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NATIONALISM IN THE USSR: A HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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**NATIONALISM IN THE USSR:
A HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE²**

The late 1980s and early 1990s were characterized by the sudden rise of nationalist movements in almost all Soviet ethnic regions. It is argued that the rise of *political* nationalism since the late 1980s can be explained by development of *cultural* nationalism in the previous decades, as an unintended outcome of communist nationalities policy. Soviet political and cultural nationalism is studied in historical and comparative perspective. All ethnic regions are examined throughout entire history of the Soviet Union (49 regions, 1917-91), using the structural equation modeling approach. This paper aims to make at least three contributions in the field. Firstly, it is a methodological contribution for studying nationalism: a ‘quantification of history’ approach. Quantitative values are assigned to historical trends and events. Having constructed variables from historical data, I use conventional statistical methods like SEM. Secondly, this paper contributes to the theoretical debate about the role of cultural autonomy in multiethnic states. The results rethink the notion of ‘cultural autonomy’ as solution of interethnic conflict. Cultural nationalism matters, it indirectly reinforces political nationalism. In both cases concessions in the cultural domain has not stopped the growth of political nationalism in the late 1980-s. Finally, the paper statistically proves that the break between early Soviet and Stalinist nationalities policy explains the entire Soviet nationalities policy. In fact, the late Soviet nationalities policy was inherited from the Stalin’s rule period. This finding revealed in other studies now gets statistical evidence.

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Introduction

The focus of this paper is nationalism in Soviet ethnic republics. The late 1980s and early 1990s were characterized by the sudden rise of nationalist movements across all Soviet ethnic regions. As a result, the USSR – a communist ethnic federation – collapsed. On the contrary, the 2000s are often presented as a period of political stability. This paper aims to answer two questions. The first question concerns how one may explain nationalism in Soviet ethnic republics. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, should the rise of ethnic nationalism in the Soviet Union be treated as a kind of deviation, related solely to the crisis of the communist state, or should it be regarded as more complex phenomenon?

The collapse of the USSR cannot be solely related to nationalism. Economic stagnation, growing dissatisfaction with living standards, mass disillusion with communist ideology, and many other factors are likely to have contributed even more to the crisis of communism. Yet there is little doubt that the role of ethnic movements was extremely important. The goal of this paper is not to assess the relative contribution of ethnic movements in the fall of the communist bloc, but to demonstrate that nationalism has emerged as an unexpected outcome of the entire communist policy regarding nationality.

The main argument is as follows: Cultural nationalism is crucial for understanding the roots of political nationalism. The Soviet Union rejected any kind of assimilation policy, claiming the right (at least to some degree) for cultural and political autonomy for every nationality. The model of ethnic federalism created opportunities for the development of ‘ethnic institutions’. As a result, most union and autonomous ethnic republics have shown significant progress in national and cultural development. Cultural nationalism comes prior to political nationalism, and cultural development is associated with nation building. Ethnic groups that completed the nation-building process are more likely to claim independence during a political crisis.

I endeavor to study Soviet nationalism from a historical and comparative perspective. All ethnic regions will be examined throughout the entire history of the Soviet Union (49 regions from 1917-1991), using a structural equation modeling approach.

This paper aims to make at least three contributions to the field. Firstly, it is a methodological contribution for studying nationalism in post-communist countries. Instead of a conventional descriptive historical case study or survey-based quantitative approach, I use an approach that combines the two. It is a ‘quantification of history’: I go deep in the history, back to 1917, and

assign quantitative values to historical events and trends. Having constructed variables from historical data, I use conventional statistical methods like SEM. Such an interdisciplinary approach bridges the advantages of history and political science.

Secondly, this paper contributes to the theoretical debate on the role of cultural autonomy in multiethnic states. The results challenge the concept of ‘cultural autonomy’ as solution to interethnic conflict. Cultural nationalism matters and indirectly reinforces political nationalism. However, concessions in the cultural domain did not stop the growth of political nationalism in the late 1980s.

Finally, this paper statistically proves that the break between early Soviet and Stalinist nationality policies explains the whole of Soviet nationality policy. In fact, the late Soviet nationality policy was inherited from the period of Stalin’s rule. This finding, which was revealed in other studies, now gets statistical evidence.

The paper consists of the following five sections. The first section provides a theoretical framework. The second one contains a brief historical outline of nationality policy in Soviet Russia. The third part describes data and methods. The fourth section includes results of analysis and interpretation, and the last section concludes the paper.

Nationalism and modernization

My theoretical approach lies within the modernist nationalism framework. This paper understands nationalism not as an idea or sentiment, but as a polity-seeking (or polity-upgrading) national movement. The latter aims to establish or upgrade an autonomous national polity (Brubaker 1996: 411-412). Modernism holds that nationalism is a rather recent invention. As Benedict Anderson and Ernst Gellner argue, education, science, and technology are key factors in the emergence of nationalism in the modern era (Gellner 2008). Anderson (2006) focuses on print languages as starting points for nation building – a sort of linguistic approach. Gellner (2008) places emphasis on cultural homogeneity through mass teaching of a national language. Miroslav Hroch (2000) argues that nations emerge as the result of activities of ethnic movements. National intellectuals, who are the by-product of modernization, play a significant role in the emergence of ethnic movements.

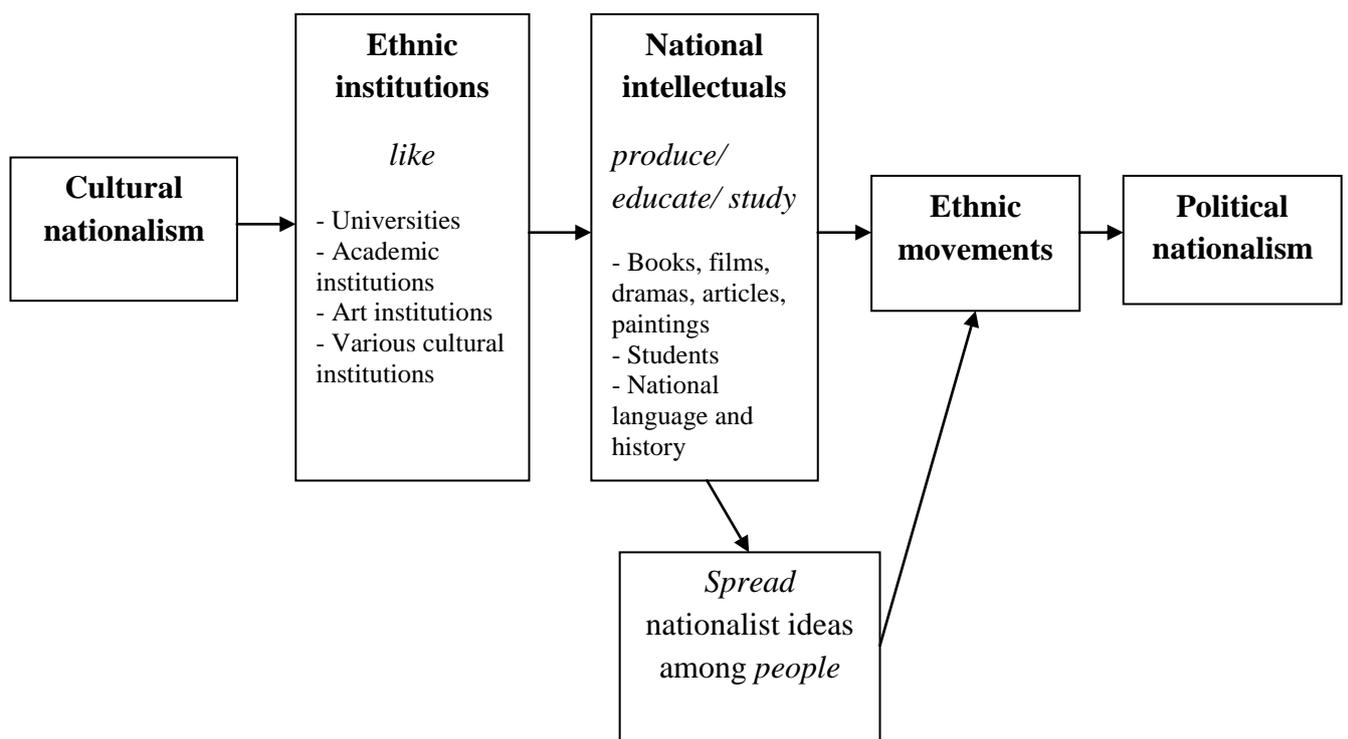
Two concepts are of crucial importance for my theoretical framework, specifically those of David Laitin and Dmitry Gorenburg. In his book 'Nations, States, and Violence' (2007), Laitin argues that nationalism is a privilege of rich societies. Only rich societies may afford to invest or spend resources in inventing, maintaining, or spreading traditions, customs, beliefs, and so forth – essentially in creating the 'imagined communities' that we call nations. Gorenburg's (2001; 2003) concept is based on the division of nationalism into political nationalism and cultural nationalism.

Political nationalism (separatism) may be defined as demand for a declaration of national sovereignty and recognition of the right to national self-determination, including secession. Cultural nationalism is defined as support for a titular official language and culture, the expansion of its teaching in schools, and the introduction of a greater or lesser degree of requirements and incentives to learn the titular language by members of a non-titular nation. Gorenburg argues that the strength of political nationalism depends on the support for ethnic institutions. The level of support for ethnic institutions, in turn, heavily depends on the willingness or capacity of regional leadership to invest a sufficient amount of resources in them. In other words, nations emerge as the result of nation building (Gorenburg 2001; 2003).

Gorenburg's concept is based on the claim that the strength and success of national movements in Russian regions depended on the degree of development of ethnic institutions in these regions during the Soviet period. Ethnic institutions lead to the emergence of an educated class of national intellectuals (*intelligentsia*) who become the driving force of political mobilization. How does this happen? There are at least three possible explanations. Firstly, intellectuals are responsible for the creation of national identity (language, literature, culture, history, etc.). Secondly, through participating in educational process, intellectuals create social networks among students whom they teach in universities. It is especially important in the case of young people who were born in rural areas and later moved to urban areas, but still retained strong links with their relatives in the countryside. Thirdly, intellectuals obtain resources that are crucial in the initial stage of political mobilization. For example, the first meetings of nationalists were held in academic institutions controlled by intellectuals. Gorenburg (2001; 2003) claims that it was the national intelligentsia who established nationalist movements in Russian ethnic republics in the late 1980s. Therefore, the emergence and strengthening of ethnic institutions is an outcome of state-led nationality policy.

The logic of cultural nationalism development assumes that support for nationalism is not equally distributed among the population (Gorenburg, 2001: 73). The national intelligentsia is a key intermediary between ethnic institutions and the rise of political nationalism. National intellectuals work in education, science, media, industry, and culture. They are responsible for the creation and distribution of national culture via books, journals, articles, paintings, films, history textbooks, lectures in universities, and classes in schools. The intended and unintended outcome of these activities is cultural nation building. When the process of nation building is accomplished and an ethnic group starts perceiving itself as a nation, political nationalism is likely to appear in the agenda. The more intellectuals society has, the more they communicate with people and spread the nationalist content they generate. To sum up, the more national intellectuals an ethnic group has, the more likely a strong ethnic movement with claims for cultural revival and greater political autonomy is.

Fig.1. Theoretical model outline.



According to Gorenburg, the level of ethnic institution development depended on the Kremlin's policies, which were based on the status of the region in the official Soviet national-administrative hierarchy (Fig.2) (Gorenburg, 2001, 2003).

Fig.2. Official administrative hierarchy in the USSR.

USSR
<i>Union Republic</i>
<i>Autonomous Republic (ASSR)</i>
<i>Autonomous Oblast' (AO)</i>
<i>National Autonomous District (NAD)</i>

The higher a region's status, the more investments were allocated for developing ethnic institutions. Larger investments in ethnic institutions lead to larger numbers of national intellectuals; in turn, the presence of numerous intellectuals also increases the probability that a mass ethnic movement will emerge.

What predicts the high level of cultural nationalism? I argue that Gorenburg gives only a partial response. In his model, the formal status on the eve of mass political mobilization is the only predictor for development of ethnic institutions.

Despite enormous amount of papers on post-Soviet and East European nationalism, only a few papers focused on the relationship between cultural and political nationalism, and most of these focused only on some fragments of cultural nationalism.

In his recent book (2013), Keith Darden linked the difference in the intensity of UPA insurgent activity in Western Ukraine in 1946-52 and the pre-Soviet schooling systems in two regions. In the Stanislav region (presently the Ivan-Fronkiivsk region), Austrian authorities endorsed Ukrainization, especially in schools, and supported Ukrainian national organizations. In the bordering Transcarpathia (another slope of the Carpathians), Hungarian authorities opposed Ukrainization and denied access to schooling for Ukrainian nationalist organizations. A similar level of education and density of social organization led to a growth of pro-Russian sentiment among the population. As a result, Transcarpathia had no anti-Soviet insurgents after World War II.

In numerous papers (e.g., Laitin, Petersen, Slogum 1992; Laitin, 1998), David Laitin stressed the importance of a titular language for nationalism. In the late Soviet context, language standardization and language rationalization were among the most important issues in the

nationalist agenda at all administrative levels. The issues of linguistic nationalism are closely connected with the creation of new identities and assimilation.

Rogers Brubaker was putting emphasis not only on institutions – ‘institutionalized multinationality’ (Brubaker 1994) – but also on cultural dimension of the post-communist nationalist agenda. He introduced the idea of ‘nationalizing nationalism’, which is a kind of nationalism that is ‘nation-shaping’ or ‘nation-promoting’ (Brubaker 1996). The aim of this kind of nationalism is to nationalize the existing polity – to strengthen new political identity, which involves issues of language, culture, and minority identity and assimilation.

To sum up, these studies put emphasis on language and education. In this paper, both language and education are taken into consideration, in addition to other factors. My starting point is Gorenburg’s model, and I extend it. I analyze not only the period preceding the rise of nationalism in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but also the entire period of communist rule. Moreover, almost all ethnic regions are included in the model. It is assumed that the extent of political nationalism in the USSR in the late 1980s and 1990s is explained by the history of cultural nationalism development during the previous decades.

Cultural nationalism is the by-product of government policies, and in some cases is an unintended by-product. The Soviet Union was a multiethnic communist federation, and nationality policy was an important part of its political agenda. The main goals of the central government were the maintenance of interethnic peace, the creation of a supraethnic identity, and the prevention of secession. However, the Soviet government failed in achieving any of these goals. Why? The response can be found in the logic behind its nationality policy. The next section presents an overview of nationalism and nationality policy in the USSR.

History of Soviet nationalism

Nationalism was one of the key issues that had been discussed during the creation of the Soviet Union. Surprisingly, ‘internationalist’ communists succeeded in mobilizing their supporters among ethnic and nationalist lines. The Bolshevik communists declared the right for self-determination (expressed as some sort of political autonomy), the equality of all nations, and protection against assimilation from the ethnic majority.

1) *The Revolution and the Civil War (1917-25)*

The Russian Empire was a unitary state. The imperial political and administrative structure was not built for the rise of nationalism. Russian governors appointed by St. Petersburg managed all provinces. The last two Tsars – Alexander III and Nicholas II - were moderate nationalists who attempted to restrict the rights of some particular nationalities. Since the late 19th century, pan-Slavism was adopted as a kind of official ideology, although the Russian Empire included not only Slavs and Orthodox Christians, but also Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, and Buddhists. The Russian Imperial government underestimated the power of nationalism and failed to implement policies to assimilate or, at least, pacify discontented ethnic groups (Etkind 2013). Only Finland and Poland had some sort of autonomy, although it was reduced by the late 19th century. Ultimately, Russia's participation in WWI precipitated the collapse of the Tsarist Empire.

During the Civil War, some parts of the Russian Empire proclaimed their independence: *The Republic of Estonia* in Estonia; *The Lithuanian Republic* in Lithuania; *The Latvian Republic* in Latvia; *The Ukrainian People's Republic*, *Skoropadskii's Government*, and the *Crimean Regional Government* in Ukraine; *Belarus People's Republic* in Belarus; *Moldovan Democratic Republic* in Moldova; *Azerbaijan Democratic Republic* in Azerbaijan; *Georgian Democratic Republic* in Georgia; *Republic of Armenia* in Armenia; *Alash-Orda* in Kazakhstan; *Transcaspian Provisional Government* in Turkmenistan; *Turkestan Autonomy* in Central Asia; *the Idel-Ural Project* in Tatarstan; *Bashkurdistan* in Bashkiria; *the Gorskaya-Mountain Republic* in Dagestan; *North Caucasian Emirate* in Chechnya; *Ingria*, *The North Karelian Government*, and *the Olonets Government* in Karelia; *the Buryat-Mongol State* in Buryatia; *the Karakorum Altai District* in the Altai Republic; *the Provisional Yakut Regional People Government*; and *the Tyva People's Republic*.

In attempt to attract new allies, the Bolsheviks declared the right of self-determination as one of their political principles. Their opponents in the Civil War, the White Movement, declared their commitment to the idea of a 'united and inseparable Russia', and this was one of the reasons of their defeat in the Civil War. Indeed, ethnic federalism was the Bolsheviks' political solution for the 'national question'. In the aftermath of the Civil War, the USSR was established as a union of equal nations and republics in 1922 (Pipes 1992). It was repeatedly stressed that the USSR was no longer a Russian empire. Moreover, all union republics were theoretically granted the right to secede.

Being Marxists, the Bolsheviks believed in the ultimate priority of class-consciousness and class ideology. The slogan of ‘national self-determination’ was a trick: after the global communist revolution, all people would have been living in classless and nationless communist republics of workers and peasants.

2) *Early Soviet period: The ‘Affirmative Action Empire’ period (1926-39)*

During the Civil War, the Bolsheviks were shocked by ‘the bloody lesson of 1919’: Ukrainian peasants revolted against Bolshevik rule, having been mobilized along ethnic lines. This uprising was clearly an anti-Russian one. Having repressed it, the Bolsheviks had to admit that nationalism could not be ignored anymore.

The Bolsheviks discussed two approaches to the ‘national question’:

- ‘*The orthodox Marxist approach*’: nationalism is a false ideology invented by bourgeois leaders to split the global class of workers (and peasants). National and local cultures should be ignored because in the (near) future any national culture would be replaced by a universal communist culture. The only true identity is class identity; no national self-determination, no national or even cultural autonomy is allowed (Martin 2001).
- ‘*The greater danger approach*’: nationalism is a real thing and should not be ignored, at least now. Ignoring the role of national culture by the Soviet regime could be understood as a continuation of Great-power Russian nationalism and colonialism. In this case, it is a danger of new anti-communist revolts as a response to Russian colonialism. Therefore, the Bolsheviks chose to support the minority nationalism against Great-power Russian nationalism. Russian chauvinism was treated as a greater danger in comparison to local nationalism (Martin 2001).

After a short but intensive debate, the Bolsheviks adopted the latter approach. The political implication of this approach was the implementation of an original nationality policy, aimed at promoting local nationalism and accelerating the social, economic, political, and cultural development of ‘backward’ ethnic groups (Vujacic 2007). Terry Martin defined this policy as ‘The Affirmative Action Empire’ (Martin 2001). Frankly speaking, it was an attempt to marry communism with nationalism – and to convert nationalists into communists. This policy declared a principle of ‘no assimilation’, as well as the ‘Piedmont principle’. The latter argued that

success in the development of bordering ethnic groups in the USSR would attract co-nationals living in other states. For example, rising living standards of Soviet Ukrainians and Belarusians would attract their co-nationals who live in Poland. Thus, the nationality policy would become an instrument of Soviet foreign policy. The distinctive features of this so-called Affirmative Action Empire are as follows:

- *Korenizatsia (nativization)*. Titular ethnic groups were given some politically biased advantages for development, like ethnic quotas in central universities, job quotas in government organizations, and resources to develop ethnic institutions. ‘Korenizatsia’ also declared the promotion of titular nations as a new recruiting policy. Indirectly, this policy endorsed anti-Russian sentiments, but the Bolsheviks had no choice but to tolerate it. Ethnic minorities had to be pacified at the expense of the majority.
- *Latinization campaign*: The Soviet government assisted in spreading written language to all, even small ethnic groups. This policy coincided with numerous proposals of some linguists and intellectuals (from Turkic ethnic groups) to shift to the Latin script. Not all officials were happy with that idea, but it was finally supported. The main reasons were: a) to show the non-Russifying nature of Soviet nationality policy; and, b) a painless shift from the Arabic script in order to remove Soviet Turkic languages and cultures from Arabic (foreign) influence. The Latinization campaign was completed by the early 1930s (Martin 2001).
- *Rapid state-led nation building*. Soviet authorities invented new ethnic identities and ascribed them, drew national boundaries, established titular language schools, promoted local elites, printed books and newspapers in native language, supported local intellectuals (writers, poets, artists, intellectuals, historians, etc.), and established national territorial units (e.g., Hirsch 1997, 2000; Slezkine 1994).

Rather than a melting pot, the Soviet Union became the incubator of new nations. New local and supranational ethnic identities were created (Vujacic 2007). The government promoted these identities through education and cultural policies. Soviet linguists created alphabets and writings for more than 20 ethnic groups – all of them in Latin script. Autonomous republics in Russia enjoyed an enormous circulation of books in native languages, often with the highest volumes in their history. All ethnic minorities across the Soviet Union were granted the right for schooling

in their native language. The first universities were established in most republics. These policies indicate the Soviet government's commitment to endorsing cultural nationalism and promoting a national intelligentsia.

However, by the mid-1930s, the Affirmative Action Empire policy had reached its peak. The promotion of local nationalism resulted in the rise of local anti-communist and nationalist sentiment. Industrialization and collectivization proved that Russians had been the most loyal ethnic group in the USSR. By the late 1930s, Stalin had radically changed the Soviet nationality policy. Local nationalism was attacked as 'bourgeois' and 'pro-capitalist' political movements, and Great-power Russian nationalism was endorsed as the new official policy. During the Great Purge, some ethnic groups were labeled as politically disloyal, which led to mass arrests and deportations. Finally, linguistic Russification became an important factor in internal state cohesion.

3) Great-power Russian Nationalism (1940-55)

Stalin's new nationality policy stressed the pivotal role of Russians in the new Soviet state. At the ideological and cultural level, new old Russian heroes were incorporated in the official Soviet pantheon: Tsars Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great (as great reformers), military leaders Suvorov, Kutuzov, Dmitrii Donskoy, and Alexander Nevskii, writers Pushkin and Tolstoy, scientists Lomonosov, Popov, and so forth. This shift has several possible explanations. Firstly, the Bolsheviks wanted to secure their political support from Russians, the most loyal ethnic group. Due to the opposition of Russians to the anti-imperialist and anti-Russian campaign (endorsed by ethnic minorities), Stalin decided to meet their demands. Attacks on Russian culture were banned, and pro-western cultural orientations were explicitly prohibited. The official position was based on the fact that any pro-Russian cultural orientation could not be 'backward' compared to pro-Western ones, as some nationalist writers could argue just a few years before (Martin 2001). On the whole, the new cultural policy can be described as a permanent shift to 'Slavophilism'. The official propaganda stressed the 'world leading' role of the *Russian* proletariat, which gave to the world the Great October Socialist Revolution (Martin 2001; Branderberger 2000). Secondly, the Bolsheviks perceived Russians as the ethnic glue for the USSR. In the 1920s Russian settlement in other ethnic regions was not regarded as a nationality policy in order to avoid discontent from local elites. Following the policy change, the central government actively promoted Russian migration to other republics, regarding ethnic

Russians as a main support group (Brandenberger 2000). Due to collectivization and industrialization, the Bolsheviks denied the privileged status of ‘backward’ nations. Now ‘backwardness’ turned out to be a synonym for disloyalty and treason. At the same time, Russians turned into a support base of the Soviet regime and unselfish representatives of the Empire (Baberowski 2006: 190).

At the political level, Stalin implemented a policy of Russification. Since the late 1930s, regional first party secretaries were predominantly Russian. The outbreak of WWII again proved the loyalty of Russians to the Soviet regime. In occupied territories, Russians and Belarusians showed the lowest level of collaboration with the Nazis. As Stalin had realized that Russians could be mobilized along ethnic lines more effectively, he issued several decrees to endorse Russian ethnic sentiments. For example, attitudes towards the Russian Orthodox Church were revised, a new military uniform (resembling pre-Soviet samples) was introduced, and new military orders in honor of famous Russian generals and Orthodox saints were established. In 1944 several ethnic groups were accused of large-scale collaboration with the Nazis and were subsequently deported in the Central Asia, among them were Chechens, Ingushs, Kalmyks, Karachais, Balkars, Crimean Tatars, and others (Hajda 1991: 220).

Postwar nationality policy stressed the exclusive contribution of Russians to the victory in the recent war. Stalin repeatedly announced that it was the Russian people who had sacrificed the most for the victory.

The promotion of Great-power Russian nationalism led to a Russification in cultural and education policies. In 1938, Russian again became an obligatory language in all schools (Hajda 1991: 219). Pre-war mass terror and emergency policies during WWII had led to the purging of the national intelligentsia in many ethnic republics. Many cultural and political nationalist leaders were repressed, and ethnic Russians filled their positions in power. The Soviet government no longer promoted pro-nationalist cultural policies. For example, circulations of books printed in native language dropped significantly in autonomous republics. Moreover, almost all languages were shifted to Cyrillic script. The role of Russians and the Russian language in the education system also increased. Schooling in a native language was mostly restricted to titular ethnic groups in their ethnic titular units. Some autonomous republics in Russia – especially the Orthodox Finnish-Ugric peoples – started to show a significant drop in native language usage (as their primary language). However, the number of universities increased as well as the number of students enrolled.

Postwar Great-power Russian nationalism adopted grotesque forms. The official viewpoint was that everything good throughout world history was done solely by Russians; Russian writers, scientists, and military leaders, were the best in the world. The spread of communism was equal to the spread of Russian influence, and the role of Russians in the new world order was incontestable. Therefore, the role of Russian culture, language, and literature were indisputable as well. The Great Russian nationalism policy was revised only after Stalin's death.

4) Nativization, or 'Trust to local elites' (1956-84)

Soviet nationality policy from Stalin's death until Perestroika included three key elements: Anti-Stalinism, 'Nativization', and slow-pace Russification.

The new Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev was quick to enact an anti-Stalinist policy. In 1956 he condemned the Great Purge and attacked Stalin for abusing his power. The Great-power Russian nationalism policy was revoked. For example, Khrushchev stressed the contribution of the Soviet *multiethnic* people to the victory in the recent war, instead of the solely Russian contribution. Furthermore, in 1957 all deported ethnic groups were allowed to return to their historic homelands. Khrushchev's condemnation of the Great Purge also meant that new political leadership was strongly opposed to mass repression, including terror along ethnic lines. The main idea was peaceful coexistence not only with the rest of the world, but within the Soviet Union as well. Russian expansion within the Soviet borders was also halted. The *Tselina* (the Virgin Lands) campaign in North Kazakhstan in 1957 was the last large-scale labor migration of Russians to a union republic. Despite his popular anti-Stalinism policy, Khrushchev failed to secure political control over the party. In 1964 he was forced to resign due to his 'voluntarism' and was replaced by Leonid Brezhnev.

Brezhnev's rule is often defined as the 'Corporatist Deal': Government demanded the loyalty of all major social groups in exchange for increasing benefits (Bunce 1983). Brezhnev attempted to design a new soft version of the Soviet regime, without rigid ideological commitments and political terror, but a pragmatic and utilitarian one. At the level of nationality policy, Brezhnev pushed 'nativization.' This time, 'nativization' had a different meaning: it was not just a linguistic policy, but a 'trust the local elites' policy. The main features of this policy were promotion of titular ethnics in local party leadership and local government. At the same time, titular nations were obliged to maintain political loyalty or social tranquility of local populations.

In some ways, it was a policy of compromise between union demands and local conditions; Moscow was seeking for a balance between central priorities and local interests (e.g., Roeder 1991).

Khrushchev's and Brezhnev's tenure were the golden age of ethnic institutional development. National intellectuals were provided with a lot of opportunities for employment in spheres of education, science, and culture. The establishment of new universities and academic institutions also led to the creation of new jobs for the intelligentsia. Rising volumes of circulations for books printed in native languages also indicated an increasing number of national writers and scholars. Union republics had more opportunities to invest resources in cultural development than autonomous republics and NADs.

Despite the advantages of a nativization policy, ethnic minorities realized that they had low chances for a good career at the union level. In fact, most of the titulars were employed in their native republics. This resentment was one of the reasons for the rise of local nationalism. Nativization provided local elites with essential resources for nation building. However, the party was strongly opposed to any kind of public nationalism.

The third key element of late Soviet nationality policy was slow-paced assimilation. In the late 1950s, the Soviet government announced new language and education reforms, which resulted in a reduction in the number of native-language schools in autonomous Russian republics. Inspired by the doctrine of 'fusion of nations' under forthcoming communism, Khrushchev tried to promote an ethnically blind personnel policy (Slezkine 1994: 449). In 1972 only Tatars and Bashkirs could study in their native language in grades 1 to 10. In all other republics, children could have native language only as subject, but not as a medium of instruction (usually only up to 4th grade). Often parents (especially in urban areas) preferred to send their children to Russian-language schools (Silver 1974). In May of 1979, Tashkent, the capital of the Uzbek SSR, hosted an all-Union conference entitled 'Russian Language: The Language of Friendship and Cooperation of the Peoples of the USSR'. This conference resulted in recommendations for improving the study and teaching of the Russian language at every level of the Soviet educational system, up to complete bilingualism across the USSR (Salchanyk 1982). In the aftermath of this conference, the Soviet government adopted and implemented policies aimed at expanding the teaching of the Russian language in ethnic republics – as a rule, at the expense of titular languages. These policies led to the rise of public discontent and even mass riots in some republics (the Baltic States, Georgia, and Ukraine) (Lapidus 1984: 572; Salchanyk 1982).

Official status in the Soviet administrative hierarchy mattered: nationalities with lower political status experienced a gradual curtailment of native language instruction (Silver 1974). The census data reveal slow-paced assimilation in some republics, both union and autonomous. Among all ethnic groups, Slavs, Orthodox Christians, with a high share of urban population were exposed to Russification more than others (Silver 1974a). Natives were opposed to Russification and tried to resist it. The roots of nationalism could be found in late Soviet anti-Russification sentiments.

5) The Perestroika and new political mobilization (1986-2000)

Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985. A few years later he announced broad political reforms that radically changed the balance between Moscow and the regions. Nationalists came to power after elections in 1990 in almost all ethnic republics. Everywhere they adopted a similar political program: claims for political and economic autonomy and ethnic cultural revival. By early 1991, six union republics declared their *de facto* independence. After the failure of the hard-liner coup in August 1991, the collapse of the USSR was inevitable, and in December 1991 the Soviet Union ceased to exist (Beissinger 2009).

Due to the policy of ‘nativization’, the Union’s republics looked like quasi-sovereign states, with state institutions, a native language, and an identity. When centrifugal forces at the Union level became stronger, political elites were ready to claim political autonomy and the independence of their republics as a priority political goal (Brubaker 1994). The Soviet regime constructed ethnic identities and trained local elites. When Russian second party secretaries disappeared (as well as the KGB, military, etc.), local elites realized that they were free to set up new political agendas and adopt and implement policies as they wished.

The rise of nationalism could also be found in autonomous republics within the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. However, in some ethnic regions, ethnic movements were powerful and strong (such as Bashkiria, Tatarstan, Chechnya, and Yakutia), but in others they failed to recruit enough supporters and played no significant role in local politics (like in Khakassia, Karelia, and Mordovia). The early 1990s saw the peak of support for nationalist movements in many ethnic republics. Sometimes the success of ethnic movements was explained by their ability to raise issues of job security for the native population (Giuliano 2011). The development of ethnic institutions in the late Soviet period is mentioned as another reason for the mass support of nationalist movements (Gorenburg 2001, 2003). The key troublesome regions

for the new Russian state were Chechnya and Tatarstan. The government fought two bloody wars in order to keep Chechnya within the Russian Federation. In the case of Tatarstan, President Yeltsin succeeded in finding a peaceful solution, having signed a few bilateral agreements on the division of powers between Moscow and Tatarstan in 1994. Why was this not done with Chechnya? Perhaps Russia's political leadership had perceived Chechens – in contrast to the 'enlightened' Tatars – as a 'backward' nation that was not worthy of negotiating and compromise (Sharafutdinova 2000). In other regions, nationalist movements succeeded to achieve either some policy changes or the incorporation of their leaders in regional administrations. By the late 1990s nationalist movements everywhere lost their influence and took a marginal part in local politics. When Putin came to power and announced his new policy of recentralizing the Russian state, ethnic movements were unable to resist in any way.

To sum up, the Soviet Union made a desperate effort to create an ethnic federation with equal rights for all constituent nations. Unsurprisingly, nationalism and nationality policy were a major source of legitimacy for the communist state. However, communist party rulers failed to create a legitimate supraethnic identity. By promoting broad cultural autonomy as a solution, communists in fact contributed to the rise of cultural nationalist movements. When supranational identity ceased to exist, the void was filled with particularistic, exclusive ethnic identities.

Data and methods

This paper aims to test the relationship between cultural and political nationalism with statistical methods. I split the history of the USSR into five periods, after which political and cultural nationalism are both measured. Finally, the relationship between cultural and political nationalism is tested.

I extend and modify Gorenburg's model. Firstly, I include the entire period of Soviet rule (1917-1985) in my analysis, which is split into 5 periods, with two periods of political nationalism – the first and the last ones – and three in the middle with periods of cultural nationalism (Table 1). I sample 49 Soviet ethnic republics.³

³ This figure includes: a) 14 union republics (Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan); b) 21 autonomous republics within the Russian Federation (Bashkiria, Tatarstan, Dagestan, Chechnya, Adygeya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachayev-Cherkessia, Kalmykia, Mordovia, Udmurtia, Chuvashia, Komi, Mari El, Buryatia, Tyva, Yakutia, Altai, Khakassia, Karelia); c) 11 national administrative districts (Chukotskii AO, Nenetskii AO, Komi-Permyatskii AO, Khanty-Mansi AO, Yamalo-Nenetskii

Table 1. Periodization of cultural and political nationalism in the USSR.

Period	USSR
Political nationalism	<i>1917-25</i> The October Revolution and the Civil War (political mobilization)
<i>Cultural nationalism</i>	<i>1925-39</i> ‘The Affirmative Action Empire’ (state-led nation building)
<i>Cultural nationalism</i>	<i>1940-1955</i> Great-power Russian nationalism (Russification campaign)
<i>Cultural nationalism</i>	<i>1956-1985</i> ‘Nativization’, or ‘Trust to local elites’ (creation of quasi-sovereign states on the basis of the Union Republics, regional cultural development)
Political nationalism	<i>1986-2000</i> Perestroika and the crisis of the Russian state (the collapse of the USSR and political mobilization)

Secondly, I have added other factors in my model.

I take *Religion* as predictor. Many studies have shown that, for example, Muslim regions tend to assimilate to a much lesser degree than Orthodox regions (Silver 1974a). One may assume that, as a primordial factor, religion can be an even more important predictor of nationalism than a region’s rank in formal hierarchy.

The central argument is as follows. Political nationalism is predicted by cultural nationalism; cultural nationalism is predicted by religion.

Political nationalism

The best way to measure nationalism would be to conduct surveys in all ethnic republics in all periods and reveal what people think about nationalism. Do they support the ideas of ethnic and cultural revival? What do they think about more political autonomy or even secession? Unfortunately, this data is almost non-existent. There were some surveys in a few Russian regions in the early 1990s, but this data is insufficient. Another way is to construct indices, based on particular historical facts.

AO, Koryakskii AO, Ust’-Ordynskii Buryatskii AO, Aginskii-Buryatskii AO, Evenkskii AO, Taymyrskii AO, Evreyskaya AO);
d) 3 autonomous republics/districts from other union republics (Abkhazia, Nakhichevan’ AO, Nagorny-Karabakh AO).

I use Treisman and Guiliano's approach to construct indices for measuring political nationalism (Treisman 2003; Guiliano 2011). They use several dummy variables to compose the indices of political nationalism in Russia.

I use 14/16 indicators for the USSR to construct indices of political nationalism in the 1990s (Table 2).

Table 2. The component of political nationalism in Russia in the 1990s.

USSR	
Both union, autonomous republics, and NAD	
<i>Declaration of sovereignty (0/1)</i>	<i>Referendum on sovereignty held (0/1)</i>
<i>Presidency established (0/1)</i>	<i>Priority of republican laws proclaimed (0/1)</i>
<i>Language law adopted (0/1)</i>	<i>Right to own currency declared (0/1)</i>
<i>Exclusiveness of titular language (0/1)</i>	<i>Priority right on national resources claimed (0/1)</i>
Only Union republics	
<i>Territorial claims raised (0/1)</i>	<i>Boycott of the 1991 March referendum (0/1)⁴</i>
<i>Referendum on sovereignty held before August 1991 (0/1)</i>	<i>Ethnic paramilitary established before 1991 (0/1)</i>
<i>Ethnic pogroms/cleansings (0/1)</i>	
Only autonomous republics and NADs	
<i>Constitution adopted before 1993?⁵ (0/1)</i>	<i>Formal administrative status raised (0/1)</i>
<i>Constitution adopted before 2000 (0/1)</i>	<i>Boycott of the 1993 April referendum⁶ (0/1)</i>
<i>Including right for secession? (0/1)</i>	<i>Refusal to send soldiers in Russian army (0/1)</i>
<i>Boycott of the 1993 December referendum⁷ (0/1)</i>	

⁴ The referendum on the preservation of the USSR

⁵ The Constitution of the Russian Federation was adopted in December 1993

⁶ The referendum on the vote of confidence for President Yeltsin and parliament

⁷ The referendum on the draft Constitution

Then I converted these data into a ‘0 – 1’ scale (mean value). The top 5 separatist regions in Russia were identified (Table 3).

Table 3. Top 5 separatist regions in the late 1980s and 1990s.

USSR	
Region	Score
Tatarstan	0.88
Chechnya	0.69
Yakutia	0.63
Tyva	0.56
Bashkiria	0.5

In a similar way I composed an index of political nationalism in Russia for 1917-1925. I use 9 indicators (Table 4).

Table 4. The components of political nationalism in Russia in 1917-25.

USSR	
<i>Declaration of sovereignty (0/1)</i>	<i>Uprising (0/1; single event, against the Reds or the Whites; small-scale uprising – 0.5)</i>
<i>Non-Soviet independent state declared (0/1)</i>	<i>Rebellion movement (0/1; long-lasting guerilla war) (0/1)</i>
<i>A Constituent convention held (0/1; ethnic convention with broad powers and goals – 0.5)</i>	<i>Occupation by the Whites (0/1)</i>
<i>A Soviet republic proclaimed (0/1; from below, not from above; as part of a broader state – 0.5)</i>	<i>Own currency printed (0/1)</i>
<i>Constitution adopted (0/1; provisional political program – 0.5)</i>	

Then I converted this data into a ‘0 – 1’ scale (mean value). The top 5 of separatists regions were then identified (Table 5):

Table 5. Top-5 separatist regions in Russia in 1917-25.

USSR	
Region	Score
Bashkiria	0.89
Dagestan	0.83
Chechnya	0.78
Tyva	0.78
Tatarstan	0.67

Cultural nationalism

Measuring cultural nationalism is an even more difficult task. The main problem is data limitations: the Soviet census data from the 1920-1930s is very biased. The approach presented in this paper is based on the argument that cultural nationalism may be defined indirectly, via the development of ethnic institutions; these institutions – mostly in the education and cultural spheres – create job opportunities for national intellectuals. It is assumed that the expansion of education, literacy, and knowledge of a native language is associated with the rising number of national intellectuals. Therefore, cultural nationalism is measured indirectly. I use some proxies that measure the growth of a national intelligentsia in ethnic regions. One of my indicators is the number of books printed in native languages in that they reflect the number of writers and scholars, who are believed to be public opinion leaders. Another proxy is the number of students enrolled in higher education – universities create jobs for national intellectuals. Finally, as a proxy for assimilation (or non-assimilation), I use the prevalence of the titular language as one's primary language. I assume that national intellectuals should regard Russification as a threat not only to their titular nations, but also to their status quo. To sum up, cultural nationalism is defined through cultural, educational, and linguistic policies that produce a national intelligentsia.

There were some papers on the measurement of some aspects of language policy and Russification in the Soviet Union. Brian Silver has published a few papers on language status, bilingualism in schools, and Russification in the Soviet Union, mostly based on 1959 and 1970

census data (e.g., Silver 1974). He shows that linguistic assimilation, or Russification, was a rather complicated process in the USSR. The scope of Russification varied through time and space. In fact, it was much stronger at the level of the ASSRs than at that of Union republics, and was even stronger for AOs and NADs. Orthodox Finno-Ugric regions (Karelia, Chuvashia, and the Mari El republic) were among the most Russified regions, while Muslim regions were not exposed to Russification.

I construct an index of **cultural nationalism** for 3 periods: 1925-1939, 1940-1955, and 1956-1985. The index consists of three variables, and, due to data limitations, I use one value for the entire period.

Books in a native language – total circulation of books printed in a native language. I take these data from official Soviet statistics: 1937/1940, 1956, and 1980. I transform all values into a ‘0 - 1’ scale in two steps: firstly, I compute all figures as shares of the 1925-1940 period (1 = data for period 1925/1940); secondly, I recalculate these values: all values between 0 and 1 remain unchanged; values in the 1-2 range get value of ‘1’; values exceeding 2 get value of ‘1.1’.

Titular language as primary language – share of titular population that claimed their native language as their primary language. I use census data – 1959, 1970, and 1989. I recalculate all values in a ‘0 - 1’ scale (‘1’ = 95-100%; ‘0.9’ = 90-95%; ‘0.75’ = 80-90%; ‘0.5’ = 70-80%; ‘0.25’ = 50-70%; ‘0’ = 0-50%).

Students – the number of students enrolled in higher education. Values are taken for the year of the republic’s origin, 1940, 1956/1960, and 1980. I recalculate all values in a ‘0-1’ scale in two steps: first, I give values to the period 1917-1925 (‘0’ = 0; ‘0.25’ = 0-1000; ‘0.5’ = 1000-2000; ‘0.75’ = 2000-3000; ‘1’ = 3000+). Secondly, I recalculate all other values as shares of the previous period (‘0.25’ = 1-1.5; ‘0.5’ = 1.5-2; ‘0.75’ = 2-3; ‘1’ = 3-5; ‘1.1’ = 5+).

Finally, I compose the *Index of cultural nationalism in the USSR* as the mean of these 3 aforementioned variables.

Non-orthodox religion – variable for the predominant religion in an ethnic republic. I code ‘0’ for orthodoxy, ‘1’ – for all others. In some cases, I assign a value of ‘0.25’ to those regions that were officially converted into Orthodoxy by the Russians, but unofficially many titular nations still practiced their traditional religion like shamanism or paganism.

I take all data from official Soviet statistical sources (Pod'yachikh 1961; Dinamika naseleniia 1985; Narodnoye khozyaystvo 1967; 1987; Naseleniie SSSR 1974; 1990).

Hypotheses:

H1: Political nationalism is predicted by previous developments of cultural nationalism.

H2: Religion has a significant effect on cultural nationalism.

Results

I use the *structural equation modeling* approach to test my hypotheses. This methodological approach allows for the testing of a path-dependency relationship between variables. Structural equation modeling is a kind of an extension of factor analysis and regression analysis, expressing the interrelationship between variables through a set of linear relationships. SEM replaces a set of observable variables with a small set of unobservable constructs (for details, see Joereskog, 1973; Bollen, 1993). My dependent variable is '*Political nationalism 1986-2000*'. Independent variables are earlier political nationalism and 3 periods of cultural nationalism. I expect that all relationships between periods will be significant. Political nationalism is predicted by previous periods of cultural nationalism.

The unit of analysis is a region. A schematic picture of my general model is presented on Picture 1. I expect a connection between cultural and political nationalism. I test my basic assumption on the path-dependency of nationalism among all periods (Model 1). Next, I add religion to the basic model to test its influence on cultural nationalism (Models 2).

Pic.1. A schematic model of general model.



Model 1. This model adds cross-temporal links (Pic.2). It finds the link between '*Political nationalism 1917-1925*' and '*Cultural nationalism 1955-1985*', and all previous links remain

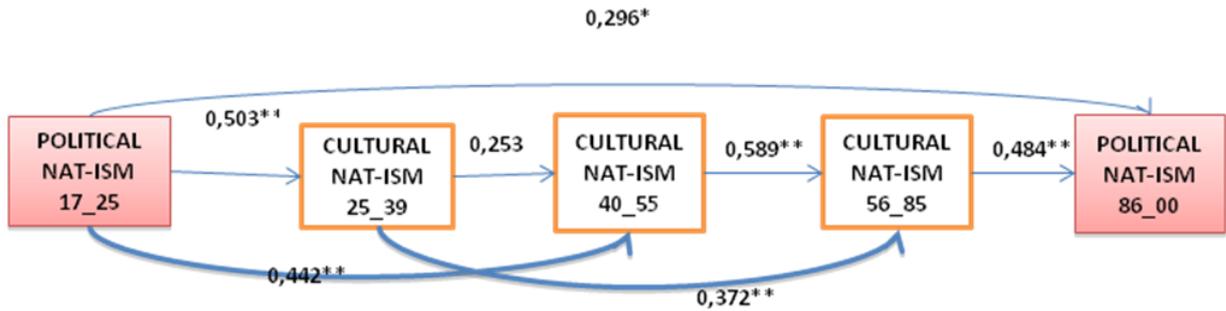
significant. These results support my hypothesis: Cultural nationalism predicts political nationalism. '*Political nationalism 1917-1925*' and '*Political nationalism 1986-2000*' have a significant relationship, but the coefficient (0.296) is lower than between '*Cultural nationalism 1956-1985*' and '*Political nationalism 1986-2000*' (0.484).

Almost all periods are connected. The consequence of causal periods lacks only one link – '*Political nationalism 1917-1925*' and '*Cultural nationalism 1925-1939*'. This break may be explained by the radical change in the Soviet nationality policy. It might be considered as evidence of inheriting the Soviet nationality policy.

This period is defined as a period of 'positive nationalism' and state-led nation building. Stalin's nationality policy, associated with the shift from the 'Affirmative Action Empire' policy to the 'Great-power Russian Nationalism', is likely to be the turning point in the history of Soviet nationalism. Despite this break, there are still indirect links between all periods: the significant link between '*Political nationalism 1917-1925*' and '*Cultural nationalism 1940-1955*' (0.442) and the significant link between '*Cultural nationalism 1925-1939*' and '*Cultural nationalism 1956-1985*'. The former link indicates that a radical shift to new Soviet nationality policy (Great-power Russian nationalism, 1940-55) was still regarded as a response to the political nationalism of the Civil War period, although the coefficient was weaker (0.442 compared to 0.503). In other words, it was a different policy, but determined by the same factor. The latter link means that the policy achievements of the early Soviet nationality policy were not completely eliminated. The significant coefficient allows one to trace some elements of the previous periods: universities were established, books were published, etc. However, the coefficient is much weaker (0.372 compared to 0.589). Therefore, cultural nationalism predicts political nationalism. The Soviet nationality policy was inherited from the early periods of the Soviet rule. Hypothesis 1 is therefore supported.

Cultural nationalism was likely to be accumulated in ethnic republics throughout Soviet history. When political a crisis broke out, the development of cultural nationalism was a predictor of political nationalism.

Pic.2. Model 1.

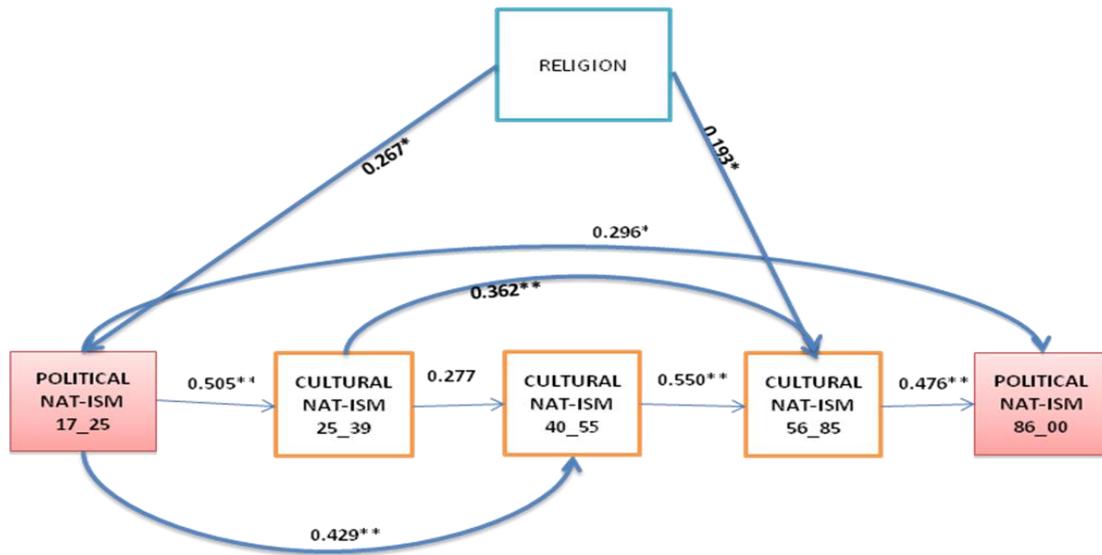


$\chi^2 = 2.988$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.394$, $CFI = 1.000$, $RMSEA = 0.000$, $SRMR = 0.026$

Model 2. Next model includes *Religion* as an independent control variable (Pic. 3). To improve model fit, some insignificant links were omitted. Almost all links between periods of cultural and political nationalism are significant, except the link between ‘*Cultural nationalism 1925-1939*’ and ‘*Cultural nationalism 1940-1955*’. This reflects the abovementioned radical change in the Soviet nationality policy. Again, ‘*Political nationalism 1986-2000*’ is affected by previous periods of cultural nationalism. All inter-period links are also significant.

Religion is significant for two periods – ‘*Political nationalism 1917-1925*’ (0.267) and ‘*Cultural nationalism 1956-1985*’ (0.193). This means that religious diversity was a significant factor for the rise of political nationalism during the Civil War. The next two periods show no evidence that religion was an important factor for the development of cultural nationalism. Possible explanations are an active anti-religion campaign sponsored by the Soviet government and the construction of a non-religious identity combined with the supercentralized and repressive nature of the Soviet state. In the late Soviet period the political regime was not so repressive, communist ideology was not so strong, and attacks on religion were not so fierce. The policy of nativization led to the creation of quasi-sovereign states in many Union republics. Perhaps, religion was implicitly regarded as a part of new ethnic identities. Surprisingly, religion only causes an indirect effect on ‘*Political nationalism 1986-2000*’ via cultural nationalism. Therefore, religion plays only a modest role in our model: State-created factors are stronger than primordial ones.

Pic.3. Model 2.



$\chi^2 = 4.523$, $df = 6$, $p = 0.606$, $CFI = 1.000$, $RMSEA = 0.000$, $SRMR = 0.046$

Conclusion

Cultural nationalism was an important predictor of political nationalism. The results show a certain level of path-dependency between all periods of Soviet history. The rise of political nationalism in the USSR was inherited from the earlier Soviet period. This paper attempted to show that latent cultural nationalism was one of the most significant factors. Republican leaders did not consider support of national culture as a ‘hard’ policy. Moreover, they did not expect it to promote any kind of nationalism and challenge the political stability of the Soviet state. The permanent development of local culture led to the emergence of local national intellectuals, who later became the driving force of ethnic movements during Perestroika.

In explaining political nationalism, the most important period is 1956-1985, which it is affected by earlier cultural nationalism and religion. There was a radical policy change between the two periods of 1925-1939 and 1940-1955. This change may explain the break in sequential causality. The rise of nationalism in the 1990s in ethnic republics in the USSR is likely to be explained by Stalin’s nationality policy. The statistical testing of this radical change is one of the major contributions of this paper. The later part of Stalin’s rule proved to be the peak of Great-power Russian nationalism, the last period of intensive Russification, and the last period of empire-building. After Stalin, the Soviet rulers preferred to compromise with local elites to gain their

support. The 'trust to local elites' policy allowed ethnic regions to enjoy some degree of cultural autonomy. When Gorbachev launched Perestroika, he could not even imagine that earlier nationality policies had built ethnic institutions in almost all republics, both union and autonomous. The emergence and rise in number of ethnic conflicts contrasted with the official Soviet doctrine of nationalities. As a political implication, the ignorance of historic legacy of both the Soviet nationality policy and ethnic conflicts may lead to a new wave of ethnic conflicts in Russia in the near future.

The rise of political nationalism in the late 1980s was not related solely to the crisis and collapse of the communist state. It can be predicted by a latent cultural nationalism that was an unintended by-product of communist cultural policy. In fact, these policies could be redefined as cultural nation-building. Paradoxically, communist ideology argued that it had found a 'true' solution for the question of nationality, and this solution contributed to the collapse of the communist state.

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