Prospect Theory-Based Explanation of Majority Nationalist Mobilization: Cases of Russia and Kazakhstan

by

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A dissertation accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in Political Science

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Fall 2023

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

Title: Prospect Theory-Based Explanation of Majority Nationalist Mobilization: Cases of Russia and Kazakhstan

The current dissertation has a dual purpose of developing a theory of majority nationalist mobilization and explaining substantive variation in levels of nationalist mobilization in post-Soviet region during the first two decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union, particularly in the country cases of Russia and Kazakhstan. The study begins by pointing out at the failure of major theoretical approaches to nationalism such as modernism and perennialism to account for a phenomenon of bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization, a variation in levels of which can be observed in these two countries through the period of 1990s-2000s. It then develops a theory of bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization based on the combination of insights from the cognitive perspective to ethnicity and prospect theory. Further, using qualitative cross-case and within-case analysis, the dissertation tests suggested theory against empirical evidence in cases of Russia and Kazakhstan and demonstrates that this framework provides better explanation to divergent mobilization outcomes in these countries then existing rational-instrumentalist and non-rationalist theoretical alternatives.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A sheer complexity of studying such immense subject as nationalism combined with real world challenges made working on this dissertation an uphill battle, so here I want to express my sincere gratitude to those people who supported me throughout the whole process. First, I want to thank the chair of my committee Dr. Craig Parsons for his intellectual input and continued support of this research project. I am also to thank my classmates and friends whose feedback and invaluable support helped to keep my spirits high while working on this dissertation. Particularly, I am grateful Drs. Jessica Neafie and Ryan Harding for reading through my half-baked drafts and helping to reassure me in my research pursuits, and Timur, Dasha, and Arielle for creating a sense of home away from home for me. Finally, I want to thank my family as their belief in me made this academic endeavor possible.

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CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

This dissertation seeks to explain some important variations in nationalist mobilization in the post-Soviet region during the first two decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It focuses on two major country cases, Russia and Kazakhstan, that appear to display different outcomes in terms of "bottom-up," ethno-nationalist mobilization. In Russia, two waves of nationalist mobilization occurred - first big one in the 1990s and second smaller yet more prolonged in 2000s. In the early 1990s, united opposition of nationalists and conservative communists rallied their supporters against President Yeltsin and his government, which resulted in growing political contention that ended in a violent standoff between these sides. While this national-patriotic movement declined by the end of the decade, a new wave of majority nationalist mobilization gestated and broke out in the early 2000s. In this second cycle of mobilization, new nationalist parties engaging in street protests mixed their critique of Russian government with anti-migration stances. Although the level of political contention did not reach the heights of the first wave, Russia still saw a rise in grassroot ethnonationalist violence that recede only after the governmental crackdown in late 2000s (Vujačić, 2001; Laruelle, 2009; Verkhovsky, 2010). In turn, little ethnonationalist contention occurred in Kazakhstan during the same periods, against the expectations of some observers. Several Kazakh nationalist parties emerged and began rising alongside other nationalist movements in the late Soviet period, however their protest activities attracted very few participants with the outset of the country's independence. By the mid 1990s, nationalist parties virtually disappeared from political life of Kazakhstan and Kazakh nationalism has since remained visible mainly in academic and cultural

domains. While several localized instances of conflict between Kazakhs and members of other ethnic groups happened through 2000s, these cases did not feed into the formation of broader nationalist movement unlike in Russia where such local conflicts propelled active anti-migration movement (Laruelle, 2016). Through comparative analysis of these two cases, this dissertation will demonstrate the mechanisms leading to different mobilization outcomes.

Major theoretical approaches to nationalism offer little analytical leverage to the study concerned with the expression of core majority nationalism that occurs independently from the state. Due to their top-down focus, major intellectual traditions in the field of nationalism studies such as modernism and perennialism tend to overlook the difference between state nationalism and majority-based nationalism in society. This problem is the most salient with the dominant modernist paradigm that simply does not see a distinction between state and nation, leaving conceptual space only for minority nationalist mobilization. However, non-state majority nationalist mobilization is also not captured well by the competing perennialist paradigm, despite its focus on the role of core majority culture in modern national identities. Potentially, different levels of nationalist contention in the studied cases could be explained by rational-instrumentalist and non-rationalist theories of ethnic and nationalist mobilization that are more agnostic toward the problem of distinguishing between state and majority nationalism. I argue that from the latter perspective divergent mobilization outcomes in Russia can be explained as the result of differential psychological responses of loss and gain among majority nationalists in these countries stemming from changes in salient structural conditions.

During the studies period, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the divergent ethno-demographic trends in these two countries created distinctly different structural contexts placing majority nationalists in Russia into the domain of losses and their Kazakh counterparts into the

domain of gains. Massive structural transformations associated with the collapse of the Soviet Union led to a status decline of the dominant majority in political, social, and economic dimensions placing the Russian majority nationalists of different ideological stripes into the domain of loss. The "shadow" of domain of loss relative to the majority group was extended further by negative demographic prospects for the ethnic Russian majority. Being in the lasting multidimensional domain of loss, majority nationalist activists behaved in a loss-averse way, e.g., participated in nationalist mobilization despite its costs and risks for their individual security, to avoid expected future losses to the dominant majority. On the contrary, Kazakhstan's independence, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, resulted in a change of political, social, and economic hierarchies in favor of ethnic Kazakhs, which placed Kazakh majority nationalists into the domain of gains. Positive demographic prospects for the ethnic Kazakh majority created a lasting domain of gains for majority nationalists. Expectations of further future status increases for the majority group made Kazakh majority nationalists' content with the status quo, and hence they became unwilling to take on the costs and risks of violent nationalist mobilization.

In the current chapter I will develop a prospect theory based theoretical framework for bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization. In the first section of this chapter, I will coin the concept of bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization – the phenomenon largely overlooked by major theories of nationalism. In contrast to classical theories that use vertical elite-diffusion models of nationalism, I suggest looking at majority nationalism through the prism of contentious politics. Hence, this dissertation shifts focus of the analysis from state and political elite-led nation-building efforts to bottom-up mobilization of nationalist organizations and individual activists that make claims in the name of core majority group. Next, I will review the existing theories of ethnic and nationalist mobilization that describe outbreaks of ethnic

contention as either the product of rational or non-rational behavior of involved actors. Finally, I will suggest an alternative framework based on prospect theory and cognitive approach to nationalism.

Defining Bottom-Up Majority Nationalist Mobilization

Before reviewing existing theories of nationalist mobilization, I must address the ways in which the phenomenon studied in this dissertation is overlooked by grand theories of nationalism. The field of nationalism studies is somewhat unevenly divided between two major theoretical paradigms – modernism and perennialism, neither of which provides a researcher with analytical tools to deal with bottom-up expressions of core majority group nationalism. Due to its top-down focus, the dominant modernist paradigm simply lacks the concept of a *core majority group,* i.e., a politically and demographically dominant ethnic group acting independently from the state (Gagnon et al, 2011; Loizides, 2015; Gagnon, 2020; Cetra and Brown Swan, 2020). The main gist of modernist intellectual tradition is that national identities as we know them today emerged relatively recently as a result of state-led processes of industrialization, mass schooling, conscription, and state bureaucratization. Modernists argue that cumulative pressures from these processes molded diverse populations of pre-modern multiethnic polities into homogenous and loyal citizenry, implying that the modern state has been a focal actor and a main source of nationalism (Weber, 1976; Breuilly, 1982; Anderson, 1983; Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm and Ranger; 1983;). Within modernist analysis, conceptual distinction between 'state' and 'nation' becomes meaningless as the latter is conceptualized as merely a homogenous community of loyal citizenry without much political agency. From this

perspective, nationalist mobilization is understood primarily through the prism of minority nationalism that occurs in response to nation-building efforts of the central state. However, even in the latter case modernist framework maintains a top-down view of nationalism primarily focusing on the role that the peripheral elite play in organizing the local masses to revolt against foreign rule (Hechter, 2000). Consequently, modernist tradition has little to say about core majority nationalist mobilization that emerges independently from the state (Kaufmann, 2017).

In turn, the rival perennialist paradigm criticizes the modernists for insufficient attention to the role that the culture of the dominant ethnic group plays in formation of national identities but also fails to provide conceptual and analytical tools for studying outbursts of mobilization by the majority nationalist movements. Perennialists challenge the modernist view of nations as a recent invention by pointing out the ancient ethnic roots that can be traced back to the Middle Ages and even to earlier historical periods. Against the modernist view that national identities are malleable and can be easily reshaped or even be created from scratch by the state, perennialists argue that the state is limited in the choice of material from which to craft national identity by a narrower and pre-existing cultural pool. From this perspective, national cultures are much more resistant to change, and instead of being a modern creation, national identities stem from myth-symbol complexes that have been accumulated over a long period. These myth-symbol complexes include language, religion, traditions, and histories of the dominant ethnic core that are being continuously reproduced and reused by the modern state and form the foundation of modern political nations. Although perennialist intellectual tradition pays significantly more attention to the role that the core majority plays in the formation of nations, it still has little to say about expressions of majority nationalism occurring independently from the state. Due to their focus on the reproduction of national culture, perennialists primarily stress the

role that cultural institutions such as religious or literary societies play in helping wider national audiences to not 'forget' about the 'ancient' roots of their identities (Smith, 1986; Hutchinson, 1987). As argued by Kaufmann (2017) in doing this perennialists, just like modernists, rely on a vertical elite-diffusion model that conceptualizes the nation as 'a network of individuals connected to elite nodes'. In this essentially top-down view the state and related cultural elite groups are perceived as the central nodes from which ideas about a nation flow vertically downwards and disseminate among the masses—conceptualized again as merely passive recipients of identities. Hence, while perennialist tradition emphasizes the role of the dominant ethnic group as a provider of cultural material for nation-building, it leaves little room for independent majority nationalist movements, still seeing the state as the main driver of nationalism (Kaufmann, 2017).

The state-centric bias and tendency to overlook bottom-up expressions of core majority nationalism is also evident in the scholarship on nation-building. Recent literature on nation-building primarily conceptualizes ethnic politics within countries as an interactive relationship between 'host state' representing the core majority, and 'national minority' or 'non-core group' (Brubaker, 1996; Mylonas, 2012). Nation-building perspectives typically draw little distinction between the state and core majority and assume that they both always work in accord towards the same national project. Even though this tradition recognizes that the nation-building process involves actors from different levels it reserves the key role for state and political elite. For example, Mylonas (2012) conceptualized "host state" as a shorthand for military and administrative elites governing the state in the name of the "core group"—a country's inhabitants who share a common national type based on one or few ascriptive characteristics and has political representation only through the state elites. Similarly, Brubaker (1996, p.66) in his

influential work maintains top-down perspective focusing at the work of ‘nationalizing state’ defined as ‘a dynamically changing field of differentiated and competitive positions or stances adopted by different organizations, parties, movements, or individual figures within and around the state, competing to inflect state policy in a particular direction, and seeking, in various and often mutually antagonistic ways, to make the state a "real" nation-state, the state of and for a particular nation’. From this perspective, nation-building is presented as a tripartite relationship between host state, non-core minority, and external states and effect of their interplay on host state nationalizing policies, hence omitting independent agency that could stem from core majority.

However, such state-centric theoretical and conceptual frameworks offer little analytical leverage to address the main research question of this dissertation. As demonstrated by the brief review above, the variation of outcomes that these study tries to explain is primarily concerned with expressions of core majority nationalism that manifest themselves independently from the state and sometimes even clash with state institutions, like in the case of the conflict between Yeltsin and national-patriotic opposition. This requires me to elaborate on my own definition of the studied phenomenon before reviewing theories by more narrowly focusing on ethnic conflict and nationalist mobilization. Against state-centric theories of nationalism, I conceptualize *bottom-up majority nationalism* (simply referred to as ‘majority nationalism’) as a political stance centered around the broad idea of a strengthening core majority group, relative to out-groups, that pulls together different societal actors independently from the state, and often in opposition to it. Such conceptualization of majority nationalism assumes that state and political elites may not always be the main source of nationalism, as they can be influenced by non-nationalist ideologies or constrained by external factors in implementing most nationalistic

policies (Mylonas, 2012). This move allows the analysis to focus on the behavior of a broad array of actors at the sub-state level, including organizations, movements, and individuals, who find that state policies are not adequate for carrying forward majority nationalist projects and can also make claims in the name of majority group. With this definition straightened up, the following literature review will focus on main theories explaining outbreaks of ethnic contention.

Theories of Ethnic and Nationalist Mobilization

The literature on nationalism and ethnicity is vast and spans boundaries of different academic disciplines ranging from history to neuroscience, which makes a comprehensive review of all the works on the subject impossible given the limits of this chapter. Instead, this section will provide a narrower review of the main theoretical approaches to ethnic and nationalist mobilization that have been used in political science. Theories of ethnic and nationalist mobilization are closely related to the grand theories of nationalism examined above, however they have concentrated on explaining rapid outbursts of identity mobilization and conflict rather than long-term processes of identity formation. As a result, these theories are much more concerned with ways in which ethnicity manifests itself and affects behavior at the level of individual participants of collective action, which makes them agnostic toward the problem of overlooking majority nationalism that grand theories of nationalism suffer from. Overall, based on the assumptions about the sources of individual level behavior, this literature can be divided into two main strains – rational-instrumentalist and non-rationalist, or into ‘greed’ and ‘grievance’ using dichotomy suggested by Collier and Hoeffler (2004). While the former strain relies on economic model of individual behavior, which aligns its broad rational choice

and expected utility literature, the later includes a diverse literature that emphasize ideational and affective factors as source of human conduct.

Rational-Instrumentalist Paradigm

The rationalist-instrumentalist major tradition rests on the assumption that humans are rational utility-maximizing actors who seek the most cost-effective means to achieve their goals, and ethnicity or nation are just instruments used by political entrepreneurs to further their interests. Rational-instrumentalist perspectives challenge the crude essentialist idea that ethnic and national identities are inherent in human nature and have intrinsic value to people. Instead, rational-instrumentalists argue that claims made in the name of ethnic identities only serve as a disguise for deeper economic or political interests of rationally minded actors. The core assumption shared by rational-instrumentalist scholars is that individuals' efforts to maximize their gains in wealth or power in a microrational way produce contentious politics. As noted by Kaufmann (2005), rational-instrumentalist downgrade or simply do not consider the possibility that individuals could have concerns for collective interests or attachments to religious, cultural, or group identity. Consequently, the rational-instrumentalist school of thought tends to treat ethnic conflict as analytically indistinct from a general civic conflict as both of them are argued to be products of 'greed' rather than 'grievance' (Kaufmann, 2005; Varshney, 2009; Muro, 2015).

Rationalist-instrumentalism is a very broad intellectual tradition that includes different explanations of nationalist mobilization. Some versions of rational-instrumentalist theory share a vertical-diffusion model of grand theories of nationalism, in that, they see self-interested political

elites as the main instigators of ethnic and nationalist mobilization. From this perspective, outbreaks of ethnic rebellions and wars, and the rise of ethnic parties and ethnic-based street violence occur when elites skillfully exploit ethnic myths and symbols resonant within broader sectors of society and lure gullible masses into collective action (Brass, 1991; Collier and Hoeffler, 1998, 2004; Hechter, 2000). However, like other elite-centric explanations, top-down rational-instrumentalism provides little explanatory power for bottom-up nationalist mobilization aimed against state and political elites. Other versions of rational-instrumentalism extend the model of economically motivated behavior down to the level of the masses. Rational-instrumentalist theories falling into this category attempt to explain outbreaks of nationalist mobilization by pointing at poor socio-economic conditions as their primary cause. One powerful line of reasoning maintains that political contention is more likely to occur in impoverished societies than in wealthy ones (Gurr, 1970; Collier and Hoeffler, 2002; Collier et al., 2003; Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Sambanis, 2004). Some proponents of this intellectual tradition argue that it is because people join rebelling factions or movements when the economic benefits of joining a rebellion outweigh the benefits of regular labor activities. Considering this it becomes easier for a movement to find recruits in poor societies with few economic prospects for individuals (Collier and Hoeffler 1998, 2004). Others suggest that rebel movements emerge in poor countries because poverty is associated with a financially and militarily weaker state, which reduces its capacity to suppress rebellion (Fearon and Laitin, 2003). Despite this intra-traditional debate, instrumentalists generally agree with the idea that poverty is positively associated with an outbreak of political contention.

Non-Rationalist Perspectives

Unlike rational-instrumentalist paradigm, non-rationalist perspectives do not share the same foundational theory of individual behavior. Instead, non-rationalist perspectives stem from two competing schools of thought – essentialism and constructivism, according to which ethnicity-related behavior is driven either by emotions or by ideas, rather than material interest. Essentialism and constructivism developed in the field of nationalism studies parallel to perennialist and modernist paradigms around the debate about the nature of nations. In this debate, the original ‘strong form’ essentialism held ethnic groups and nations as coherent social entities with immutable boundaries defined by a shared culture and/or blood ties that preceded the modern state and generated intense feelings of belonging among their members (Shils, 1957; Geertz, 1963; Connor, 1994). In turn, ‘strong form’ constructivism claimed that national identities are better understood as malleable social constructs that emerged together with the modern state as byproduct of industrialization, print capitalism, mass education and conscription (Weber, 1976; Breuilly, 1982Anderson, 1983; Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). Such a ‘thin’ view of national identity became increasingly prominent in the discipline alongside the modernist paradigm. However, since the original constructivist theories were primarily geared towards explaining identity formation over long-term period, they could say little about rapid outbreaks of identity mobilization. This explanatory gap in the constructivist reasoning was filled by rational-instrumentalist theories that also ascribed little to no emotional salience to national/ethnic identities, and instead, concentrated on individual material interests behind ethnic-based collective action. In turn, new generation of non-rationalist approaches emerged in response to shortcomings of rational-instrumentalist perspectives such as its inability to explain

efficiency of appeals to ethnic identities despite alleged individual self-interests of people participating in ethno-nationalist mobilization[1] (Petersen, 2001; Kaufmann, 2005; Kaufman, 2006; Varshney, 2009).

Non-rationalist perspectives argue that ethnic/nationalist mobilization results from the presence of strong and widespread negative feelings or 'grievances' towards outgroups, not from the competition over material benefits. In criticizing the rational-instrumentalist paradigm, the non-rationalist scholars, however, depart from the first-wave 'strong form' essentialist view of national/ethnic identity, and instead, develop complex theories of ethnic mobilization that incorporate different micro-level pre-conscious mental mechanisms from the latest psychological research. One notable example of such non-rationalist theorizing is Petersen's (2002; 2012) emotion-based approach, which states that a widespread presence of such emotions as *fear*, *hatred*, *resentment*, and *rage* explain patterns of ethnic violence. Petersen defines emotions as 'mechanisms – recognizable individual-level causal forces – that work to change the level of salience of desires,' and argues that they fundamentally affect human behavior in several ways. Most importantly, emotions act as a "switch' among a basic set of desires, such as safety, wealth, status, vengeance, and other goals, when individuals encounter situational challenges. Depending on the situation, emotions raise salience of one desire or concern over others, effectively working as mechanisms of preference formation and preference change. Additionally, emotions heighten both cognitive and physical capabilities of an individual necessary to respond to structural

[1] Kaufmann (2005) argues that despite the value of the rational choice approaches in other fields, it is unsuited to the study of ethnic conflict as the very existence of the latter poses a serious anomaly that radically contradicts the program's core assumptions. If people are motivated solely by individual interests, then there is no reason why they should accept losses of material welfare to support a group identity. Varshney (2009) adds that if rational-instrumentalist premises about individual motivation were correct then we should have seen mobilization along economic rather ethno-nationalist lines, and that ethno-nationalist movements should have been plagued by perennial free-rider problem due to potential risks and costs of participation.

changes like in fear-caused 'fight or flight' physiological responses to danger. According to Petersen, emotions are often instrumental meaning that they drive individuals to pursue a clear goal – fear to seek safety, hatred to act on historical grievance, resentment to address status or self-esteem discrepancies. In turn, non-instrumental emotions such as rage often lead individuals to self-destructive behavior without clear aim. These emotions result from the structural changes, such as modernization, state collapse, or war, through the intervening processes of conceptualization and evaluation, when individuals come to believe that a new situation produced a discrepancy between groups, or a threat from another group. Once formed, emotions drive individuals to achieve their instrumental goals, hence, leading to outbreaks of ethnic mobilization and violence.

Petersen develops four separate emotion-based models that suggest different ethnic mobilization outcomes during a structural breakdown. The fear-based model derived from the security dilemma theories of international relations states that the heightened desire for security under conditions of anarchy will lead to targeting of the group that presents the biggest threat. In turn, the hatred-based model posits that collapse of the central state eliminates constraints and provides an opportunity for 'settling scores' with disliked groups. Hence, it predicts targeting of group that has frequently been attacked with similar justifications over an extended period. The third model rests on the social psychological idea that resentment proceeds from a cognition that one's group hold unjust subordinate position in the status hierarchy and creates an urge for remedial action to correct such injustice. This, resentment-based model expects that ethnic mobilization will happen against 'a group perceived as farthest up the ethnic status hierarchy that can be most surely subordinated through violence'. Finally, the rage-based model builds on psychological theories linking frustration and aggression. Petersen suggests that being a non-

instrumental emotion, unlike fear, hatred, and resentment, rage does not drive an individual to reach a recognizable goal. Instead, it emanates from frustration or a troubled personality and leads to cognitive distortions in the selection of targets and instances of indiscriminate violence where choice of targets is not premised on any coherent justification. After applying these four models to the patterns of ethnic conflict that took place in Eastern Europe over the course of the twentieth century, Petersen concludes that resentment-based model provides the best predictive and descriptive fit across a variety of cases, while other models help to account for discrepancies that fall out of its explanatory reach (Petersen, 2002). Although not directly addressing the question of majority nationalism, the logic of Petersen's argument suggests that overall, we should see bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization at times of structural breakdown as weakening of state's coercive capacity would allow one of the four described scenarios to occur.

Another notable example of non-rationalist scholarship is Kaufman's (2001) symbolic politics theory that employs Smithian ethno-symbolist view of ethnicity and attributes the outbreaks of ethnic mobilization and conflict to the presence of ethnic myths justifying hostility towards out-groups. Whereas Petersen's emotion-based approach looks at individual level psychological mechanisms without directly engaging with the concept of ethnicity, Kaufman's symbolic politics theory understands ethnicity in terms of emotionally powerful ethnic myths and symbols along the lines of ethno-symbolist approach elaborated by Anthony Smith. Smith criticized 'strong form' constructivist view that national identities are very malleable arguing that nations and ethnic groups have 'myth-symbol complexes' accumulated over the course of history that set limits on possible national and ethnic identity construction. According to Smith, a 'myth-symbol complex' is as widely available repository of cultural knowledge that ties together ideas of a group name, common historical memories, language, and group attachment, components of

which have strong emotional resonance among the group members, and from which identity entrepreneurs must pick if they want to mobilize popular support. Building on this idea, Kaufman suggests that ethnicity is related to a *myth* or ‘a belief held in common by a large group of people that gives events and actions a particular meaning’ irrespective of its truth or falsity that helps ‘a person to understand what a set of events means to him or her’ exemplified by myths of the birth of the nation and national martyrdom. In turn, ethnic *symbols* or ‘emotionally charged shorthand references to a myth’ affect peoples’ behavior when invoked by triggering in them a sense of national pride or grievance, e.g., the symbol of the ‘Battle of Kosovo Field’ that is related to the myth of Serbian martyrdom in defense of Serbian honor and of Christendom against the Turks. Consequently, from this perspective an individual’s decision to participate in ethnic mobilization results not from the pursuit of material benefits, but from the existence and successful deployment of such powerful ethnic myths and symbols.

Despite the difference in their theoretical foundations, Kaufman’s symbolic politics theory and Petersen’s emotion-based approach expect ethnic/nationalist mobilization to occur at the time of the structural breakdown. According to Kaufman, the presence of hostile myths and fears are necessary preconditions for the outbreak of ethnic conflict. However, in contrast to Petersen’s stricter view that ethnic mobilization is a mass-led phenomena, symbolic politics theory assumes that mobilization can be either elite-led or mass-led. Kaufman also points out that even though ethnic symbols are tools that can be used by identity entrepreneurs to mobilize masses, they only work when there is ‘real or perceived conflict of interests and mythically based feelings of hostility that can be tapped using ethnic symbols’. Therefore, elite-led attempts to stir masses will fall short if ethnic myths are not already widely known and accepted, and even though it is possible for elites to recast the myths for mobilization purpose it will take very long

time to do that. Another necessary condition for ethnic/nationalist mobilization is prevalence of ethnic fears among the members of ethnic group, which is directly related to the presence of myth-symbol complex portraying in-groups as peculiarly under threat or peculiarly victimized by out-groups. The more a group's historians emphasize the group's victimization in the past, the more credible will be fear-inducing charges that out-groups planning another attack and more appealing will be calls for vengeance. In turn, ethnic fears, conceptualized as fears about the existence of one's own group, justify hostile attitudes towards the other group and extreme measures in self-defense will cause escalation of ethnic conflict and violence. While the widespread hostile myths and ethnic fears are necessary conditions for the outbreak of ethnic-based collective action, mobilization will not happen if the state strong coercive capacities. Effective policing can prevent violent episodes from escalating, while political repressions can prevent ethnic leaders from articulating their programs and rallying supporters. Thus, from this perspective, significant ethnic mobilization and violence will occur only in the case of structural breakdown when the state cannot coerce ethnic identity entrepreneurs any longer (Kaufman, 2001).

Prospect Theory-Based Explanation of Majority Nationalist Mobilization

However, neither rational-instrumentalist nor non-rationalist perspective can adequately answer the research question of the current dissertation. Based on comparison of divergent patterns of majority nationalist mobilization in Russia and Kazakhstan, I develop an alternative theory explaining the occurrence and non-occurrence of nationalist mobilization based on the combination of cognitive approach to ethnicity and prospect theory. Cognitive perspectives

conceptualize ethnic and national groups not as substantial and bounded groups but as "collective cultural representations, as widely shared ways of seeing, thinking, parsing social experience, and interpreting the social world" (Brubaker et al., 2004, p.45). Hale (2004, p. 34) suggests that ethnic identity can be thought of as "the set of points of personal reference on which people rely to navigate the social world they inhabit, to make sense of the myriad constellations of social relationships that they encounter, to discern one's place in these constellations, and to understand the opportunities for action in this context." From this perspective, people employ ethnic and national categories when interpreting events because these categories can provide maximum information with the least cognitive effort given the complexity of social world and the limited capacity of human brain to process it. This way they can parse the variety of social relationships and interactions happening at different political, economic, and spatial dimensions into discriminable and interpretable objects, attributes, and events. People use ethnic and national categories to label themselves and other people they encounter for the fact that it is impossible to accurately assess every single encountered individual. Ethnic and national categories become especially relevant if these categories are recognized as having importance for one's life chances, like in cases where ethnicity of applicants has an effect on their employment prospects, and if these ethnic categories work well as a rule of thumb in representing social reality. In other words, ethnic and national categories are unconsciously invoked by people to navigate through social complexity by simplifying it and providing a rough estimate of knowledge about their surrounding reality prior to making decisions on a further course of action (Brubaker et al., 2004, Hale, 2004).

In turn, prospect theory, resting on a similar assumption of the cognitive limitations of the human brain, shows that decision-making of most people is influenced by general context

(domain of gains or losses) rather than the absolute values of the presented choices. Kahneman and Tversky (1979) - the authors of prospect theory – found in a series of experiments that people are more willing to take risks when they are losing and abstain from taking risks when they are gaining. In contrast to the classical expected-utility model view that individual behavior is motivated by clear and orderly preferences, they found that people struggle with complexity when they need to assess utility even under mundane conditions and their choices are often affected by cognitive biases, like issue framing. From the prospect theory perspective, people tend to code the outcomes in terms of general losses and gains, rather than in terms of final absolute states of welfare. Whether one is in the domain of losses or in the domain of gains depends on some individual reference point that can be either status quo or a subjective aspiration point. If outcomes fall below, or above, the chosen reference point, then people find themselves in the domain of losses or in the domain of gains respectively. Further studies also demonstrated that losses have a more significant effect on behavior than equally weighted gains and people pay more attention to real or perceived losses than to prospective gains. Effectively, individuals spend more energy trying to avoid or compensate losses than they would spend on attaining new gains. This innate human tendency to loss-aversion induces general preference to the status quo in most situations. In addition to that, further works show that loss-aversion is a widespread phenomenon that recurs in different professional and cultural contexts both at individual elite and group levels (McDermott, 1998; Fanis, 2004; Mercer, 2005; Vis, 2011; Weyland, 2019), which justifies extending its logic to study of majority nationalism.

Combination of cognitive approach to ethnicity and prospect theory allows to have a theory of nationalist mobilization that accounts for the shortcoming of both rational-instrumentalist and non-rationalist perspectives. I argue that ethnic/nationalist collective action is

neither a product of rational self-interested behavior, nor it is driven by uncontrolled past ethnic grievances, but instead its occurrence depends on ability of nationalists to reach their aspiration points. Like rational-instrumentalist perspective, my theoretical framework assumes that participants of nationalist mobilization are driven by forward-oriented strategizing. However, my theory also holds that forward-oriented strategizing of participants does not revolve around narrow economic individual interests, but around ideas existing within nationalist ideational field that allow participants to orient themselves toward dynamically changing social structure. Such nationalist ideational field can have numerous ideas, and consequently numerous aspiration points that are not concerned with pure economic rationality, including those related to past-oriented ethnic grievances towards outgroups that existing non-rationalist perspectives are concerned with. Depending on the structural factors, nationalists can be placed in different domains of loss or gain once the state of affairs moves below or above one or more of their aspiration points. If nationalists are in a domain of losses, i.e., the outcomes are falling below either the status quo or the affected aspiration point, then they will be more willing to accept individual risks associate with mobilization, hence we will see occurrences of nationalist movements. In turn, nationalists who are satisfied with the status quo or who can reach their aspiration point will be in a domain of gains, making their engagement in risky nationalist mobilization unlikely. Thus, in contrast to existing non-rationalist perspectives, the presence of ethnic grievances on their own does not guarantee the outbreak of nationalist collective action as the structural changes could place nationalists in the domain of gain on this issue, which would render nationalist mobilization redundant.

Structure of the dissertation

In this section, I will outline the overall structure of the current dissertation. I will begin my analysis with a brief historical summary to illustrate divergent majority nationalist mobilization outcomes in Russia and Kazakhstan during 1990s-2000s in chapter 2. Focusing on the expressions of nationalist contention and numerical strength of nationalist parties and movements, it will demonstrate that Russia had more significant levels of majority nationalist mobilization compared to Kazakhstan throughout the studied period. It will show that two distinct waves of majority nationalist mobilization occurred in Russia –large-scale mobilization by 'red-brown' opposition to Yeltsin in the early 1990s and smaller-scale yet growing mobilization of radical nationalist movement in 2000s. It also will show the failed mobilization by Kazakh nationalist parties during the same timeframes. Doing this will serve a double purpose of demonstrating bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization as a distinct phenomenon and clarifying dependent variables which variation the current study seeks to explain.

In the following chapters, I will demonstrate the limitations of existing rational-instrumentalist and non-rationalist theoretical frameworks at explaining divergent mobilization outcomes in the studied cases. Chapter 3 will show that there is too little variation in material condition between the studied cases to explain different level of majority nationalist mobilization in Russia and Kazakhstan. Through comparison of macro- and socio-economic indicators, I will show that these countries experienced very similar material conditions in both periods – sharp economic decline and widespread of poverty in in the early 1990s and fast economic recovery together with significant poverty reduction through 2000s. Furthermore, I will demonstrate that Russia overall had better socio-economic indicators and lower poverty rates than Kazakhstan in

both periods, which rules out rational-instrumentalist explanation of more significant nationalist mobilization in the former country. In turn, chapter 4 will demonstrate that ethnic grievance-based non-rationalist perspectives cannot explain different levels of majority nationalist mobilization between these countries either. Using within-case analysis, I will show how the 'red-brown' mobilization of the early 1990s deviates from pattern of mobilization expected by existing non-rationalist accounts. After doing that, I will also show that there is a little reason to believe that Russia significantly surpassed Kazakhstan in the level of ethnic grievances based on sociological data on xenophobia and relative prominence of majority nationalist themes in public discourse. Thus, I will demonstrate weaknesses of both intellectual traditions and set the ground for building an alternative theory of majority nationalist mobilization.

Finally, in chapter 5, I will build a prospect theory-based framework and demonstrate how it can explain different patterns of majority nationalism in the studied cases. I will argue that from this perspective, occurrence of bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization in Russia and its non-occurrence in Kazakhstan during the studied period were determined by the fact that holders of majority nationalist aspiration points were placed in different domains of loss and gain by salient structural condition in these countries. In the early 1990s, the salient structural condition that led to divergent mobilization outcomes was the collapse of the Soviet Union. I argue that the collapse of the Soviet Union, working akin to artificial conditions of loss and gain engineered by behavioral economists and psychologists in experimental setting, produced divergent psychological impacts on the large sections of population in Russia and Kazakhstan. Consequently, I will show that opposite demographic trends, alongside with divergent post-Soviet nation-building practices, were salient structural conditions that placed majority nationalists into domain of loss in Russia and into domain of gain in Kazakhstan, effectively

creating incentives for the mobilization in the former case and reducing them in the latter in 2000s. Finally, I will argue that ethnodemographic changes, unlike other political and socio-economic processes, is a crucial factor capable of creating lasting domain of loss or gain for majority nationalists due to relative accuracy with which they can be predicted.

Conclusion

This introductory chapter sought to achieve several aims. First, it stated that the main research aim of the current dissertation is to explain divergent nationalist mobilization outcomes in Russia and Kazakhstan in 1990s-2000s. Second, after reviewing major intellectual approaches to nationalism and demonstrating their weaknesses in addressing expressions of majority nationalism that occur independently from the state, this chapter defined bottom-up majority nationalism as dependent variable of interest. Third, it reviewed existing theories of nationalist mobilization that could potentially explain the variation on dependent variable in the studied cases. Fourth, it presented an alternative theory of majority nationalist mobilization based on the cognitive approach to ethnicity and prospect theory. Finally, it outlined the overall structure of the current dissertation.

CHAPTER II - BOTTOM-UP MAJORITY NATIONALIST MOBILIZATION IN POST-SOVIET RUSSIA AND KAZAKHSTAN

What were the patterns of bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization in Russia and Kazakhstan during the first two post-Soviet decades? To answer this question, the following brief historical overview describes the main Russian and Kazakh non-state majority nationalist actors and their political activities of that time, conceptualized in terms of contentious politics. Following Brubaker (1996, p.10), I define majority nationalism in terms of a heterogenous set of 'nation'-oriented idioms and practices rather than a firmly established ideology with explicit tenets and, effectively, consider majority nationalists to be a variety of actors, such as political parties, social movements, or individuals, for whom a question of 'core majority' is a central part of their political program. From this perspective, majority nationalists are societal actors that may conflict with each other over political, social, and economic questions at times, but who can set aside their differences and participate in joined collective action due to their shared majority nationalist aspiration points. In turn, majority nationalist mobilization refers to the ability of majority nationalists to rally supporters for their cause and carry out disruptive political activities like those described by scholars of contentious politics (McAdam et al., 2001). Tarrow (2013) describes "contentious politics" as collective political struggle that can take different forms, ranging from social movements to revolutions to civil wars, and which can overlap and easily shift from one form to another. For this historical overview, I adopt a similar conceptual framework and focus on different forms of contentious politics, including meetings, protests, riots, as well as political and ethnic violence, carried by majority nationalists to reconstruct

patterns of bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization in Russia and Kazakhstan during the studied period.

Besides describing patterns of Russian and Kazakh majority nationalist contentious politics in 1990s-2000s, this chapter also does a cross-country comparison of mobilization levels to demonstrate different outcomes in these two cases. I distinguish between two broad possible outcomes for majority nationalists – the occurrence and non-occurrence of the nationalist mobilization wave. The nationalist mobilization wave occurs when disruptions caused by consequent majority nationalist contentious events clustered over time and space have significant effect on political life in the country and become a challenge for state authorities. The disruptiveness of nationalist mobilization depends on numeric strength of majority nationalist movement, which can be measured on several different dimensions. Researchers of social movements approach quantifying protest activities in various ways – while some focus on duration or frequency of events, others count individual participation in protests and their magnitude, while still others look at severity of activities i.e., number of people arrested, injured, or killed (Biggs, 2018). Depending on data availability, I determine occurrence of nationalist mobilization waves in Russia and Kazakhstan in the studied period by looking at number of active nationalist organizations (whether political parties or social movements), participation in protests acts, severity of conflict with state authorities, and number of victims of political violence.

Two Waves of Nationalist Mobilization Russia

Bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization in Russia can be divided into two distinct waves: a period of large-scale mobilization by opposition of patriotic camp in the early 1990s, and a period of smaller-scale yet growing mobilization by radical nationalist movement in the 2000s. In the first wave lasting from late 1991 till 1993, an emerging coalition of multiple communist and nationalist parties and movements called 'red-browns' (*krasno-korichnevye*) by their political opponents tried to oust the president Boris Yeltsin and his liberal reformist government. The head of the Russian Republic (RSFSR) Boris Yeltsin and his allies came to power in the newly separate Russian Federation after the defeat of the conservative coup against Mikhail Gorbachev in August 1991, and the subsequent ban of the Communist Party (CPSU) and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. However, Yeltsin himself soon faced growing resistance from the same 'patriotic camp' that previously opposed Gorbachev. Before the August coup many patriots placed their trust in state institutions, hoping that the conservative wing of the communist party would contain reformists and prevent the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, after the Belovezha Accords formally dissolved the union in December 1991 they had to act on their own. Numerous communist and nationalist parties emerged and engaged into political struggle with Yeltsin and his government of liberal reformers both in the parliament and in the street (Vujačić, 2001; Laruelle, 2009; Verkhovsky, 2010).

Despite formal separation of anti-Yeltsin opposition into communists and nationalists in the above paragraph, this work follows the scholarship that treats communist parties of that period as part of broader phenomenon of Russian nationalism. For example, Vujačić (2001, p, 294), identified four pillars of Russian nationalism in 1991-1993: on the "left" the conservative

wing of the newly formed Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) and even more radical neo-Stalinist Working Russia (*Trudovaia Rossiia*) movement led by Viktor Anpilov; on the neo-imperial, anticommunist right Vladimir Zhirinovsky and Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR); on the moderate right parliamentary statists of Sergey Baburin's Russia (*Rossiia*); and the various openly fascist groups like Aleksandr Barkashov's Russian National Unity (RNE) groups on the extreme right[2]. Due to the lack of ideological cohesion between different wings of this protest-oriented opposition movement, Laruelle's (2009) typology classifies it broadly as an extra-parliamentary nationalist camp. Alternatively, these parties can be grouped as an 'empire'-oriented form of nationalism, with some of them being more state-centric and others being more ethno-centric yet still united by the idea of holding the Soviet Union together as a state (Kolstø, 2016). During the first wave of mobilization, various groups form this self-named 'patriotic camp' tried to build a joint anti-Yeltsin coalition, which resulted in the formation of Front for National Salvation (FNS) on October 24, 1992. This new FNS coalition included approximately 20 parties and movements of the right and the left (Hahn, 1994), and soon became the main protest movement of that period. The major exception was Anpilov's Working Russia that remained to be an independent actor, but nevertheless participated in all major political action of anti-Yeltsin opposition.

This national-patriotic coalition could mobilize a large number of supporters for mass protests and posed a significant threat to Yeltsin's power. The wave of mass rallies was initiated by the Anpilov's Working Russia movement with a demonstration of around 80,000 people on the 74th anniversary of the October Revolution in Moscow on November 7, 1991. Working

[2] Mentioned parties and movements represent only main tendencies in Russian national-patriotic movement of the period. For more complete list of "patriotic" parties see Verkhovsky et al., 1996.

Russia, often together with other nationalist groups, held numerous mass rallies some of which ended in violent confrontation with police forces. The first instance of such joint rally, as the well as the first case of violence, was the Working Russia and Stanislav Terekhov's Union of the Officers' demonstration of 10,000 people on February 23, 1992, in celebration of the Day of the Soviet Army, which was disbanded just a month before. The clash between protesters and police erupted when the most determined activists tried to break through the heavily armed police cordons that they encountered on its way. The largest mass rally of national-patriotic opposition in that period was an all-people assembly (*vsenarodnoe veche*) that brought out around 100,000 (350 or even 500,000 according to its organizers) participants held on March 17, 1992. Furthermore, joint right-left FNS movement formed after February and March events played important role in the be mini-civil war on the streets of Moscow between President Yeltsin on one side and the Supreme Soviet and the Congress of People's Deputies parliament on the other in September-October 1993 crisis. Yeltsin's decision to dissolve the parliament also sparked mass protests with tens of thousands of people, including supporters of FNS and Working Russia coming on the streets of Moscow. The activists of these movements actively participated in the clashes with police forces and in one instance tried to storm Ostankino TV tower controlled by pro-Yeltsin forces (Verkhovsky et al., 1996; Vujačić, 2001).

Despite the defeat of FNS and its allies in the mini-civil war and the consequent decrease in mass protest activity, patriotic camp remained politically relevant for the next few years. After the bloody stand-off and shelling of the parliament by Yeltsin troops on October 3-4, 1993, which left around 150 people dead, defenders of the parliament surrendered while the protest leaders such as Ilia Konstantinov, Viktor Anpilov, Stanislav Terekhov, and Albert Makashov were arrested. Supporters of the banned FNS put their hope on those nationalism-oriented parties

that did not participate in mass protests during September-October crisis like Gennady Zyuganov's CPRF and Vladimir Zhirinovsky's LDPR. The remaining national-patriotic parties gave up mass protest tactics for the sake of electoral competition. According to Verkhovsky (2010), the period of 1993-1996 was a high point for national-patriotic parties that collectively could secure around 40 percent of votes in different elections. In 1993 parliamentary elections nation-patriots in sum gained 35.32 percent of votes with 22.92 percent of votes for LDPR and 12.4 percent votes for CPRF. Whereas in 1995 parliamentary national-patriotic parties collectively received 43.85 percent of votes. Also, popularity of extremist Aleksandr Barkashov's RNU grew significantly in national-patriotic circles due to the presence 150-200 of RNU's armed fighters among the defenders of the parliament. By mid-1990s RNU became a dominant party of the radical right with approximately 15,000 members across the country, while numerous miniscule radical nationalist groups emerged copying RNU's style. However, eventually the first wave of national-patriotic mobilization subsided as CPRF and LDPR became increasingly incorporated into a new political system and transformed from revolutionary parties into electoral machines, and RNU became focused more on providing security services to criminal groups and local militia units rather than focusing on political struggle (Verkhovsky et al., 1996; Vujačić, 2001; Laruelle, 2009).

The second wave of bottom-up nationalist mobilization, characterized by a shift to ethnic nationalism and rise in ethnic street violence, occurred in 2000s and was smaller in scale than the USSR statist national-patriotic wave of the early 1990s. While the national-patriotic parties, including RNU, declined by late 1990s, a new nationalist movement grew from Nazi Skinhead youth subculture. Nazi Skinhead subculture appeared in Russia during the early 1990s and initially had a largely informal and decentralized structure, bringing together agitated teenagers

for brawls at soccer stadiums and underground concerts. In contrast to their older counterparts from patriotic camp, many skinheads were not interested in ideological debates and instead engaged in violent street actions, often targeted against people of non-European descent. The movement became more organizationally structured with emergence of powerful Skinhead associations in the second half of 1990s and continued growing until mid-2000s when its membership was estimated around 50,000 people countrywide. The scale of ethnic violence grew in parallel to the increased organization capacity of Skinhead movement. After a series of violent mass actions on street markets that involved hundreds of skinheads in Moscow in 2001-2002, the movement attracted the attention of wide public as well as new nationalist parties that saw Skinheads as potential social base (Laruelle, 2009; Verkhovsky, 2010, 2015).

Although the second wave did not reach the same high levels of mobilization as in the first wave, new nationalist parties still attracted increasing numbers of supporters for their public events throughout 2000s. The Movement Against Illegal Migration (DPNI) that emerged as a group that defended participants of anti-Armenian ethnic riot in Krasnoarmeysk in 2002 became the leading grassroot organization of this wave of bottom-up nationalist mobilization who catered to Skinheads. Unlike patriotic parties of 1990s, the DPNI led by Aleksandr Belov consciously abstained from a theoretical debate over Russian national identity to avoid ideological schisms and concentrated on connections to wider public xenophobia towards migrants instead of ideas of restoration of the Soviet Union. DPNI attracted wide public attention after it participated with other nationalist parties and movements in the first Russian March (called Right-Wing March in that year) event organized by Aleksandr Dugin's Eurasian Youth Union in Moscow on the newly established Day of National Unity – November 4, 2005. The first Russian March attracted around 2,500-5000 participants, many of whom had Skinhead

background, which made strong impressions both on public alarmed by such display and nationalists who became more confident in their own mobilizational potential (Laruelle, 2009; Verkhovsky, 2010). DPNI actively participated in media coverage of ethnic riots in small Karelian city Kondopoga in 2006 that ended with most Caucasians leaving the town, which further boosted the movement's popularity in nationalist circles. In 2006, DPNI became a prime organizer of the second Russian March, overtaking that role from the Eurasian Youth Union, which despite state prohibition was organized in ten large cities throughout the country, attracting a total of more than 10,000 participants (Laruelle, 2009; Verkhovsky, 2010).

The peak of the second wave of bottom-up nationalist mobilization both in terms participation in public rallies and street ethnic violence came at the second half of 2000s, until nationalists got under increasing pressure from the authorities. Data gathered by SOVA monitoring center (Verkhovsky, 2015), shows that ethnic violence committed by Skinheads had reached highest level in 2007-2008, in which there were several hundred victims of street violence and dozens of fatalities each year. Furthermore, in that period violence started evolving from hooliganism and street attacks on foreigners into right-wing terrorism. The bombing at Moscow's Cherkizovsky Market in October 2006 that killed 13 people was the first case of terrorism by Nazi Skinhead groups. Other instances of right-wing terrorism included several attacks with Molotov cocktail on police departments, assassination of Antifa activists, lawyer Stanislav Markelov, and federal judge Eduard Chuvashov that prosecuted a group of ultranationalists. According to Verkhovsky (2015), anti-regime sentiments and desire for revolutionary change grew widespread in the nationalist movement at the end of 2000s. Nationalist tried to exploit local instances of ethnic conflict for broad social mobilization and got the closest chance for it during Manezhnaia Square riots that broke out after the murder of a

soccer fan by a Caucasian in Moscow on December 11, 2010. On that occasion around 5,000 of soccer fans and skinheads clashed with riot police forces close to the Kremlin's wall, leading some to believe that a nationalist revolution was just behind the corner. However, authorities alarmed by Manezhnaia Square riots cracked down on nationalist organizations and started imprisoning nationalist activists en masse. Eventually, the levels of ethnic violence along with participation in the Russian Marches started declining from the federal pressure, and the nationalist movement was overshadowed by a new broad anti-Putin opposition that emerged in 2011. (Laruelle, 2009; Verkhovky, 2015)

Failed Nationalist Mobilization in Kazakhstan

In contrast, Kazakhstan had significantly lower levels of bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization in the 1990s and 2000s. After the dissolution of the Soviet, the first president of Kazakh SSR and the former First Secretary of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, became the president of independent Kazakhstan. In the early 1990s, Nazarbayev, like Boris Yeltsin in Russia, encountered fervent opposition to his rule from nationalist parties that positioned themselves as the rivals of local communist elites. Unlike the plethora of parties from the patriotic camp that challenged the power of Yeltsin, Nazarbayev had to face only three main nationalist parties – Zheltoksan, Alash, and Azat. Kazakh nationalist parties were united by the special claims for Kazakhs and, to varying degrees, de-Russification of Kazakhstan. Zheltoksan (December) movement, the first in order of emergence, was established in 1988 to request liberation of prisoners arrested for participation in anti-Soviet/anti-Russian riots in December 1986 and officially registered in March 1990 after Moscow authorized a multi-party

political system in the USSR. Zheltoksan demanded that government revisited its interpretation of the December 1986 riots, stressed concern for Kazakhs abroad and called for Islam to become central political and ideological framework for the new Kazakh society. While it did not call for Russians to be expelled in masses it still urged their voluntary migration and demanded the restriction of Cossack activities. In contrast, the more radical Alash party, established in April 1990 and led by poet-activist Aron Atabek, wanted to create an independent Islamic state – Greater Turkestan – that would include all the Turkic people of the CIS, as well to expel all the Slavs from Kazakhstan. Finally, the most imposing party, Azat (Freedom), established in July 1990 by former foreign minister Mikhail Isinaliev, Dos Koshim and the historian Sabetkazy Akatay, had a more moderate stance. It opposed violent inter-ethnic relations, but it still called for the formation of democratic Kazakhstani patriotism that would prioritize the Kazakh population and language (Bremmer and Welt, 1996; Laruelle, 2021).

Kazakh nationalists not only had fewer political organizations than the patriotic camp in Russia, but also failed to attract a wide following and pose a significant threat to the power of Nazarbayev. Like their Russian counterparts, Kazakh nationalist parties actively engaged in different street activities including meetings, unauthorized rallies, protest encampments, hunger strikes, and sometime assaults of public figures in the early 1990s. However, in contrast to the Russian case where large-scale protests led to bloody clashes of demonstrators with police and eventually mini-civil war between president and parliament, these public acts typically involved a small number of activists. There is very little data available on the membership size of Kazakh nationalist parties of this period but by some estimates radical Alash party had only 80-200 members, with about 20 of them actively participating in protest activities (Babak, 2005; Ismagambetov, 2019). Due to the small size of nationalist parties the state did not have any

serious problems subduing them. For example, the state allowed the registration of the Zhelotksan movement for its stance on inter-ethnic relations, but outright banned Alash after some party activists attacked mufti of Kazakhstan Rysbek Nysambayev in December 1991. Contentious politics exercised by Kazakh nationalist parties never reached significant levels of mobilization and was easily undercut by police forces. After one such protest, in early 1992, several Alash members were simply arrested for holding unauthorized rallies, 'insulting the honor and dignity of the President', and 'hooliganism'. Likewise, police arrested members of Azat and Zheltoksan who camped in front of the Presidential building to demand the government's resignation in May 1992, and 11 nationalists from different organization who organized hunger strike in front of the parliament building in Almaty on May 16, 1994 (Bremmer and Welt, 1996; Laruelle, 2021).

The remainder of the nineties was marked by further decline of Kazakh nationalist parties. While in Russian case "patriotic camp" parties had strong presence in the parliament and even represented a separate pole of power in the country, prior to the 1993 standoff with Yeltsin, only moderate Azat was allowed to have a seat in the parliament of Kazakhstan in the early 1990s. After the heavily manipulated 1994 parliamentary elections, carried out after Nazarbayev dissolved the parliament without much resistance from deputies in December 1993, Azat had only 1 seat out 177. Cognizant of their weaknesses, segments of Alash, Azat, and Zheltoksan decided to establish a coalition with a less radical ideology in 1992. Together they established the Republican Party of Kazakhstan (Respublikanskaia partiia Kazakhstana) led by Sabetkazy Akatay, which toned down its rhetoric to obtain registration. After the arrest and imprisonment of nationalist activists participating in hunger strike on May 16, the parties united under the Republican Party of Kazakhstan abandoned their plans for large-scale national demonstrations

for several years. In 1999, Alash, still led by Akatay, was the only nationalist party that succeeded in getting re-registered under the name: National Party of Kazakhstan – Alash (Natsional’naia partiia Kazakhstana – Alash). However, in the 1999 legislative elections it received only 2.67 percent of the vote and eventually disappeared from political life after losing its registration in 2003 (Laruelle, 2021). After the decline of the National Party of Kazakhstan – Alash, Kazakh nationalists remained without political organization, and consequently had even more less potential for mobilization through most of the 2000s (Ismagambetov, 2019).

Several instances of ethnic clashes occurred in Kazakhstan in the mid 2000s, however none of them transcended their local context and did not feed into formation of a countrywide Kazakh nationalist movement as was the case with DPNI in Russia. All the instances of ethnic conflict between Kazakhs and other ethnic groups happened in non-urban settings and were sporadic rather than planned in nature. For example, on October 20–21, 2006, a fight between Turkish and Kazakh oil workers involving 400 participants at the Tengiz Field in Atyrau region broke out after Kazakh workers complained about poor treatment by Turkish employees and underpayment relative to Turkish workers. Few cases resembled the ethnic clashes in Kransoarmeisk and Kondopoga in Russia, in that conflict between few individuals sparks larger mobilization among local co-ethnics against outgroups. In November 2006, a restaurant fight between three Uighurs and a Kazakhs escalated into a massive brawl that involved 300 Uyghurs and Kazakhs in Shelek village in south-eastern Kazakhstan. In October-November 2007, anti-Kurdish riot broke out in Mayatas village after word leaked about a rape of a Kazakh by a Kurdish teenager, resulting in the Kurdish population fleeing the village. In March 2007, conflict between a Chechen and a Kazakh individuals spilled out into an ethnic clash between these group causing death of five people in the Malavodnoe village (Tussupova, 2010).

According to Laruelle (2021), the Kazakh nationalist field largely lacked organizational capacity throughout 2000s and consequently the ability to mobilize large number of people to carry out regular public demonstrations akin to Russian March. It remained visible in the academic and artistic circles, especially around the promotion of Kazakh language and literature and the production of a national historical narrative alternative to the state-sponsored one. Despite being divided along ideological lines within the Kazakh nationalist landscape[3], nationalists have been united in the belief that Kazakh language should be given priority and be the only state-recognized language and hence replace Russian as a "language of inter-ethnic communication". They also criticized the state-backed concept of the multi-ethnic Kazakhstani nation, which according to them was just an illusion created by the Nazarbayev regime to avoid conflict with Russia and Kazakhstan's Russian population. Kazakh nationalists gained some visibility by the late 2000s-early 2010s with emergence of new generation of nationalists using social medial, but they actions were still limited in scale compared to Russian case. For instance, Kazakh nationalists protested the new Doctrine of National Unity and its conceptualization of a Kazakhstani nation in 2009-10 was carried mostly by intellectual figures. On the other occasion, 138 public figures wrote an open letter to President Nazarbayev, the prime minister, and the heads of both chamber of parliament asking them to strip the Russian language of the special status granted to it by the constitution in 2011. Nevertheless, such nationalist rhetoric did not pave the way to large-scale or violent organized collective action. Although these instances demonstrated growing presence of Kazakh nationalism in the country's public discourse, these

[3] According to Laruelle (2021), Kazakh nationalists are divided on many important questions regarding to development and concept of national identity. The main disagreement relates to religion with at least three school of thought on the subject – those who promote secular nationalism, those who call for the rehabilitation of Tengrism and those who links Kazakh national identity to Islam.

are still very low levels of mobilization because both acts of protests appeared only in form of public letters rather than actual street protest movement. Protest activities of Kazakh nationalists, even though limited in scale, became more visible in 2010s but this is outside of the scope of this study.

Conclusion

We see different patterns of bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization in Russia and Kazakhstan during the two first post-Soviet decades. Two waves of majority nationalist mobilization of different scales occurred in Russia. The first wave is associated with numerous communist and nationalist parties and movements that emerged around the time of the dissolution of the USSR and actively employed contentious street politics in their struggle against Yeltsin and his government throughout the early 1990s. Among the compared cases, this is the largest wave of mobilization characterized by regular protest demonstrations of the ‘patriotic camp’ some of which attracted tens of thousands of people and in several instances broke out in violent fighting with police forces. This wave of contentious politics ended with a defeat of nationalist and communist opposition in mini-civil war that erupted between Yeltsin and the parliament in Fall 1993. The second wave of nationalist mobilization lasted in Russia through much of the 2000s and was characterized by stronger ethnocentric orientation and increased street ethnic violence. Although the second wave was smaller than the first one and did not end up with a massive unrest similar to the mini-civil war of 1993, the nationalist parties represented the most significant opposition to the state during that period. With annual Russian Marches demonstration attracting thousands of participants in different cities from 2005

onwards, nationalist activities significantly outnumbered protests of non-nationalist opposition groups through the rest of the decade. The second wave began to decline only in the late 2000s due to increasing pressure from the state concerned by the mobilizational capacity of the nationalist movement and was finally overshadowed by a wider anti-Putin opposition protest in 2011-12.

Meanwhile, bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization waves did not occur in independent Kazakhstan during the same period despite the efforts of nationalist activists. Only three significant Kazakh ethnonationalist parties actively engaged in contentious politics in the early 1990s. However, their protest activities usually attracted only tens of participants, which is significantly lower even compared to the smaller second wave of nationalist mobilization in Russia. These nationalist parties did not present a significant challenge to the rule of Nazarbayev, were quickly subdued by the state and virtually disappeared from the political life of the country by the end of the decade. Throughout 2000s, bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization occurred mostly in a form of sporadic local clashes between Kazakhs and other ethnic groups. Unlike in Russia, no significant political movement capitalized on these outbreaks of violence and Kazakh nationalism remained confined primarily to the cultural sphere. The following chapters try to answer the question of why the waves of majority nationalist mobilization occurred in Russia, but not in Kazakhstan.

CHAPTER III - TESTING RATIONAL-INSTRUMENTALIST EXPLANATIONS OF NATIONALIST MOBILIZATION

Rational-instrumentalism is one of the major intellectual traditions in scholarship of nationalism and ethnic conflict that explains ethnicity-related behavior from an economic perspective. The core assumption shared by rational-instrumentalist scholars is that people seek to maximize either their personal wealth or power in a micro-rational way lay behind outbreak of contention. This school of thought typically downplays or simply disregards ideational and psychological aspects of mass attachment to group as a significant causal factor for collective behavior such as nationalist mobilization, and instead focuses on individual interests. In fact, some of the formulations of rational-instrumentalist thought an ethnic conflict is analytically indistinct from general civic conflict as both of those argued to be products of 'greed' rather than 'grievance' (Collier and Hoeffler 1998, 2004; Sambanis, 2004; Kaufmann, 2006). Rational-instrumentalism is a broad tradition that includes multiple theories addressing a wide range of questions related to ethnicity, and the theories that attempt to explain outbreaks of nationalist mobilization usually point at poor socio-economic conditions as their primary cause. One powerful line of reasoning from this intellectual tradition is that political contention is more likely to occur in impoverished societies than in wealthy ones (Gurr, 1970; Collier and Hoeffler, 2002; Collier et al., 2003; Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Sambanis, 2004). Some rational-instrumentalists argue that it is because people join rebelling factions or movements when the economic benefits of joining a rebellion outweigh the benefits of regular labor activities. Considering this it becomes easier for a movement to find recruits in poor societies with few

economic prospects for individuals (Collier and Hoeffler 1998, 2004). Others suggest that rebel movements emerge in poor countries because poverty is associated with a financially and militarily weaker state, which reduces its capacity to suppress rebellion (Fearon and Laitin, 2003). Despite this intra-traditional debate, rational-instrumentalists generally agree with the idea that poverty is positively associated with an outbreak of political contention.

How well do economic factors explain different levels of bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization (or simply bottom-up mobilization considering rational-instrumentalist disregard of ethnicity) in Russia and Kazakhstan? In the current chapter, I argue that a rational-instrumentalist approach cannot explain why waves of contention occurred in Russia but not in Kazakhstan during the studied period. Variation in mobilization does not correspond with ups and downs in these countries' economies. Following the rational-instrumentalist logic, we should expect to see a wave of bottom-up mobilization, whether nationalist or not, to occur at a time when a country is experiencing serious economic crisis and suffers from high rates of poverty. Conversely, mass mobilization should not occur in a period of economic growth and poverty reduction. However, a close look at different economic indicators, such as annual GDP per capita growth rate, inflation, unemployment, and poverty rates during the 1990s and 2000s, reveals that the success or failure of nationalist parties in mobilizing supporters for contentious collective active in these countries was not determined by material factors. Comparison of these macro- and socio-economic indicators show that Russia and Kazakhstan had very similar economic conditions in the first two post-Soviet decade – the drastic decline of living standards for a large part of population in the early 1990s and dismal performance until the end of decade followed by the strong growth and related poverty reduction of 2000s. Moreover, Kazakhstan had even worse poverty rates than Russia in both timeframes, as well as worse performances on other measures like inflation or

unemployment at various points. If the rational-instrumentalist thesis was correct, it should have had similar or even higher levels of societal mobilization.

This chapter is structurally divided into two broad sections based on a time of occurrence of mobilization waves in Russia. Both sections investigate how socio-economic patterns overlap with patterns of bottom-up mobilization within and across cases. The first section reconstructs the socio-economic context of the early years after the collapse of the Soviet Union when both Russia and Kazakhstan initiated massive reforms to transform their planned economies into market economies. Using macro- and socio-economic data from national and international sources, this section compares negative consequences of 'shock therapy' style reform on the wider section of population in these countries. The second section focuses on the period of economic growth which took place in both countries during the 2000s due to high demand for their natural resources on the global market. It compares rates of economic growth and poverty in Russia and Kazakhstan using national and international data, but also looks at Russia-focused sociological studies of xenophobia to identify typical socio-economic background of majority nationalist activists of that period.

Socio-Economic Context of the Early 1990s

At first glance, the early 1990s wave of bottom-up nationalist mobilization in Russia seems to conform the expectations of the rational-instrumentalist perspective. Since the rise of the "red-brown" opposition occurred against the backdrop of rapid impoverishment of Russia's population, it seems easy to attribute outbreak of large-scale protests against Yeltsin and his government to dismal economic conditions in the country at that time. However, a comparison of

the macro- and socio-economic indicators of Russia and Kazakhstan during the period of post-Soviet free-market reforms shows that high levels of bottom-up nationalist mobilization in Russia cannot be explained purely by material factors. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the governments of newly independent Russia and Kazakhstan both took on the task of transforming their planned economies into free market economies and did it by means of "shock therapy" reforms (Hall and Elliott, 1999; Hedlund, 1999; Montes and Lu, 2002; Pomfret, 2005; Åslund, 2013). The "shock therapy" reform program based on the prescriptions of the Washington Consensus such as rapid price and trade liberalization, large-scale privatization, and stabilization through tight monetary and fiscal policies was supposed to help these countries to overcome maladies of Soviet planned economy. However, instead of swift economic recovery after relatively short painful period like in the case of Poland, economies of Russia and Kazakhstan collapsed after the "shock therapy" program and started really recovering only at the end of the 1990s.

Different levels of bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization occurred in Russia and Kazakhstan despite similarly poor economic conditions during the early years of independence. The break-up of the Soviet central planning system contributed to the collapse of industrial output in the previously integrated economies and led to prolonged economic contraction in both countries. Economies of Russia and Kazakhstan each lost more than 40 percent of their gross domestic product (GDP) between 1991 and 1995, started modestly recovering only in 1996 and 1997 respectively until interrupted by a financial crisis in 1998 (Figure 1.1). Between 1991-1993, the period characterized by contentious politics and joint mass protests of communists and nationalists in Russia, the country's economy experienced the most drastic contraction losing 28.6 percent of its GDP. Looking at the Russian case alone one might suggest that the fact of

such radical economic decline provides strong support for rational-instrumentalist explanation of high levels of mobilization by “red-brown” coalition at that time.

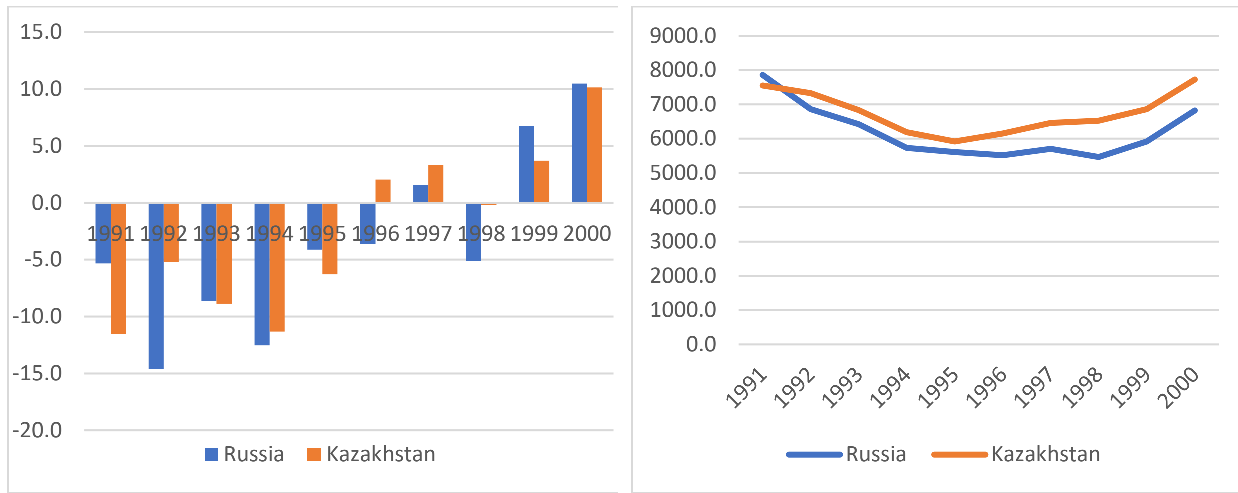


Figure 1.1 Left: GDP per capita growth (annual %); Right: GDP per capita, PPP (current international $)**.** Sources: World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2022

However, this explanation becomes less compelling if we consider the case of Kazakhstan. During the same period of 1991-1993, the economy of Kazakhstan lost a comparable 25.7 percent of GDP, but this economic contraction did not help Kazakh nationalists to foster significant level of public mobilization. Judging by GDP per capita growth and GDP per capita at purchasing power parity (PPP) presented below, one might argue that this happened because slightly better economic conditions prevailed in Kazakhstan. Specifically, macroeconomic data shows that economic decline in 1992, a year preceding the 1993 open conflict between Yeltsin and the parliament, was less pronounced in Kazakhstan (-5.2 percent) compared to Russia (-14.6 percent) and that the former country had somewhat higher index of GDP per capita at purchasing power parity (PPP) during the early transition to the market (Figure 1.1). Nevertheless, further analysis of such economic indicators as inflation, unemployment, and poverty rates demonstrates that economic conditions were at least as dismal

in Kazakhstan if not worse than in Russia, without an outbreak of bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization in the former country.

The comparison of Russia and Kazakhstan's levels of inflation during the 1990s demonstrates that the latter country suffered from much higher inflation during the transition period. Rapid dismantling of state price-setting mechanisms implemented in both countries as part of "shock therapy" had large negative effects across their economies. Due to various factors, including loose monetary policy, lack of market institutions, and maintenance of the common ruble zone flooded by currency from 15 independent republican central banks, price liberalization triggered rapid growth of consumer prices (Klugman and Braithwaite, 1997; Hedlund, 1999; Murthi et al., 2002; Pomfret, 2005 Åslund, 2013). In both Russia and Kazakhstan, already high inflation remaining from the Soviet period was turned into hyperinflation that the governments could get under control until 1997. Although both countries suffered from lasting hyperinflation, the macroeconomic data suggests that the economy of Kazakhstan was hit harder in the early years of reform. According to the World Bank (Figure 1.2), inflation cumulatively increased in Kazakhstan twice as much compared to Russia's level in the first half of the 1990s. Consumer prices grew by 2629 percent in Russia between 1991 and 1995, whereas in Kazakhstan prices increased by almost 5000 percent during the same period. Importantly, in 1993, the annual inflation in Kazakhstan grew to nearly double of Russia's inflation level (1662 percent against 874 percent), which itself decreased compared to 1992 figures. Although inflation continued growing in Kazakhstan until the next year, the country did not experience any serious public unrest, whereas Russia, with its falling rates of inflation, saw an outbreak of a mini-civil war between Yeltsin and the "red-brown" coalition. Furthermore, in contradiction with the instrumentalist hypothesis, the political situation remained stable in

Kazakhstan even when the difference between the levels of inflation in Kazakhstan and Russia were six-fold (1887 percent against 308 percent) in 1994.

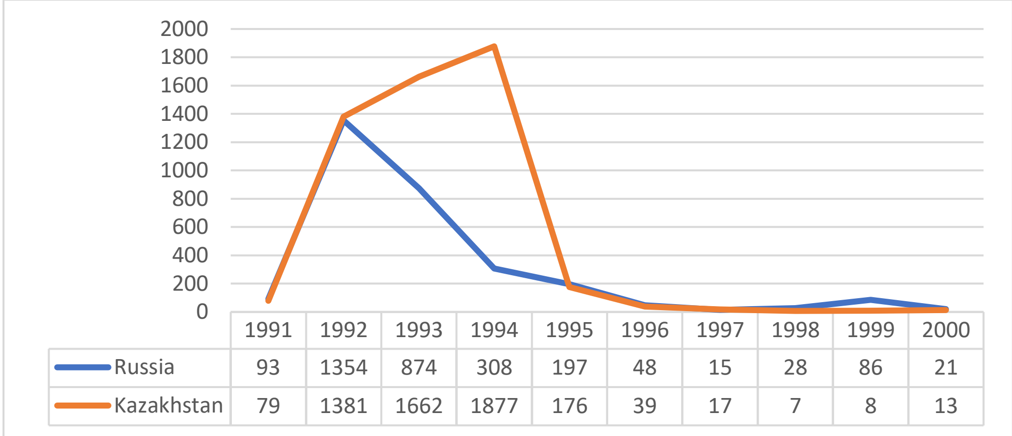
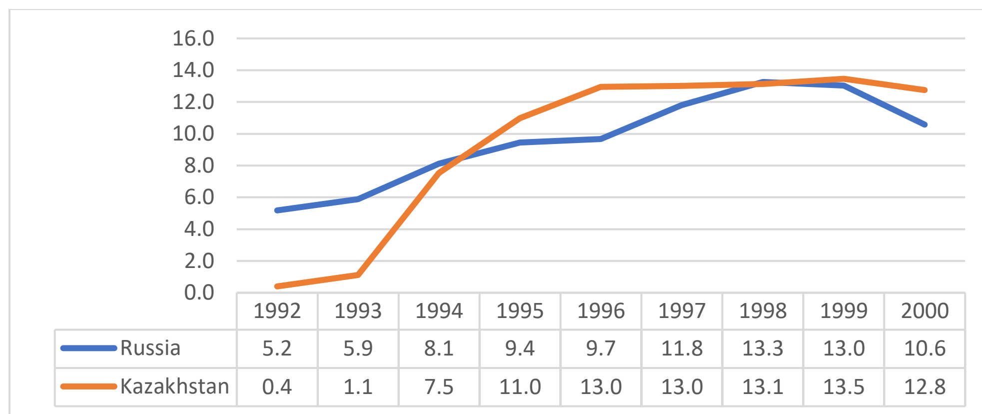


Figure 1.2 Estimates of inflation (annual %)**.** Sources: Murthi et al., 2002, (Table 7.1); Zanini, 2003, (Table 1.1); World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2022

While official statistics on unemployment do not provide an accurate picture of welfare during the early 1990s, some studies suggest that Kazakhstan may have had more serious problems with employment than Russia. While official national statistic demonstrates that both countries, especially Kazakhstan, had very low unemployment rates during the transition period (Figure 1.3), researchers argue that these accounts capture mostly open unemployment. Meanwhile, many people suffered from hidden unemployment or underemployment related to wage debts, forced vacations, and reduced working hours—as old Soviet state-dependent industries and enterprises were starved of funding throughout the 1990s. Braithwaite (1997, p. 53) reports that approximately 37 percent of industrial, construction, and agricultural enterprises were overdue on their wage payments in November 1993, while between 40 and 60 percent of the Russian workforce in various industries were on shortened hours or forced vacations in 1994 . Although accurate data on underemployment is missing due to imperfect methodology employed by official statistics, researchers claim that similar developments took place in

Kazakhstan (Falkingham, 1999; Klugman and Scott, 1997). In Kazakhstan, despite better official statistics on unemployment, other indicators show that workers were more likely to encounter long-term unemployment compared to workers in Russia. In Russia, the share of registered unemployed people who could not find a job for more than 12 months was below 10 percent, while in Kazakhstan the share of people experiencing long-term unemployment reached almost 30 percent by 1994 (Commander and Yemtsov, 1995; Klugman and Scott,1997, p. 133).



	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Russia	5.2	5.9	8.1	9.4	9.7	11.8	13.3	13.0	10.6
Kazakhstan	0.4	1.1	7.5	11.0	13.0	13.0	13.1	13.5	12.8

Figure 1.3 National estimates of total unemployment (% of total labor force). Sources: World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2022

In line with the rational-instrumentalist reasoning, the wave of protests by communist and nationalist organizations in Russia unfolded alongside the drastic increase in poverty. Lasting hyperinflation not only depressed economic activity, but also eliminated individual bank savings, and devalued fixed wages and pensions, pushing large parts of their populations into poverty. According to Klugman and Braithwaite (1998, p. 12-14), the old Soviet minimum consumption basket became unusable by January 1992 because incomes most of the population fell below this standard due to price liberalization, which led to the adoption of a new methodology with a less generous poverty line. Still, about half of the population fell under the minimum standard even under the new methodologies developed by government agencies, which led to even further

downward revision of the consumption basket with input from the World Bank. The study of Klugman and Braithwaite (1998) using the official poverty line adopted by the Russian Ministry of Labor after the revisions and the data from Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS)[4] show that poverty rose sharply from 1991. Poverty reached its highest level in 1995 with 41 percent of people falling below the established poverty line. At the same time, the authors suggest that the worst poverty occurred in 1993 because the share of the very poor (households whose expenditures were less than half of the poverty line) and the severity of poverty peaked in that year (Table 1.4). The period of the worst poverty in Russia coincides with the peak of the first wave of nationalist mobilization – the violent clash between the FNS and allied movements supporting the parliament and pro-Yeltsin forces on the streets of Moscow.

Unit	1992	1993	1994	1995
Poor households (a)	25.2	31.9	26.8	35
Very poor households (b)	8.4	12	10.4	10.9
Depth	9.8	13.6	11.7	13.2
Severity	5.4	8	7.2	6.9
Head count for individuals	26.8	36.9	30.9	41.1

Note: Percentage of households (unless noted). Expenditure-based.
a. Percent of households with expenditure below the poverty line.
b. Percent of households with expenditures less than half the poverty

Table 1.4. The Incidence, Depth, and Severity of Poverty among Households in Russia, 1992-95 (percent). Source: Klugman and Braithwaite, 1998

Considered by itself, this fact fits well into the rational-instrumentalist explanation of high level of national-patriotic mobilization in the early 1990s. However, if the rational-

[4] The Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS) is a series of nationally representative surveys designed to monitor the effects of Russian reforms on the health and economic welfare of households and individuals in the Russian Federation that was run jointly by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Higher School of Economics in Moscow.

instrumentalist thesis that poverty causes civic conflict was correct then we should have also seen levels of mobilization in Kazakhstan that are at least similar to those in Russia. The comparison of poverty levels in Russia and Kazakhstan shows that the latter country had even higher rates of poverty during the reform period. Nationally representative household data on poverty becomes available with Kazakhstan Living Standards Survey (KLSS) [5] conducted by the National Statistical Agency only in July 1996 (Murthi et al., 2002). According to the KLSS, 34.6 percent of the population of Kazakhstan was living in the poverty, which is comparable to official Russian levels of poverty in that period. Meanwhile, other studies demonstrate that share of poor population was much higher in Kazakhstan than in Russia. Often cited Milanovic's (1998) study using monthly $120 poverty threshold[6] shows significant disparity in poverty rates between two countries in 1993-1995. Depending on methodology, the difference in poverty headcount between Russia and Kazakhstan in that period ranges from 15 to 18 percent to Kazakhstan's disadvantage (Table 1.5). Other estimates suggest that there was an even greater twofold disparity in poverty rates between these countries, in 1993 (Slay, 2009). According to this estimate, only 30 percent of Russia's population fell below the World Bank's income threshold of $4.30 per day in purchasing power-parity (PPP) terms, compared to 63 percent of Kazakhstan's population. Likewise, only 9 percent of population in Russia lived under more stringent $2.15 PPP per day standard compared to 20 percent of population of Kazakhstan. Thus,

[5] In Kazakhstan Living Standards Survey (KLSS) "subsistence minimum" line was set at around $40 (2861 tenge) per person per month at market rates of exchange, and around $70 at purchasing power parity (PPP) (Murthi et al., 2002, pp. 164-165).

[6] Same monthly poverty line is established for Russia and Kazakhstan through multiplication of purchasing-power-parity (PPP) exchange rate of each country by $120 per month. For further explanation of poverty measurement see Milanovic, 1998

if rational-instrumentalist thesis that poverty produces conflict were correct, then we should have seen significant levels of bottom-up mobilization in Kazakhstan in the early 1990s as well.

	Poverty headcount (%)			Average income per capita ($PPP pm)
	HBS Income[1]		Macro Income[2]	
Country	1987-88	1993-95	1993-95	1993-95
Russia	2	50	44	181
Kazakhstan	5	65	62	115

1. HBS (household budget surveys) - obtained through regular household interviews and extrapolated to the level of population; 2. Macroeconomic sources (national accounts) - population income from macro sources by adding all funds received by population

Table 1.5 Estimated poverty levels in Russia and Kazakhstan. Source: Milanovic, 1998

Finally, the rational-instrumentalist explanation of nationalist mobilization becomes even less convincing if we look at levels of mobilization and poverty rates at the subnational level. Following the instrumentalist logic, the outbreak of mobilization should have happened in the regions with higher poverty, but we don't observe this pattern in either Russia or Kazakhstan. The bulk of national-patriotic protest activity in Russia between 1991 and 1993 was concentrated in Moscow. This is true despite the fact that Moscow was a commercial center that weathered the period of economic transition better than industrial areas in central Russia, which were especially hard hit during the country's rapid economic transformation (Klugman and Braithwaite, 1998, p.7). While trade liberalization benefited commercial centers like Moscow and Saint Petersburg and regions with abundant natural resources, industrial regions dependent on military production were affected badly, which was reflected by almost every macroeconomic and demographic indicator, including poverty rates. Still, the first wave of nationalist mobilization occurred primarily in economically better-off Moscow, not in those impoverished industrial regions.

Similarly, the limited protests by nationalists in Kazakhstan during the harsh conditions of early market reforms also occurred in the country's main commercial center and then-capital Almaty city, and not in the most impoverished regions. If the rational-instrumentalist thesis were correct, then we should have seen a high level of bottom-up mobilization happening in the Kazakhstan's southern regions where rates and severity of poverty was significantly higher the national level (Table 1.6). Moreover, in addition to the highest levels of poverty in the country, southern regions also have had the highest proportion of ethnic Kazakh population (Anderson and Pomfret, 2004). Such a combination should have made southern Kazakhstan particularly prone to outbreak of civic conflict. Overall, geographic patterns demonstrate that different levels of majority nationalist mobilization in Russia and Kazakhstan during the early 1990s cannot be explained from purely rational-instrumentalist perspective.

Region	Poverty ratio, H	Poverty gap, PG	P2
North	9.2	1.9	0.7
Centre	26.4	9	4.4
East	31.3	9	3.6
West	37.8	10.8	4.2
South	69.2	26.4	13
Total	34.6	11.4	5.2

North: Kostanai, Kokshetau, Pavlodar, and North Kazakhstan oblasts; Centre: Zhezkazgan, Karaganda, Akmola and Torgai oblasts; West: Manghystau, Atyrau, Aktyubinsk, West Kazakhstan; East: Semi Palatinsk, East Kazakhstan, Taldykorgan and Almaty oblasts and Almaty city; South: Kzyl-Orda, South Kazakhstan and Zhambyl oblasts.

The headcount ratio, H, is the proportion of individuals below the poverty line. The poverty gap, PG, is a measure of the depth of poverty. It measures the average consumption shortfall in the population (the non-poor have zero shortfall) as a proportion of the poverty line. P2 is a measure of the severity of poverty. It is calculated in same way as the PG but gives more weight to poorer households. For further details, see Ravallion (1994).

Table 1.6 Regional Dimensions of Poverty in Kazakhstan. Source: Murthi et al., 2002

Socio-Economic Context of 2000s

Like the outbreak of the conflict between Yeltsin and national-patriots in the early 1990s, political stability in Kazakhstan during 2000s initially looks like a confirmation for rational-instrumentalist explanation. The lack of bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization in Kazakhstan might not be surprising from the rational-instrumentalist perspective, considering the country's rapid economic growth throughout the 2000s. Economic reforms, together with an upturn in oil prices from 1999, improved conditions for transporting the country's oil to export markets, and the discovery of new large deposits facilitated inflow of foreign investments and, consequently, an economic boom in the country (Pomfret, 2005; Agrawal, 2008). After the drastic contraction of the 1990s, Kazakhstan's economy went through a decade of strong recovery with its GDP growing on average 9 percent per year from 2000 until the 2007-2008 global financial crisis (Figure 1.7). Such rapid economic growth translated into improvement of living standards and significant reduction of poverty in Kazakhstan during this period. According to UN estimates, Kazakhstan managed to reduce poverty from five million or 39 percent of the population in 1998 to three million or 20 percent of population in 2003 (Daly, 2008, p. 7). Due to sustainable economic growth and governmental anti-poverty programs[7] implemented in the first half of the decade the poverty headcount rate declined by 33 percent between 2001 and 2009 (Kudebayeva and Barrientos, 2013). Furthermore, this trend for poverty reduction in Kazakhstan

[7] The 2000-2002 State Programme to Combat Poverty was focused on direct social support and employment; 2003-2005 State Poverty Reduction Programme focused on raising the levels of wages, minimum pensions, and social assistance transfers. These two programmes absorbed approximately USD 4.55 billion in public expenditures, amounting to 2.3 percent of GDP annually for the period 2000-2005 (Kudebayeva and Barrientos, 2013).

remained uninterrupted through the 2007-2008 financial crisis well until 2015 (The World Bank Group, 2018).

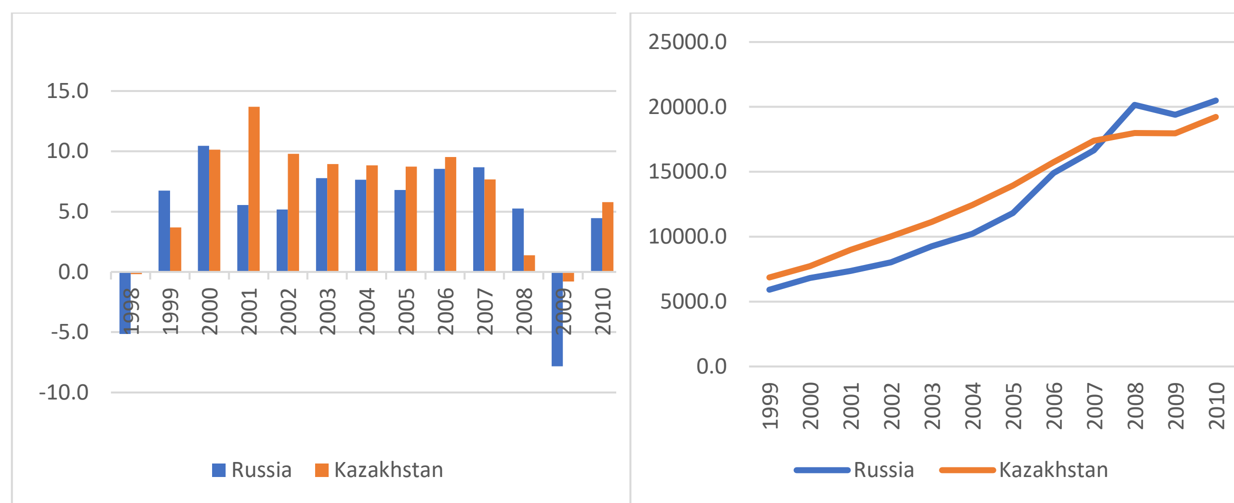


Figure 1.7 Left: GDP per capita growth (annual %); Right: GDP per capita, PPP (current international $). Sources: World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2022

While the idea that political stability in Kazakhstan during the 2000s is a product of increased welfare might sound convincing at first, the comparative analysis of socio-economic conditions in Kazakhstan and Russia casts doubt on purely economic explanation of different levels of bottom-up mobilization. Like Kazakhstan, Russia entered a decade of a strong economic growth driven by increasing prices of hydrocarbons and other raw materials on the global market after calamity of the 1990s (Kudrin and Gurvich, 2015). While the Russian economy grew somewhat slower than the economy of Kazakhstan in the 2000s, it still reached impressive average GDP per capita growth rates of 7 percent per year between 1999-2008 (Figure 1.7). Moreover, Russia had higher growth rates than Kazakhstan in some years – 8.7 percent against 7.7 percent in 2007 and 5.2 percent against 1.4 percent in 2008. Like in Kazakhstan, strong economic growth in Russia was accompanied by serious improvement of living standards and reduction of poverty. Between 1999-2008, average real wages in Russia

increased 10.5% per year, while unemployment declined from 12.6% to 6.3% (Cooper, 2009). The trend for steady poverty reduction, felt especially in the urban area, began after the 1998 crisis, and was only mildly interrupted by the 2008 economic crisis just to be followed by the resumed decrease in poverty. As a result, poverty fell from around 30 percent of population in 2000 to about 11 percent in 2014 based on the national poverty line (Gerry et al., 2008; World Bank, 2015; Abanokova and Dang, 2021).

If material factors mattered for the success of bottom-up mobilization as argued by rational-instrumentalists, we should have seen as little mobilization in Russia as in Kazakhstan. But in contrast to such expectations, the level of majority nationalist mobilization grew in Russia throughout 2000s despite rapid economic growth. According to Verkhovsky (2015) the level of street ethnic violence continuously grew from mid-1990s until its peak in 2007-2008. For example, data of SOVA monitoring center shows that number of victims of ethnic violence jumped from 270 people 50 of whom were murdered in 2004 to 715 with 93 murdered in 2007 and 615 with 116 murdered in 2008 (Kozhevnikova, 2007). Also, while the first Russian March on November 4, 2005, brought together 2,500-3000 nationalists and was held only in Moscow, the Russian Marches in the following years attracted increasingly larger number of people and spread into new regions. Although participation in Russian March in Moscow dropped in 2006 due to prohibition of the event by the city administration, the public rallies were held already in 13 cities, and spread further to 22 cities in 2007 (Kozhevnikova, 2007, 2008; Verkhovsky, 2010). Moreover, these expressions of majority nationalism reached the peak during the time of the fastest economic growth, something that is not intuitive to rational-instrumentalists. Verkhovsky (2010) argues that a majority in the nationalist circles were convinced of the political success of the nationalist movement in 2005-2007, hence, during the period of lasting major economic

recovery. Similarly, the peak of ethnic violence occurred in 2007 – one of the best years for Russian economy since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, when GDP per capita growth reached 8.7 percent (Figure 1.7).

Furthermore, if we compare levels of poverty, then we will find that Russia has consistently lower rates of poverty than in Kazakhstan throughout the 2000s. Fast economic growth led to significant reduction in poverty in both countries in the second post-Soviet decade (Gerry et al., 2008; Kudebayeva and Barrientos, 2013; Mareeva, 2020; Abanokova and Dang, 2021), which became especially visible in the case of Kazakhstan. According to the World Bank data, the proportion of people living below $3.65 a day in 2017 PPP in Kazakhstan dropped from 37.6 percent in 2001 to the mere 2.9 percent in 2010 (Figure 1.8). Nevertheless, even though Kazakhstan experienced more dramatic decline in poverty than Russia, it kept having significantly higher poverty headcounts measured at different daily minimum expenditure thresholds throughout the 2000s. For example, UNDP data reveals that 67 percent of population of Kazakhstan lived below PPP$4.30/day threshold compared to only 29 percent of Russia's population in 2002. The gap in poverty rates between the two countries remained in 2005 with the proportion of the poor falling to 50 percent in Kazakhstan, but still further to 19 percent in Russia (Slay, 2009). Moreover, Kazakhstan, unlike Russia, seemed to experience a temporary setback in the poverty reduction trend in 2005. While a cause for such setback is unclear, the share of the poor measured at PPP$3.65/day and PPP$2.15/day in Kazakhstan grew between 2004 and 2005 from 21.6 percent to 28.4 percent and from 3.3 percent to 8.7 percent respectively. In other words, considering its poverty levels, Kazakhstan again should have had similar or even higher levels of bottom-up majority nationalist mobilizations than in Russia in 2000s if material conditions were a primary cause.

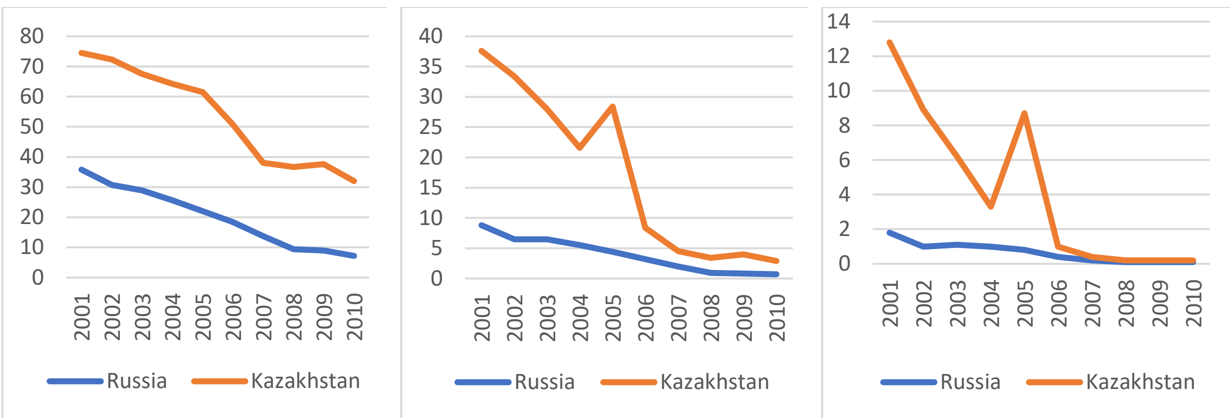


Figure 1.8 Poverty headcount ratio (% of population). Left: $6.85 a day (2017 PPP); Center: $3.65 a day (2017 PPP); Right: $2.15 a day (2017 PPP); Sources: World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2022

Rational-instrumentalists might argue that primary support for nationalist views came from people of underprivileged social background unaffected by the economic recovery of 2000s, but sociological studies of xenophobia find that often the opposite was the case. According to Herrera (2011), quantitative studies that test the relationship between economic vulnerability and xenophobia against each other at individual level do not find a simple link between these two variables. Economic variables (income, unemployment, economic fear, and education) are all found to have different impacts depending on the ethnic groups in question. While unemployment and economic fear were significant for xenophobia toward Chechens, neither was significant for either Roma or Azerbaijanis. Moreover, higher income was associated with higher levels of xenophobia to the latter two groups, opposite to the expectations of economic explanations. Similarly, Alexeev's (2010) study of hostility and tolerance towards outgroups did not find significant relations between such economic variables as blue-collar status, income, and unemployment, and xenophobia. Finally, Laruelle (2009, p. 44) claims that the hypothesis of relation between pauperization and xenophobia seems to be valid only for the most radical parties and for the years immediately following the dissolution of the USSR. She

argues that both young supporters of radical RNU, and older voters for LDPR and CPRF parties in the first half of the 1990s came from small and middle-sized cities located in regions whose economies were in crisis and dependent on single industry. However, correlation between xenophobia and poverty disappeared in the second half of the 1990s as the xenophobia started rising in all social strata, including citizens with higher education, in tertiary-sector job, living in big cities, and having regular cultural activities. From the onset of the 2000s, the wealthiest and most cultivated social strata have statistically shown themselves not only to be as xenophobic as the poor, but even surpassing them on that measure due to being more politically active compared to the largely depoliticized latter group.

The latter trend was also reflected in the changing social backgrounds among skinheads from 1990s to 2000s. During the 1990s, skinheads primarily recruited 12–14-year-old teenagers from the social classes weakened by post-Soviet changes and residents of suburbs in large cities suffering from economic crisis. Many of these teenagers hailed from families of the Soviet middle class - qualified workers, engineers, militiaman and military personnel, whose living standards deteriorated sharply within a span of few years, while many others often had not even completed secondary school and had no career perspectives. However, by 2000 – a time when skinheads started turning from youth subculture into political movement – their socioeconomic make-up rapidly evolved. Part of the skinhead movement that resided in large cities – the main sites of bottom-up nationalist mobilization – were now largely recruited from slightly older adolescents from the sections of middle class that largely benefited from Russia's economic boom after the 1998 crisis (Laruelle, 2009, p. 65). Hence, considering all these facts, we cannot explain different levels of bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization in Russia and Kazakhstan during 2000s by looking at material factors.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that different level of bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization in Russia and Kazakhstan in the early 1990s and 2000s cannot be explained purely by material factors. Occurrence and non-occurrence of nationalist mobilization waves does not correspond with patterns of economic development and rates poverty in these countries. At the first glance, the early 1990s mass demonstrations of the 'patriotic camp' in Russia occurred against the backdrop of deteriorating economic situation in line with instrumentalist reasoning. Indeed, tens of thousands of people came out to the streets at the time of unprecedented inflation when living standards deteriorated drastically for a large part of its citizenry. However, comparison of macro- and socio- economic indicators in Russia and Kazakhstan shows that economic problems during the early reform period were as serious if not worse in the latter country. At the time when the wave of national-patriotic mobilization unfolded in Russia, Kazakhstan had significantly higher inflation and poverty rates, which from an instrumentalist perspective should have made it even more susceptible to outbreak of bottom-up mobilization than Russia. Additionally, a link between material conditions and successful mobilization is questioned by the disparity of mobilization levels at the regional levels. The most significant attempts for mobilization happened in economically better off large urban centers, not in impoverished regional provinces.

Similarly, in comparative perspective, economic factors cannot explain why the second wave of majority nationalist mobilization occurred in Russia. Political stability of Kazakhstan is often attributed to its strong economic growth of that period, but if its lack of mobilization were determined by material factors, then we should have seen equally little bottom-up mobilization in

Russia. After the disastrous first post-Soviet decade, both Russia and Kazakhstan enjoyed a lasting period of fast economic growth in 2000s, driven by strong demand for their natural resources on the global market, and consequently, significant poverty reduction. While Kazakhstan had impressive annual growth rates of economy, Russia did as well, and also had much lower rates of poverty throughout the decade, which should have made occurrence of bottom-up mobilization unlikely. Nevertheless, majority nationalist mobilization wave occurred and few in Russia against the backdrop of improving economy, reaching its peak in the most prosperous years before 2008 financial crisis. Finally, sociological studies demonstrate that there was little relationship between economic welfare and xenophobic attitudes, and the affluent part of society was as likely if not more willing to embrace majority nationalist program in Russia. Hence, to explain different levels of bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization in Russia and Kazakhstan we need to look beyond economic factors.

CHAPTER IV - TESTING NON-RATIONALIST EXPLANATIONS OF NATIONALIST MOBILIZATION

As we saw in the review of theoretical literature in Chapter 1, non-rationalist approaches include different theoretical perspectives that converge in their opposition to rational-instrumentalist explanations of ethnic conflict but are based in two competing intellectual school of thoughts – essentialism and constructivism. The non-rationalist approaches argue that ethnic/nationalist mobilization results from the presence of strong and widespread negative feelings towards outgroups, not from the competition over material benefits. Some scholars within this intellectual tradition pay more attention to affective, emotional conditions like fear, hatred, resentment, and rage behind different patterns of ethnic violence, such as Petersen (2002; 2012). Others focus on more ideational components, like in Kaufman's (2001) symbolic politics theory. It employs Anthony Smith's ethno-symbolist view of ethnicity and attributes the outbreaks of ethnic mobilization and conflict to the presence of ethnic myths justifying hostility towards out-groups. Despite the theoretical differences between affective and ideational forms of non-rationalist argument, they share similar expectations that ethnic/nationalist mobilization should occur at the time of the structural breakdown and weakness of central power.

A major weakness of these non-rationalist approaches is their tendency to make somewhat tautological statements about causes of ethnic mobilization, which is related to how they measure levels of ethnic grievances. In fact, neither Petersen nor Kaufman offer direct measurements of their suggested causal variables – emotions and hostile myths respectively. For example, Petersen demonstrates presence of fear in the studied countries by pointing out how

well historical developments in particular cases fit behavior described by his fear-based model, and not by referring to some descriptive statistics capturing essence of fear. In turn, Kaufman postulates the presence of ethnic myths through historical process tracing and study of narratives in his cases and does not provide tools that would allow us to evaluate how widespread and powerful myths are in different societies. Instead, the knowledge about the prevalence and causal power of myths is derived from the fact of whether ethnic mobilization occurred or not. In other words, although the original non-rationalist argument is that ethnic mobilization occurs because of the prevalence of ethnic grievance, we know about the presence of such grievances only if ethnic mobilization occurred. Because of that, existing non-rationalist frameworks tend to suffer from tautologies leading to an assumption that non-occurrence of nationalist mobilization in a country simply stems from the lack of ethnic animosities in a case at question. In turn, the following chapter will demonstrate that we can test statements of non-rationalist frameworks non-tautologically by looking closely at how structural breakdowns relate to nationalist mobilization.

In the following sections, I will demonstrate that existing non-rationalist frameworks cannot explain different levels of majority nationalist mobilization in Russia and Kazakhstan in both studied periods and will also argue that the presence of ethnic grievances on its own is not sufficient cause for bottom-up outbreaks of ethnonationalism. Following non-rationalist logic, the outbreak of grievance-driven ethnonationalist mobilization should occur as soon as opportunity for it presents itself in the form of a structural breakdown. In turn, this first section will demonstrate that such ethnic grievance-based explanation poorly accounts for 'red-brown' mobilization in Russia as it lifted off only few years after Gorbachev-led reforms reduced structural constraints and opened window of opportunity for bottom-up collective action.

Furthermore, by using sociological data on xenophobia and its indirect indicators such as prominence of majority nationalist ideas in the public sphere, this section will show that core majorities in Russia and Kazakhstan had comparable degree of ethnic animosities in the early 1990s, hence diminishing explanatory power of grievances for divergent levels of nationalist mobilization in that period.

The second section will show that grievance-based non-rationalist frameworks also cannot explain different level of nationalist mobilization in Russia and Kazakhstan throughout 2000s. The application of existing non-rationalist frameworks towards more stable political context of 2000s in both countries is not very intuitive, however given their focus on past grievances it is safe to assume that non-rationalists would rather expect mobilization to occur against more historically established ‘ethnic enemies’ within nationalist narratives. Meanwhile, the section will demonstrate that against such non-rationalist expectations in both cases there is little tendency for bottom-up nationalist mobilization against already established ‘ethnic enemies’, and instead, if it occurs, its targeted against new outgroups.

Ethnic Grievance in the Early 1990s

From a non-rationalist perspective, the timing of nationalist mobilization depends on the presence of political opportunity for it. A fundamental idea in non-rationalist accounts is that ethnicity arouses in people very strong emotions that in relation to outgroups designated as ethnic foe take a form of fear, hatred, or resentment. Non-rationalists argue that such negative emotions create a poorly controlled urge to act against ethnic foes, which can be tamed only by the presence of efficient state policing. But once the state’s coercive capacity deteriorates and it

becomes unable to prevent people from unleashing their ethnic grievances, nationalist collective action against disliked outgroups should happen (Petersen, 2001; Kaufman, 2006; Kaufmann, 2005).

When explaining the causes of Russian nationalist mobilization of the early 1990s non-rationalists could point out on the presence of anti-Semitism as a key factor. Indeed, rhetoric of different actors from ‘red-brown’ opposition in one way or another mentioned Jews as such ‘ethnic foes’ responsible for past and present woes in Russia and framed their ‘democratic’ opponents as being Jews or serving interests of Jewish nationalism. For example, in the words of former KGB general Alexander Sterligov who headed Russian National Assembly (*Russkii’ Natsionalnyi’ Sobor*) – one of the first broad coalition of national-patriotic organizations of the period – “Jewish nationalists were the main force behind subversion of the state integrity, destruction of economy and culture, and moral decay.” He also implicated proreform Soviet intelligentsia in losing its national character while emphasizing it Jewish component that presumably remained committed to ethnonationalism. National-populist Vladimir Zhirinovsky, whose political star was rising at that time, deployed similar logic while arguing that majority of democrats, as majority of Bolsheviks before them, were Jews. Such anti-Jewish sentiments were also present among those who actively participated in street protests during contentious phase of mobilization. Some participants of the “siege of empire of lies” (*Osada imperii lzhi*) demonstration around Ostankino TV tower organized by orthodox communist Russian Communist Workers' Party (RKRP) in June 1992 shouted anti-government and anti-Semitic at the television workers. Finally, part of the defenders of the parliament were convinced in the

presence of combatants from Jewish youth organization "Beytar"[8] among those who assaulted the White House during September-October 1993 crisis (Verkhovsky et al., 1996; Verkhovsky and Pribylovskiy, 1996).

Would then existing non-rationalist grievance theories be correct in suggesting that Russian nationalist mobilization of the early 1990s happened because its participants acted on their ethnic antipathies toward Jews? My answer is no. If ethnic grievances, as conceptualized by non-rationalists, were the dominant motivation for participants, then we should have seen a different timing of mobilization. Following this logic, mobilization of 'patriotic camp' parties should have started earlier as an opportunity for bottom-up collective action in the USSR began progressively expanding from 1986. From 1986 to 1991, the political transformation of the Soviet Union went through three phases in which opportunity for protest mobilization increased. In the first phase (1986-1987), the state led by the new General Secretary of the Communist Party Mikhail Gorbachev initiated liberalization of the Soviet political system under the banners of *perestroika* (restructuring) and *glasnost'* (openness), which opened a window of opportunity for bottom-up mobilization. Upon coming to power in March 1985, Gorbachev continued Andropov's reform line in the top-down command-administrative campaigns against corruption and for *uskorenie* (acceleration) of scientific and technological innovation to address accumulated problems in the Soviet Union. However, in late 1986 he shifted the focus of reforms toward mobilizing Soviet citizens and increasing the local autonomy of sub federal actors, under the assumption that decreased control of the center over republics and regions and increased democratic accountability of local authorities would promote local economic efficiency and

[8] Curiously, according to Verkhovsky et al. (1996), in fall 1993, "Beytar" was a tiny group of 9 people, 7 of which were teenage girls.

productivity, hence reinvigorating the Soviet economy and state institutions. During this phase, the state first reduced and then completely abolished censorship, allowing mass appearance of previously banned cultural products and public discussion of sensitive topics related to Soviet history. Also, the state drastically decreased levels of persecution for political activities and released many political prisoners from the Soviet prison camps. The state-led decrease of coercion levels opened a window of opportunity for emergence of nascent protest activity. As a result, from mid-1987, various groups and organizations across the Soviet Union started engaging in a series of small-scale demonstrations centered around ecological, pacifist, human rights, and ethnonationalist themes. Most of the protests at that period embraced slogans of *perestroika* and did not openly challenge either the party or the Soviet state, which led Gorbachev to portraying them as a positive force for change within Soviet institutions (Beissinger, 2004; Willerton et al., 2005; Marples, 2011; Tsygankov, 2014; Sakwa, 2021).

In the second phase (1988-1989), Gorbachev and his reformer allies enacted more radical political reforms, which led to weaking of existing state structures and thus expanded opportunity for bottom-up mobilization even further. Against the background of growing conflict in the Soviet leadership about the limits of liberalization and worsening ethnic relations in the country[9], Gorbachev moved toward radical transformation of the Soviet political institutions and

[9] The increasing protest activity of opposition groups divided the Soviet leadership into "left" and "right" factions - the former favoring liberal reforms to be implemented at a faster pace, and the latter concerned with the destabilizing effect of liberalization and/or favoring a Russian nationalist agenda. By early 1988, the fears of conservatives were only confirmed by the outbreak of ethnic conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh in February. On March 13, 1988, the newspaper *Sovetskaia Rossiia* published an article titled "I Cannot Forsake My Principles" by chemistry teacher Nina Andreeva, which berated Gorbachev's democratization reforms for destabilizing Soviet society. The article praised by the Central Committee Secretary Yegor Ligachev and supported by a number of Politburo members. On April 5, the newspaper Pravda published a response by Gorbachev and his aids, who called the article "an anti-perestroika manifest". In turn, Ligachev received a reprimand within the Politburo and the conflict was temporarily concealed (Beissinger, 2004).

democratization in attempt to shift power from CPSU to alternative vessels. At the consequential June 1988 Nineteenth Party Conference, the grand strategy of reforming the entire political system within the framework of one-party democracy and one-party parliamentarism was outlined. In Gorbachev's view, captured by the notion of *pravovoe gosudarstvo* (law-based state), the CPSU would retain a predominant role in the renewed system, but its power would be reduced because all its officials, from the top to the bottom, would be subordinated to the law, and the positions in the state and party organs at different levels would be contested in elections. In practical realms, the Nineteenth Party Conference was followed by a number of major institutional changes[10], including creation of a new Congress of People's Deputies (CPD USSR) legislature. Meanwhile, the attempts to challenge the Soviet regime proliferated rapidly in the aftermath of the Nineteenth Party Conference. In increasingly more open political atmosphere, the scattered small-scale acts of protest that began during the first phase started rapidly transforming into massive and interconnected tide of ethnonationalist mobilization across the Soviet Union (Figure 2.1). The tide of mobilization began with demonstrations of "popular fronts in support for perestroika" formed by local intelligentsia and communist party insiders against the effort of republican elites to control selection of the delegates to the conference in the Baltics in summer-fall 1988[11], which in the short time evolved into huge rallies centered around

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[10] Among other important institutional changes implemented after the conference was reorganization of the Central Committee apparatus of CPSU – the main body from which the executive control over the USSR was exercised – from its hierarchical branch departments into a series of six commission. It was planned that this reform will help to transform the party bureaucracy from enforcer to consensus builder and replace "command-administrative" methods of governance with "political" ones (Beissinger, 2004).

[11] Importantly, the Soviet leadership in Moscow took sided with local popular fronts against the republican party leaders during the early phase of mobilization. In Estonia, Moscow removed the Estonian Party First Secretary from his post after, according to some accounts, the request for military intervention in the wake of planned mass meetings. Similarly, popular fronts in Lithuania and Latvia received backing from the reformists in Moscow against the local party bureaucrats, which made impossible for the officials to harass or ignore those movements (Beissinger, 2004).

demands for secession from the USSR. These demands started quickly spreading to other groups and soon analogous movements appeared in the other republics (Beissinger, 2004; Willerton et al., 2005; Garcelon, 2006; Marples, 2011; Sakwa, 2021).

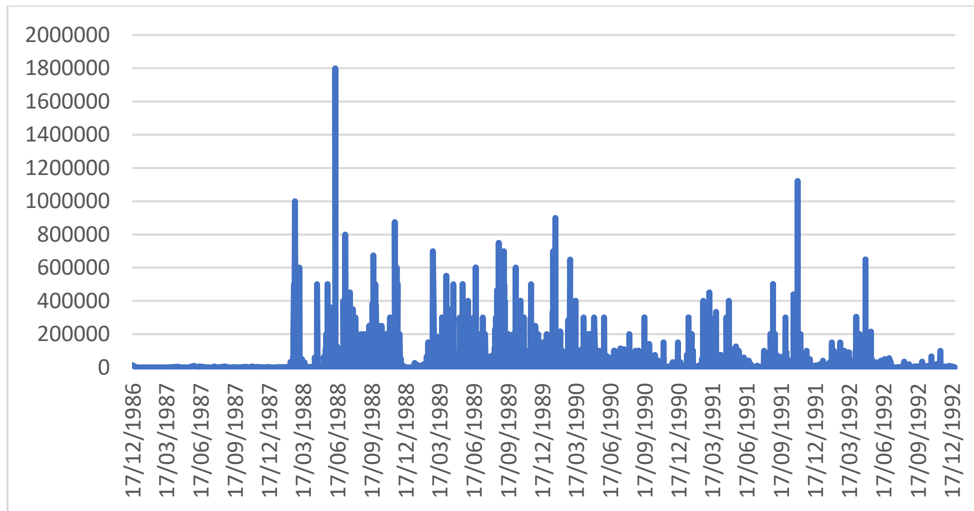

Figure 2.1 Participation rates in demonstrations across the USSR. Source: Beissinger, 2002, Demonstrations and Mass Violent Events in the USSR, 1987-1992

In the third phase (1989-1991), the progressively weakening state lost control over the rapidly growing wave of bottom-up mobilization unleashed in the earlier phase. From mid-1989 to the collapse of the USSR, major protest demonstrations, riots, and violent ethnic conflicts occurred in the country on almost daily basis. The electoral campaign of early 1989 – the first conducted on the semi-competitive basis in the USSR – gave boost to oppositional mobilization, in part because of the crude attempts to control nominations and electoral results by the party officials, in part because elections fostered the growth of electoral organization and rallies in support for specific candidates. In addition to growing nationalist mobilization in republics, a wave of liberal-reformist mobilization unsatisfied with the pace of reform began in Russia. In February and March 1989, liberal groups organized electoral rallies in seventeen major Russian cities in support of proreform candidates, with the largest (attracting around forty thousand

people) in support of Boris Yeltsin's election happening in Moscow[12]. The liberal Russian mobilization gained massive strength in May, as demonstrations involving tens and hundreds of thousands of participants were held in Moscow on a daily basis. From 1990, in anticipation of republican and local elections, positions of Russian liberals converged with those of non-Russian separatists with the former beginning to push for Russia's sovereignty vis-à-vis the Soviet regime and state[13]. Consequently, the power began seeping from Gorbachev, who took the post of the newly created Soviet presidency without a wide electoral mandate, to a chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet Yeltsin who could claim more democratic legitimacy, and from Soviet institutions to institutions of Russian republic by thus creating a dual-power situation (*dvoevlastie*). Parallel to these developments, the acts of contention in the USSR, according to Beissinger (2004, p. 80), "gained a tidelike momentum with the pace of events further "thickened" in time", with massive strike involving hundreds of thousands coal miners unfolding in Russia and violent conflicts breaking out in multiple locations[14]. As result, during this period the Soviet institution, including the party and state bureaucracies, police, and armed forces[15],

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[12] Although the Communist Party controlled the new legislature by the end of elections, still its experienced number of defeats that further undermined its authority. For example, in Baltics where Popular Front candidates won almost across the board. In number of major urban centers, party candidates failed to gain enough votes for election even when they did not have opponents. As a result, the congress, whose legislative meeting were broadcasted live to whole country, became a tribune from which regime's critics could spread their message to captivated mass audience (Beissinger, 2004).

[13] In 1988 and 1989, Russian liberals defined themselves primarily in opposition to the Soviet regime, whereas non-Russian separatist opposed the Soviet end. Considering the difficulty in distinguishing the Soviet regime from the Soviet state, alliance between Russian liberals and non-Russian separatists became possible (Beissinger, 2004).

[14] In June, ethnic violence started between Uzbeks and Meskhetian Turks in the Fergana Valley, between Kazakhs and Lezgins in the oil town of Noviy Uzen', and between Georgians and Azerbaijanis in Georgia's Marneuli district. In July renewed violence between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in Karabakh moved into more intense phase, conflict happened between Kirgiz and Tajiks in the Osh valley, and between Abkhaz and Georgians on the Black Sea coast (Beissinger, 2004).

[15] Much of coercive capacity of the Soviet regime to control street protests was undermined after the violent crackdown in Tbilisi on April 9, 1989. The application of force against nationalist demonstration in Tbilisi led

were simply overwhelmed by the ever-growing scale of challenge to the state (Beissinger, 2004; Willerton et al., 2005; Garcelon, 2006).

Considering the diminishing capacity of the Soviet state to shut down large-scale collective action from 1986 to 1991, Russian nationalists had plenty of opportunity to start acting on anti-Jewish grievances during that period. However, as shown in Figure 2.2, very little protest mobilization around nationalist-conservative themes happened in Russia between 1987 and 1991. During this period, anti-Jewish sentiments, alongside attacks on liberal-reformist intelligentsia and Gorbachev's cultural policies, circulated among nationalist intellectuals affiliated with RSFSR Writers' Union and appeared on the pages of such literary outlets as *Nash sovremennik*, *Molodaya gvardiya*, and *Literaturnaya Rossiya* in a form of antiperestroika and antiglanost articles. Nevertheless, for much of perestroika such anti-Semitism largely remained constrained to cultural circles and part of the media and did not pave the way to a mass protest movement. One exception to that was protest activity of far-right *Pamyat* (Memory) Society that came into spotlight after May 6, 1987, demonstration in Moscow at which four hundred activists of it demanded a meeting with Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin, then a head of the Moscow Party organization. *Pamyat* was able to emerge out of a small cultural club because of Gorbachev's policy of permitting the formation of nonofficial organization with political agenda and was independent from the nationalist cultural institutions mentioned above. While *Pamyat* positioned itself as pro-perestroika movement much of its political program was based on strong anti-Semitic sentiments. By 1988, *Pamyat*-like organization started to appear in different city of the

numerous casualties including death of 19 people and was followed popular backlash. This created reticence on the part of authorities for further use of force and so called "Tbilisi syndrome" as the military was for the first time vilified for acting as an instrument of repression against the population. As a result, army tried to avoid participating in internal conflicts relegating itself to the position of sideline observer, which emboldened further nationalist mobilization (Beissinger, 2004).

USSR turning the *Pamyat* into visible factor of the Soviet politics, which given its political stance alarmed liberal proreform intelligentsia[16] (Pain, 1998; Brudny, 1999). Notwithstanding the notoriety that *Pamyat* got in that period, its case rather demonstrates the weak mobilization potential of anti-Jewish frames and their low causal importance for Russian nationalist mobilization of early 1990s.

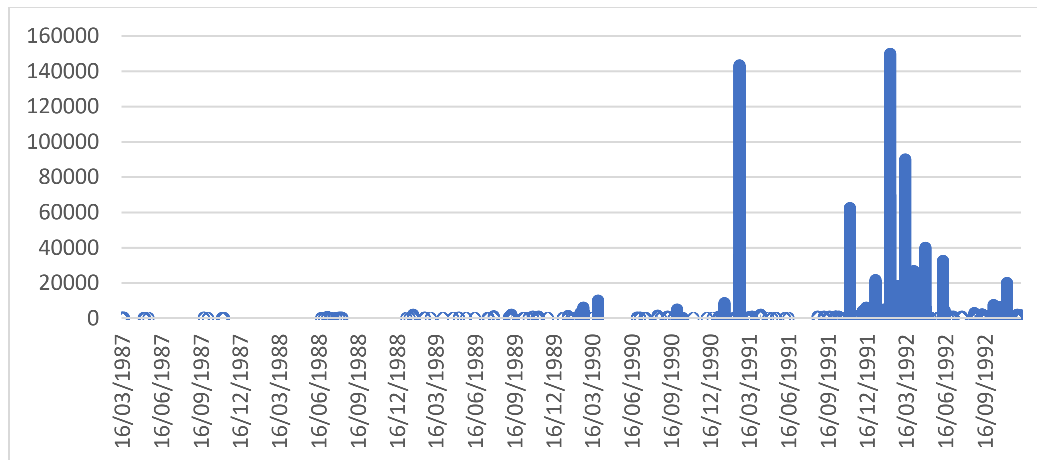

Figure 2.2 Participation rates in nationalist-conservative demonstrations by Russians in the RSFSR. Source: Beissinger, 2002, Demonstrations and Mass Violent Events in the USSR, 1987-1992

Despite a self-inflating image promoted by the movement's leaders[17] and the attention it got from liberal opponents at that time, membership size of *Pamyat* was negligibly small.

[16] In its programmatic "Appeal to the Russian People [and] to the Patriots of All Countries and Nations" (*Vozzvanie patrioticheskogo obiedeneniya "Pamyat" k russkomy narody, k patriotam vsekh stran i natsii*), Pamyat declared that true goals of perestroika must be the revival of traditional Russian village, the preservation of nature and historic monuments, and end to persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church, and a relentless struggle against alcoholism, bureaucracy, and especially "Zionists" and "Free-Masons" that stand behind Russia's economic and social problems. Pamyat also demanded to publish Protocols of the Elders of Zions and to reveal to the Russian nation that the Jews were responsible for the murder of Tsar Nicholas II and his family, the administration of Stalin's labor camps, and the systematic destruction of ancient Russian churches and other architectural pieces of prerevolutionary Russian culture (Brudny, 1999).

[17] According to Brudny (1999), emergence of similar organizations in different Russian cities, encouraged the leaders of Pamyat to boast their organization as a popular social movement in the making. In a series of interviews conducted between June and August 1988, the organization's chairman Dmitry Vasiliev claimed that Pamyat branches in thirty cities and that the movement's membership size reached twenty thousand activists in Moscow alone.

Brudny (1999) reports that *Pamyat* had somewhere between two hundred and four hundred activists in Moscow and approximately one thousand throughout the country in early 1990. Furthermore, this number looks even less impressive considering that *Pamyat* went through several splits from late 1987 due to internal conflict and by 1990 was divided into several rival *Pamyat* groups each having only about forty to fifty people. Such low membership figure of *Pamyat* provide important evidence against non-rationalist hypothesis of anti-Jewish sentiments being primary cause of early 1990s mobilization. Existing non-rationalist frameworks hold that strong negative emotions towards ethnic foes driving people to participate in ethnic/nationalist collective action remain entrenched over time. Thus, if 'red-brown' opposition was able to attract hundreds of thousands of participants to their protest events between 1991 and 1993 primarily because of the appeal of anti-Jewish frames as non-rationalists would suggest then we should have seen much larger following of *Pamyat*. But since *Pamyat*, despite having plenty of opportunity for mobilization due to its wide publicity and decreasing levels of state coercion, failed to gain a significant following with its anti-Semitic program few years earlier, that most of supporters of the 'patriotic camp' were drawn to protest sites by some other motives.

Furthermore, if ethnic antipathies were the primary cause of the nationalist mobilization as suggested by non-rationalists, then we should have seen comparable level of bottom-up mobilization in Kazakhstan in the early 1990s. Indirect indicators[18] demonstrate that ethnic grievances were at least as widespread among Kazakhs as among Russians in the first post-Soviet years. As noted by different observers, the political atmosphere of Kazakhstan at that time

[18] The fact that is nearly impossible to measure ethnic emotions discussed by both Petersen (2001) and Kaufman (2001). In the current study, the measurement problem is further complicated by the dearth of sociological data on the investigated cases, especially for Kazakhstan. Due to these issues, the author relies on indirect indicators when comparing levels of ethnic grievances between the two studied cases.

was characterized by heightened ethnic tensions. While there was a general rise of ethnic hostility among ethnic Kazakhs toward minority groups[19], much of Kazakh nationalist discourse was centered around anti-Russian sentiments. During the early 1990s, Kazakh nationalists articulated a host of grievance-based narratives that could be targeted at Russians. One such narrative focused on the great famine, collectivization, and sedentarization campaigns carried out by the Bolshevik government between 1928 and 1934, which resulted in a massive decline in the Kazakh population because of death and outmigration to neighboring countries. The demographic theme was continued in the grievances against the influx of Slavic settlers throughout the late tsarist and the Soviet periods, which at it is peak in early 1960s diminished ethnic Kazakhs to less than a third of the total population in Kazakhstan. Another theme was focused on the ecological problems that occurred under the Soviet administration such as nuclear testing at the Semipalatinsk site and disappearance of the Aral Sea. Finally, a major grievance that took off shortly before the dissolution of the USSR was related to perceived decline in the prevalence of Kazakh language and traditional Kazakh culture due to Russian political domination (Hale, 2009)

While the lack of sociological data prevents me from direct quantitative comparison of xenophobia levels between core majorities in Russia and Kazakhstan, I argue that there are reasons to think that anti-Russian grievances had wider resonance among Kazakhs than anti-Jewish sentiments among Russians in the early 1990s. My judgment about levels of ethnic

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[19] Khazanov (1995) writes about several instance of ethnic clashed happening between 1990 and 1992. In July and August 1990, clash happened between Kazakhs and Chechens in the Dzhambul raion (district). In the summer of 1991, Meskhetian Turks living in the Enbekshikazakhskii raion received the ultimatum from the local Kazakhs to leave the raion in three months. In the beginning of 1992, activists of the Kazakh nationalist organizations 'Azat' and 'Kazak till' forced Chechens and Ingush living in the Novyi Mir settlement in the Taldy-Kyrgan oblast' to sell their houses for low price and to leave Kazakhstan immediately. Also, anti-Chechen demonstrations also took place in the city of Ust'-Kamenogorsk, in September 1992.

antipathies in Russia and Kazakhstan is based on the significant difference in the ideological status of majority nationalist narratives within public political discourses of these two countries. To begin with, Russian majority nationalism was just one of the ideological alternatives that found itself in opposition to a liberal anti-nationalist discourse dominant in the early 1990s. Although anticommunist political dissent came from both Russian democrats and nationalists in the Soviet Union, these two ideological traditions existed largely separately. While the Brezhnev-era dissident movement did not pay attention to nationality issue, Russian nationalists did not have reasons to join the liberal human-rights activists or the nationalist movements in other republics (Kolstø, 2014). The alliance between non-nationalist liberals and moderate nationalists emerged on the platform of liberal-dominated pro-Yeltsin Democratic Russia (DR) movement during perestroika, but it did not last long. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, moderate nationalists parted ways with DR and joined the emerging National Salvation Front (NSF) movement formed by conservative communists and radical nationalists, and throughout the rest of the decade liberalism and Russian nationalism remained in ideological opposition to each other (Brudny, 1999; Beissinger, 2004). According to Sokolov (2007), marketplace of ideas in Russia of 1990s was largely separated into two major almost non-overlapping segments – the segment of liberal narratives consumed by supporters of ruling 'democrats', and the segment of diverse narratives consumed by supporters of 'red-brown' opposition. In this second segment, Russian majority nationalism was just one of the concepts, coexisting with 'statist-patriotic', religious-fundamentalist, and socialist ideas. Additionally, sociological studies show that xenophobia and anti-Jewish sentiments associated with Russian majority nationalism in the beginning of the 1990s were not very widespread and resonated only for around one-fifth of Russians. According to VTsIOM (All-Union Center for the Study of

Public Opinion; later Russian Public Opinion Research Center studies), the spread of xenophobia among Russians was below the Soviet average (around 20 percent of population) between late 1980s and early 1990s. In similar vein, the research of Levada center demonstrates that the saturated slogan "Russia for the Russians" (*Rossiia dlia russkikh*) that became popular in skinhead circles and extra-parliamentary nationalist parties, enjoyed support of merely 15 percent of those surveyed in that period. Finally, negative attitudes particularly targeted against Jews were expressed by 13-18% of those surveyed between 1990 and 1993 (Pain, 2007; Laruelle, 2009).

Meanwhile, Kazakh majority nationalist discourse aspired for hegemonic status without having significant ideological opposition, like those of liberal anti-nationalist narratives in Russia. To start with, Kazakh nationalist discourse did not have the same internal ideological conflict as Russian nationalism. Whereas the latter was fragmented into a great number of parties and movements using a unique combination of ideological elements[20] in their political programs, Kazakh nationalism in late 1980s-early 1990s was represented by just three main movements that did not have any serious ideological disagreement with each other. All these Kazakh nationalist movements broadly shared ethnocentric goal of achieving political and cultural primacy of ethnic Kazakhs in Kazakhstan and the difference between them was primarily in the degree of their radicalness (Babak et al., 2004; Laruelle, 2021). Also, unlike in Russia where liberal-dissident intelligentsia rallied against Russian nationalism, much of the Kazakh intelligentsia embraced ethnonationalist ideology. During the transition from the Soviet rule to

[20] Laruelle (2009) points out that while it possible to specify the singularity of each movement through its unique combination of ideological components and political trajectory of its leader, it is almost impossible to classify them systematically using global criteria such as right/left or ethnonationalism/imperialism. Actors within Russian nationalist field deployed all sort of conceptual combinations and differed in their choice of political regime (monarchism or republicanism), the conception of nationhood (culturalist or racialist), religious preferences (Orthodox, neopagan, or indifferent), and focus on Jewish question.

independence, numerous Kazakh elites went through the same communist-turned-nationalist pattern switching from active propagation of the cherished Soviet goals of internationalism towards formulating arguments for privileged position of ethnic Kazakhs in the new country. This ideological stance became the dominant position among Kazakh intelligentsia who turned their anger on to a small dissident group of Russophone Kazakhs that stood on 'internationalist' positions and expressed support for granting Russia a status of state language on par with Kazakh, pejoratively labeling the former russified *(obrusevshie)* and 'cosmopolitans'[21] (Kolstø, 1998; Dave, 2007). The lack of serious internal ideological opposition to Kazakh nationalism is also reflected by a general political dynamic in Kazakhstan, which in contrast to Russia took a form of inter-ethnic rather than ideological conflict. This dynamic was perfectly illustrated by the biased procedure of selection and elimination of candidates for March 7,1994 parliamentary election which led to significant disproportion in favor of Kazakh candidates[22] (Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1994; Kaiser and Chinn, 1995). Considering the relative internal ideological homogeneity of Kazakh nationalism, the lack of active political actors expressing ideological opposition to nationalism, and the fact that political dynamics in Kazakhstan took a form of inter-ethnic conflict, it is highly unlikely that anti-Russian sentiments among Kazakhs were less widespread than anti-Jewish sentiments among Russians in the early 1990s. Hence, if the presence of ethnic grievance determined occurrence of nationalist

[21] On one instance, Sherkhan Murtaza, noted Kazakh writer and the former Minister of Information and Press, called Nurbulat Masanov and Nurlan Amrekulov – two prominent Russophone Kazakhs – the 'poisonous fruits of the empire.' Similarly, Olzhas Suleimenov, the best-known Kazakh poet of the late Soviet period, also became target of nationalist opprobrium for his continuing support of two state languages, internationalism, and a confederation of Kazakhstan and Russia. Several articles, including an 'open letter' addressed to him by fellow Kazakh writers, challenged him to take a patriotic public stand on issues such as dual citizenship for Russians, the status of the Kazakh language, and ethnic relations in the republic (Dave, 2007).

[22] According to Kaiser and Chinn (1995), As a result of pre-election manipulations, only 128 Russian candidates appeared on the ballots, compared to 566 Kazakhs, even though voting-aged Russians outnumbered Kazakhs.

mobilization, we should have seen a comparable level of bottom-up nationalist mobilization in Kazakhstan.

Failure of Past Grievance Narratives in 2000s

Also, due to their focus on past grievances, existing non-rationalist explanations cannot account for change in primary ethnic foes between early 1990s and 2000s waves of Russian nationalist mobilization. Existing non-rationalist perspectives stress the importance of past grievance narratives in stirring nationalist mobilization. They suggest that the primary source for ethnic emotions that motivate people to join nationalist collective action are the wrongs committed by ethnic foes towards one's own group in the past. This view presupposes the existence of a singular nationalist historical narrative that is widely familiar to most of the members of the mobilizing group. If such past grievances were the primary cause of nationalist mobilization, then nationalist parties that exploit narratives of "familiar foes" should have been more successful in rallying supporters than the parties targeting new outgroups. However, the evolution of the Russia nationalist field between the 1990s and 2000s demonstrated the opposite dynamics. Considered the early emergence of anti-Semitic narratives during perestroika and their broad usage by parties and organization associated with 'red-brown' coalition, I suggest that the anti-Semitic frames represented the most elaborated and entrenched ethnic grievance themes within broader Russian nationalist discourse. Hence, according to the non-rationalist past grievance logic the mobilizational potential of anti-Semitic frames should have been carried over to the 2000s as well. On the contrary, nationalist groups that actively exploited anti-Semitism in their political programs largely came into decline by the end of the 1990s. The most telling

example of such decline is the trajectory of Russian National Unity (*Russkoe natsional'noe edinstvo, RNE*), the most prominent radical nationalist organization of the mid 1990s that held anti-Semitism at the core of its political program[23]. The popularity of RNU within nationalist field grew after the movement's participation in the 1993 confrontation between Yeltsin and the parliament[24], and between 1993 and 1996 the organization had about 15,000 active member and between 50,000-100,000 supporters. However, the moment of fame did not last long for RNU, and the organization went through a series of internal schisms, just like its predecessor *Pamyat*. In 2000, RNU underwent an internal coup that resulted in exclusion of Barkashov from his position of the head of the party by several regional leaders, and splintering up into multiple faction, none of which could claim a unifying role (Sokolov, 2007; Verkhovsky, 2010; Laruelle, 2019)

In turn, against the non-rationalist logic, the most successful Russian nationalist organizations of 2000s in terms of rallying supporters where those organization that tapped into generalized xenophobia rather than narratives of past grievances against distinct ethnic foes. According to Laruelle (2009) the xenophobia among ethnic Russian began to grow in jumps from 1993-1995 with anti-Chechen sentiments becoming dominant in 1990s against backdrop of

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[23] RNE emerged out of *Pamyat* in 1990 after the split between its founder Alexander Barkashov and Pamyat's head Dmitry Vasiliev. According to Laruelle (2019), RNE borrowed symbols from fascism and Nazism: the swastika; the Hitler salute; the slogan "One Nation, One People, One State"; the black paramilitary uniforms for members; and multiple references to the program of the NSDAP, including mixed economy and eugenics. The party defended "genetic purity of the Russian nation" and considered linguistic and religious markers to be less important than blood ties. Also, the party believe in an existence of in anti-Russian plot on the part of the world's cosmopolitans, while Barkashov himself celebrated fascist Italy and Nazi Germany for having freed themselves from Jewish domination.

[24] The RNE's militia patrolled the White House and controlled entry to the Supreme Soviet building together with the Ministry of Defense troops that remained loyal to the parliament. After the even which resulted in death of two of RNE's members, the movement was temporarily banned, and Barkashov was arrested and imprisoned for short term. When he was released in February 1994, his prestige within the nationalist movement was at its peak (Laruelle, 2019).

terrorist acts committed in Central Russia and the North Caucasus[25]. Against the non-rationalist logic of past grievances, which would expect nationalist mobilization to occur under narrow anti-Chechen frames, anti-Chechen sentiments soon got subsumed by more encompassing forms of xenophobia. First, anti-Chechen sentiments had turned into a generalized "Caucasophobia" (*kavkazofobia*), which lumped Russian citizens of Caucasian descent (Chechens, Dagestanis, etc.) with citizens of independent states of the South Caucasus (Azeris) under a same category of migrants and foreigners. Furthermore, this Caucasian grouping reified into even larger group without clear distinction going under various labels such as "southerners" (*iuzhane*) or "blacks" (*chernye*), which would also incorporate Central Asians, Chinese, and Africans. Importantly, the most successful Russian nationalist groups of the 2000s became organizations that referred in their political programs to generalized xenophobia instead of past grievances against concrete ethnic outgroups. This was the case of the Movement Against Illegal Immigration (DPNI) founded by a former press attaché of *Pamyat,* Alexander Potkin, in July 2002. In contrast to old nationalist organizations that got bogged down by theoretical debates, DPNI consciously refused developing a well-elaborated ideology to avoid doctrinal schism and concentrated on xenophobia, and more particularly "migrantophobia" in the political program[26]. Instead of singling out one outgroup as the ethnic foe, DPNI's political program juxtaposed ethnic Russians with a broad category of migrants that according to it took advantage of the goodness of Russian people and were responsible for the arrival of mafia, terrorism, drug- and arms- trafficking, resurgence of crime and rape and other ills, and suggest 'the deportation of all illegal migrants

[25] Particularly badly were taken hostage takings such as those Budennovsk in June 1995 and in Kizliar-Pervomaiskoe in January 1996, but even more so those at the Dubrovka Theater in Moscow in 2002 and at the school in Beslan in 2004 (Laruelle, 2009)

[26] This for example sets DPNI apart from RNU whose meetings often were ridden by debates about correct definition of "Russianness" and "Jewishness" (Sokolov, 2007).

outside of Russian territory". Although such diluted focus on ethnic foes goes against the logic of existing non-rationalist accounts that expect much more elaborate grievance stories driving nationalist mobilization, it did not prevent DPNI from becoming from the preeminent movement of Russian interparliamentary nationalism in 2000s[27] (Laruelle, 2009; Verkhovsky, 2010).

Existing non-rationalist accounts also have little to say about nationalist dynamics in 2000s, as the nationalist mobilization did not happen in Kazakhstan based on the most elaborated past grievance narrative either. As mentioned above, the most elaborated past grievance narrative in Kazakhstan was related to the Russo-Soviet period. In the post-independence period, the themes of domination from the center, assault on culture that restricted development of Kazakh nationalism, ecological catastrophes, migration, and mass Russification with some variations were articulated by different political actors. The most moderate version of these narratives stemmed from president Nazarbayev who tried to dilute its anti-Russian message for strategic reasons related to the presence of significant ethnic Russian population concentrated in northern and eastern parts of Kazakhstan, as well as dependence on Russia in terms of political stability and economic development (Hale, 2008). In their purer form, with particular focus on language question[28], these past grievance narratives were voiced by different Kazakh nationalist groups

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[27] According to Laruelle (2009), DPNI one of the key contributors of spreading the slogan "Russia for Russians" throughout society. By 2006, DPNI took over the leadership in organization the most visible public event of nationalist of that period – Russian Marches, from its original founder Eurasianist Youth espousing imperial rather than ethnic form of nationalism.

[28] Although the Russian language did not receive the same legal status of a state language as Kazakh language, it got official status of the language of 'inter-ethnic communication' (iazyk mezhnatsional'nogo obshcheniia) that allowed its use on pair with Kazakh in state and local administration. On the grounds, Kazakhstan remained bilingual country with significant portion of ethnic Kazakhs (especially in the large urban centers and northern part of the country) being Russophone and dominant part of ethnic Russians having no or little command in Kazakh. In turn, achieving of primacy for Kazakh language and demise of Russian language from its current status are the key themes that unite different Kazakh nationalist groups (Dave, 2007; Laruelle, 2021).

unsatisfied with the moderate presidential stance on nationalizing policies[29] (Kudaibergenova, 2016). From the point of view of non-rationalist theories, this seems like promising conditions for bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization: shared grievances against a specific group (Russians) were clearly widespread and were simultaneously somewhat encouraged by the state but also moderated by it – seemingly leaving clear terrain for disgruntled nationalists to mobilize beyond the state. Thus, Kaufman (2001)—a proponent non-rationalist approach—while arguing that there was insufficient level of ethnic grievances in Kazakhstan during the early 1990s, suggested a worsening of the interethnic situation in Kazakhstan due to a presence of an anti-Russian element in Kazakh nationalist mythology.

However, the lack of bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization despite the presence of ethnic grievances through the 2000s proves invalid the logic of existing non-rationalist accounts. While the lack of quantitative sociological data on xenophobia in Kazakhstan does not allow for making conclusive statements about the spread of grievance narratives in society, some indicators hint on their resonance among Kazakh-speaking Kazakhs. For example, media studies demonstrate that Kazakh-language press of that period did not refrain from using xenophobic rhetoric toward ethnic minorities groups, including Russians. According to Kolstø (1998), since the 1990s the nationality debate in the Kazakh-language press was premised on the view that Kazakhstan ought to be the national state of the Kazakh nation and rejected the notion of the broader Kazakhstani nation that would include non-Kazakhs. In turn, Tussupova (2014) points

[29] Furthermore, in 2005, Kazakh nationalists were joined by opposition groups from Kazakh political and economic elite that previously campaigned under pro-democracy slogans and refrained from relying on Kazakh nationalism during their attempt to challenge the ruling regime of Nazarbayev in 1990s and earlies 2000s (Kudaibergenova, 2016).

out that compared to the Russian-language press of Kazakhstan[30], Kazakh-language newspapers more likely to use xenophobic rhetoric when covering interethnic relations and have general tendency to separate readers in Kazakh and non-Kazakhs while denigrating ethnic minorities. While there are important caveats that point out the limited reach of the Kazakh-language press[31], the lack of any taboo on the use of xenophobic language in a relatively unrestricted setting suggests that past grievance narrative had fairly wide resonance among sections of Kazakhs. Given the presence of such past narratives non-rationalists would expect significance ethnic contention in Kazakhstan happening along Kazakh-Russian divided, but the lack of anti-Russian mobilization throughout the 2000s betrays this logic. Furthermore, the actual occurrence of nationalist mobilization against other ethnic groups that less prominently figure in past grievance narratives, such as clashes with Uigurs and Chechens in mid 2000s and the sudden outbreak of anti-Chinese protests in mid 2010s, demonstrate the presence of other mechanisms behind ethnic-based collective action.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that existing non-rationalist theoretical frameworks focusing on the causal role of ethnic grievances also cannot explain majority nationalist dynamics taking place in Russia and Kazakhstan during 1990s and 2000s. Against the non-rationalist logic, it shows that the presence of established grievances towards codified 'ethnic foes' is not a

[30] Since independence, media sphere of Kazakhstan has been largely separated into two major segments of Kazakh-language and Russian-language media with the former being either pro-governmental or non-political, and in rare instances presenting liberal rather than nationalist opposition (Kolstø 1998).

[31] In the studied period, Kazakh-language newspaper had smaller circulation that Russian-language press. Furthermore, bilingual TV and radio medias more tightly controlled by the state have been much more popular source of information for majority of population (Tussupova, 2014).

sufficient cause for an outbreak of bottom-up nationalist mobilization. Despite the presence of anti-Jewish sentiments and increasing opportunity for bottom-up mobilization brought up by Gorbachev's reforms, we do not see much of Russian nationalist mobilization happening throughout the late 1980s as otherwise would be expected from the non-rationalist view of ethnonationalist collective action as an outburst of long suppressed ethnic antipathies. Furthermore, different levels of majority nationalist mobilization happen in Russia and Kazakhstan in the early 1990s despite the core majorities in the countries harboring comparable levels of ethnic antipathies. Finally, both cases demonstrate similar patterns during the 2000s in which nationalist mobilization does not occur based on the most elaborated ethnic grievance narratives, and instead get targeted against some new outgroups. In Russia, broad, ahistorical xenophobia towards migrants proved to be a more successful platform for majority nationalist mobilization then more established anti-Semitism. Meanwhile, very little mobilization based on anti-Russian sentiments happened in Kazakhstan despite their centrality in nationalist narratives, and we see the outbreaks of ethnic contention targeted against other groups. All of these show the deficiency of existing non-rationalist frameworks that conceptualize ethnic-based collective action as outburst of negative emotions fed by the presence of the past-oriented grievances.

In the following chapter, I will elaborate an alternative framework based on prospect theory that can account for these deficiencies and explain the instances of non-mobilization in the countries with existing ethnic grievances.

CHAPTER V – PROSPECT THEORY-BASED ALTERNATIVE

I propose an alternative theory explaining the occurrence and non-occurrence of nationalist mobilization based on the combination of the cognitive approach to ethnicity and prospect theory. The cognitive approach to ethnicity is based on a psychological model of a cognitive miser according to which the human mind seeks to avoid spending cognitive effort, which leads to tendency of people to think and solve problems in simpler and less effortful manner rather than more complex and effortful ways (Stanovich, 2009). Nationalisms and ethnic conflict scholars working in this intellectual tradition argue that people employ ethnic and national categories when interpreting events because these categories can provide maximum information with the least cognitive effort given the complexity of social world and the limited capacity of human brain to process it (Brubaker et al., 2004; Hale, 2004). For example, Hale (2004, p. 34) suggests that ethnic identity can be thought of as "the set of points of personal reference on which people rely to navigate the social world they inhabit, to make sense of the myriad constellations of social relationships that they encounter, to discern one's place in these constellations, and to understand the opportunities for action in this context." In turn, prospect theory, resting on a similar assumption of the cognitive limitations of the human brain, shows that decision-making of most people is influenced by general context (domain of gains or losses) rather than the absolute values of the presented choices (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979; McDermott, 1998). It holds that people tend to code the outcomes in terms of general losses and gains relative to some individual reference point, rather than in terms of final absolute states of welfare. Depending on whether outcomes fall below or above the chosen reference point, people

find themselves in the domain of loss or in the domain of gain respectively which affect their predisposition to risky behavior. While in the domain of gain people prefer risk avoidant behavior, in the domain of loss people tend to be more acceptable of risks trying to avoid or compensate losses.

The combination of the cognitive approach to ethnicity and prospect theory forms a theory of nationalist mobilization that accounts for the shortcomings of both rational-instrumentalist and non-rationalist perspectives. I argue that ethnic/nationalist collective action is neither a product of rational self-interested behavior, nor it is driven by uncontrolled past ethnic grievances, but instead its occurrence depends on the ability of nationalists to reach their aspiration points. Like rational-instrumentalist perspective, my theoretical framework assumes that participants of nationalist mobilization are driven by forward-oriented strategizing. However, my theory also holds that forward-oriented strategizing of participants does not revolve around narrow economic individual interests, but around ideas existing within nationalist ideational field that allow participants to orient themselves toward dynamically changing social structure. The nationalist ideational field can have numerous ideas, and consequently numerous aspiration points that are not concerned with pure economic rationality, including those related to past-oriented ethnic grievances towards outgroups that existing non-rationalist perspectives are concerned with. Depending on the structural factors, nationalists can be placed in different domains of loss or gain once the state of affairs moves below or above one or more of their aspiration points. If nationalists are in a domain of losses, i.e., the outcomes are falling below either the status quo or the affected aspiration point, then they will be more willing to accept individual risks associate with mobilization, hence we will see occurrences of nationalist movements. In turn, nationalists who are satisfied with the status quo or who can reach their

aspiration point will be in a domain of gains, making their engagement in risky nationalist mobilization unlikely. In contrast to existing non-rationalist perspectives, the presence of ethnic grievances on their own does not guarantee the outbreak of nationalist collective action as the structural changes could place nationalists in the domain of gain on this issue, which would render nationalist mobilization redundant.

In this chapter I highlight two salient empirical conditions that can affect aspiration points of majority nationalist thus placing them either in domain of loss or domain of gain – state status and demography. The first refers to the extent to which the current state position and practices regarding the nationality issue move developments towards the direction preferred by majority nationalists. The second speaks to expected changes in a country's ethnodemographic composition affecting the share of core majority in a population relative to outgroups. In the following two sections, I will demonstrate that these structural factors can engineer domains of loss and gain for majority nationalists in various ways, hence predisposing them either toward mobilization or non-mobilization. The first section will show how the collapse of the Soviet Union, working akin to artificial conditions of loss and gain engineered by behavioral economists and psychologists in experimental setting, produced divergent momentous psychological impact on the large section of populations in Russia and Kazakhstan and created different pools of potential participants in nationalist collective action in the early 1990s. The second section will discuss the role of demographic factors in producing lasting effects of loss and gains on holders of majority nationalist aspiration points and will show demonstrate how the occurrence and non-occurrence of majority nationalist mobilization in post-Soviet Russia and Kazakhstan maps onto divergent demographic trends and nation-building practices in these countries.

Prospect Theory, State Status, and Nationalist Mobilization of the Early 1990s

The theoretical framework that I propose suggests that occurrence or non-occurrence of nationalist mobilization depends on whether holders of nationalist aspiration points in a country find themselves in domain of loss or gain respectively. According to prospect theory, people affected by perceptions of loss and gain relative to their aspiration points when deciding whether they take on action involving risks. It holds that outcomes falling below one's aspiration points are perceived as loss, while those coming above it are coded as gain. Numerous psychological experiments demonstrate that the former has stronger emotional effect on people compared to equivalent gain, which means that individual experiencing loss is easily stirred for action (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979; McDermott, 1998; Levy, 2003; Mercer, 2005; Barberis, 2013). Applied to nationalist mobilization, this framework would expect more active participation to happen in a country where greater number of people sharing nationalist aspiration points find themselves in domain of loss. It holds that the greater the pool of people in domain of loss, the great is social base from which nationalist movements can recruit participants for their collective action. In turn, prospect theory-based explanation does not expect nationalist mobilization in a country where holders of nationalist points largely perceive themselves to be in domain of gain. Psychological mechanism of gain has negative effect on likeliness of bottom-up mobilization by shrinking the pool of potential activists. Thus, ethnonationalist grievances might persist in a country without spurring into contentious collective action if the majority of people sharing them have their aspiration points satisfied.

Before proceeding to the analysis, I must address the problem of determining a reference point relative to which people assess losses or gains. The major limitation of prospect theory that

stalled its proliferation in political science has been the lack of clarity of how to determine whether people experience losses or gains considering the malleability and uniqueness of their aspiration points (Levy, 2003; Mercer, 2005). Indeed, as context-sensitive theory of individual behavior, prospect theory does not provide a researcher with an easily accessible starting point from which losses and gains could be evaluated. However, in studying nationalism that problem of identifying aspiration points can be solved by looking at widely shared ideas within nationalist narratives. For example, analysis of Russian nationalist narratives demonstrates that despite great ideological diversity and multicity of reference points within them, the preservation of the Soviet Union was the cross-cutting aspiration point shared by majority of nationalists during late 1980s (Table 3.1). Between 1953 and 1991, three distinct ideological current emerged - liberal, conservative, and radical – with Russian nationalism each having their own political program (Brudny; 1999). The liberal nationalist current was a constituent but distinct part of liberal-reformist movement that rejected excessive emphasis of latter on individual rights and did not share the view that total adoption of Western political, social, cultural, and economic institutions was desirable for Russian nation. At the same time, they did not share anti-Western and anti-Semitic xenophobia of conservative and radical currents and believed that Russian national renewal required radical political and economic reform, including the rejection of Stalinist legacy in Soviet politics. In turn, conservative nationalists elevated the moral and cultural values of Russian peasantry, revitalization of which was proclaimed to be crucial for survival of Russian nation. Initially focusing on the hardships experienced by the peasantry during the Stalinist period, conservative nationalists allied themselves with liberal nationalists. However, with an improvement of rural living standards and increasing urbanization and Westernization of Russian society, conservative nationalists began criticizing the moral corruption of the society

brought about by a modern urban lifestyle blaming it on the Westernized urban intelligentsia. Finally, radical nationalists articulated a set of ideas emphasizing a need of having a powerful authoritarian state capable to stop corrupting influence of Western values on Russian society. Admiring Stalin as a leader who had the strength and ability to create and maintain a powerful state capable of keeping in check Western aggression in cultural, ideological, and military domains, radical nationalists subjected Stalin's successors to harsh criticism for their inability or unwillingness to prevent the spread of Western ideas and values. The later current became one of the earliest open critics of *perestroika* and *glasnost* arguing that political and economic liberalization was aimed at destroying the Soviet-Russian state.

Ideology	Liberal Nationalists	Conservative Nationalists	Radical Nationalists
Liberalizing political and economic reforms (before 1985)	+	+/-	-
Western political, social, and cultural values	+/-	-	-
Antisemitism and xenophobia	-	+	+
Modernity	+/-	-	+/-
Tsarist past	+	+	+/-
Soviet past: The Stalinist period	-	-	+
Soviet present: The post-Stalin period	-	-	-
Gorbachev's political, economic, and cultural reforms	+	-	-
Preservation of the Soviet Union	+/-	+	+
August 1991 coup attempt	-	+	+
Yeltsin's politics	+	-	-

Note: + = positive orientation
- = negative orientation
+/ - = ambivalent orientation

Table 3.1 Political and Ideological Orientations of Russian Nationalists, 1953-1991. Source: Brudny, 1999

Continued attempts by different parties to build a common organization structure on the basis of a single issue of the preservation of the Soviet Union amidst their ideological difference further confirm the fact it was a widely shared aspiration point within Russian nationalism. While being ridden by multiple doctrinal debates and personal conflicts between key charismatic figures, nationalists viewed the Soviet Union as their home country and did not seriously contemplate any truncation of its territory (Brudny, 1999; Kolstø, 2016). The failure of August 1991 coup by CPSU hardliners and the signing of Belovezha accords formally dissolving the Soviet Union by presidents of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus in December 1991[32], was followed by simultaneous mobilization of different currents of Russian nationalism (Vujačić, 2001). Despite multiple doctrinal debates and personal conflicts between key charismatic figures, different parties and organization of Russian nationalist field spend a lot of energy in building unifying structure that would bring together all opponents to the loss of the Soviet state. Nationalist and communist parties began to participate jointly in the same protest events, and from early 1992 called for national reconciliation between 'whites' and 'reds' in order to build a common front against Yeltsin and 'democrats.' The first major attempts of such coalition building happened in February of 1992 on the platform of Russian National Assembly (*Russkii' Natsionalnyi' Sobor; RNS*) that had among its most recognized members former KGB general Alexandr Sterligov, communists Gennadi Zyuganov and Albert Makashov; "village prose" writer Valentin Rasputin; and the leader of Russian National Unity, Alexandr Barkashov. Although RNS quickly failed at becoming a unifying platform for the patriotic camp[33], the new

[32] According to Vujačić (2001), until 1991 'patriots' believed in ability of the conservative wing of CPSU to prevail over 'democrats' and prevent the collapse of the Soviet state with a help of the army and the KGB.
[33] According to Verkhovsky et al. (1996), the disintegration of RNS began almost immediately after its formation. After departure of different organization, RNS de facto became the personal party of Sterligov.

attempts at coalition building followed and materialized in the United Opposition in March 1992 and by October 1992 had transformed into Front for National Salvation (FNS) movement. The latter movement brough together actors of great ideological diversity ranging from hardline Stalinist communists to Orthodox monarchists to moderate nationalists formerly participating in pro-Yeltsin's Democratic Russia movement such as Ilya Konstantinov, Viktor Aksyuchits, and Mikhail Astafiev. Importantly, the cobbled coalition dubbed 'red-browns' by their opponents neither sought to preserve the communist ideology nor the planned economy but focused as holding the Soviet Union together as a state and pledged to 'work consistently for the restoration of the state unity of our country' (Hahn, 1994; Verkhovsky et al., 1996; Laruelle, 2009; Kolstø, 2016).

While the preservation of the Soviet Union was a goal uniting different currents of Russian nationalism, independence of Kazakhstan was a major aspiration point for Kazakh nationalists notwithstanding the peculiarities of their political programs. Independence of Kazakhstan was not certain reality until the dissolution of the USSR due to position of its leader Nursultan Nazarbayev. Nazarbayev, whose ascent to power in Kazakhstan happened in 1989, allied himself closely with Gorbachev and the new policy of 'self-administration' and 'self-financing' for the republics so as to create 'a strong center' and 'strong republics'. While committed to expanding the authority of republic-level institutions, Nazarbayev was not a proponent of full republic sovereignty and spent the years 1989 to 1991 repeating his conviction that the economies of the Soviet republics were too tightly interwoven for them to go it alone[34]. The question of sovereignty was rather pushed to the top of the national agenda in June 1990,

[34] Hale (2008) provides a more detailed economic explanation of Kazakhstan's elite unionist position related to its dependency on Russian and all-union economy in the early 1990s.

after Boris Yeltsin was elected a chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet and declared Russia's sovereignty. Out of necessity, the government of Kazakhstan then elaborated its own statement of sovereignty that affirmed the right of the republic to control its own political and economic life, recognized Kazakh as the state language, and defended the historic right of the Kazakh people to their territory[35]. Nevertheless, throughout the spring and summer of 1991 Nazarbayev vigorously pushed an idea that the transition to a market economy should happen with the preservation of the USSR as 'a single economic space' and supported a new union treaty proposed by Gorbachev. Finally, Nazarbayev continued to maintain that Kazakhstan although sovereign was still an integral part of the USSR in the aftermath of the failed August 1991 coup even though most of its neighbors had already declared their independence (Brill Olcott, 1995). In turn, Kazakh nationalist parties of late perestroika—whether they like radical Alash aspired to unite all Turkic-speaking people of the world into Greater Turkistan and repatriate the Slavs beyond the republic's borders or like more moderate Azat (Freedom) called for the formation of democratic Kazakhstani patriotism that would give priority to the Kazakh language and population—all advocated for the secession from the Soviet Union (Babak et al., 2004; Laruelle, 2021).

I argue that the nationalist mobilization occurred in Russia but not in Kazakhstan during the early 1990s, despite the similar economic conditions and comparable levels of ethnic grievances in these countries, because differentiated psychological effects of loss and gain from

[35] Parallel to that, The Democratic Bloc, organized during the summer of 1990, presented its statement of republic sovereignty that demanded a separation of party and government institutions, equal rights to all citizens, and the introduction of market economy in the republic. However, shortly after the Democratic Bloc presented its sovereignty decree, the Communist Faction headed by the second secretary of the republic was organized to defend the government position. Ultimately Nazarbayev's control of the legislature, as well as the compromises on language that were written into the legislation, ensured passage of the government's version, which was adopted October 25, 1990.

the breakup of USSR created a significantly larger pool of potential participants in nationalist collective action in the former case. Public opinion studies show that more than two thirds of Russian share an aspiration point of preserving the Soviet Union in some form throughout late 1980s-early 1990s. The earliest surveys from 1989 demonstrated that Russian opinion was set at the position that things would carry on as before in regard to the existence of the centralized union. Polls conducted by VTsIOM in 1989 shown that only a minority of respondents in RSFSR chose alternatives that suggested giving more autonomy or full independence as being best 'for the good of their people', whereas almost two thirds wanted the alternative to preserve the Union. Similarly, public opinion surveys show that 73 percent of the population approved of the efforts to preserve the country in revised form in December 1990. Amidst growing nationalist mobilization in non-Russian republics and contention between Gorbachev and Yeltsin in charge of Soviet and Russian state institutions respectively in the period between 1990 and 1991[36], Russian public opinion demonstrated the process of coming to terms with the ongoing developments. Surveys conducted in this period demonstrated a growing number of respondents supporting decentralization and increasing willingness to concede the principle of self-determination, although not desire to see the Union fall apart. In July and August 1990, 43 per cent of Russians were prepared to fully agree that secession was acceptable and another 17 per

[36] By September 1989 Central Committee Plenum on nationalities issues, the idea of elevating the powers of the RSFSR and creating a separate Russian Communist Party had gained widespread support within party circles and was openly championed by the conservative wing of the Politburo. During the March 1990 elections, all candidates for seats in the Russian Federation Congress of People's Deputies albeit for different reason were running on Russian sovereignty issue. According to Beissinger (2004), assertion of Russian sovereignty for liberals was mainly a vehicle for undermining the central authority of the Soviet government that had been dragging its feet in implementing further political and economic reforms. In turn, for conservatives, sovereignty meant gaining the same type of self-respect that non-Russian nationalists derived from the language of self-determination and a more powerful political base from which to undermine Gorbachev's reforms. Yeltsin, who did not show much concern about the issue previously, transformed himself into a champion of Russian sovereignty vis-à-vis the USSR during 1990 election and opposed to Gorbachev advocating for a new union treaty.

cent to partly agree, while only 21 per cent disagreed to some degree. However, acceptance of a right for secession did not necessarily mean that secession was seen as desirable by majority of respondents as the survey shown that 73 per cent said that efforts should be made to preserve the existing borders of the Soviet Union, while just 16 per cent disagreed. Although the overwhelming majority favored decentralization of economic decision-making, law and order, and cultural issues, they also wanted to see the defense and foreign policy activities run by all-Union authorities. Following the failed August 1991 coup, the declaration of independence by Ukraine, and the beginning of the process of negating an end to the Soviet Union, Russian public opinion embraced the signing of the treaty that created the Commonwealth of Independent States with 64 percent welcoming it and only 11 percent disapproving. Similarly, a survey conducted on January 1992 72 per cent of Russians supported the idea of turning the USSR into a Union of Sovereign States, and only 12 per cent were opposed. Yet, throughout 1992, two thirds said they were sorry that the Union had split up (Wyman, 1996; Beissinger, 2004).

Furthermore, the collapse of the Soviet Union followed by the significant decline in the level of life satisfaction for wide section of society in Russia. Study based on the data from World Values Survey (WVS) and other survey [37] show that collapse of the Soviet Union was followed by the drop of subjective well-being in Russia to the levels never seen before by 1995. The World Values Survey measures the average level of satisfaction in the country based on self-assessments by respondents reporting about their subjective well-being on a on a scale from 1 (completely dissatisfied) to 10 (completely satisfied). Using this measure, the study by Foa et al.

[37] The World Values Survey (WVS) and the European Values Study (EVS) have carried out several waves of representative surveys in the Russian Federation in 1990, 1995, 1999, 2006, and 2011 as part of the wider study covering over 100 countries. Data from WVS and EVS was amended by a 1982 sample for soviet Russia taken from Tambov Oblast, a province of Russia’s Central Economic Region, which was selected as most representative of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). Additional surveys of Tambov oblast conducted in 1995 and again in 2011 were found to approximate the national level (Foa et al., 2017).

(2017) demonstrates dramatic decline in reported life satisfaction taking place in Russia between 1982 and 1995 (Figure 3.2). Although the level of life satisfaction in Russia during the 1980s was below the level in established Western democracies, such as the United States or Sweden, still it was comparatively high. For example, Saris and Andreenkova (2001) report that the majority of respondents were satisfied with life (66% had a score above 5)[38] in 1988 (Table 3.3). However, by 1990, Russia (and few other countries such as Belarus, Ukraine, Bulgaria, and Romania) showed the world's lowest of subjective well-being, which was also linked with falling birth rates and life expectancy (Inglehart et al., 2013). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, level of life satisfaction score in Russia dropped to average reported score of 4.4 out of 10 in 1995 which was one of the lowest levels recorded in history. Such low levels of subjective well-being lasted in Russia for much of the decade and as demonstrated by Table 3.3, only small minority of respondents (23.7%) reported that they are satisfied with life in 1998 in contrast to two thirds majority of pre-collapse period.

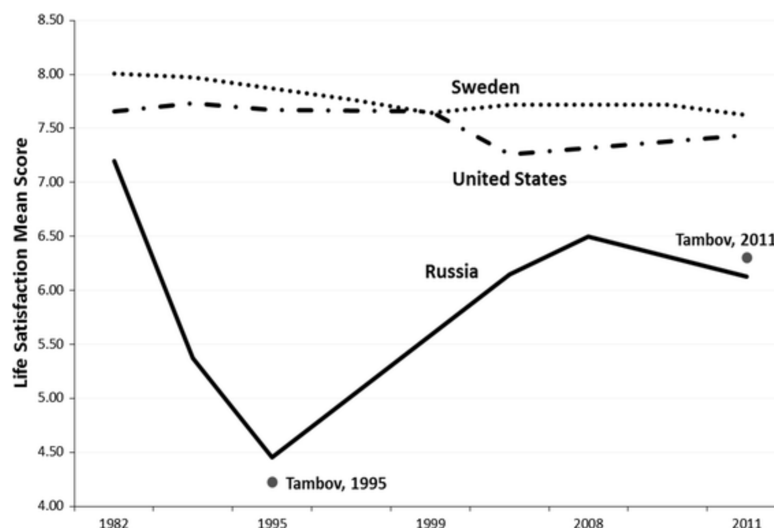

Figure 3.2 Tambov oblast results in comparison with Russian World Values Survey data, 1981–2011. Mean life satisfaction scores from the World Values Surveys in years indicated. Source: Foa et al., 2017

[38] Saris and Andreenkova's study use RUSSET panel data, which like WVS measures subjective wellbeing based on self-assessment on 1 (very dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied) scale.

Response category	1988		1998	
	abs	%	abs	%
1 (not at all satisfied)	126	3.5	569	16.6
2	74	2.1	371	10.9
3	193	5.4	602	17.6
4	233	6.5	376	11
5	587	16.5	689	20.2
6	439	12.3	267	7.8
7	571	16	220	6.4
8	718	20.1	191	5.6
9	312	8.7	54	1.6
10 (completely satisfied)	313	8.8	54	1.6
Total	3727	100%	3418	100%

Table 3.3 The responses of the panel members in Russia to the question: How satisfied are you with your life as a whole? Source: Saris and Andreenkova, 2001

In line with expectation of prospect theory-based explanation, the comparison of sociological data demonstrates that amidst similar economic hardships holders of nationalist aspiration points in Russia and Kazakhstan diverge on responses about their subjective well-being. Public opinion studies conducted in Kazakhstan during mid-1990s by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) reveal equally low level of life satisfaction in the country[39]. According to IFES's findings, against the background of poor economic conditions, only minority of respondents (21%) were satisfied with the situation in the country in Kazakhstan by 1995 and even less so (16%) in the following year, which is comparable to level of life satisfaction in Russia (Skoczylas et al., 1995; Charney, 1997). However, sociological data also shows that despite similarly low general levels of life satisfaction among populations of Russia and Kazakhstan in the 1990s, a different relationship existed between the level of subjective well-being and adherence to nationalist aspiration points in these two countries. For

[39] Besides the public opinion surveys conducted by IFES, the there is virtually no data on state of society in Kazakhstan. The World Value Survey could have been potential source for it, but it started covering Kazakhstan only form the sixth wave conducted in 2011.

example, quantitative study by Graham et al. (2004) based on the Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS)[40] dataset found that minorities (16 percent are in the former group, 84 percent identify as Russian) on average where happier than Russians in 1995. In contrast, Kazakhs were more likely to be satisfied with life than Russians (the second largest group) during the same period as shown by Table 3.4. Public opinion surveys show that more than two thirds of Kazakhs expressed positive attitudes toward Kazakhstan's independence. In 1996, 75% of respondents said it was a good thing, which is strikingly similar to the share of Russian favoring the preservation of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. Another indicator on which a similar share of Russians and Kazakhs responded albeit expressing different sentiment is related to the sense of pride/contentment for country/national identity. Whereas 65% of Russian responded that they felt shame for their country in 1995, 66% of Kazakhs of all age group expressed positive feelings about being Kazakhstani (24% felt proud and 42% felt content) (Charney, 1997; The Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 2011).

	Total adult population	Total by population		Young adults	
		Kazakh	Russian	Kazakh	Russian
Sample size	1500	598	641	83	197
Living standard	88	81	94	87	94
Social welfare	86	81	91	84	95
Health care	84	75	90	79	92
Anti-crime measures	75	60	84	69	82
Pace of economic reforms	72	60	84	69	82
Education, science, culture	64	57	70	60	71
Protection of human rights	55	39	63	55	80
Political and civil freedoms	45	34	52	45	63
Electoral system	41	36	44	39	51

Table 3.4 Percent dissatisfied with conditions in the country in Kazakhstan: Source: Skoczylas et al., 1995.

[40] RLMS covers an average of almost 13,000 Russians per year from 1992 to 2001. For more detail on happiness levels in Russian during the 1990s see Graham et al., 2004.

Finally, the responses over the question of whether Kazakhstan is a democracy reveals the clustering between holders of a narrower nationalist aspiration points and a higher level of life satisfaction. The survey shows the optimistic view about the country's trajectory (overall shared by 25% of population in 1996) that was predominated by Kazakhs but also among a category of people who considered Kazakhstan to be a democracy. Meanwhile, positive responses to the question about whether Kazakhstan is a democracy was driven by ethnic background, with a plurality of Kazakhs agreeing with this statement. Moreover, a majority of people considered their ethnicity more important than their citizenship also said that Kazakhstan was democracy (Charney, 1997). Given the relatively low concern for the state of political and civil freedoms among Kazakhs compared to outgroups in the studied period (Table 3.4), I suggest that the position of seeing Kazakhstan as democracy largely stemmed from the section of the population that interpreted democracy as a as rule of one's ethnic group or the core audience of nationalist movements. Thus, Kazakhstan was drastically different from Russia in terms of a pool of potential recruits for nationalist mobilization. Whereas large section of population of the population was affected by psychological mechanism of loss in the latter country, an equal share of Kazakhs was content with situation regarding their nationality. Furthermore, sections of the population that would constitute primary audience of nationalist movement demonstrated the highest level of satisfaction in Kazakhs during the early 1990s. Following the logic of the prospect theory, holders of nationalist aspirations points in Kazakhstan were placed into domain of gain as a result of the break of the Soviet Union and hence had very little incentive to participate in risky collective action. This explains why Kazakh nationalist parties could not get significant following in that period despite having growing popularity few years earlier.

State Status, Divergent Demographic Prospects, and Nationalist Mobilization of 2000s

I argue that majority nationalist mobilization happened in Russia but not in Kazakhstan during 2000s because of differentiated psychological effects of loss and gain on the holders of nationalist aspiration points as well, but this time coming from the divergent trajectories of post-Soviet nation-building and related structural demographic changes in these countries. Political elites in Russia and Kazakhstan both engaged in nation-building practices after the collapse of the Soviet Union, however the former successfully delivered concrete gains for holders of majority nationalist aspiration points. Sociological studies demonstrate striking similarity in the share of responses favoring the privileged core majority in Russia and Kazakhstan by the end of studied period - whereas 39 percent of respondents in the Romir 2013 NEORUSS survey supported the idea of privileging ethnic Russians in Russia by 2013 (Blakkisrud, 2016), the public opinion report by Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies (2011) revealed that 37.1 percent of Kazakhs favored privileges to the core majority in 2011. Meanwhile, divergent post-Soviet trajectories of state-led nation-building and demographic changes placed holders of majority nationalist aspiration points in Russia and Kazakhstan in different domains – loss in the former and gain in the latter, particularly in the domain of ethnic demography.

From the prospect theory-perspective, demographic changes affecting a country's ethnic composition, particularly changes in size of the core majority relative to outgroups, is a crucial structural factor affecting aspiration points of majority nationalists, and hence their mobilizational potential. An important property of demographic trends that distinguishes them from other political and socio-economic processes, is their relative predictability (Kaufmann and Duffy Tofft, 2011). Forecasts based on the studying of differentiated demographic trends such as

crude birth rate, crude death rates, and net migration across ethnic groups residing within a country allow (Goldstone, 2011) can provide fairly accurate sketch of the future standing of core majority relative to outgroups. Provided the availability of knowledge about expected demographic changes, holders of majority nationalist aspiration points will be placed either into domain of loss or into domain of gain depending on the predicted status of the core majority. In case of expected decline of core majority relative to outgroups, majority nationalists will be placed in a lasting domain of loss, and hence prone to mobilize against the faster growing groups despite associated costs and risks. On the other hand, expected increases in the share of core majority group relative to outgroups will place majority nationalists firmly on the domain of gain as the desired as their aspiration point will be achieved, even though with delay, notwithstanding of their individual inaction. Thus, bottom-up nationalist mobilization will not occur against the groups that are perceived to be in long-term demographic decline.

Meanwhile, the different trajectories of Russian and Kazakh state status continued to play out over the 2000s, and they did so against an important backdrop of different demographic trajectories. Holders of Kazakh majority nationalist aspiration points had little incentives for mobilization throughout the studied period as the long-term demographic structural changes underway in Kazakhstan placed them firmly into lasting domain of gain. Already in November 1991, Kazakhstan initiated repatriation policy aimed at encouraging ethnic Kazakhs residing abroad 'to return to the historical homeland'[41] with a double purpose of overcoming the

[41] Refence to historical homeland is rather symbolic as the majority of potential repatriates have always lived outside of Kazakhstan's contemporary borders. The immigration law adopted in 1992 targeted population of about five million identifying as Kazakhstan (primarily clustered in Uzbekistan, China, Russia, Turkmenistan, and Mongolia), and thus defined *Oralman* repatriate exclusively in ethnic terms as person of indigenous nationality (*litso korennoi natsional' nosti*) or any foreigner or stateless person with Kazakh ethnicity who resided outside the boundaries of Kazakhstan on the day of independence and who entered Kazakhstan in order to settle on a permanent basis (Laruelle, 2021).

disadvantageous demographic position of ethnic Kazakhs within Kazakhstan and shifting the balance in the geographical distribution of Kazakhs within the national territory by stimulating resettlement of Kazakh in Russified north. This policy bore fruit as it succeeded in attracting large numbers of Kazakhs through the studied period (nearly 740,000 ethnic Kazakhs came to Kazakhstan by 2009), hence contributing to the significant shift of ethnodemographic balance in the country in favor of Kazakhs. Even more substantially contributed to the change in the ethnodemographic status quo the continued emigration of non-titular Russophones from Kazakhstan. The trend for emigration of Russophones already began in the late Soviet period and intensified with the offset of the independence and the beginning of the nation-building practice in the early 1990s. According to Dave (2007), cumulatively about two million of Russian-speakers (including 750,000 ethnic Germans out of about a million residing in Kazakhstan) left the country during 1989-1999. As result, the combined European share of the population dropped to under 40 percent from over half of the population in 1989. Although the peak of the outmigration of Russophones happened in the first half of the 1990s (1.8 million Russian-speakers including about half a million Germans who left for Germany by 1996) it remained as a continued trend with younger non-Kazakhs opting for the long-term exit option. Finally, differential fertility rates of Kazakh and minority populations (particularly Europeans) with higher fertility and younger age structure also became an important factor guarantying that Kazakhstan will have increasingly Kazakh face (Figure 3.5) (Dave, 2007; Brubaker, 2011).

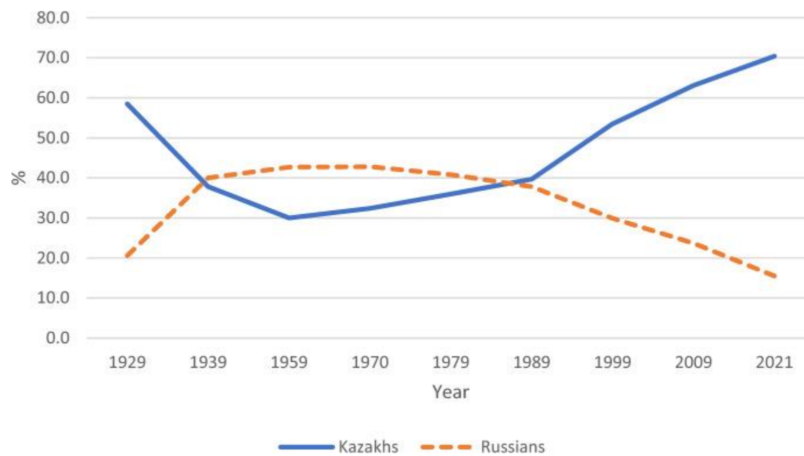

Figure 3.5 Population composition of Kazakhstan, 1929–2021, %. Source: Kan, 2023

Importantly, the theme of increasing share of Kazakhs within country's population has been present in the public discourse. As noticed by Kolstø (1998), demography was one of the favorite themes in the Kazakh nationality debate in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan, with its figures and trends helping to drives home two points. First, as anticipation that demographic change will break the resistance of Russophone activists against the Kazakhification of the state. Second, the expected increase in the share of Kazakhs was used as justification for the overrepresentation of Kazakhs in the state apparatus and in elected offices following the collapse of the USSR. According to Kolstø, the overrepresentation of the Kazakhs in the state apparatus was a taboo in the Kazakhstani press for a long time until it was broken by an article published in *Karavan* newspaper in December 1993[42]. In 1994, the disproportion in ethnic representation was acknowledged by some Kazakh scholars from semi-official Institute for the Development of

42 Kolstø notes that that already in 1970 Kazakhstan was among the republics in which titular nationalities were able to dominate the political scene in their respective republics even though the Kazakhs were the only titular nationality which made up less than half of the total population. Such preeminence of the titular nationality in Kazakhstan is attributed to persistence of traditional clan structure during the Soviet period through which power and authority ran through.

Kazakhstan who computed the ethnic composition of the top executive figures in two key bureaucracies – the Cabinet of Ministers and the Presidential apparatus. Reflecting on this situation, the researchers provided justification for the state of affairs based on the anticipated ethno-demographic change claiming that:

> while the major ethnic groups have different degrees of representation in the institutions examined the differences are not so large that they give cause for concern. The dynamics of ethnic representation, in our view, go in the same direction as the ethno-demographic development in the country.

The theme of the higher birth rates of the Kazakhs was also seen by many Kazakh researchers as key factor determining the future of ethnic relations in Kazakhstan. For example, the demographer Azimbai Galiev forecasted a rapid decrease in Russian population in the coming years and argued that Russian emigration from Kazakhstan is likely to promote socio-economic adaptation among those who remained, hence producing loyal ethno-political population. In turn, Makash Tatimov, a demographer who was presidential advisor on nationalities issued in the 1990s, further elaborated on this topic diving the nations of the world by their demographic development into 'old' and 'young' with the older age cohorts dominating over children in the former. According to Tatimov's classification, Russians alongside with Ukrainians and Balts fell into category of 'old' nations, which meant that situation was favorable for 'young' Kazakhs. He also forecasted that Kazakhs will soon reach majority status in their own state and 'fully restore their genetic pool' by the year 2010 (Dave, 2007). Thus, awareness of ethnodemographic dynamics was reflected in the confidence of many Kazakh experts expressed in their writings sense of triumphalism and confidence that Kazakh side will win out in the ethnic rivalry without resorting to extreme measures.

In turn, Russia had the opposite dynamics of a shrinking core majority relative to the share of outgroups from the predominantly Muslim Central Asia and Caucasus. In contrast to a

continued increase of core majority happening in Kazakhstan, demographic studies predict a long-term decline of ethnic core majority in Russia. According to forecasts, Russia had much bleaker demographic prospects despite the influx of Russians from the post-Soviet republics in the 1990s[43] with the continued decline of its population due to combination of low fertility and high mortality particularly, which was particularly high during the 1990s difficult economic transition. For example, preliminary figures released as soon as October 2002 census was conducted, placed the population of Russia at 145.1 million, a decrease of 2.3 million or 1.6% since the 1989 census, whereas official sources also demonstrated the decrease of population by 3.6 million between 1992 and 2002 (Arel, 2002). Although demographic indicators improved over time, the trend for long-term decline was only interrupted by a period of the moderate growth at the end of the 2000s[44] (Shcherbakova, 2022). This demographic decline was also widely present in the public debate throughout the studied period. For example, the concept of "Russian cross" – the diagram that captures intersection of falling birth rate and increasing high death rate trends in Russia that happened in 1992 became popular in mass media throughout the studied period, particularly after 2002 census. Media outlets of different orientation provided alarmist assessments of impending Russia's depopulation and mourned over hypothetical losses (Oushakine, 2009). In 2006, bringing this topic the highest salience, President Vladimir Putin flatly declared Russia's birth dearth to be "the most acute problem facing our country today" (Herd and Sargsyan, 2007).

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[43] Unlike in Kazakhstan, the bulk of Russian migration into Russia happened prior to establishment of the repatriation program in the first half of the 1990s. Following the breakup of the Soviet Union, net migration to Russia rose rapidly peaking at 809,614 in 1994. The 1991-1996 cohort of migrant was mostly comprised of ethnic Russians (Heleniak, 2001; Gorodzeisky and Glikman, 2018)

[44] According to Shcherbakova (2022), trend for population decline was interrupted by a period of moderate growth in 2009–2017.

A wide range of actors in Russia reflected on the bleak demographic prospects of the country and more specifically status of core majority within it through 2000s. For example, expected demographic decline was considered in the forecast for the period of 2006-2009 by the Ministry of Economic Development of Russia that predicted the country's population decline from 142.2 million to 140.4-140.7 million in 2009. In turn, members of political parties often framed demographic crisis in more dramatic terms. For example, Sergey Mironov, a Chairman of The Federation Council (the upper house of Russian parliament) and a head of *Spravedlivaya Rossiya* (A Just Russia) party, claimed that without urgent measures the population of Russia will decline to 52 million of people by 2080. Gennady Zyuganov, a head of CPRF, argued that within a span of 15 years Russia had lost 10 million of people, 9 million of which were ethnic Russians. They were joined by then-head of Russian Orthodox Church Patriarch Alexy II who proclaimed in 2006 that: we lived to see the terrible time when the extinction of our people began. Meanwhile, researchers from the Center of Demography and Human Ecology of Russian Academy of Science forecasted in 2007 that population of Russia will drop to 103.3 million by 2050, which was 10 million less than was predicted by US Census Bureau and United Nations Population Division. (Herd and Sargsyan, 2007). This trend was discovered by the media who framed it in an apocalyptic way under headlines like 'Will Russia remain without Russians?' (Komsomolskaya Pravda, 2005) and 'Russia will disappear from the world map' (Trofimova, 2006)

Parallel to the widespread rhetoric of demographic decline, the public discourse throughout the studied period was also marked by discussion about expected Islamization of Russia. According to Malashenko (2006), until 2002 there was no clear figure of the estimate of the share of Muslim population in Russia and throughout the 1990s different actors estimated

their own figure ranging from 11.5 million to 26 million of people. The 2002 census however assessed that there were 14.5 million people identified as Muslims, which caused disappointment among Muslim spiritual leaders in Russia. In his reaction to the census, Ravil Gaynutdin, head of the Council of Muftis of Russia, argued that diminishing the size of Muslims happened due to the imperfect counting method and later he contended that actual number of Muslims in Russia was close 23 million. This conversation occurred alongside the broader discussion about Russia becoming a Muslim majority country in the future, with Muslim shares of the Russian population reaching between one third (the most conservative estimate) and one half (the most generous estimate) by around 2050, according to different demographic forecasts (Laruelle, 2016). Such ethnodemographic changes are stemming from two primary sources – first, high birth rates in Russia's minority republics in the North Caucasus and second, influx of labor migrants from Central Asia to Russia's urban areas that supplanted the early 1990s stream of migration by ethnic Russians from former Soviet republic (Heleniak, 2001; Gorodzeisky and Glikman, 2018). In line with cognitive view of ethnicity as a complexity reducing tool, both of these groups demographically booming groups were conflated within anti-migrant discourse that was behind the 2000s wave of majority nationalist mobilization.

In addition to the differentiated prospect for core majorities due to demographic changes, divergent positions of states on the status of core majority throughout the studied period further contributed to establishing domain of gain for nationalists in Kazakhstan and domain of loss for their peers in Russia. In Kazakhstan, besides the momentous effect from the independence, the structural changes engineered by nationalizing state's policies and practices satisfied various aspiration points of Kazakh majority nationalists placing them into the lasting domain of gain throughout the studied period. Amidst some ideological divisions, the Kazakh nationalist field

converged on the widely shared aspiration point related to the promotion of 'Kazakhness', and, particularly, an idea that the Kazakh language should be given priority in the country with Russian losing its status as a 'language of inter-ethnic communication'[45]. Meanwhile, the political elites of post-Soviet Kazakhstan swiftly enacted the nation-building policies and practices aimed at empowering the Kazakh core majority relative to outgroups. While the state invoked an allegedly civic 'Kazakhstaness' nation-building paradigm, parallel to that it also utilized the core majority-oriented Kazakhness paradigm to which the former was subjugated. According to Laruelle (2021), the Kazakhness paradigm was articulated during perestroika as early as October 1990, in the 'Declaration of Sovereignty of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic', which stated that 'rebirth and development of a specific culture, traditions, the language, and the reinforcing of national pride of the Kazakh nation and the other nationalities living in Kazakhstan constitutes one of the main missions of the statehood of the republic of Kazakhstan'.

Kazakhness of Kazakhstan was further asserted in the country's foundational documents with the 1995 constitution stating that the creation of the state was being carried out on indigenous Kazakh land, as well as in presidential speeches and works of Nazarbayev of the 1990s. For example, in his V potoke istorii (In the Flows of History), Nazarbayev's argued that Kazakhness of Kazakhstan is a historic legal accomplishment recognized by the international community: 'A legal, constitutional and international foundation has been given to the fact that all Kazakhstan is the historic-genetic territory of the Kazakh nation'. Also, the 1996 Concept for

[45] The 1989 census showed that 98.5 per cent of Kazakhs claim Kazakh as their native language. This claim, however, was out of sync with the actual Russian language-dominated repertoire of a majority of Kazakhs. For example, only about half of urban Kazakhs were in Kazakh-medium classes in 1990. Meanwhile, almost no Russians could speak fluently in Kazakh language. (Dave, 2007; Brubaker, 2011)

the Formation of a State Identity of the Republic of Kazakhstan maintained that Kazakhstan must be a national state of Kazakh as Kazakhs do no possess state anywhere else in the world, hinting to the fact that outgroups such as Russians, Germans, Greeks, Koreans etc. already have 'historical homelands' elsewhere to which they could easily return. Simultaneously, the state promoted supra-ethnic Kazakhstaness paradigm reflected by the official discourse boasting the interethnic harmony in which 130 nationalities live thanks to 'hospitality' (gostepriimnost') of the native Kazakh people and arguing that such multi-nationality has engendered a civic identity in the country[46]. In spite of conceptual incongruity between these two nation-building paradigms, the official discourse insisted that pre-eminence of Kazakhs in the country should not be thought as reducing rights of non-Kazakhs urging them to internalize culture and values identified as specifically Kazakh. Hence Kazakhness has been promoted as core around which purportedly civic Kazakhstani should emerge: 'The formation of Kazakhstani statehood (*grazhdanstvennost')* … is impossible without the transition to a higher level of spiritual development of the Kazakh nation since Kazakh culture has to be objectively the kernel around which will grow … the cultural community of all the Kazakhstani people' (Schatz, 2000; Ó Beacháin and Kevlihan, 2013; Laruelle, 2021).

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[46] This discourse relies on the Soviet dissociation between citizenship and nationality/ethnic identification, which is recorded in Kazakhstan's passports, and primarily manifests itself in a Soviet-style celebration of multi-nationalism through state established institutions such as the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan and minority cultural centers. Established by presidential decree on 1 March 1995 as the Assembly of Peoples, the institution was led by Nazarbayev personally. Laruelle (2021) argues that the Assembly was created against a backdrop of competition between Nazarbayev and the parliament, with the former wanting to institutionalize a civil society more supportive of his policies. A merely consultative body all of whose 350 members appointed by the president, the Assembly initiated two referenda – one for extending the presidential term and another about the new constitution. Regarding nationality issue the Assembly works on the principle of co-option by representing all minority cultural centers. Debates on political issues such minority representation in political life and the higher echelons of economy are outside of the scope of the Assembly program, which instead focused on folkloristic activities such as days of Slavic culture, Armenian music, Korean cuisine etc. For more information on the subject also see Schatz, 2000 or Dave, 2007.

In practical realm, the state-led nation-building policies and practices in Kazakhstan has advanced the structural changes in the various domains of country, hence satisfying a host of potential aspiration points of majority nationalists. As noticed by Ismagambetov (2019), already by 1992, the state under Nazarbayev largely fulfilled aspiration points articulated in the 1990 political program of nationalist Azat party. Besides demands for Kazakhstan's sovereignty, Azat also pushed for redress in cultural sphere including the change of Soviet/Russian names of topographical objects in the country. In the aftermath of the independence, the state vigorously pursued politics of cultural redress and soon renamed numerous streets in honor of Kazakh historical figures and Kazakihified the city names, while also adopting the state symbols reflecting Kazakh nomadic heritage. Parallel to that, informal nationalized recruitment and promotion practices[47] led very quickly after independence to a substantial overrepresentation of Kazakhs in government and administrative offices, especially in Russian-dominated north. According to Kolstø (2000), a trend for overrepresentation of the titular population of Kazakhstan in top administrative and political position that began under Brezhnev, increased greatly after the independence with the share of Kazakh in the composition of the presidential administration and cabinet of ministers by far outstripping their share in the country's population (Table 3.6). Also, the political voice of Russophones in Kazakhstan was further diluted by ethnic gerrymandering that included redrawing of district boundaries in northern regions bordering

[47] Whereas exclusion of non-titular group from the political process through restrictive citizenship baring happened in Baltic states, it was not an issue in Kazakhstan. After the collapse of the USSR, any resident of Kazakhstan who carried a Soviet passport citizenship was entitled to citizenship. Schatz (2000) argues that such move by political elite represented a minimal form of institutional protection as the real politics of ethnic division laid beyond the scope of leally 'civic' designation and introduction of legal principle did not guarantee its implementation (Schatz, 2000; Brubaker, 2011).

Russia, depriving them of prior Russian majorities, as well as the transfer of the state capital from Almaty to the provincial northern town Akmola[48].

	1993			1994		
	Slavs	Kazakhs	Minorities	Slavs	Kazakhs	Minorities
Cabinet of Ministers	24.9	73.1	6.5	22.8	74.3	3.1
Presidential apparatus	25.8	67.7	6.5	22.8	74.3	3.1
Share of total population	43.4	42.8	13.7	43	44.3	12.7

Table 3.6 First and second-echelon executives in central Kazakhstani state organs (%): Source: Kolstø, 1998.

Another important change occurred due to the nationalizing measures in the domain of language policies and practices. Kazakh language emerged as a symbol of the nation under threat and was at the center of demands made by nationalists to establish it as sole state language during perestroika. Meanwhile, the language law declaring Kazakh as the state language but preserving Russian as 'the language of interethnic communication' was adopted in 1989 prior to the collapse of the USSR. The following constitutions of 1993 and 1995 further only buttressed its status by declaring Kazakh the sole state language, while relegating the Russian language to the odd status of an 'official' language that can be used 'on par with the state language'. While the state de facto recognized bilingualism, it also provided preferential treatment to Kazakh language with the aim of progressively expanding its domain of usage and changing the

[48] The East Kazakhstan and North Kazakhstan regions had Russian majorities (Russians forming 62 and 66 per cent of the total population, with the Kazakh share at 18.6 and 27.2 per cent respectively), whereas Akmola, Kokshetau, Kostanay and Pavlodar had a plurality of ethnic Russians. During the territorial reorganization affecting all Russian dominated border regions (except Pavlodar), the state enlarged the size of these regions and increased the ethnic Kazakh share in the reconstituted units assuming that such changes will prevent potential secessionist claims. As a result, Kazakhs formed clear majorities in all reorganized regions. Driven by the similar logic, even though not openly acknowledged, the state-initiated transfer of the capital from the south of the country to Russian-dominated north in order to channel the movement of Kazakhs in that direction (Dave, 2007).

linguistic practices of the country's population, particularly focusing on Russophone Kazakhs. Despite the discontent of Kazakh nationalists with rather incremental and moderate implementation of language policy[49], overall post-independence trajectory set the country toward expanded role of Kazakh language in the future with share of people who can fluently write, read, and understand Kazakh sharply increasing among the younger generations[50] (Kolstø, 1998; Schatz, 2000; Dave, 2007; Brubaker, 2011; Laruelle, 2021)

In turn, the holders of majority nationalist aspiration points in Russia remained in the permanent domain of loss throughout the studied period. State-building policies adopted by Russia's executive branch after the breakdown of the USSR lacked explicit references to ethnic core majority, leaving the issue of Russian nation in the hands of opposition for much of the 1990s. Compared to other former Soviet republics, the state-building doctrine promoted in Russia in 1991-92 did not have ethnic component, which was reflected in a new citizenship law. The majority of declarations of independence and new laws former-Soviet republics described these states as territorial entities created on behalf of all the people residing there. Nevertheless, the same legislation also defined these new statehoods as a form of self-determination for dominant ethnic communities. Meanwhile, Russian citizenship law adopted on 28 November 1991 explicitly lacked references to an ethnic definition of national and did not give any preferential treatment to either ethnic Russians or Russian speakers compared with other citizens the former USSR. The law regarded all those residing in Russian Federation territory at the time

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[49] Despite early adoption of the language legislation, its limitation was rather lax due to strategic necessity to accommodate large non-Kazakh Russophone population, as well to the fact that political elites and urban Kazakhs outside of southern regions predominantly have used Russian language in their daily practice to the chagrin of nationalists (Dave, 2007).

[50] According to Laruelle (2021) the Kazah language progressively displaced Russian in the educational system in the aftermath of the independence with number of students studying in Kazakh rising from 55 percent in 2003 to 66 percent in 2013.

of its adoption as its citizens and defined them not as no *russkie* (plural for ethnic Russian), but *rossiyane* (defined in civic terms regardless of ethnicity). In contrast to the citizenship laws in other republics, Russian Federation citizenship law did not include knowledge of the state language as a requirement for naturalization. Instead, the only requirement for foreigners or stateless people who themselves and whose parents have never had Soviet or Russian Federation citizenship is to live in the territory of the Russian Federation for three years sequentially or for five years altogether if the period of residence was interrupted. Also, until its termination in June 1994, after protests from Estonia and Ukraine, the Russian citizenship law allowed all citizens of the USSR living outside the Russian Federation on 1 September 1991 to obtain Russian Federation citizenship without moving to Russia by a simple process of registration, provided they did not already possess citizenship of another newly independent state. Meanwhile, as far as the majority in the executive branch of the government was concerned, Russian-speaking residents in the 'near abroad' were not part of the Russian (*rossiiskaya*) nation defined in territorial and political terms. As was actively argued by liberal foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev up until the fall of 1999 Russians and Russian speakers in the newly independent states did not constitute a specific problem for the Russian government. In turn, communist and nationalist opposition groups in the parliament opposed purely civic-territorial identity policies advocated by the government, and instead articulated alternative visions of Russian nation based on some combination of the three following ideas – 1) Russian identity meaning only within the framework of a broader Union identity; 2) Russian identity is a Slavic one, and 3) Russian defined by a linguistic marker. Whereas members of the opposition overwhelmingly preferred the Union identity, they regarded definitions of the Russian nation as a community of eastern

Slavs or as a community of all Russian-speakers in the former USSR as alternative possibilities, in case if restoration of the Union failed (Tolz, 1998; Kolstø, 2016).

While there was a period of tactical embrace of the nationality issue, official policy largely remained de-ethicized throughout Yeltsin's presidency, which further contributed to fostering the domain of loss for holders of nationalist aspiration points in Russia[51]. Despite the victory over the Supreme Soviet and national-patriotic mobilizers in the fall of 1993, the conflict weakened Yeltsin relative to patriotic camp[52]. As a result, since 1994, the Kremlin has tried to avoid the political polarization that led to the violence between the president and the Supreme Soviet and made series of moves to reconcile with so-called patriotic camp[53]. Parallel to that, the Kremlin, under Yeltsin concerned with his re-election prospects[54], made efforts to reappropriate

[51] One might object that the main difference between Russian and Kazakh nationalist mobilization, at least in the earlier period of the 1990s, is that the Russian state emphasizes de-ethnicized frames (leaving nationalists unsatisfied) while the Kazakh state emphasized a fairly satisfactory (if careful) degree of nationalism. While I agree that state played important role in creating different domains in Russia and Kazakhstan, it is also important to notice that mere use of 'correct' frames by the state would not be sufficient on its own without ongoing structural changes that could verify legitimacy of the state-used frames.

[52] According to Laruelle (2009), the popularity of liberal parties declined after self-proclaimed democrats endorsed the use of violence against the parliament and of supported the December 12 referendum, which favored new constitution with weaker legislative powers and a stronger executive. Neither Democratic Choice of Russia headed by Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar, nor Russian Party of Unity and Peace lead by Sergey Shakhrai, then deputy Prime Minister and chairman of the State Committee for the National policy got a decisive result despite strengthened presidency. The former obtained 16 percent of the vote, whereas the latter only 8 percent.

[53] Among those moves were the replacement of liberal prime minister Yegor Gaidar with Viktor Chernomyrdin linked with industrial lobbies and especially the military-industrial complex in January 1994. Also, following the amnesty granted to 1991 putsch planners and October 1993 insurgents by the LDPR and the CPRF-dominated Duma, Kremlin proposed a civic agreement obliging signatories not to overthrow the constitutional order or organize massive, extra-parliamentary regime-change movements (Laruelle, 2009).

[54] Despite the Kremlin's effort to reappropriate symbols of the motherland, the liberals suffered during the 1995 legislative election even more crushing defeat than in 1993. Pro-Kremlin parties collectively failed to receive even one quarter of votes, centrist Our Home is Russia headed by Prime Minister Chernomyrdin get 10 percent, whereas liberal Yabloko and Democratic Choice of Russia led by Gaidar gained 7 percent and 3.9 percent respectively. Meanwhile, patriotic forces cumulatively won some 40 million votes, or almost half of the voting-age population (Laruelle, 2009).

some of the patriotic themes from the opposition. For example, Kremlin tried to play the card of reconciliation between "Whites" and "Reds" around the cult of the military using the fiftieth anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War (common name to World War II in Soviet and Russian historiography) in May 1995 as an opportunity[55] (Laruelle, 2009). In 1993-94, under the influence of this dynamics, the executive branch altered its discourse and began referring to Russians and Russian-speakers in the 'near abroad' as compatriots (*sootechestvenniki*) and an integral part of Russian nation. In addition to that, Yeltsin actively promoted the idea the Union of Russia and Belarus during 1995-96 electoral cycle and even announced a competition to define a new Russia national idea in July 1996. However, soon after his re-election, Yeltsin's concern for defining a unifying national idea rapidly declined and his annual addresses to parliament in 1996–1998 made virtually no mention of nationality (Tolz, 1998; Goode, 2018). Also, despite the shift in rhetoric toward diaspora the law 'On State Policy of the Russian Federation towards Compatriots Abroad' was adopted only in May 1999. Furthermore, the 1999 law did not resolve contradiction in the question of nation-building but rather legally institutionalized the ambiguity of nation's boundaries. The law defined compatriots as those 'who were born in one state' and who 'share common language, religion, cultural heritage, customs, and traditions', as well as their direct descendants, except for 'descendants of persons who belong to titular nations of foreign states', which without specifying what constitutes a common language, culture or religion could be applied to anyone from ethnic Russians to all former Soviet citizens (Shevel, 2011). In other words, due to the state position on the nationality

[55] Meanwhile, rival CPRF tried to capture the event by linking Soviet patriotism with the personality of its leader Gennadi Zyuganov (Laruelle, 2009).

issue holders of majority nationalist aspiration points were aware that they should not expect structural developments tilt toward their preferred direction in foreseeable future.

Furthermore, holders of Russian majority nationalist aspiration points remained in the domain of loss through much of 2000s, despite the general shift from liberalism to statism (*gosudarstvenichestvo*) in the Kremlin's ideology during the first two terms of Putin's presidency[56](Sokolov, 2007), the state remained on the same track of de-ethicized civic nation-building inherited from the 1990s. After coming to power, Putin identified three key pillars for a successful Russian resurgence: an effective economy, a strong state and further consolidation of the national idea (*rossiiskaia ideia*). However, during his first two terms, the priority was given to the two first of these pillars with remarkable recovery of Russian economy and comprehensive re-centralization of a different sectors within Russian politics and society. For the third pillar, the Kremlin's main strategy for nation-building during this period remained an attempt to inculcate civic patriotism with a focus on state rather than ethnicity. According to Blakkisrud (2016), Putin continued referring to civic-territorial identity introduced by Yeltsin's administration, in which 'Russian people' (*rossiiskii narod*) was understood as a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional union of peoples residing within the borders of the current state. In essence, the state under Putin tried to build a non-ethnic nation with significant cultural and political rights given to non-Russians, around broad set of common values and traditions. Aside from some programs of developing patriotism among youth, the Kremlin did not adopt an especially proactive nation-building strategy. Hence, the set of polices encouraging migration of compatriots in Russia

[56] Sokolov (2007) describes statism an as ideology that holds a having a strong state as a paramount goal. In contrast to nationalism that sees state as an expression of nation's drive for sovereignty, statism sees a nation as mean for strengthening the state. State, whose citizens united by strong national feelings, can rely on their loyalty in the face threats and influences from other states. While statists see security and special status for Russian nation as desirable from state's perspective, it is not of the highest priority and could be easily set aside.

where fairly late - in the second half of 2000s. The government program ‘On Voluntary Resettlement of Compatriots to Russia’ was approved by a presidential decree in June 2006, whereas amendments to the citizenship law giving simplified access to Russian citizenship for the participants of the program only in October 2008 (Shevel, 2011).

Hence, the majority nationalists in Kazakhstan and Russia were in completely different contexts in the 2000s – domain of gain and domain of loss, relative their aspiration points both due to structural demographic changes and the state status on the nationality issues. This is why we see more active bottom-up mobilization in the latter case that is particularly targeted to demographically booming groups conceptually lumped under the migrant rubric.

Conclusion

In this chapter I suggested a prospect theory-based explanation to different levels of majority nationalist mobilization in Russia and Kazakhstan during 1990s and 2000s. Unlike rationalist-instrumentalist and non-rationalist alternatives, prospect theory-based holds that ethnic/nationalist collective action is neither a product of rational self-interested behavior, nor it is driven by uncontrolled past ethnic grievances, but instead its occurrence depends on ability of nationalists to reach their aspiration points. From this perspective, different outcomes of majority nationalist mobilization in Russia and Kazakhstan during the studied period stems from the structural developments place holders of nationalist aspiration points into different domains of loss and gain respectively. During the early 1990s, the structural disintegration of the Soviet Union created a sense of loss for a large number of people in Russia, hence creating a significant pool of potential participants in nationalist mobilization. In turn, it had opposite effect in

Kazakhstan as it created comparable share of people satisfied with the country's independence, hence reducing number of people ready for risky action. Consequently, divergent post-Soviet nation-building practices and related structural demographic changes created different domains of loss and gain for holders of majority nationalist aspiration points in Russia and Kazakhstan. Nation-building polices in Kazakhstan had much more pronounced focus on ethnic core majority that provided sense of gain to Kazakh nationalists, that could not be achieved by de-ethnicized civic-territorial nation-building taking place in Russia at the same period. Most importantly, divergent ethnodemographic changes accompanying nation-building practice created lasting domains of gain and loss for majority nationalists in Kazakhstan and Russia respectively, hence creating different incentives for mobilization.

CHAPTER VI – CONCLUSION

This chapter will conclude the study on the difference in majority nationalist mobilization outcomes in Russia and Kazakhstan throughout 1990s and 2000s by summarizing the key research findings in relations to the research question and discussing the value and contribution of thereof. It will also review the limitations of the study and propose future directions of research.

This study sought to explain the occurrences of bottom-up majority nationalist mobilization in Russia in the 1990s and 2000s by comparing to the case of Kazakhstan. It found that exiting rational-instrumentalist theories of ethnic conflict, according to which nationalist mobilization is merely a disguise for economically motivated rational behavior in response to poor material conditions, cannot explain divergent mobilization outcomes in these countries during the studied period. Comparison of macro- and socio- economic indicators across cases revealed too little variation in terms of material conditions in these two countries during the early 1990s and 2000s to explain divergent nationalist mobilization outcomes. In the early 1990s, Russia and Kazakhstan both experienced similarly difficult period of transition from planned economy to market economy, with the latter country having even worse indicators of inflation, unemployment, and poverty at that time. In turn, divergent nationalist mobilization outcomes happened in these two countries despite similar patterns of fast economic recovery and significant reduction in poverty rates in 2000s. Meanwhile, the consistently smaller share of poor population in Russia compared to Kazakhstan throughout the studied as well as the fact that participants in majority nationalist movements increasing became from middle class in Russia

consolidated the point that poor material conditions does not explain occurrence of nationalist mobilization.

It also found that non-rationalist theories focused on the causal role of past ethnic grievances and conceptualizing nationalist mobilization as an outburst of poorly ethnic hatreds cannot explain divergent bottom-up majority nationalist dynamics in these two countries either. The study showed that collective action of the parties from 'patriotic camp' in Russia temporally lagged behind the structural opening provided by Gorbachev's perestroika, which deviates from non-rationalist expected pattern of grievance-driven mobilization breaking out at the first opportunity in the face of weakened coercive capacity of the state. Furthermore, by looking at available sociological data on xenophobia and comparing the relative prominence of majority nationalist ideas in public discourse, the study did not find enough variation in the levels of ethnic animosities between the core majorities in Russia and Kazakhstan in the early 1990s to attribute higher level of nationalist mobilization in the former country to the particular prominence of ethnic grievances. Finally, the study revealed that bottom-up majority nationalist dynamics in both Russia and Kazakhstan during 2000s deviated from the past grievances pattern expected by existing non-rationalist theories, and instead of mobilization happening against familiar groups already established as 'ethnic foes' within nationalist narratives it was primarily turned against new outgroups when occurred. All of that allowed me to suggest that that the presence of ethnic grievances on its own is not a sufficient factor for nationalist collective action and that another theoretical explanation needed to account for divergent mobilization outcomes in these two countries.

Consequently, the study proposed an alternative theoretical framework combining cognitive approach to ethnicity and prospect theory to address the research question by looking

at differential psychological responses of majority nationalists in Russia and Kazakhstan to the similar structural changes happening in these countries. In contrast to rational-instrumentalist and non-rationalist accounts, my theoretical framework suggests that ethnic/nationalist collective action is neither a product of rational self-interested behavior, nor it is driven by uncontrolled past ethnic grievances, but instead its occurrence depends on ability of nationalists to reach their aspiration points. In line with the cognitive approach to ethnicity, my theory assumes that given the cognitive limitations of the human mind people rely on ethnicity as a complexity reducing device that allows them to navigate in complexity of social reality. Working as an ideational field, ethnicity provides nationalists with numerous aspiration points that are not concerned with pure economic rationality that can be affected by structural changes, hence placing nationalists either into domain of loss or into domain of gain. As described by prospect theory, perceptions of gain and loss have differential impact on human behavior with gain making people more risk averse and cautious and with loss making individuals more risk prone and ready for action to avert the losses. My theoretical framework suggests that depending on which side of differential psychological response structural changes place majority nationalists regarding their aspiration points determines whether their mobilization will happen or not.

From this perspective, different outcomes of majority nationalist mobilization in Russia and Kazakhstan during the studied period stems from the due to structural developments placed holders of nationalist aspiration points into different domains of loss and gain respectively, hence creating incentive for mobilization in the former and eliminating them in the latter. The study demonstrated that the disintegration of the Soviet Union was a structural change that produced momentous differential psychological impact on holders of nationalist aspiration points in these two countries during the early 1990s. Whereas preservation of the USSR was widely shared

aspiration point by different currents of Russian nationalism in the late 1980s, Kazakh nationalists at that time converged on the aspiration for Kazakhstan's sovereignty. Meanwhile, comparison of sociological data on life satisfaction in the countries during the early 1990s shows that collapse of the Soviet Union had divergent effect on wide sections of population of Russia and Kazakhstan. The argument was made that the differentiated effect on populations of two countries from the breakdown of the USSR created large pool of potential participants ready to partake nationalist mobilization in Russia, and curbed it size in Kazakhstan by placing holder of nationalist aspiration points into domain of gain.

Also, the study argued salient structural demographic changes alongside divergent post-Soviet nation-building practices created lasting domains of loss and gain for holders of majority nationalist aspiration points in Russia and Kazakhstan respectively, hence creating incentives for mobilization for majority nationalists in the former country while pacifying them in the latter. It demonstrated that divergent majority nationalist mobilization outcomes in Russia and Kazakhstan during 2000s happened alongside diametrically opposite structural trends affecting proportional share of core majority in country's population – with share of titular Kazakhs continuously rising in Kazakhstan relative to other groups due to migration patterns and high birth rates, and share Russian population of Russia having been in the long-term demographic decline relative to outgroups of primarily Muslim background. In addition to that, the study showed that divergent ethnodemographic trajectories for core majorities were backed by differential nation-building practices in the countries after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Nation-building in Kazakhstan had much more pronounced ethnic core majority-oriented focus early on that facilitated changes in numerous domains including aforementioned demography. In turn, Russian nation-building period was largely de-ethnicized from the onset and throughout the

studied, which placed Russian nationalist more firmly in domain of loss considering salient ethnodemographic changes in the country.

In addition to addressing the main research question, this dissertation contributes broadly to two separately developing schools of thought in the field of nationalism and ethnic conflict. First, the current study contributes to emerging scholarship that seeks to dissociate between state nationalism and majority nationalism (Cetra and Brown Swan, 2020; Gagnon, 2020). As demonstrated in chapter 1, dominant theories of nationalism tend to conflate state and majority nationalism as an analytical whole, which leaves no analytical leverage when dealing with the instances of majority nationalism independent from the state. In turn, theoretical framework and related conceptual apparatus proposed in this dissertation could help to improve our understanding of the relationship between core majorities and the state. The study can also contribute to the scholarship that tries to identify psychological microfoundations for ethnicity-related behavior (Hale, 2016). As noted by Hale, despite theoretical advances in the field of ethnic conflict there is little agreement about foundation understanding of what ethnicity is, which spurred some social scientists to look at the findings from psychology for the answers. Trailing this line of inquiry, I argue that prospect theory-based framework offers a more accurate picture of ethnic politics than rational choice-based alternative used by many scholars in the field. Furthermore, the prospect theory insight of differential psychological response to loss and gain sheds light on the aspect of ethnic politics overlooked by existing frameworks. Whereas many frameworks focusing on the role of negative emotions in producing ethnic-based collective action in some way accounted for the role of loss mechanism, none of them really considered the other side of the coin highlighted by the prospect theory – namely the sense of gain. As demonstrated by this study, the sense of gain also plays an important role in determining

outcomes in ethnic politics and hence deserves more attention from researchers. Finally, it contributes to broader scholarship that try to bring prospect theory into comparative politics by showing ways of its application to group behaviors.

That being said, the author also recognizes the weaknesses of the study that are primarily stem from the dearth of the sociological data for the cases and difficulty in operationalization of concepts related to affective reactions among populations of studied countries. The study of such multifaceted phenomenon of nationalism already presents a tantamount challenge as it requires researcher to tap into perceptions of huge number of people allegedly connected by common identity on the wide range of issues without having clearly identifiable actors and easy entry points for analysis. It becomes even more challenging when the case at question lacks the history of longitudinal studies of public opinion from which some inferences can be made. Such dearth of sociological data on public perception has been a major limitation for the current study, particularly felt in the case of Kazakhstan for which the author often had to rely on indirect indicators to capture public attitudes like for example when trying to gauge level of ethnic grievances in the country. Furthermore, even in the presence of better datasets on public opinion for both countries, quantitative measurement of ‘ethnic emotions’ would still present a great challenge. As noted by scholars working in non-rationalist intellectual tradition, it is incredibly difficult if even possible to measure to which degree people experience emotions toward different issues. Considering this challenge, the authors often had to infer mental states from the salient structural conditions rather than from direct measurement of loss and gain in population despite their centrality to the theoretical framework suggested in this dissertation.

The present dissertation was primarily concerned with theory-building, therefore the logical next step what be theory-testing. Potentially, future research could test the current

theoretical framework against other cases to see whether its explanatory power holds in different contexts. Further testing could help to refine this theory by improving its conceptual apparatus and possibly could help to identify other salient structural conditions capable of producing different domains of gain and loss. Besides that, future research could focus on developing measurement technics to capture perception of gain and loss in public opinion.

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