

III. General Evaluation of the Autonomous Process

According to the wishes of the contractor and the proposed methodology we prepared a Questionnaire with Basic question from the Methodological Guide of the contractor. The Questionnaire consists of 32 questions. According to sociological practice, we proposed several answers for each question (mainly 3 but in some cases only 2). Two answers exclude each other, the third was neutral. In our opinion, it was the only productive method in the actual circumstances.

The order of the questions corresponds to the order proposed in the Methodological Guide. In our opinion, the content of these questions corresponds to the common world view in this region. That was confirmed by the answers.

All strata of the population were consulted in different localities. A large number of the respondents are students of the Chechen State University. This was of special value for us because students come from all social strata and from a lot of localities not covered by our inquiry. The respondents represent all adult age groups.

We considered the question No. 9 *What symbols do you connect with your Republic?* and proposing two possible answers a). *Flag, Coat of Arms, Anthem adopted before the war;* b) *Other symbols and artefacts* complicated for the following reasons. For a long time the Republic had no relevant symbols except the flag of the former ChIASSR¹. None of the respondents remembered this flag. At the same time many persons perceive the defence and dwelling castles as recognisable symbols of Chechnya. The symbols adapted by the Chechen parliament before the first war have in our opinion their own weaknesses. They existed for a short time and they correlate with a historical period, for many persons, not associated with a national revival.

Nevertheless 52% of the respondents connect these symbols with their Republic. We consider such perception of these symbols as an influence of the attitude of the Russian authorities towards Chechen citizens. 48% of the respondents consider other items as symbols of the Republic.

The answers about the attitude toward the symbols of the Russian state are distributed by the following way:

- 1) 32 persons accept it as their own – 26%
- 2) 37 persons don't accept it and consider it as symbols of arbitrariness – 30%
- 3) 51 persons have an indifferent attitude – 42%

¹This footnote and the following are the translators explanations. Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic

10. There was the following distribution of the answers on question about *The resolution of conflicts between particular communities or groups of persons*:

- a) By state authorities - 27 persons;
- b) By negotiations of informal leaders – 70 persons;
- c) By other means

In our opinion, in pre-war conflict situations the role of informal leaders was more important.

11. About the benefits of its own government (administration) there were following answers:

- a) Solution of personal² problems – 51 persons;
- b) It is easier to influence it and mass repressions are impossible – 31 persons;
- c) There is no need for it – 38 persons.

31 % of the respondents do not see a need for their own government, in our opinion it is a result of the Chechen pre-war government and their successors³.

12. There were following answers on the question about the self-identification (*As whom do you consider yourself primary?*):

- a) As a Russian [citizen] – 9 persons;
- b) As a [ethnic] Chechen – 101 persons;
- c) As a Russian [citizen] and as a Chechen. As someone different – 10 persons.

Almost all of the Chechen respondents, except several who consider themselves as Russian [citizens] consider themselves just as Chechens. The other respondents were Kumyk and Nogai people living in the Shchelkovskij Rayon⁴. Their answers were different.

13. In your opinion, what are the main obstacles for establishing a local government and self government?

- a) The war and the attending lawlessness and arbitrariness – 101 persons;
- b) The lack or unimportance of a respectable elite with an national [i.e. ethnic] orientation – 9 persons;
- c) The lack of consent among the indigenous population – 10 persons.

14. On the question about the best way to solve conflicts and difficulties in the communities or on

²In the questionnaire *local*

³I.e. the armed separatists

⁴Rayon - secondary territorial entity of the Russian Federation and some other post-Soviet states

the level of the rays there are following answers:

- a) An acceptable solution can be obtained by traditional negotiations if there is no unfriendly influence from outside on a party of the conflict – 71 persons (59%)
- b) An acceptable solution can be negotiated with the help of a respected third party – 40 (33%) persons;
- c) The conflicts are insolvable – 9 persons (8%).

By *unfriendly influence from outside* the respondents understand the activities of the Russian special services with supposedly extraordinary fatal consequences for the social stability. On the other side it should be mentioned that *respected third party* often means Russia. Beside the negative estimate of Russia's role in the Chechen society there are still positive expectations regarding the role of Russia.

15. In your opinion, what is the need for political parties? The answers also reflect the objective ideological references in the society.

- a) Political parties are a feature in and in the same time an instrument of stable democratic societies – 41 persons;
- b) Political parties are necessary for democratic change of power; their existence prevent political stagnation in the society – 24 persons;
- c) There is no need for it in our circumstances – 55 persons.

So 52% of the respondents evaluate positively the institute of political parties, in the present situation it is rather good.

16. Are the traditional authorities, for instance the elders, able to respond to actual situations and problems of the community?

- a) In the time of the continuing war and the continuing disintegration of the society the role of the traditions and the elders is still present but less then before the war – 52 persons (43%);
- b) The traditional organisation is still possible but in the actual circumstances no laws are obtained – 54 persons (43%);
- c) The traditional organisation lost its importance and there is no need to revitalise it in the time of globalisation – 14 persons (11%).

At all times the elders played significant role in the Chechen society. No important matter, neither land conflicts nor abactions or thefts or more serious crimes were solved without their participation.

Very often problems were solved by the elders without involvement of the formal authorities. In Soviet times this influence of the elders aroused suspicion. The Soviet system didn't accept such persons according to their informal status but discriminated against them in the seventies and in the eighties. Before they were even persecuted because the respected elders were Koran Scholars and therefore considered as hostile elements in the atheistic state. In the actual situation the role of the elders is still "present" but they don't influence the social processes. Nevertheless there is a chance to revitalise this institution.

17. Are there cases of abject behaviour or discrimination of non-indigenous persons? In your opinion, what is the reason for it?

- a) Such behaviour happened between the wars and was practised by members of the lower social strata and criminal elements – 53 persons (44%);
- b) The discrimination was an expression of claims to property of a third party and, in my opinion, it was a result of the social disintegration – 24 persons (20%);
- c) Abject behaviour to non indigenous persons is not a Chechen feature – 42 persons (36%).

The question affects a complicated problem. Being the object of disdain and discrimination, Chechens in their country could play the role of oppressors. 64% of the respondents agreed that this shameful phenomena came from the low social strata and criminal elements in a time of social disintegration. The social description of persons robbing and "expropriating" non-indigenous persons during troubled times confirms this statement. The reason for all such cases, was not ethnic animosities but the defencelessness of the victim because the state authorities didn't function and the victims were not covered by the traditional protective Chechen mechanisms of solidarity.

18. What does it mean for you to be a Chechen? What features are marking this affiliation?

- a) The knowledge of the language, the origin and the observance of some traditions - 91 persons (75%);
- b) I don't know precise features, for me it is an insolvable problem - 6 persons (5%);
- c) Primarily a person who is familiar with some elements of the Chechen culture and who defines himself as affiliated to the Chechen people – 15 persons (12%).

The criteria for ethnic affiliation are for the majority of the respondents the same as for people everywhere. There are no special features without which a person wouldn't be accepted as a Chechen. The Chechen ethnic group grows up until the last time integrating persons of other ethnic

origin. Now there are many Chechens with Avar, Kumyk, Georgian, Arab, Turkic, Nogai roots. Literally in every village with strong conservative traditions there are persons of this ethnic origin. Probably the 36% respondents who consider abject behaviour to non-indigenous persons not to be Chechen feature are such persons.

19. As a Chechen, in what do you believe?

- a) In Allah, the Prophet Mohammed and his ustazes [religious teachers] – 78 persons;
- b) I believe in Allah; the Chechen tradition and the Adat [Customary Law] have for me the same importance 31 person;
- c)

Some respondents didn't answer this question. The belief in God is for majority of Chechens an obligatory attribute. The lack of it makes a person inferior.

20. Is it useful for children to learn at school, to study at college, at higher education facilities? Why?

- a) The existing formal education is inefficient - 31 persons (25%);
- b) The existing educational institutions are viable and should be supported - 45 persons (37%);
- c) It is necessary to study there because there are no alternatives – 44 persons (36%).

The expedience of studies was never questioned in Chechen society. It was a postulate even for strict Muslims. The Islamic peculiarities restricting studies for women have not been an obstacle for female education in Chechnya. In the three functioning high education facilities of the Republic, more than 70% of the students are female.

School education is appreciated too.

On the other hand, there is a common opinion about the inefficiency of the formal education. Its quality is below all acceptable standards. Although all children are going to school the level of knowledge is low.

21. Would it be sufficient to use in higher education facilities the Chechen language only; is it possible to express all necessary thoughts in the Chechen language?

- a) In my opinion, the present level of the development of the Chechen language does not allow to use it in several spheres of knowledge - 36 persons (30%);
- b) The Chechen language should be used in more domains, it should be popularised with all

possible means – 60 persons (50%);

- c) The Chechen language should be used in limited domains; science and education should be developed in the traditional languages of science and education – 27 persons (20%).

In the past, especially in the seventies and at the beginning of the eighties the Chechen language lost many of its domains in particular in family life. Now this tendency has stopped. Chechens not speaking the Chechen language are now uncommon. In the past persons not speaking Russian were rather rare, whereby now the number of persons not speaking Russian is increasing. There are even students with a weak knowledge of the Russian language. In our opinion, the results of the inquiry indicate the situation and the perspectives of the Chechen language.

22. In your opinion, what is the content of the traditional Chechen, tribal, tayp [clan], local (traditional) knowledge?

- a) There is knowledge in the form of traditions; the observance of these traditions shape human behaviour in different situations - 76 persons (63%);
- b) In my opinion, if such thoughts do exist, they belong to the spheres of morality and education - 33 persons (28%);
- c) In my opinion, there is no special knowledge as a means to influence outward things – 11 persons (9%).

Indeed, it is difficult to find knowledge differentiating the Chechens from other Caucasian peoples. But it seems that the contradictory image of the Chechens is decisively shaped by an educative process, taking part not only in the family and schools but a whole microcosm including a lot of relatives, neighbours and even unknown persons. This problem is still not analysed although it is a matter of particular interest. Probably that's why it will be studied more detailed in future investigations.

23. How do people with a special or higher education behave in the community?

- a) In my opinion, a difference in education is not a decisive factor for the behaviour of a Chechen person - 56 persons (57%);
- b) Educated persons act more adequate and can better survive – 50 persons (41%);
- c) Among educated people there are more unscrupulous persons – 14 persons (11%).

Among Chechens the general level of education is not very high. There are a lot of persons having

higher education facilities diplomas and university diplomas. More people graduated at secondary schools. As a result of the low quality of the educational facilities and the continuing adversarial social conditions the education doesn't prevent educated Chechens from antisocial behaviour. Very often the behaviour of an "educated" person is determined by mercantile motivations. This social disease is characteristic of the present machinery of State, civil servants, completely consisting of such "educated" people. More the 10% of the respondents answered that there are more unscrupulous persons among educated persons. Indeed it is difficult to find among the Chechen intelligentsia educated persons of the third or fourth generation. This fact is reflected by the low average level of the educated persons.

At present, education helps people survive in extreme situations, influence the economic status, but it shapes the behaviour xxx in the interest of the whole society to a much lesser extent

24. How do you get information about events outside of your locality? How do you communicate the outer world about events which happen here?

- a) I obtain information about international events form Russian (TV) and foreign (broadcasting) media. It is quite difficult or even impossible to communicate about the local situation – 53 persons (45%);
- b) The communication with the outer world is controlled and happens /passes only through state media - 19 persons (16%);
- c) I am getting oral information about events in our Republic from different persons - 48% persons (40%).

The information of the Russian media, especially Russian TV, about the events in the Chechen Republic is predominantly misleading. No efforts are necessary to assert it. It is obvious from the first moment of listening to this media. Therefore many persons are listening to foreign broadcasting. Newspapers and magazines are not arriving or arrive very seldom. The Novaya Gazeta⁵ is a popular [critical and anti militarist] Russian newspaper in Chechnya. For incomprehensible reasons this newspaper is delivered regularly to selling points. Many things happen in the Republic and naturally not all are covered by the media. The people learn about it from different people through conversation. 40% of the respondents answered that they use such information. This is usually an objective information.

25. What is your opinion about

⁵www.NovayaGazeta.ru

Wahhabites: good – 4 persons, suspicious - 27 persons, negative - 89 persons;
Orthodox Church: good - 17 persons, negative – 15 persons, indifferent – 88 persons;
Protestant Church (Baptist, Pentecostal): good – 23 persons, negative – 7 persons , indifferent – 90 persons.

Wahhabism is a new phenomenon in Chechnya. The spread of Wahhabism began after 1990. Only a few of people knew about this religious current before the end of the First Chechen war [1996] and there were even fewer supporters and no influence. After the end of the First war the situation changed: using their financial potential which was relatively big for Chechnya Wahhabites began to infiltrate into different social spheres. Their activities were openly negative and antisocial, among other things their attitude regarding the traditions of the Adat honoured by the Chechens and the Prophet Mohammed and his ustazes. That's why their influence wasn't sustainable relying only on brute force. In our opinion, there were no perspectives for a spreading of this current. The conviction about the active role of the Russian secret services in the propagation of the Wahhabism is widespread in the society.

In reference to other religious confessions the Chechen society was always tolerant. Only few peoples relate negatively to the Orthodox Church supporting a party of the conflict.

26. In your opinion, is there a discrimination of the traditional knowledge and the traditional way of life of the indigenous population?

- a) There is no discrimination, life is gradually normalising – 19 persons (15%);
- b) It is difficult to speak about particular discrimination, there is absolute arbitrariness and lawlessness – 100 persons (84%);
- c)

Since the beginning of the war the Chechen Republic became a zone of arbitrariness. Self-evident there was a discrimination in the spheres of the traditional knowledge and the traditional way of life. But against this background, or the fate of the defenceless population, few if any followed such "bagatelles". At the present time there are no decisive changes but less repressions from the so called "Federalists"⁶. The Russian troops do not rob and plunder anymore. This can be seen as the positive influence of the new Chechen president Akhmat Kadyrov⁷. From his activities one can

⁶First of all Russian army, but also non-local agents of the Ministry of the Interior or non-local agents of the FSB - Federal Service of Security – police authority, successor of several branches of the former KGB - Committee of State Security of the USSR

⁷Akhmat Abdulkhamidovich Kadyrov (August 23, 1951 - May 9, 2004) was former supreme Muslim leader (Mufti) of Chechnya, he was elected as (non-separatist) President of Chechen Republic within the legal framework of the Russian Federation on October 5, 2003. Assassinated on May 9, 2004 in Grozny stadium by a bomb blast under a VIP stage during a World War II memorial victory parade

assume an improvement in this sphere. Anyway there are such hopes among the people reflected in the answers of more than 15% of the respondents.

27. How can the public health service and housing be improved?

- a) It is necessary to stop the war, and then to act in the same way as everywhere else in the civilised world 95 persons (80%);
- b) The most important condition for the solution of all social problems is the observance of the elementary law by the existing [formal] authorities – 23 (19%);
- c) Other answers- 2 persons (1.7%).

Probably, the way to solve such problems is the same everywhere. This is also the opinion of the majority of the respondents who are also pointing the need for a stop of the war. The observance of the laws by the authorities is also seen as a necessary condition for the solution of social problems.

28. How can be improved your housing situation?

- a) In my opinion, it needs many measures, including humanitarian aid from international organisations – 58 persons (48%);
- b) In the case of favourable conditions I will solve this problem by my own efforts - 18 persons (15%);
- c) It is the state's obligation to solve this problem - 51 persons (37%). .

There is a still unofficial information on the destruction of approximately 80,000 private and municipal houses. In our reminder such homeless state occurs the second time. After returning from banishment the Chechens remained alone in such a complicated situation. Acting on their own initiative, the Chechens solved the problem in 5-10 years. At the beginning of the seventies the Chechen houses were more modern and comfortable than houses in other Russian regions including the neighbouring Republics of the Northern Caucasus. By the way, there was no support from anywhere. More than 42% of the respondents pointed to the state's obligation because the state began the war and caused the problem. Taking into consideration the reality in the Republic and in proper Russia, the Chechens will have remain for a longer time in such housing conditions.

29. Does your community benefit from the exploitation of natural resources (soil, water, minerals, forest, [unpolluted] air, wind, sun, oil)?

- a) According to the accessible information, we do not benefit from these resources - 41 persons (34%);
- b) Probably there is some advantage, but I don't know about it – 72 persons (61%);
- c) 6 persons (5%) gave different answers... the Republic was ruined because of oil; there is an advantage but not for me etc.

The majority of the people in the Republic are sufficiently informed about the situation regarding oil, but less about the other listed natural resources. “To transform the oilfields now useless for the owners in a national patrimony” would be an efficient slogan for the meetings at the beginning of the nineties. Presently the population of the Republic benefits even less than at that time. The state of water, air and forests has deteriorated significantly. A big part of the territory of the Republic turned into a waste dump with the former city of Grozny as the centre.

30. What is required to get permanent benefits from the available natural resources (renewable resources) for the Republic's inhabitants and their descendants ?

- a) In my opinion, it is necessary to adopt appropriate laws and strictly observe these laws – 34 persons;
- b) Under the present circumstances it is impossible – 35 persons;
- c) It is possible only if there will be a government depending only on the people and the laws – 35 persons.

31. Are there any land-conflicts?

- a) There are a lot of problems with land tenure – 42 persons ;
- b) There are such problems, but for me they are not the topmost content – 45 persons;
- c) At this time problems with land tenure still don't concern me - 33 persons.

The existence of the problem is obvious for all respondents. The use of land as arable land, grassland or other productive needs was not allowed since the time of collectivisation in the thirties during the 20th century. Before there was only a restricted access of Chechens to the land as a result of Russia's colonial policy toward the “tuzemtsy” [“aborigines”] (in the Russian Empire the designation for the Chechens [and other North Caucasian peoples]). People got used to such a situation. In the present life this problem is less painful than many other.

32. How can natural resources be used without destroying nature?

- a) I think it is necessary to elaborate on protective measures considering the traditions of the people – 25 persons;
- b) The war crippled nature in an irreparable way; I think that the question is not to benefit from nature but to help it – 59 persons;
- c) In handling nature one should consider the experience of civilised countries – 36 persons.

On the territory of the Chechen Republic hundred of thousand of tons of diverse explosives were detonated including those forbidden by the international community. Therefore even a restricted use of natural resources now seems to be problematic. The peoples living in such a situation understand the problem. The authorities do nothing to improve the ecological situation. Even more, this problem is not discussed on the local administrative level.

33. How do you evaluate the quality of government public services (electricity, water supply, telephone, infrastructure, bridges, roadwork)?

- a) I cannot evaluate these services because they don't exist – 73 persons (62%);
- b) The quality of these services doesn't suit me – 42 persons (31%);
- c) Except for some details they suit me 3 persons (2%).

At the end of the fifth year of the “counter-terrorist operation” the authorities even not began to provide public services. There are no acceptable roads neither in localities nor between them. In some rayons [districts] of Grozny there are no power supply lines, water is sold from tank lorries (a pailful of water for 1 Rouble); for the purchase of a mobile phone one need a permit of the FSB. These are the public services as they are accordingly evaluated by 98% of the respondents.

34. How is property of land held? How is land distributed? Is there community land?

- a) There are traditions of land tenure and land distribution but this tradition should be re-adapted – 70 persons (58%);
- b) The existing family and tayp land distribution is suitable and should be perpetuated - 50 persons (42%);

The traditional form of land tenure was not destroyed even by the communist kolkhoz system. During the existence of kolkhozes communities and concrete families remembered their landownership although it was not documented. After the dissolution of the USSR these lands went

to their [traditional] owners without resistance from other members of the communities. There are still communal and family lands in villages. Usually nobody makes a claim to the common lands. In Soviet times these traditions were tacitly respected. Common lands were distributed only with consent of the members of the community or their representatives. Decisions of state authorities were accepted “de facto”. But a person who was granted land by the authorities did not consider it ultimately as his property until it was approved by the community.

Probably, this form of land tenure and land distribution will remain among the Chechens. Anyway there are only few explicit opponents to this form of land tenure.

35. What are the different ways to possess of land in your community? What is the preferable way to possess land for you and your children?

- a) In my opinion, the most preferred to possess land would be by private property of land – 38 persons (31%);
- b) In my opinion, communal as well as private ways to possess land there are necessary - 60 persons (50%);
- c) The land should belong to the state – 22 persons (19%).

36. Who should solve land property conflicts? Local authorities⁸ (elders) or governmental bodies?

- a) The official administration – 18 persons (15%);
- b) In my opinion, an efficient solution to land property conflicts is impossible without participation by the elders – 32 persons (26%);
- c) In my opinion, the best way is on both elders and public agents to participate – 70 persons (59%).

In matters of land tenure and land property rights the majority of Chechens still follow the tradition. 85% exclude an efficient solution of land property conflicts without participation by the elders. And only 15% of the respondents have trust in the state authorities alone.

37. Who should own the soil, mines-and-carries, oilfields?

- a) In my opinion, there should be mixed ownership – 56 persons (47%);
- b) As the most efficient, private ownership should prevail – 38 persons (31%);
- c) In my opinion, state ownership should prevail – 26 persons (22%).

⁸In the Russian language use the word “avtoritet” - *authority* designates informal authorities e.g. tribal, clan or even

38. Would loans of money be a good way to improve your housing conditions or it would be enough to save up some money?

- a) With credits and in peace I would solve my problems relatively quickly – 41 persons (34%);
- b) Obedience of laws and credit agencies are among the most important conditions for the solution of the present problems – 62% persons (51%);
- c) For the improvement of the living conditions in our Republic are necessary... (your opinion) – 17 persons, 15% wrote diverse variants, among other things negotiations with Maskhadov⁹, it needs freedom etc.

In our opinion, beside stability the possibility of money loaning would be the most efficient way of the solution of a lot today's complicated problems.

39. Which economic system would be the most helpful for the population (private, public/social, mixed)?

- a) In my opinion, all economic systems should have a right to exist, but the private economy is the most efficient – 75 persons (62%);
- b) In my opinion, the public/social economy is preferable – 20 persons (16%);
- c) In my opinion, a mixed form is preferable – 25 persons (22%).

criminal authorities although they can have a formal status too.

⁹Aslan Alievich Maskhadov (born September 21, 1951). Former Soviet officer and Chief of Staff of the Chechen army during the 1. Chechen war (1994-1996); second elected Chechen president (January 1997). He was elected as separatist president and nevertheless was recognised by the Federal government as a legitimate president until the 2. Chechen war (1999 - 2000). Maskhadov is still considered as President by the armed separatists. He lives now in hiding.