muslims, Haji Allah Shukur Pashazade, is ethnically Talysh. *Akhunds* (the Persian name for Shi'i clerics, used in Iran, Azerbaijan, and parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan) are often ethnically Talysh as well. Lezghins live in the northern and northwestern parts of Azerbaijan and are traditionally Sunni but not particularly religious. However, with the recent spread of Salafism from Dagestan in the north, levels of religiosity have increased remarkably.

The Azerbaijani government perceives both groups as a potential threat, and has sought to restrict the influence of foreign religious organizations (in the south from Iran and in the north from Dagestan) not only with respect to peripheral minority groups but the whole citizenry. In the early 1990s, the Azerbaijani government feared the influence of revolutionary (Shia) Islam from Iran. Responding to the large increase in the number of radical Sunni groups, the Azerbaijani government closed the main Sunni mosques—the Salafi-oriented Abu Bakir and the Turkish-founded Shehidler—and arrested some members of so-called radical groups.

The involvement of hundreds of Azerbaijanis (particularly Salafi-oriented Sunnis) in the war in Syria has only further convinced the government to take a critical eye toward so-called radical Sunni groups. Without mentioning the ethnic origins of these groups, the local mass media have noted that most of those who have gone to Syria to join the fight against the Assad regime are from the northern part of Azerbaijan, where Lezghins are numerous. There have also been news reports about Azerbaijani Shias joining Assad's forces. In sum, the war in Syria is widely perceived as a war of Sunni versus Shia. From the government's point of view, however, the participation of citizens from Azerbaijan on either side is seen as a serious security threat. Although a sectarian view would suggest that Lezghins

represent a considerably larger threat, since they are predominantly Sunni, the government's policy is targeted at both Shia and Sunni radicals and at the external sponsors of those movements—that is, the threat is religiosity (both Shia and Sunni strains) rather than sect or ethnicity per se.

Finally, it is important to note that, until recently, all Muslims in Azerbaijan (majorities and minorities, Shia and Sunni) were collectively called "Muslims." Even in the early twentieth century, the conflict with Armenians was commonly referred to as the "Muslim–Armenian"—and not the "Turkic–Armenian" or (later) "Azerbaijani–Armenian"—conflict. The Lezghin and Talysh minority groups are both predominantly Muslim, though of different sects. However, the key distinction is not their denomination (Sunni Lezghin or Shia Talysh) but the extent of their (Islamic) religiosity. As Goyushov (2008) observed, the nationalist government during the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918–1920) combined the (previously separate) Shia and Sunni spiritual boards together in order to minimize foreign religious influences that were widely viewed as threatening (Goyushov 2008, 67). Even the Ittikhad party, an Islamic party during the first republic, supported that policy. As a result of this policy, and of the later anti-clerical Bolshevik policies, the Sunni–Shia rivalry was not particularly salient for the later generations in Azerbaijan. Currently, the government of Azerbaijan maintains a nonsectarian and unified religious policy. Although the head of the Spiritual Board of the Caucasian Muslims, Haji Allah Shukur Pashazad, is Shia, Sunni clerics also take part in the board of *gazis*.[11] The president of Azerbaijan addresses his speech during religious holidays to all religious Muslims together and does not differentiate between sects and schools.

In short, "Azerbaijani" is a civic (secular) identity for all Muslims, regardless of their ethnic or tribal belonging, and thus we expect that individuals with a stronger Islamic identity will display more civic identity and less ethnic identity.

Hypothesis 3: Talysh and Lezghins who are more religious will tend to emphasize civic over ethnic identity.

THE CASE IN CONTEXT

In this article we investigate the three hypotheses using an original data set on ethnic minorities in Azerbaijan that covers Lezghin and Talysh villages.

Azerbaijan offers an excellent setting for an examination of the problem of civic identity formation because the overarching Azerbaijani identity is very much a work in progress, a point to which we return in the next section. The ability of out-group members to become in-group members —that is, for Muslim minorities such as Lezghin and Talysh to become "Azerbajani," if they wish—is realistic, even though the Azerbaijani state retains a strong authoritarian hand over all domestic affairs and minority issues that are particularly sensitive.[12] Second, Lezghin and Talysh, the two largest minorities, have displayed ethno-nationalist behavior in the recent past. This makes the problem of their identification with the state's civic identity relevant to current politics, which is imbued with a deep sense of threat from peripheral minorities and their external sponsors.[13] Third, ethno-nationalist movements among both the Lezghin and the Talysh revealed both strong cleavages between those individuals who supported ethno-nationalists and those who identified with the Azerbaijani nation-state. The collapse of Soviet Union, and the Nagorno-Karabakh war, made such cleavages highly visible and the problem of establishing a strong civic identity and social cohesion particularly important for the security of Azerbaijan.

The Lezghins tend to live in the northern and northeastern parts of Azerbaijan, along the border with Russia, especially in Gusar and in a number of villages in the Quba, Khachmaz, Gebele, and Sheki districts.[14] Some 250,000 Lezghins also live on the other side of the border, in southern Dagestan (in the Russian Federation), and maintain close relations with their ethnic kin. "Sadval," a nationalist Lezghin movement, was established in 1989 in Russia, and aims to unite Lezghins in Russian Dagestan and Lezghins in Azerbaijan. In 1994, Sadval organized a terrorist act in the Baku subway that resulted in fatalities. In April 1996, Azerbaijan's National Security Ministry arrested several members of the organization. In May 2008, Lezghins gathered in Moscow for an academic conference on the history and culture of the Lezghin people that was sponsored by the Russian Foreign Ministry, the Regional Development Ministry, and the Russian State Duma. After the conference, the organizers proclaimed that the border between Azerbaijan and Russia is illegal and must be redrawn.

In September 2007, Armenia hosted a conference dedicated to the history of Caucasian Albania, which Lezghin scholars claim as their historic homeland.[15] Armenia has consistently supported Lezghin nationalists and their territorial claims through both official and unofficial means (Shafee 2008, 30). Armenia has also been implicated in supporting the Talysh. In 1993, an ethnic Talysh named Alikram Humbatov, a former commander, proclaimed himself the leader of the "Talysh-Mugan Republic," but the local population offered minimal support. In May 2005, Armenia organized the "First International Conference on Talysh Studies," hosted by Yerevan State University's Iranian Studies department and the Yerevan-based Center for Iranian Studies, which rekindled the Talysh issue.

Although Talysh and Lezghin separatist tendencies were arguably strongest in the 1990s, their continued support by external states, especially Russia, Iran, and Armenia, has ensured that their concerns and movements remain politically salient and a thorn in the side of the Azerbaijani state.

Azerbaijan's defeat in the war with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh, which has profoundly shaped Azerbaijani politics since the early 1990s, and the latent separatist threat posed by the Talysh and Lezghin minorities, has led the government of Azerbaijan to craft policies that would encourage a stronger sense of civic nationalism and contain any stirrings of ethnic nationalism, both from within and from abroad, that Azerbaijan views as a critical national security threat. The construction of an overarching identity—Azerbaijainism—is thus a project in which the state is profoundly vested. In the next section, we examine this project in more detail and thereby provide further context for the subsequent quantitative analysis.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF AZERBAIJANISM

Modern Azerbaijan has been profoundly marked by Soviet nationality policy, especially during the Stalinist period, which sought to construct new identities on the basis of "socialist federalism" (Rakowska-Harmstone 1976), and later by the traumatic events surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh. During the late nineteenth century, there were rival ideologies that defined the different Turkic-speaking Muslim populations of Azerbaijan. Tsarist Russia recorded the peoples at different times as "Tatars," "Azerbaijani Tatars," "Caucasian Tatars," and "Persian Tatars" (Yilmaz 2013, 513). Some local intellectuals emphasized Turkic origins while others stressed Persian culture. At the time when the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic declared its independence, on May 28, 1918, all the Turkic-speaking Muslims of the South Caucasus were called "Turks." The Bolsheviks continued to refer to the population as "Turkic." Not until the new ethnic and nationality policy of Stalin in 1936 did the name "Azerbaijanis" prevail. Since the new nation-states of the USSR were named after their respective titular nationalities in almost all cases, it followed that an Azerbaijani identity existed, but in reality it had to be constructed. An Azerbaijani national identity was first constructed by native elites before World War I, which is well known in historical literature on Azerbaijan but ignored in the Soviet literature and the work of most Western specialists on nationalities (Altstadt 1992; Balayev 2015; Cornell 2011; Swietochowski 1995).

Some prominent Western scholars have viewed this situation, which more often than not created tensions between titular and minority groups, as a contradiction between civic and ethnic nationalism. The Communist leadership hoped to defuse that potential conflict by ranking identities in terms of size, development, and the creation of a high literary culture. Ethno-territorial status would be granted only to those with the highest rank (Beissinger 1997, 166–67; Schopflin 1996, 153). Yet nationalism in the USSR never fully disappeared—despite Marxist and modernization theorist predictions to the contrary—and in many cases ethnic nationalism matured through institutionalization, urbanization, industrialization, and education (Armstrong 1995).

Under Abulfaz Elchibey, the nationalist who led independent Azerbaijan in 1992–1993, the country was faced with Talysh and Lezghin separatism. Elchibey had adopted an ethnic view of the nation and asserted the Turkic origin of Azerbaijanis. During his presidency, he renamed the language from Azerbaijani to Turkish[16] and opened a debate on the name of the nation. He and his supporters insisted that every nation should be called according to its ethnic origin rather than the name of the place they inhabited. Despite Elchibey's ethnic nationalism, he was paradoxically the only president to propose specific aid for the development of the languages and cultures of national minorities living in the Republic of Azerbaijan.[17]

When Heydar Aliyev came to power, he reverted to the standard name—Azerbaijani—for the language and the people, and continued the state's policy of promoting civic nationalism. Heydar Aliyev consciously sought to create "Azerbaijanism"—an overarching identity that includes all citizens, regardless of ethnicity or religion—as a response to the ethnic separatism of the early 1990s and the continuing threat of ethnic conflict.[18] The constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, adopted in 1995, defines the Azerbaijani people in civic terms as "citizens of the Azerbaijan Republic living on the territory of the Azerbaijan Republic and outside it who are subordinate to the Azerbaijan state and its laws."[19] President Ilham Aliyev has not come up with any new civic nationalism initiatives but has continued to implement the policies of his father. Ramiz Mehdiyev's ongoing role as a promoter of this ideology can be seen as evidence of Ilham Aliyev's perpetuation of Heydar Aliyev's policies. Ilham Aliyev has fostered initiatives, such as the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue and the Baku Humanitarian Forum, that contribute indirectly to civic nationalism.[20] In his speech to the first World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, Ilham Aliyev highlighted Azerbaijan's multicultural (and specifically, multidenominational) identity: "Representatives of all peoples in Azerbaijan are citizens with equal rights, and all historical and religious monuments are being protected…. Throughout the period of independence, the state has built and refurbished hundreds of religious monuments—mosques, churches and synagogues, and this process is continuing."[21]

No discussion of Azerbaijani identity would be complete without mentioning the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. The conflict has served to reinforce the rival identities of the warring sides (Kelman 2001, 191–92). On the Armenian side, this issue plays an important role in the narrative of Greater Armenia (Longobardo 2014).[22] On the side of Azerbaijan, which lost the war, the government and media have used the defeat to unify and strengthen national identity.[23] According to a survey conducted by the Baku-

based Sociological Monitoring Center PULS, the public supports the government's position: approximately 60 percent of respondents were against any kind of compromise in the conflict.[24] Mass media in Azerbaijan promote and bolster this opinion. Most of the influential television stations (e.g., Public TV Channel of Azerbaijan, ITV, and ANS TV) start their broadcasts by mentioning the occupied territories, the international community's toleration of this injustice, and the importance of regaining the lost territories. In short, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict has, perhaps not surprisingly, played a key role in the state's effort to construct an Azerbajani civic identity that would strengthen minority groups' sense of belonging to Azerbaijan and prevent a recurrence of minority separatism, something that has deeply traumatized the country.

Formally, at least, Azerbaijanism is not another word for assimilation to the majority culture. Article 11 of the Constitution provides for the development and preservation of the minority cultures and Article 44 guarantees preservation of national identity. It also includes opportunities for studying in minority languages at public schools as well as minority representation in the highest positions in the government (e.g., the head of AZERENERGY is Etibar Pirverdiyev and the First Deputy Minister of Defense is Nejmeddin Sadigov, both Lezghins) and of course in local government structures where minorities reside in large numbers; there are numerous Talysh and Lezghin members of parliament.[25]Although the legislation of Azerbaijan allows for freedom of asssembly and the establishment of political parties, it is forbidden to form such organizations on an ethnic or religious basis. As a result, aside from individual examples, it is difficult to objectively measure the real level of participation and inclusion among ethnic minorities in public life (Kotecha 2006). For these reasons, a study of why some individuals from minority groups have been more or less receptive to civic nationalism than others is particularly important from the point of view of state formation, social order, and regional stability.

In the next section, we introduce an original survey data set covering identity issues in Azerbaijan that was conducted in four cities where Talysh and Lezghin minorities are spatially concentrated. These data uniquely enable us to assess among whom this policy has worked most and least in fostering identification with the Azerbaijani nation-state, and to evaluate the individual-level characteristics associated with a stronger sense of civic nationalism.

DATA AND ANALYSIS

The original survey was conducted in 2009 by the Department of Ethno-Sociological Research in the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography of National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan. It covered four cities (Lankaran, Astara, Khachmaz, and Gusar), which were selected because they represent the largest settlements of Talysh (Lankaran[26] and Astara[27]) and of Lezghins (Gusar[28] and Khachmaz[29]). Figure 1 displays the locations of the survey sites.

The survey was realized within the framework of the program of "The study of minorities in Azerbaijan," which is held periodically by the institute. The survey covered 288 individuals over the age of 18 in 12 villages of four districts,[30] using stratified random sampling, and consisted of 73 questions; several questions focused specifically on identity. The villages were selected according to their closeness to the border and their ethnic demography (minority and mixed villages). The survey was conducted face-to-face by the staff—some of whom were from minorities themselves—of the Department of Ethno-Sociological Research at the Academy of Sciences.

To capture a more nuanced conceptualization of the ethnic vs. civic nationalism distinction, we adopt a three-valued variable rather than a simple ethnic/civic dichotomy. This allows us to capture respondents who express a *mixture* of ethnic and civic identities (see Figure 2 for a graphical display of this variation). The dependent variable for the analysis is therefore an ordered factor indicator of civic nationalism that we built as a composite variable on the basis of two survey questions about identification with the nation-state and one's ethnic group. Respondents were given the following choices:

1. If someone asked you, Who are you, what comes first to your mind?

1) I am a citizen of Azerbaijan
4) I am a member of my family or my clan
5) I am a member of my ethnic group

2. If someone asked you, What is your nationality, what would you say?

1) Azerbaijani
2) Lezghin
3) Talysh

We recoded the dependent variable (as below) to better reflect our conceptual scale from more civic nationalism to more ethnic nationalism, and to allow for more nuance by including a "mixed" category, which is the modal category:

<u>Civic Nationalism = 1(n = 57)</u>
1+1=1 (I am a citizen of Azerbaijan *and* my nationality is Azerbaijani)
<u>Mixed Civic and Ethnic Nationalism = 2</u> (n = 155)
1+2=2 (I am a citizen of Azerbaijan *and* my nationality is Lezghinian) (n = 56)
1+3=2 (I am a citizen of Azerbaijan *and* my nationality is Talyshian) (n=99)
<u>Ethnic Nationalism</u> = 3 (n = 40)
5+1=3 (I am a member of my ethnic group *and* Azerbaijani) n = 3

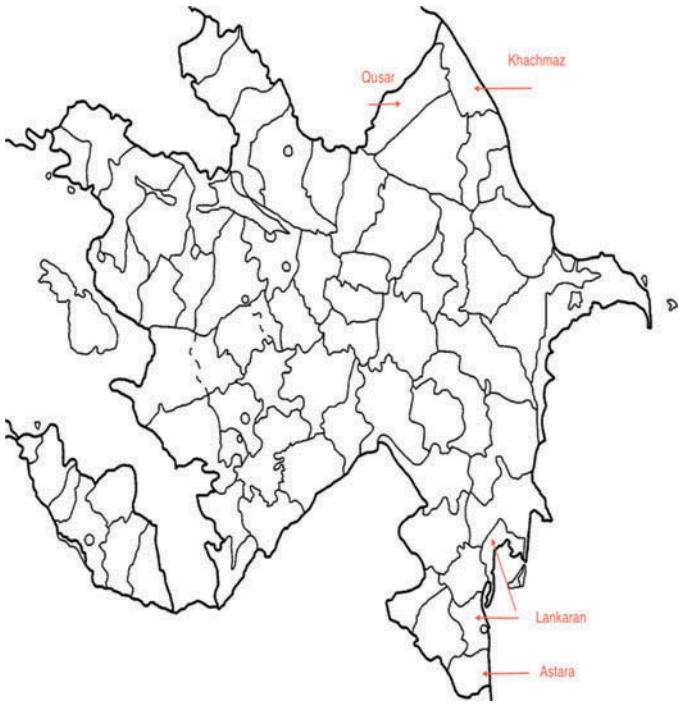

FIGURE 1 District-level map of Azerbaijan identifying the four sites studied: Astara and Lankaran (in the south) and Khachmaz and Qusar (in the north).

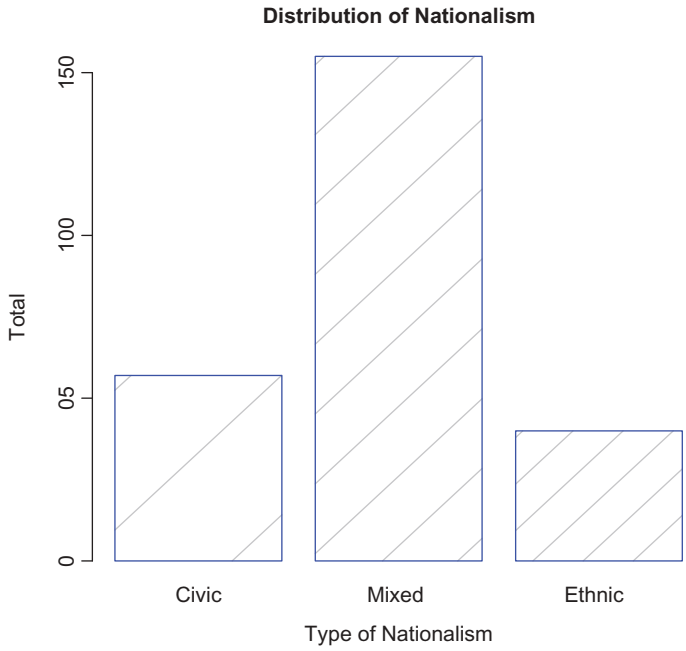

FIGURE 2 Distribution of nationalism in four districts in Azerbaijan; trichotomous dependent variable in subsequent analyses.

5+2=3 (I am a member of my ethnic group *and* Lezghinian) n = 8
5+3=3 (I am a member of my ethnic group *and* Talyshian) n = 4
4+1=3 (I am a member of my clan *and* Azerbaijani) n = 9
4+2=3 (I am a member of my clan *and* Lezghin) n = 5
4+3=3 (I am a member of my clan *and* Talysh) n = 11

The resulting dependent variable captures two core dimensions of identity. Rather than assuming that civic and ethnic nationalism are an either/or proposition, our measure allows for a grey zone that combines some aspects of civic and ethnic nationalism. For example, fully integrated minorities may identify both as citizens of Azerbaijan and as Azerbaijani by nationality, which would be the strongest marker of civic nationalism, according to our coding scheme. Talysh or Lezghin identifying with their own ethnic group or clan *and* their own nationality indicate a strong ethno-nationalist identity. For the mixed category, we classify those identifying as citizens of Azerbaijan *but also* their own nationality; that is, these respondents express a mix of civic and ethnic nationalism, and are thus coded in the middle category. Figure 2 shows the distribution of all individuals (all of whom are Talysh and Lezghin by nationality) in the four miniority districts.

The bulk of the data are in the middle category, and the tail categories are roughly equal in size, with slightly more responses in the civic than ethnic category. Since the dependent variable has three values and is ordered, we estimate an ordered logistic regression model.

To measure interethnic networks, we utilize a question on friends from different ethnic groups, which can assume three values, and ranges from no friends from other groups to some friends and many friends from other ethnic groups. The indicator for endogamy is a question soliciting attitudes toward mixed marriage, which ranges from "I don't support this kind of marriage" to "Ethnicity is not important in marriage."[31] To measure a respondent's religiosity we utilize a four-point question that ranges from "I believe in religion and worship" to "I am not religious." Finally, we measure the respondent's level of educational attainment, which ranges on a four-point scale from "university education" to "no secondary or technical education," as a control variable in all models (see Appendix).

The first three models (**M1**–**3**) include only one variable each for the indicator of each of the three main hypotheses —interethnic networks, religiosity, and endogamy—and **M4** includes an indicator of educational attainment as a control variable. **M5** includes the two significant variables in the preceding models—interethnic networks and religiosity. **M6** and **M7** include three variable combinations, and **M8** includes the fully saturated model.

Each model is estimated using an ordered logistic regression in the statistical language *R*. We first present the results numerically in Table 1. The analysis points to the importance of interethnic networks and Islamic identity, which lends support to the first and third hypotheses. Individuals with more interethnic networks and stronger Islamic identity were more likely to identify with the state-promoted civic nationalism. Interethnic networks influence an individual's access to information about the other groups, which facilitates a stonger sense of civic nationalism and reduces the propensity of more insular attitudes associated with ethnic nationalism. Talysh and Lezghin share the Islamic faith with ethnic Azeris, and their belief in the trans-ethnic *umma* in Islam translates into more civic nationalism and less ethnic nationalism. Consistent with these findings, **M5** and **M8** provide the best fit.

As for the second hypothesis relating civic nationalism with endogamy, we could not reject the null hypothesis. We found that attitudes toward endogamy did not significantly shape the likelihood of identifying more with civic or ethnic nationalism, against our expectations. Finally, we found that the educational attainment of the respondents, which we conceived of as a control variable, had no significant effect on the likelihood of expressing a civic identity.

To examine the substantive impact of the statistically significant variables, we plot their marginal effects on the dependent variable, holding constant the other variables (see Figure 3). The probability of a respondent expressing an ethnic nationalist attitude decreased as the number of interethnic networks increased. The predicted probability of a respondent expressing an ethnic identity was about 0.36 when the Talysh or Lezghin in question had many friends outside his or her ethnic group, 0.48 when he or she had a few friends, and 0.62 when he or she had essentially zero friends from outside his or her ethnic group. The respondent's religiosity (Islamic) also decreased the probability of a respondent expressing an ethnic identity (and increased the probability of a civic identity). The

TABLE 1
Ordered Logistic Regression Models

	M1	*M2*	*M3*	*M4*	*M5*	*M6*	*M7*	*M8*
Interethnic networks	**–.55*** (.15)**				**–.51*** (.15)**	**–.54*** (.15)**		**–.49*** (.15)**
Endogamy		**–.11 (.09)**				**–.07 (.09)**	**–.12 (.09)**	**–.09 (.10)**
Religion			**–.38*** (.10)**		**–.35*** (.10)**		**–.38*** (.10)**	**–.35*** (.10)**
Education				**.03 (.17)**		**.00 (.17)**	**.02 (.18)**	**.01 (.18)**
/cut1	–2.26 (.38)	–1.34 (.30)	–1.79 (.25)	–.97 (.38)	–2.87 (.43)	–2.45 (.59)	–2.09 (.54)	–3.07 (.63)
/cut2	–1.04 (.36)	–1.50 (.29)	–.56 (.23)	.23 (.37)	–1.61 (.40)	–1.22 (.58)	–.86 (.52)	–1.82 (.61)
Number of observations	271	271	271	271	271	271	271	271
Log likelihood	–281.1	–287.5	–281.3	–288.2	–275.2	–280.7	–280.4	–274.7

Note: Dependent variable is a three-point scale (Figure 2) that ranges from civic to ethnic nationalism. Significance levels *** = p < .01, **p < .05, and *p < .1.

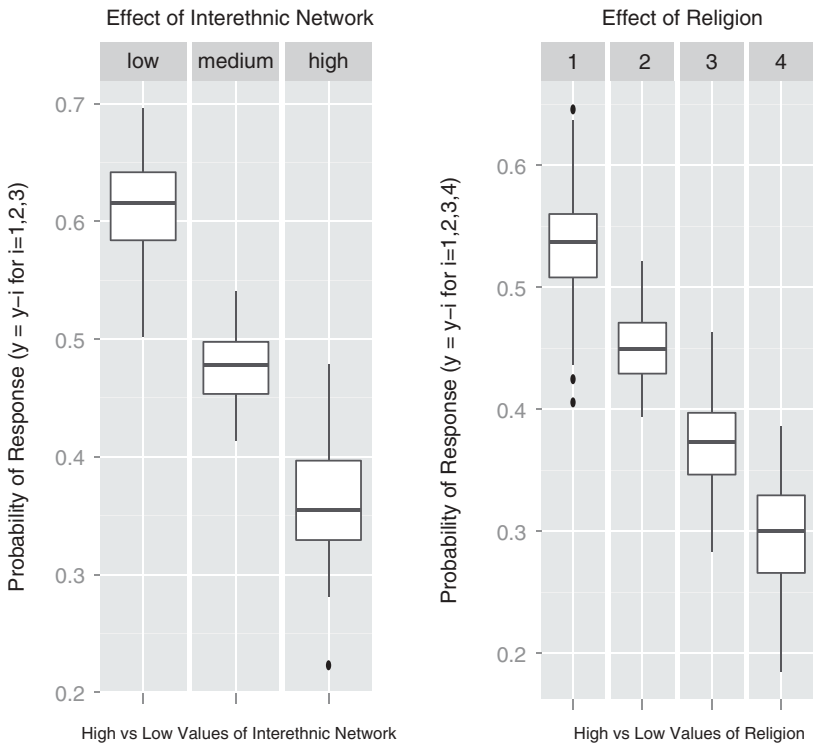

FIGURE 3 Marginal effect plots for the effects of interethnic networks and religion.

predicted probability of a respondent expressing an ethnic identity was about 0.55 when the Talysh or Lezghin had the weakest Islamic identity, and decreased to 0.30 for those respondents with the strongest Islamic identity.

CONCLUSION

For many multiethnic countries, the lack of integration, the absence of identification with the state, and ethnic separatism represent a persistent challenge to social order and successful state building. Whereas some states prefer to exclude minorities and rule by ethnocracy, other states (both democracies and autocracies) make a concerted effort to integrate ethnic minorities and create an overarching civic identity. But what explains the degree of civic nationalism among minorities? What determines the degree to which individuals from minority groups feel attached to their ethnic group or clan rather than to the nation-state's civic identity? This article develops a set of theoretically informed hypotheses and tests them using original data from a survey of Lezghin and Talysh minorities in four districts where such groups are concentrated within Azerbaijan.

Specifically, we have developed three hypotheses that may explain the variable loyalty of individuals from minority groups to the state, in terms of interethnic networks, in-group solidarity, and religiosity. We posit a positive effect of interethnic networks and Islamic identity, and a negative influence of group solidarity, on attachment to the nation-state's civic identity. The analysis points to clear evidence of an association between civic nationalism and both interethnic networks and religiosity (Islam). Individuals who had a stronger Islamic identity and more interethnic networks—both of which allow the individual to cut across ethnic lines—were considerably more likely to identify with state-promoted civic nationalism. Against our expectations, however, we found that group solidarity did not diminish an individual's degree of attachment to civic identity, and that educational attainment did not have any discernible effect on civic identification. Although there are some important differences between Talysh and Lezghin, which we note in our historical discussion, the quantitative analysis aggregates respondents from both groups, and focuses on estimating overall effects and testing several key hypotheses, since the key distinction in our view is not their denomination (Sunni Lezghin or Shia Talysh) but the extent of their (Islamic) religiosity and the density of interethnic networks among different individuals.

One possible implication of these results is that there may be different pathways to civic nationalism in multiethnic but largely mono-religious (but multisectarian) countries than in countries where religion reinforces boundaries rather than cuts across ethnic identities (e.g., the former Yugoslavia). However, interethnic networks appear to be effective both in cases where the majority and minorities share a religion (Talysh, Lezghins, and Azeris in Azerbaijan) and in cases where minority and majority do

not share a religion (Hindus and Muslims in India; cf. Varshney 2002). In terms of negative implications, it would seem that group solidarity (endogamy) and education, which respectively have been thought to decrease and increase civic identity, actually have very little effect in Azerbaijan. This implies that investments to increase educational attainment among minorities and policies that encourage (or discourage) intermarriage may be less important than commonly believed.

Overcoming parochial identities and fostering a civic identity in a multiethnic country is certainly not easy, but it is crucial to successful state formation and social order. This article proposes and tests three micro-level mechanisms for the variable success of such projects in multiethnic societies.

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NOTES

1. Horowitz (1985) argues that loyalties to the nation state are greater in the West than they are in Asia, Africa, and Caribbean. We use quotation marks around "East" and "West" to indicate that these are not our categories, and their boundaries are not strictly geographic.
2. For an extensive of analysis of German citizenship and nationhood over time, and an insightful comparison to Russian and Turkish citizenship and nationhood, see Aktürk 2012.
3. For a study of this phenomenon in Russia, see Gorenburg 2001 and 2003; on Ukraine, see Shulman 1998, 2004, 2005; on Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, see Marat 2008. For a cross-national study of this issue using International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) data that includes but is not exclusive to minorities, see Kunovich, 2009.
4. Varshney (2002, 11–12) suggests that, in India, violence is primarily an urban phenomenon, and thus the level of violence was lower in the cities where there was intense associational civic engagement; he found that informal interethnic engagement worked better in villages, and more formal associational civic engagement worked better in urban settings. See also Horowitz, 1985, 598.
5. Where such networks exist, interethnic tension possesses an organic regulatory mechanism that can prevent communal identities from leading to violence. Varshney divided civic engagement into associational and everyday forms of civic engagement. Associational forms of civic engagement are based on institutional relations, such as business organizations, political parties, reading clubs, and so on. Everyday forms of civic engagement are characterized as informal interethnic relations. Informal interethnic engagement works better in villages than in cities, Varshney argues, and associational civic engagement works better in urban settings. See Varshney 2002.
6. The "cultural division of labor" is a concept that characterizes situations in which there is a *lack* of interethnic networks. See Hechter 1978.
7. Whitmeyer's MES theorem (the minimal endogamous set) suggests that ethnic nationalism will be most likely when the population of the state (or state-sized region) becomes the MES for members of the population. Conversely, ethnic nationalism will be less likely where there is local endogamy. See Whitmeyer 1997.
8. From the Quran, Surat Al-Ĥujurāt, 49/13: "O mankind, indeed, we have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted." Hastings (1997, 201) argues that, because the Quran is written in Arabic language, Islam necessarily implies the Arabization of other Muslim nations.
9. For recent analyses of the role of Islam in Azerbaijan, see contributions by Goyushov (2012), Wistrand (2012), and Bedford 2012.
10. Global Index of Religiosity and Atheism—2012, Win–Gallup International, Press Release, 25, at www.wingia.com/web/files/news/14/file/14.pdf, accessed June 12, 2015; Steve Crabtree and Brett Pelham, "What Alabamians and Iranians Have in Common," Gallup, www.gallup.com/poll/114211/alabamians-iranians-common.aspx, accessed May 27, 2015.
11. The board is responsible for making *fetva* (fatwas), that is, decisions and interpretations on Islamic issues.
12. See Gerber 2007. On the risks of nationalism in semi-authoritarian regimes more generally, see Goode 2012.
13. The State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan counts 17 distinct ethnic groups; see www.azstat.org/statinfo/demoqraphic/en/AP_/AP_1.shtml, accessed April 22, 2015. There are also Avars, Meskhetians, Tatars, Ukrainians, Georgians, Kurds, Tats, and Jews. The census data from 2009 (and previous years) are available at www.azstat.org/statinfo/demoqraphic/en/AP_/1_5.xls, accessed April 17, 2015. Some Talysh and Lezghin activists are still on trial in Baku for charges such as spying for Iran and drug possession.
14. On Lezghins, see Gerber 2007; on separatist influences, see Shafee 2008. Lezghins are represented in the Azerbaijani government and media and also have education in their own language.
15. On Caucasian Albania, see Gerber 2007, 10.
16. Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the State Language of the Republic of Azerbaijan (December 22, 1992), at www.legalacts.az/En/document/36/34, accessed October 1, 2013.
17. Presidential Act No. 212, On State Aid for the Development of Language and Culture of National Minorities and the Protection of the Rights and Liberties of Small Nations and Ethnic Groups Living in the Republic of Azerbaijan (September 16, 1992), at www.e-qanun.az/alpidata/framework/data/7/f_7762.htm (in Azerbaijani), accessed August 24, 2015.
18. See, for example, Ramiz Mehdiyev, "Azerbaijanism as an example of national ideology" (in Azerbaijani), *Azərbaycan* (newspaper), September 11, 2007, www.azerbaycanli.org/az/page55.html, accessed June 17, 2015.
19. Constitution of Azerbaijan Republic, Chapter 1, Article 1.
20. Baku International Humanitarian Forum, http://bakuforum.az/archive/forum-2014/, accessed June 17, 2015; World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, http://bakuforum-icd.az/, accessed June 17, 2015.
21. Ilham Aliyev at the opening ceremony of the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, http://en.president.az/articles/1845, accessed June 17, 2015.
22. For example, see Longobardo 2014; also Poghosyan 2009, 11.

23. For example, see Ilham Aliyev, "Speech at the official military parade on the occasion of the 95th anniversary of the Armed Forces," Official Internet Site of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, at http://en.president.az/articles/8574, accessed May 7, 2015. See also Bilal Dadayev, Ceyhun Mahmudlu, Shamkhal Abilov, *Qarabağ 99 sualda* (Karabakh in 99 Questions), (Baku: CBS, 2014), 293. See also Sultanova 2011.
24. The survey is cited in the International Crisis Group report, "Nagorno-Karabakh: Risking War," *Europe Report No. 187* (November 14, 2007), 15 (note 165), at www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/europe/south-caucasus/azerbaijan/187-nagorno-karabakh-risking-war.aspx, accessed August 24, 2015.
25. Consistent with the current government's focus on creating a strong civic nationalism, there are no political parties based on ethnicity in Azerbaijan.
26. According to the official statistical information, the population of the province of Lankaran is 205,726; 73.5 percent are Azerbaijanis and 26.3 percent are Talyshis. See Gerber 2007; and www.lankaran.az/content.php?lang=az&page=ehali, accessed April 29, 2015.
27. Roughly 40 percent of the population of Astara is Talysh. See http://astara-ih.gov.az/page12/%C6%8Fhalisi.html, accessed May 20, 2015.
28. It is estimated that 40 percent of the entire Lezghin population in Azerbaijan lives in Gusar, and over 90 percent of Gusar is Lezghin. See Gerber 2007; and www.azstat.org/region/az/007_4.shtml, accessed April 29, 2015.
29. It is estimated that about 15 percent of the population of Khachmaz is Lezghin; www.azstat.org/region/az/007_2.shtml, accessed April 29, 2015.
30. In Gusar: Urva, Hasagala, and Chilavird; in Khachmaz: Girmizigishlag, Gadashoba, and Mushkir; in Astara: Kokolos, Kijoba, Lovayn, and Tangarud; in Lankaran: Osakucha and Veraul.
31. We recoded this variable so that "It is difficult to answer" was set as the middle category on a five-point scale; 1.2 percent of respondents responded "Hard to answer" and these were recoded as missing.

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APPENDIX

The survey was conducted in 2009 by the Department of Ethno-Sociological Research, which falls under the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography within the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The survey covered 288 individuals over the age of 18 in four districts and consisted of several questions focused specifically on identity. Below we only report variables that were included in the analysis. The full survey is available in Azerbaijani from the authors upon request.

Wording of Questions Analyzed (author's translation into English)

If someone asked you, Who are you, what comes first to your mind?	Code	%
I am a citizen of Azerbaijan	1	77.4
I am a member of my family, my clan	4	9.4
I am a member of my ethnic group	5	6.2
If someone asked you, What is your nationality, what would you say?	Code	%
Azerbaijani	1	24.60
Lezghinian	2	26.0
Talyshian	3	43.4
Do you have friends from different ethnic groups?	Code	%
No, none	1	21.5
Yes, but few	2	38.9
Yes, many	3	39.6
What is your opinion about religion?	Code	%
I believe in religion and worship	1	49.6
I am interested in religion but I have hesitations	2	29.2
I am ignorant about religion	3	3.1
I am not religious	4	18.1
What is your opinion about mixed marriage between the members of different ethnic groups?	Code	%
I don't support this kind of marriage	1	22.60
If the couple will follow the traditions of my ethnic group, then same ethnicity is not essential	2	19.80
I prefer a marriage candidate to be from my ethnic group, but I don't oppose this kind of marriage	3	15.80
Ethnicity is not important in marriage	4	40.6
It is difficult to answer	5	1.20
What is your education?	Code	%
University	1	19.10
High school	2	59.7
Secondary and technical school	3	19.4
No secondary or technical education	4	1.1

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