

## Irredentism in Disputed Territories and Its Influence on the Border Conflicts and Wars

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### Abstract

One of the fundamental issues in the ethnogenesis is a common territory with the specific geographical and climatic conditions which define economic and cultural types of a civilization, reflected in its mentality, customs, traditions, etc. The importance of the territory explains the fact that it represents one of the main reasons for interethnic or interstate conflicts in which all sides claim their own rights to this territory. Territorial disputes and conflicts remain one of the most acute and complicated problems in the contemporary international relations. Millions of people live in the areas that are claimed by two or more sovereign countries which recognize each other. The number of such people dramatically increases in cases of the territorial claims between sides without mutual recognition. A region under the political jurisdiction of one nation but related to another through cultural, historical, or ethnic ties is sometimes called an *irredenta*. There exists another meaning of *irredenta*—an ethnic minority living compactly and for a long historical period in the border area of the neighboring homeland state with the maternal ethnic core. Therefore *irredenta* and *diaspora* have different attitudes to the residing area, the former pretending to be aboriginal and the latter having a mother land i.e., a kin state from where their ancestors migrated to the host country. This paper is an attempt to understand different interpretations of irredentism and its influence upon territorial conflicts of the neighboring countries with the aim of analyzing the paradigm in the existing literature.

### Keywords

Diaspora, Irredenta, irredentism, territory, separatism, secessionism, border conflict

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the socialist block, territorial conflicts became large scale in the vast areas of Eurasia. Ethnic cleansing, armed clashes, civil and interstate wars led to the explosion of studies on separatism for practical and academic purposes. However, most of the scholars prefer not to use the concepts of *irredentism* and *irredenta* and use the notions of secessionism and Diaspora instead.

Most of the so-called irredentist disputes, including Albanian claims to Kosovo, or China's claims to Taiwan, over Hong Kong and Macau, Pakistani claims to Jammu and Kashmir, Kurds over parts of Turkey, Syria and Iran, Uyghurs over Xinjiang etc. are examples of the old irredentism still threatening the regional and world security. The collapse of communism at the end of the 1980s and the disintegration the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia led to the creation of new irredentist trends in Europe.

The concept of irredentism, which is derived from the Italian *irredenta* (“unredeemed”) originated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in connection with the Italian movement which after the unification of Italy aimed at the annexation of Italian-speaking regions under Austrian or Swiss rule, such as Trent, Dalmatia, Istria, Trieste and Fiume. The concept, however, has become detached from its concrete and specific connotation and has come to denote any movement which aims to unite politically or by arms with its co-national mother state a region under foreign rule” (Encyclopedia 1950, VIII, 325).

The aim of this paper is manifold and attempts to find answers to the following questions: Why is it necessary to study irredentism? What is Irredenta and how is it different from Diaspora? How are Irredentism and territorial conflicts interconnected in post Soviet Central Asia?

This paper traces irredentism<sup>1</sup> (Saideman 1998, 53) of the border region and its influence in civil conflicts and military clashes for the disputed territories. It will be shown how different historical circumstances have contributed to the development of irredentist views of the irredenta's leaders and elite. These irredentist views are likely to lead to conflicts and they are important for explaining the relations between bordering countries with territorial claims based on the ethnic origin of population (irredenta). Shedding some more light on the puzzle of irredentism means making a significant contribution to the studies of border conflicts and territorial disputes. Last but not least, the paper is focused on the territorial disputes of Kazakhstan with neighboring countries in the border areas paying special

1 I rely on a definition from Saideman, who has defined irredentism as “state support for annexing neighboring territories inhabited by ethnic kin.” Stephen M. Saideman. “Inconsistent Irredentism? Political Competition, Ethnic Ties, and the Foreign Policies of Somalia and Serbia,” Security Studies, Vol.7, No.3, 1998. p.53.

attention to the ethnic origin of the residing population.

## WHY THE STUDY OF IRREDENTISM IS NECESSARY?

Markus Kornprobst in the Introduction to his monograph asking: *Why study irredentism?* gave his response, stating that there are two principal reasons—one theoretical and the other empirical—that make studying irredentism a very important research enterprise (Kornprobst 2008, 10-12).

One of the reasons why irredentism is not actively explored by social scholars may be the way it has been defined. Its most common definitions are rather limited, but there is a consensus in the studies that irredentism is a particular kind of a territorial dispute. Many scholars understand *irredentism* as the attempt by a sovereign state to incorporate the territories of ethnically related populations in neighboring countries (Saideman & Ayres 1991, 161). Yet there are disagreements on how exactly to define irredentism. In the case of ethno-territorial cross-border conflicts, irredentist and secessionist movements often coincide.

Gigi Gokcek argues that irredentist conflicts are often instigated by sovereign states, whereas, secessionist conflicts are usually initiated by ethnic minority groups. Since sovereign states have military capability to fight full-scale wars, irredentist conflicts tend to be more violent and/or turn international. Given that minority groups lack military resources to fight for their causes, secessionist conflicts, on the other hand, normally do not escalate to interstate wars (Gokcek 2011, 276).

One study in particular revealed that secessionist ethnic conflicts were militarily weaker and thereby less likely to turn international as compared to irredentist conflicts. As it has already been noted, secessionism refers to a decision by an ethnic group to separate the territory in which the group is concentrated from the sovereign authority of the country in which it resides. Secessionist conflicts ensue when a group's claims are rejected by the sovereign state to avert any territorial loss, creation of Diaspora populations, complications over shared natural resources, etc. Since sovereign states are unlikely to grant secessionism to minority populations within their borders, these movements almost always lead to violence. However, the international community recognizes a sovereign state's right to preserve its territorial integrity and such conflicts rarely turn global. This is not the case for irredentist movements (Gokcek G. 2011, 279-280).

Irredentism refers to political efforts to unite ethnically related parts of a particular population living in two or more different neighboring states. Irredentist claims are normally made by ethnic groups that happen to be the dominant

majority inside a sovereign-state and wish to incorporate the land and territory of their ethnic-kin living as minorities inside a neighboring country or countries. Similar to secessionist claims, irredentism also challenges the territorial integrity of sovereign states. However, the clear difference is that in most cases the claim is being made by a sovereign state with a well-organized and capable military. When the request to incorporate the territory and/or its people is denied, the claimant does not immediately nor easily give up. The situation intensifies as the claimant pushes to have its objectives met by any means possible. This reluctance to back-down creates an environment of hostility and violence, which ultimately leads to a war (Saideman S. & Ayres R. 2000, 1136).

In irredentist clashes there are two (or more) confronting sides but all countries of the region and great powers will be involved in the conflict. As Stefan Wollf noted, international support for or against a secession/irredenta will depend upon a variety of different factors, such as the danger of armed conflict arising from the secession or its denial, the human rights records of both states involved and their international influence, strategic interests of regional and world powers in the area, the potential creation of a new minority problem in the seceding territory and its consequences for regional and global stability, the strength of support and enthusiasm which the kin-state lends to the secessionist aspirations of the co-ethnic group, and the means with which secession and its prevention are being sought (Wollf 2002, 28).

## **WHAT IS IRREDENTA AND HOW IT IS DIFFERENT FROM DIASPORA?**

George Fredrickson a prominent American scholar offered the following observations: "...There are two ways you can gain territory from another country. One is by conquest...the other way you can regain territory is by population infiltration and demographic dominance..." (Fredrickson 1988, 135).

During the resettlement of an ethnic group to a new place, it is up to not only the first generation of immigrants, but also their descendants, to preserve its former distinctiveness and its ethnic characteristics in one way or another. Long-term residence in another country transforms the generation of immigrants into a sub ethnos, a Diaspora, a splinter broken away from the main ethnic core, with a culture, lifestyle and language that differs from the original. The representatives of this kind of sub-ethnos (Diaspora) usually have dual ethnic identity, with a consciousness of belonging to the larger ethnos, and a consciousness of belonging to the Diaspora.

Descendants of immigrants, having lived a long time outside of their historic homeland (ethnic grounds), are usually subject to assimilation, or rather, dissolution into the dominant alien ethnic environment. They gradually forget their native language, customs and ethnic culture, which ultimately leads to the loss of a sense of the old sub-ethnos ethnicity. This process usually ends with the shift of several generations. The Diaspora, however, will not disappear as long as its members perceive themselves as opposed to the “we-they” binary, and the “they” refers to all others, including even the ethnic-core from which their ancestors once broke free (Semenov 2000).

At times radical changes in the national identity (citizenship) occur within short timeframes, as was the case after the collapse of federative states in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Here, it is not so much a question of evolution, but of radical change in the habitual self-consciousness on both the individual and group levels. Diasporas, much like all other social structures, are mobile, as S. Arutyunov so convincingly states: “*Diasporas are not only and not so much a condition is represented, diasporas are a development from ‘yet to be Diaspora’ to ‘actually a Diaspora’ to ‘not so much a Diaspora’*” (Arutyunov 2000, 77).

Contemporary Diasporas are predominantly urbanized, characterized by higher rates of assimilation and a forced transformation from the traditional way of life to the modern. The transition from one stage of Diaspora genesis to another, which took centuries in the past, now occurs rapidly and in an accelerated mode. The shift of many ethno cultural markers, such as traditions, customs, native language, and the religion of ancestors, will take place in urban and unified environments for the duration of two or three generations.

The analysis of Diaspora consciousness requires a differentiated approach to its bearers. The Diaspora is divided into two main groups: 1. first generation immigrants who have existing national and ethnic consciousness; 2. subsequent generations born and raised in the host country. In adult immigrants, the restructuring of national (ethnic) consciousness in the Diaspora is a long and sometimes painful process. Diaspora consciousness of those born in the host country is a primordially native one, though not without various layers of stratification in national (ethnic) consciousness (Kalust'yants 2007, 288-294).

Immigrants living in the alien-ethnic, alien-cultural environment are subject to the process of diasporization. This is influenced by complex internal and external factors that differ in amplitude and intensity. It is believed that the rate of transition from immigrant communities to the Diaspora depends on the following key factors: compact resettlement in another country; age, gender and family structure; linguistic, cultural and confessional similarities or differences with the dominant alien ethnic populations; the national cultural policy of the state which

has accepted immigrants; intensity of the ties with historical homeland; presence of strong Diaspora network organizations (Semenov 2000).

One of the keys to understanding the essence of Diaspora consciousness lies in fact that it is not the Diaspora that generates Diaspora consciousness, but on the contrary, Diaspora Identity creates the Diaspora. The genesis of the Diaspora, on the whole, is objective, but to argue that the processes of Diaspora formation have ended is possible only with the formation of Diaspora consciousness.

The most important factor in the formation of Diaspora consciousness is the knowledge of the native language by parents and senior members of the family, which then stirs interest in the national language and traditional culture in children, and shapes diasporic perceptions of the world.

The importance and role of ethnic identity characteristics in Diasporas vary depending on the particular historical-political situation, the level of Diaspora consolidation, and the specifics of ethnic environment. The assertion that for Diasporas with a long history, the ethnicity shifted to the old traditional ethnic rituals, customs and traditions seems to be true. In fact, Diaspora members feel completely different and distinct, especially during the days of ancient folk holidays and eating traditional food.

In the self-consciousness of the Diaspora, the idea of the Diaspora plays a key-role; much like pioneering immigrants serve as the glue for future generations to come. Within this idea lies the understanding of the Diaspora's unique historical fate, the similarities and differences with the mother ethnic group, the members of the Diaspora in other countries, the recognition of the indispensability and the conservation of liaison channels with the historical homeland, and the aspiration for inter-diaspora consolidations and inter-ethnic integration into the country of residence. Unlike immigrant ethnic groups, uncertain as to whether or not they will take root in the host country, Diasporas are aware that their lives and the lives of future generations are directly related to the new homeland (German Kim 2012, 81-105).

Historically, few scholars have investigated the specific topic of diasporic political influence, but the last decade has seen an upsurge in new research. Diasporas have become remarkably more involved in the political processes in recent years.

A region under the political jurisdiction of one nation but related to another through cultural, historical, or ethnic ties is sometimes called an *irredenta*<sup>2</sup> (*Italia irredenta*) But there is another meaning of *irredenta* as an ethnic minority living compactly and for a long historical period in the border area of the neighboring

2 The word was coined in Italy from the phrase *Italia irredenta* ("unredeemed Italy"). This originally referred to Austro-Hungarian rule over territories mostly or partly inhabited by ethnic Italians, such as Trentino, Trieste, Dalmatia, Istria, Gorizia, Ticino, Nice (Nizza), Corsica and Malta.

homeland state with the maternal ethnic core and pretending to be aborigine in the living region (Mendiculova 2003).

A significant characteristic of many conflicts is what is called ‘external involvement.’ another state, usually a neighboring state, gets involved in the conflict, declaring that it aims to support and protect the rights and interests of its irredentic or diasporic minority. In many cases, the neighboring country’s goal is more radical than just protecting the rights of the minority: its objective is to ‘liberate,’ or to ‘redeem’ that minority and the territory in which it lives. This goal and the set of policies to achieve it constitute the core of “irredentism.” Irredentism invariably has an aggravating effect on minority-majority conflicts. By enhancing mutual suspicion and enmity, it frequently engenders violence, and, sometimes, even war (Yagcioglu 1996).

Ethnic Diaspora can be only in the case when the members of a particular ethnic group live in the host country populated by a different native peoples. Irredenta has different than Diaspora attitude to its inhabited territory, arguing that the border area in which they are the aboriginal population, should be attached to the territory of its ethnic core living in neighboring country.

### **Collapse of USSR and Territorial Disputes in Central Asia**

The territorial conflicts can be divided into two types depending on the nature of conflicting sides. The first type is the conflict between the ethnoses (tribes, clans) within one country (inter ethnic) or between two or more states (international). Another type of conflicts is related to a section of the territory of a country and is defined as *separatism*. Separatism depending on its goals can be of the two types: *secessionism* which aims at separation of a part of the country’s area for establishment of a new sovereign state and *irredentism*—claiming annexation of a territorial part of one country for its Anschluss to the other neighboring state on the grounds of common ethnicity or prior historical possession (Horowitz 1992, 118-130).

The central issue in many irredentist movements is territory and not population, despite the irredentist state’s assertions to the contrary. There are several cases of irredentism that involve territories without even the existence of an ethnic minority related to the irredentist nation (Mayall & James 1990, 57) Therefore, it is the minorities that suffer the brunt of irredentism’s negative consequences. That is why ethnic minorities are often not very enthusiastic about irredentism. According to Horowitz they are even more likely to develop secessionist movements than support irredentist ones originating from the ‘mother-countries’ (Horowitz 1992, 118-130).

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia, China, and all five Central Asian states—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan,

accepted the old Soviet borders. However, currently there are tensions among all former Soviet republics regarding the issue of border delimitation. Ongoing border disputes—involving Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan has been a significant source of inter-state tension in the Central Asia since independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

The institutionalization of borders in Central Asia has a long history which can be divided into several stages: the first one going back to the time of the Russian colonization of the region in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The victory of the October revolution, establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics led to the second wave of delimitation of the borders between Kazakhstan and other Republics of Central Asia. Nikita Khrushchev initiated the changes of the borders within the Soviet Union. The transfer of the Crimean Oblast from the Russian Federation of Socialist Republics to the Ukrainian SSR was the greatest of them and led to high scale conflict between the two countries escalated to the international level. Through instructions by the Kremlin, areas of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, by decision of Nikita Khrushchev, were exchanged causing today's border and territory disputes. The final ongoing stage began with the collapse of the Soviet Union and establishment of the five sovereign countries in the post Soviet Central Asia.

The Republic of Kazakhstan being territorially the largest and economically the most advanced country of the region managed to solve most of its border problems in the post Soviet era. Its opponent is Uzbekistan—the second largest in size but first in the number of population and soldiers. Both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have been rivals to become the regional leader in the Central Asia.

In the early 2000s, Uzbekistan's border guards undertook a unilateral demarcation of the border, by building outposts with neighboring Kazakhstan; Kazakhstan in turn reacted with unease. On November 16, 2001, an agreement was signed by presidents Nazarbayev and Karimov delineating 96 percent of the over 1,200 mile Kazakhstani-Uzbekistani border. Both leaders indicated that the remaining border issues could be resolved diplomatically. The final agreement on border delimitation between the two states was reached in July 2003. The case of the village Bagys situated in the border area of the current Uzbekistan soil close to Tashkent but inhabited mostly by ethnic Kazakhs preferring Kazakhstan because of the higher living standards is a classical example of the importance of territory. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the residents of Bagys hoped they would become a part of Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, Uzbekistan was unwilling to cede the land; Kazakhstan did not press the issue because Astana did not want to worsen its relations with Tashkent. As a result, the status of the residents of Bagys remains uncertain. Approximately half of the population still holds Kazakhstani passports,



another half Uzbekistani (International Crisis Group 2002).

In an attempt to show their frustration, the residents of Bagys took to the streets on December 31, 2000, and proclaimed the Independent Kazakhstan Republic of Bagys and elected a president and a legislature (Rongxing Guo 2006, 59). The government of Kazakhstan refrained from pressuring Tashkent, both to prevent negative reactions from Uzbekistan and to avoid setting any precedent for Slavic separatist movements in the north of Kazakhstan.

After the 2003 border demarcation and delimitation between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan the situation in some border areas remains tense. Since independence, there have been nineteen incidents recorded including one where four Kazakhstani and two Uzbekistani citizens were killed. Without resolving border disputes on a parity basis, the potential for armed conflicts will be high. Given tightening border controls, it is hardly surprising that both ethnic Uzbeks and Kazakh minorities continue to migrate out of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan respectively. Even if the demarcation is completed, both countries will still be facing the daunting challenge of how to ensure freedom of movement across the border (Border issues between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan 2003).

Another hot spot for Kazakhstan was in the northern border areas with Russia where ethnic Russians formed majorities, while Kazakhs predominated in the south and west. The policy of resettling Kazakhs into the northern regions of Kazakhstan began since the 1990s when Astana relocated Kazakhs from the South of the country to the northern part with the aim of changing the ethnic composition of the local population in the North.

In order to change the balance of population in favor of the titular nation the government of Kazakhstan promoted the resettlement of Kazakhs returning from abroad in the north. As is known, some four to five million ethnic Kazakhs lived outside of Kazakhstan in the 1990s: 1.3 million in China, 870,000 in Uzbekistan, 660,000 in the Russian Federation, and 157,000 in Mongolia. Between 1991 and 2011, approximately 860,000 so called *oralmans*<sup>3</sup> mostly from Uzbekistan returned back to their kin state. Then, in April 2012, Astana stopped the repatriation program, apparently concerned about the skills, values, and adaptability of those who had returned.

The Kazakhstan government's program of changing the ethnic composition of the northern regions of the country has worked. By the beginning of 2010, Russians exceeded ethnic Kazakhs only in the North-Kazakhstan oblast where the

3 *Oralman* - this term derives from the Kazakh verb *oralu* (to return) and was coined in Kazakh and Russian languages (*оралман*) in the middle of 1990s when the Kazakhstan governmental started the program of support to 'returning' Kazakhs from abroad. Oralman is repatriated to Kazakhstan according the quota system established in 1993.

former constituted 48.2 percent of the population.

The most tragic conflicts between two ethnic groups in the border area in the post Soviet Central Asia were Osh riots. The massacre took place in June 1990 in the cities of Osh and Uzgen, part of the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic (Kyrgyz SSR). The immediate cause for the riots was a dispute over the land of a former collective farm. While official estimates of the death toll range from over 300 to more than 600, unofficial figures range up to more than one thousand (Tishkov 1995, 133-149).

Ten years later in June 2010 Kyrgyz President Roza Otunbayeva declared a state of emergency in the southern Kyrgyzstan after admitting that ethnic pogroms carried out between June 10 and June 14 had claimed 2,000 victims -10 times the previous official death toll. These deaths largely took place when ethnic Kyrgyz mobs attacked minority Uzbek communities in some parts of the southern Kyrgyzstan, including the cities of Osh and Jalalabad. Many ethnic Uzbeks fled to makeshift camps along the Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan border, sections of which were sealed off by a barrier fence built by the Uzbek government. Red Cross officials said there were major shortages of food, water, shelter, and medicine (International Crisis Group 2010).

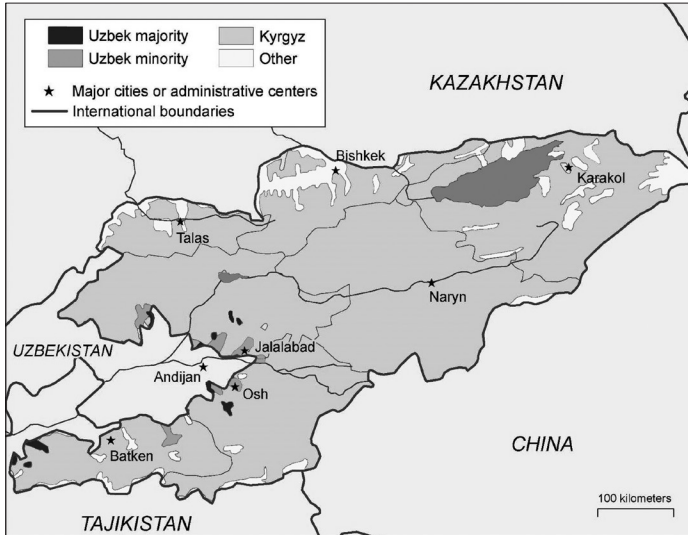
Some Kyrgyz and international experts state that the riots in 2010 were not just merely a repeat of those of 20 years before, but a continuation of the conflict (Suinaly kyzy 2012, 80).

The international aid for solving the conflict was quite passive and confined to the humanitarian assistance. The U.S. focused on the security of its own base, Manas, which was of key importance for the Afghan operation. Russia, Kazakhstan, China, and international organizations like Shanghai Cooperation Organization or the Kazakhstan-led OSCE remained passive and seemingly expected that the clashes would calm down on their own. But in the longer perspective the return of violence is very probable.

### **Irredenta vs. Diaspora in Territorial Claims**

The stated goal of irredentism is, in its radical form, to 'redeem' the territory where a kin ethnic minority (irredenta) lives and in its moderate form, and to defend that minority's rights. Thus irredentism, as a set of policies and actions, purports to help that minority. However, an irredentist approach to a minority, as a rule, does not improve but worsens its status and conditions (Yagcioglu 1996).

Territorial disputes and irredentist disputes are very prone to escalation and very difficult to resolve. According to Chazan, there are four main outcomes of irredentist conflicts: Successful readjustment of boundaries and territories to satisfy irredentist interests; The redefinition of the minority group struggle, usually high-



Map showing the distribution of Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, and “other” nationalities of the population of Kyrgyzstan in 2009. “Other” includes Russians, Dungans, Uyghurs, Tajiks, and Koreans etc.

Source: Bond & Koch, 2010, 533

lighting separatism at the expense of irredentism; The (temporary) withdrawal of irredentist demands (frequently as a result of a defeat of the irredentist state and/or minority), but with the prospect of them reappearing again sometime in the future, when conditions change; and accommodation and compromise through negotiation. Such an accommodation often involves some type of autonomy (cultural or territorial, or both) for the ethnic minority, as well as the recognition of some special relationship between that minority and the state that had made the irredentist demands (Chazan 1991, 1-8).

The list of irredentist claims or disputes in *Wikipedia* contains several dozens of cases, both historical and continuing to the modern day in all continents from Europe to Africa, from America to the Middle East (List of irredentist claims or disputes 2015). This list is a clear demonstration, on the one hand, of the large role of irredentism in contemporary international relations but on the other hand, of the lack of Irredenta and Irredentism’s studies.

Markus Kornprobst explains how irredentist disputes between European states have been resolved peacefully since the end of the Second World War by two case studies: the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the Republic of Ireland.

The main question posed by Kornprobst is: why have European states given up their irredentist claims. A comprehensive survey covering irredentist disputes throughout the world from 1946 to 2000 provides a picture of how European states have largely solved their disagreements through peaceful recognition of the

*territorial status quo* since the end of the Second World War. Expanding on more traditional understandings of irredentism that focus largely on the retrieval of ethnic kin and the land they inhabit from other states, Kornprobst starts by defining the phenomenon as “a territorial claim by a sovereign state against another sovereign state, aimed at reaching congruence between the boundaries of the nation and the borders of the state” (Kornprobst 2008, 10-12).

Numerous situations in which displaced ethnic groups kindred to those of neighboring nation-states but outnumbered in the nation-states which they inhabit, have been prevented for centuries from achieving reunion with their homelands. Although the Germans, for example, have long been in the majority in France’s provinces of Alsace and Lorraine and Italy’s South Tyrol, they have been prevented from achieving self-determination by French and Italian majorities in the rest of those nations. Similarly, Slovenians are predominant in the Austrian province of Carinthia, which borders on their homeland of Yugoslavia, but the German-speaking majority in Austria has long prevented their secession. Other examples of the failure of irredentist movements in Europe are those of the Albanians of Yugoslavia’s Kosovo province and the Greeks of Cyprus. A closer examination of those nation-states compounded of more than one nationality will reveal, however, that, in most instances, citizens of one culture, language or nationality are overwhelmingly dominant in either their numbers or their ability to employ the force of law. Thus, although the Germans are more numerous than any other nationality in Alsace-Lorraine or South Tyrol, they are themselves minuscule minorities within France or Italy as a whole. The Slovenians in Carinthia, also, are overwhelmingly outnumbered within the whole of Austria by their German-speaking fellow citizens. Even if the Yugoslav masses did not wish to retain control over the Albanians of Kosovo, their government is willing to resort to the force needed to suppress any Albanian dissidents. Similarly, Turkey met Greece’s call for *enosis* with the overwhelmingly Greek population of Cyprus by threatening to wage war against Greece.

It would moreover, be a serious error to denigrate the significance of irredentist movements simply because they often are unsuccessful. Even a minuscule national minority within a larger nation-state has often, when unable to win either its independence or reunion with its homeland, demonstrated a potential for generating chronic civil disorder and political extremism (Heubaum 2009, 79-84).

There is a crucial difference between Diaspora and Irredenta, the latter being an ethnic minority living compactly and for a long historical period in the border area of a neighboring homeland state with the maternal ethnic core and pretending to be aborigine in the living area. *Diaspora* has a mother land from where its ancestors migrated to the host country which, over time, became native. An area

that may be subjected to a potential claim is sometimes called an irredenta. Not all irredentas are involved in irredentism (Ambrosio & Thomas 2001, 1-30).

A traditional understanding of irredentism as the actions of one state to annex the bordering territories administered by another state on the grounds of common ethnicity of the populations of both countries or prior historical possession is still predominant in the contemporary discourse of political and international relations studies.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the crash of the East European block led to a boom in the scholarly interest in irredentism, separatism and secessionism initially in America and Western Europe. Recent historiography of irredentism includes the studies of the scholars in all parts of the planet and especially in the countries involved in the territorial claims, conflicts and wars.

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