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Arunas Juska

Abstract

The collapse of the USSR resulted in a decline of institutions which had supported the dominance of ethnic Russians throughout the periphery of the country. In their place new institutions and mechanisms have been developed to regulate the access of people of different nationalities to power, resources and prestige. This article provides a comparative analysis of ethnic transformation in ten of the fourteen successor states of the former Soviet Union. The analysis identified five types of ethnic transformation in the successor states. In the Baltics the attempts of titular ethnic groups to secure predominance over ethnic Russians and radically transform institutions of the Soviet state resulted in the creation of exclusive ethnic democracies. In Central Asia an élite-negotiated transformation led to the emergence of ethnocracies in Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, while the regimes formed in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were characterized by a mixture of ethnocratic and consociationalist features. In Moldova a failed attempt at unification with Romania eventuated in policies directed towards the creation of a Moldovan ethno-territorial federation. Finally, in Ukraine gradual reforms and attempts to abolish any ethnic hierarchy have led to the creation of consociationalism, in which ethnic Russians and Ukrainians, Rusophones and Ukrainophones share power over the state.

Keywords: Russian minorities; ethnic transformation; Baltic States; Central Asia; Moldova; Ukraine; successor states of the former USSR.

Introduction

During this century the populations of the non-Russian territories of the USSR went through two periods of radical change: adaptation to Russian dominance within the Soviet Union and a withdrawal from it. In each of these cases of systemic transformation, the problem of ethnic stratification has raised a number of empirical and theoretical questions.¹ The Bolshevik consolidation of power during the 1920s precipitated the debate concerning the likelihood that the destruction of tsarist Russia and attempts to build socialism would lead to a decline in the importance

of ethnicity in the USSR. Official Moscow claimed that the creation of state socialism had resulted in the emergence of a 'Soviet nation', purportedly built on class rather than ethnic characteristics. Opponents of the communist regime insisted that the Soviet Union was essentially a re-creation of the Russian Empire under the guise of Marxist ideology.

By the early 1960s, the number of intellectuals taking extreme positions in the debate over the nature of ethnic stratification in the USSR had declined. This occurred because Moscow, by using repression as well as co-optation, appeared successful in pacifying ethnic groups populating the periphery of the country. Therefore the majority of sociologists, anthropologists, and political scientists adopted a 'melting pot' paradigm. The primary task of social research conducted under this framework was to estimate the degree to which the 'Soviet nation' was becoming ethnically integrated through the migration, assimilation and acculturation of non-Russians into the Russian nation (Motyl 1992).

By the mid-1980s, with the rise of ethnic unrest in the USSR, the focus of ethnic studies began once again to change. The 'melting pot' paradigm was rapidly replaced by what may be called a 'deviation from the ideal condition' model. This new approach was based on the assumption that Soviet society was undergoing a fundamental transition which entailed change from a dictatorship to a democracy, from a command economy to a market economy, and from an Empire into nation-states (Yergin and Gustafson 1993). The purpose of the studies conducted under the 'deviational' framework was to measure (a) degree to which political institutions in the successor states resemble institutions of liberal democratic states – for example, in terms of civic and human rights protection and provision for the cultural rights of ethnic minorities – (Brzezinski 1989; Buttino 1992; Lapidus 1992), (b) potential of ethnic conflict (Tishkov 1991; Lieven and McGarry 1993; Ettinger 1994; Drobizheva *et al.* 1996; Zdravomyslov 1997), and (c) level of 'mismatch' between the political and cultural boundaries of the new states and ethnic groups that populate them (Lewis 1992; Shlapentokh *et al.* 1994; Kolstoe 1995; Chinn and Kaiser 1996).

However, by the mid-1990s deviational models in post-Soviet ethnic studies were increasingly subject to criticism. It was argued that such an approach was too ideological because it assumed that the extremely complex social, economic and political processes evolving on the Eurasian continent had uniform goals and direction. Some critics argued that the notion of *transition* should be altogether abandoned (Lewis 1995). Instead of a transition, changes in ethnic stratification should be interpreted as an open-ended process, 'in which the introduction of the new elements takes place most typically with adaptations, rearrangements, permutations, and recombination of already existing institutional forms' (Bryant and Mokrzycki 1994, p. 4).

This essay attempts to develop an alternative model to the deviational

approach that allows for the systemic characterization of the emerging ethno-political systems in the post-Soviet states. Instead of a one-dimensional process, the process of ethnic transformation is conceptualized as occurring within a grid comprised of four overlapping 'ideal types' of ethno-political systems: the consociational regime, ethnic authoritarian regime, ethnic (or exclusive) democracy and liberal democracy. Such a conceptualization makes it possible to characterize the process of ethnic transformation in each of the ex-Soviet states as a trajectory on the above-described grid. This approach has significant advantages over the deviational model in that it can account for more than just 'forward' movement in the process of ethnic transformation (for example, the case of transformation from an empire into a liberal-democratic state). It also allows for the characterization of 'backward' shifts in ethnic transformation (for example, shifts to primitive ethnocracies), as well as movements 'sideways' towards the creation of a variety of 'hybrid' ethnic orders (for example, shifts to forms that are a mixture of elements of traditional, Soviet and new institutions).

In this article the ethnic transformations in ten national republics of the former USSR are analysed. These include Ukraine, Moldova,² the three Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and the five Central Asian states of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. These ten republics account for more than 90 per cent (twenty-three million) of ethnic Russian and Russophone population³ that by the late 1980s lived in non-Russian republics of the USSR. Ethnic Russians constituted more than one-third of the population in Latvia and Kazakhstan, about 30 per cent in Estonia, 20 per cent in Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, 13 per cent in Moldova and 10 per cent in Lithuania, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan (Harris 1993).

The interaction of two types of factors is used to explain the changes in the ethno-political order in the national republics of the former USSR: structural and strategic. Structural factors refer to the character of ethnic stratification as it emerged across the periphery of the USSR by the early 1980s. This article argues that the wide variety of patterns of ethnic stratification evolved as a result of territorial incorporation and conquest, and social and cultural policies pursued by Moscow in the national republics of the USSR. These patterns of ethnic stratification varied in character from rigid-competitive stratification in Central Asia to bipolar stratification in the Baltics, and fluid-competitive ethnic stratification in Ukraine.

The strategic dimension refers to actions taken by groups and individuals engaged in contestation over the old ethnic rules and negotiation over the new ethnic order. Following Brubaker (1995), the interaction of three parties in negotiations over the new ethnic order are analysed. First, the emerging new ethnic order in the national republics is influenced by the actions of local Russian populations. Second, ethnic transformation also depends on the actions taken by the newly created '*nationalizing*

states, ethnically heterogeneous yet conceived as nation-states, whose dominant elites promote (to varying degree) the language, culture, demographic position, economic flourishing and political hegemony of the nominally state-bearing nation' (Brubaker 1995, p. 109). Finally, how power, status and resources are distributed among ethnic groups depends on the involvement of the Russian Federation in ethnic politics in the ex-Soviet republics.

This study argues that the interaction of strategic and structural factors has produced five types of ethnic transformation in the republics of the former USSR. In the Baltics attempts by titular ethnic groups to secure predominance and to radically transform the institutions of the Soviet state resulted in the creation of 'ethnic democracies'. In Central Asia the élite-negotiated transformation led to the emergence of ethnocratic regimes in Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, while the regimes that were formed in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were characterized by a mixture of ethnocratic and consociationalist features. In Moldova a failed attempt at unification with Romania eventuated in policies directed towards the creation of a Moldovan ethno-territorial federation. Finally, in Ukraine gradual reforms and attempts to abolish any ethnic hierarchy have led to the creation of consociationalism, in which ethnic Russians and Ukrainians, Russophones and Ukrainophones share power over the state.

This article is organized first to present an outline of the model used for the analysis of ethnic transformation in the new ex-Soviet states. Then, the patterns of ethnic stratification which evolved during the late socialism period in the national republics of the USSR are described. The empirical part of the essay analyses the ethnic transformation in four regions of the former USSR (Baltics, Central Asia, Ukraine and Moldova). The article concludes with some general remarks on the theoretical implications of the proposed approach to the study of an ethnic transformation process in the successor states of the USSR.

Ethnic transformation and its outcomes

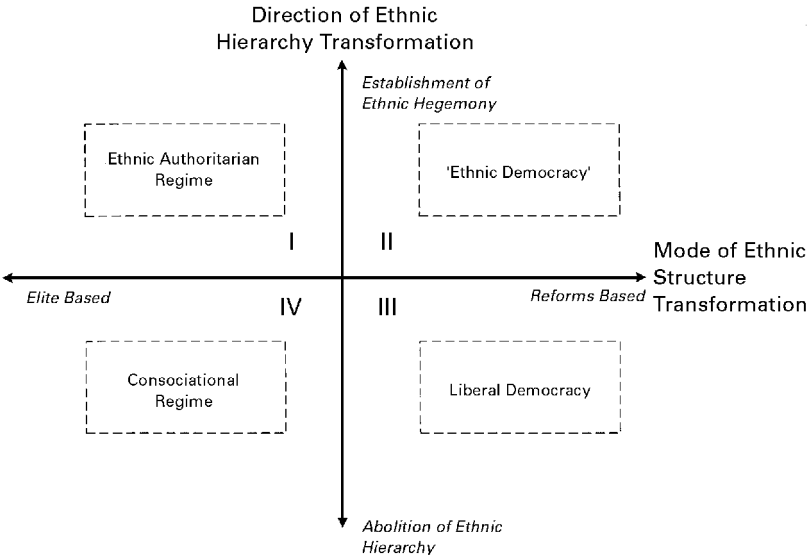
When Moscow's control over the periphery began to decline in the late 1980s, non-Russian ethnic groups started contesting the domination of ethnic Russians in their native homelands. Increasingly, demands were made to redistribute access to power, resources and status among ethnic groups. Under the transformation model proposed in this essay, the ethno-political changes can be described by the intersection of two dimensions: the mode and direction of ethnic transformation. The model (Figure 1) describes the types of ethnopolitical systems likely to emerge as a result of the decline of Russian domination. According to the model, four ideal types of ethno-political systems can result from the ethnic transformation process: ethnic democracy, ethnic autocratic regime, consociational regime and liberal democracy.

An élite-based ethnic transformation would occur if there were changes in the ethnic composition of the élites, and the hierarchical and centralized institutions of the Soviet state remain unaltered and intact. Depending on the direction of ethnic hierarchy transformation, two kinds of élite-based ethnic transformation can occur (Figure 1, quadrants I and IV). Implementation of the ‘nationalizing policies’ within unreformed Soviet economic and social institutions would lead to the creation of an ethnic authoritarian regime. Under an ethnic authoritarian regime, ethnic Russians occupying positions of privilege and power would be replaced by individuals of the titular nationality, while power would be concentrated in the hands of an eponymous élite that would not be constitutionally responsible to the people.

If multi-ethnic élites agree to share power in the successor states, then ethnic transformation produces a consociational regime (Lijphart 1968; 1977). Consociationalism develops in ethnically divided societies when none of the élites from different ethnic groups have enough resources or power to subordinate other ethnic groups, and when each ethnic group needs their opponent’s resources for their own survival.

Reforms-based ethnic transformation refers to efforts at changing the institutions of the Soviet state that had produced a hierarchy of ethnic groups. In the political sphere, such reforms would result in reorganization of the polities under the principles of liberal democracy (for example, the institutionalization of political pluralism and rule of law,

Figure 1. *Direction, modes of ethnic structure transformation, and character of ethno-political systems in the successor states of the former USSR*



and the provision of civil and political rights for the citizens). In the economic sphere, reforms would be directed towards transformation of the centralized planning system into a market-based economy. In the sphere of ethnic relations, reforms would attempt to (a) curtail the policies of forceful nativization and assimilation, (b) provide for the protection of ethnic minorities against discrimination, while also (c) creating conditions for the preservation of their cultural uniqueness.

Depending on the direction of ethnic hierarchy change, reform-based ethnic transformation can lead to the establishment of one of two types of ethno-political systems (Figure 1, quadrants II and III). If the reforms result in a democracy for one ethnic group, whereas members of other ethnic groups are excluded from participation in the polity, economy, or social life of the society, then a system of 'ethnic democracy' would evolve in the successor states of the USSR.

Ethnic democracy, in its milder forms, denies some political, economic or civil rights to the individual based on their ethnic origins (for example, the right to vote in national elections, hold public office, or participate in the privatization of state property, etc) (Smootha 1990). An extreme ethnic democracy can evolve into an 'ethnic apartheid', a political system based on ethnic segregation.

If the reform of Soviet institutions was also directed towards the abolition of ethnic hierarchy and the establishment of a political system based on the rights of the individual (autonomy of the individual, protection of civil and political liberties, establishment of a government based on law with the consent of the governed, and protection from arbitrary authority), then ethnic transformation would evolve into liberal democracy.

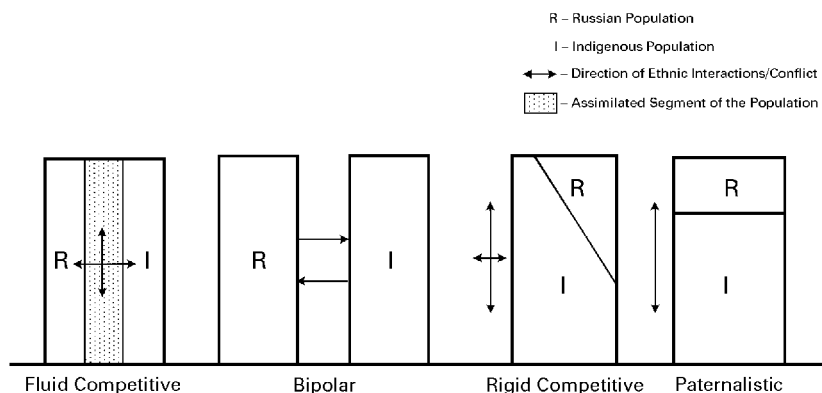
The model, as presented up to this point, remains abstract and theoretical. This is because, in addition to the direction and mode of transformation, the 'starting position' in the process of ethnic transformation needs to be outlined. This requires a description of the ethnic stratification patterns of the national republics in the early 1980s. It is because the ethnic stratification of the pre-Gorbachev USSR, to a large degree, determined the character of ethnic tensions and grievances, as well as the possibilities and constraints for change (for example, access to resources, differences in socio-economic status among members of ethnic groups, differences in their group and territorial distribution, differences in culture, etc). Therefore before applying the outlined model to an analysis of ethnic transformation, the patterns of ethnic stratification that emerged in the national republics of the USSR by the early 1980s will be briefly described.

Patterns of ethnic stratification in the late Soviet period

For analytical purposes four types of ethnic stratification can be discerned in the national republics of the former USSR (Figure 2). Ethnic

Figure 2. *Patterns of ethnic stratification in the national republics of the USSR**

*Based on: Shiburtani and Kawn (1965), Van den Berge (1978) and Wilson (1978), Horowitz (1985)



stratification in Ukraine can be described as having had a fluid-competitive character. During the last three centuries the territories of what are now contemporary Ukraine were incorporated piecemeal into the Tsarist Empire, and later into the USSR. The integration of the Ukrainians into the Russian nation was greatly facilitated by the linguistic and cultural similarity of the two ethnic groups (for example, Kiev was the cradle of the Russian Orthodoxy). Furthermore, on an individual level, there was no discrimination against ethnic Slavs in the USSR. Ukrainians, as well as Byelorussians, were able to secure high-placed positions in the military, state and/or party bureaucracy. As a result of the long historical process, ethnic boundaries between Ukrainians and Russians became fluid. Modernization and economic development since World War II [WWII] only accelerated the process of Ukrainian assimilation into the Russian nation. In Ukraine, Russians and Ukrainians shared control of all major institutions, and the rates of intermarriage were high (Motyl 1993).

At the opposite end of the scale from Ukraine was Central Asia, which was characterized by a rigid-competitive type of ethnic stratification. When tsarist Russia invaded the region in the late nineteenth century, it was at a semi-feudal level of development. The creation of the Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, and Turkmen nations was largely the consequence of efforts by Soviet administrators, bureaucrats, planners, engineers and the military to impose workable territorial boundaries on the huge, newly acquired territory (Lieven and McGarry 1993).

The policies of modernization in Central Asia, pursued by Moscow during and after WWII, had encouraged mass migration of ethnic Russians into the region. At the same time development and modernization

of the region had also significantly contributed to the advancement of the titular populations, and a sizeable class of professionals, as well as state and party bureaucrats, developed. By the early 1970s the advancement of the titular populations resulted in an increase in ethnic competition between them and Russians for jobs, education and housing (Fierman 1991).

However, despite the rise of the eponymous professional class, and the increase in ethnic competition, ethnic Russians continued to run most of the industries, transportation, education and medical systems in Central Asia. The Kremlin kept Russians in these dominant positions in order to maintain control over the region. Russians also dominated the region because the modernization policies carried out by Moscow allowed only limited participation of the local populations. Moscow treated this region as an appendix to the Soviet economy, utilizing its rich resources for the Centre's needs rather than for development of the region. Thus, Soviet modernization failed to develop sizeable indigenous working classes. As a result of these developments, rigid-competitive ethnic stratification emerged in Central Asia.

Military incorporation of the economically and socially advanced Baltic States produced a third, bipolar, pattern of ethnic stratification. Before Soviet invasion in 1940, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were independent countries possessing all the institutions of modern states. They had well developed cultures and strong ethnic identities, and their standards of living were higher than in Russia. Post-WWII development in the region led to the rapid evolution of institutional completeness of the Baltic Soviet republics. Thus, the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian administration, media, educational systems and cultural institutions were created. Fully-fledged socio-economic stratification of the titular populations emerged, which included both the working and middle classes (intelligentsia, managerial strata, state and party bureaucrats).

At the same time, continuous industrial development, combined with the high living standards in the region, led to mass migration of ethnic Russians into the Baltics. Thus, in five decades since the end of WWII, the proportion of Russians in Latvia increased from 10 to 34 per cent, and in Estonia from 8 to 30 per cent (Harris 1993). The mass migration of ethnic Russians to the region, in which titular populations already had developed institutions, led to the formation of bipolar ethnic stratification in the Baltics. Each ethnic group, eponymous and Russian, had their own relatively separate institutions, patterns of recruitment and social mobility, and relatively little contact across the ethnic divide. The emergence of two societies within the single administrative frameworks of the national republics heightened ethnic tensions in the region. In part this occurred because the continuous immigration of ethnic Russians threatened to undermine the demographic balance in the Baltics, and convert Latvians and Estonians into ethnic minorities in their own republics.

Ethnic stratification in Moldova exhibits features of both rigid-competitive and bipolar stratification. Such stratification developed, in part, because Moldova was created by Stalin in 1940 from the territories of two different states. Transnistria (*Pridnestriovie* in Rus.), located on the left bank of the Dniester river, was part of Ukraine. Bessarabia, the territory on the right bank of the Dniester river, was part of Romania prior to WWII. Historically, Transnistria had a large Slavic (Russian and Ukrainian) population. Bessarabia was populated mainly by Romanian peasants. From the moment of Moldavia's creation, the Slavic population of Transnistria has dominated the republic. Transnistria controlled the republic, in part, because it was economically more developed than rural Bessarabia.

After the end of WWII, the policies of economic and social development pursued by Moscow initiated rapid social differentiation within the titular population and led to consolidation of the ethnic Moldovan middle classes. Nevertheless, these positive developments failed to bridge the deep ethnic, social and economic divisions that existed between the two segments of the Moldovan republic. First of all, economic development was spread very unevenly throughout the territory of the republic. Industries were built mostly in Slavic Transnistria, while the right bank of the Dniester remained predominantly rural. Therefore, despite its smaller size, Slavic Transnistria dominated the Moldovan republic. Unlike in the Baltics, the adoption of the Russian language remained a precondition for social mobility in Moldova (Fane 1993; Kolstø *et al.* 1993; Crowther 1997).

In sum, the intersection of regional and ethnic divisions in Moldova produced a mixed type of ethnic stratification. The bipolarity of the ethnic structure emerged as two ethnic societies were consolidating in two separate regions of the country. The interaction between the two ethnic 'pillars' of Moldovan society had clearly expressed features of Slavic domination and Moldovan subordination.

The analysis carried out in this section indicates that, by the early 1980s, ethnic stratification in the periphery of the USSR was characterized by two major features. First, the policies of modernization and development pursued by Moscow since the end of WWII, and the consolidation of the eponymous middle classes, were eroding the superior position that ethnic Russians had enjoyed in the national republics. Second, the character of Russian domination varied significantly across the periphery of the USSR. The dominant position of Russians was most clearly expressed in Central Asia and Moldova. Russian domination was more ambivalent in the Baltic republics. The majority of ethnic Russians had moved to the region because of the higher standards of living in the Baltics than in other parts of the USSR, including Russia itself. Therefore Russian attitudes towards Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians were a mixture of superiority and inferiority (Lieven 1993). In Ukraine

development and urbanization only accelerated the process of Ukrainian assimilation into the Russian nation.

Although the position of ethnic Russians by the early 1980s had partially eroded, this did not constitute a threat to their security, or political and cultural rights. Moscow's unchallenged control over the national republics and ruthless suppression of any signs of nationalism provided local Russians with assurance of their security and protection. This situation changed dramatically once the power of the Centre started to decline. As Moscow was losing control over the national republics, the local conditions began increasingly to determine the situation of ethnic Russians. It was at that time that the features of ethnic stratification described here began to play a crucial role in the process of ethnic transformation.

Ethnic transformation in the successor states of the USSR

The policies of liberalization pursued by Gorbachev during the late 1980s allowed for the consolidation of political opposition to the communist regime in the periphery of the empire. However, the emerging nationalism in the periphery of the country had not yet consolidated into a political force strong enough to displace the Centre. At the same time, the Centre weakened by Gorbachev's reforms could not unilaterally impose its will on non-Russian regions either. Thus, an impasse ensued in which the old principles of stratification promoting Russian dominance within the Soviet state were openly challenged, while new principles of stratification had not yet been established. As a result, Moscow, the nationalizing republics and the local Russian populations engaged in negotiations over the future of ethnic order in the country.

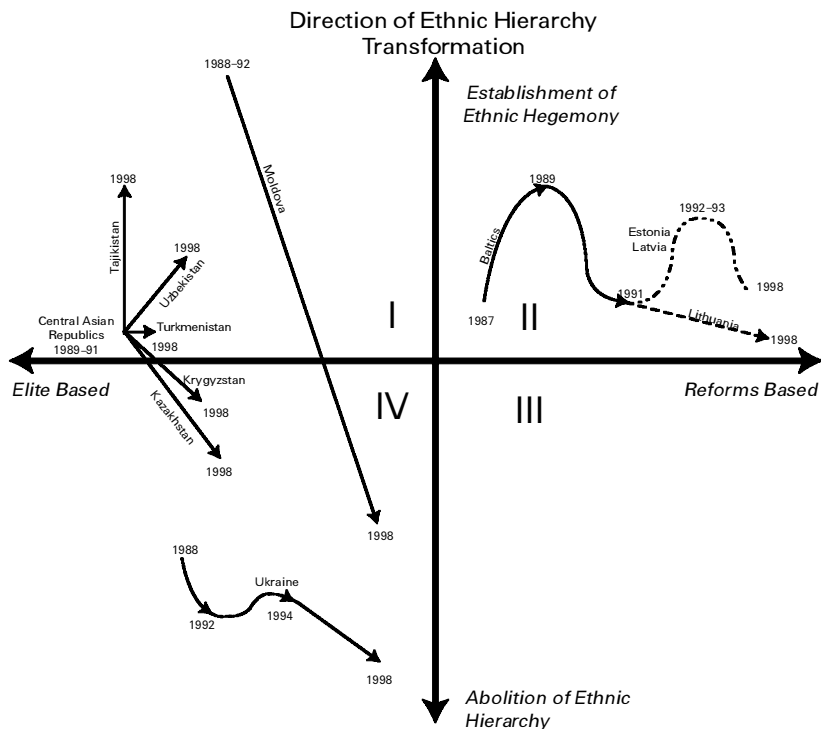
The interaction of structural characteristics with the strategies pursued by the ethnic Russian minorities, the nationalizing successor states, and the Russian Federation produced four trajectories of ethnic transformation (Figure 3). The following sections briefly analyse each of them.

The Baltics: ethnic transformation through attempts to impose ethnic dominance and carry out reforms

The process of ethnic transformation in the Baltics was characterized by a perpetual vacillation between civic and ethnic strands of Baltic nationalism (Figure 3). This characteristic of ethnic transformation can be partly explained by the bipolar ethnic stratification of the region. Developments in the Baltics preceding *perestroika* had led to the consolidation of the two incipient ethnic societies which had been poised for a 'showdown' as soon as the Centre started to decline.

Because the Russian communities in Latvia and Estonia were much larger than in Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia went through much wider

Figure 3. *Direction and mode of ethnic transformation in the states of the former USSR, 1985–1998*



‘ethnic hegemony–civic nationalism’ swings than Lithuania. Such swings proved, by far, the most destabilizing in Estonia because of the great territorial concentration of ethnic Russians in the northeastern part of that republic. The quest for ethnic hegemony in Estonia therefore often led to the counter demands of ethnic Russians for autonomy and even secession of the northeastern territories.

The liberalization of the Soviet political system (1987–1989) initiated by Gorbachev led to the rapid rise of ethnic nationalism in the region. Attempts to subordinate the Russian segments of the population need to be understood, first and foremost, as a defensive reaction of the small Baltic nations to the policies of Russification and demographic imperialism which had threatened their ethnic survival. The rapid grass-roots mobilization was also fostered by the strong ethnic identities of the Baltic people, their cultural traditions and historic grievances which included lost statehood, and mass terror following the end of WWII (Sedaitis and Butterfield 1991; Misiunas and Taagepera 1993; Taagepera 1993).

While the Centre was strong enough to maintain control over the republics, the titular societies attempted to subordinate the Russian

segment of the population *within* the framework of the Soviet state. This occurred through attempts to promote eponymous cadres within the centralized and hierarchical institutions of the Soviet state by pushing out the cadres of Russian ethnicity from positions of power and prestige. Predictably, the result was a rapid escalation of ethnic tensions in the region. Ethnic tensions reached a peak in 1989 when the newly elected Soviets declared restoration of the Baltic republics' independence. The declarations of independence were followed by a wave of protest demonstrations and mass political strikes by ethnic Russians (Apine 1993; Tishkov 1994).

By late 1989 ethnic tensions in the region began to decline due in part to the transformation of Baltic nationalism. Instead of espousing a struggle for 'ethnic hegemony', Baltic nationalism evolved into a mass movement for the restoration of the independent Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian states. Struggle for independence motivated Baltic national leaders to search actively for an accommodation with the large Russian population in the region. Facing Moscow's threat to use military force, the Baltics could ill-afford a restless and resentful Russian population. Additionally, the ensuing political and economic chaos in the Russian Federation and the limited possibilities to return to their homeland significantly weakened the Russians' opposition to Baltic independence. The result was a decline in ethnic tensions throughout the region.

By the time independence was restored in 1991, the ethnic situation in Lithuania had normalized (Gaidys 1994). Because of its small size the Russian community in Lithuania did not represent a threat to Lithuanian ethnic dominance. Every resident of the republic who applied for the new Lithuanian passport was automatically granted citizenship. In addition, extensive cultural rights were extended to ethnic Russians in the republic (Lakis 1995).

In Estonia and Latvia the situation was very different. Independence led to the rapid rise of ethnic nationalism in these two states. This occurred for a variety of reasons. First, the unexpected collapse of the Centre after the failed August 1991 *coup d'état* dramatically changed the power balance between the ethnic communities in the republics. Once the imperial Centre had collapsed, national governments no longer needed local Russians as allies in their struggle for independence. Second, ethnic nationalism in Latvia and Estonia was fuelled by widespread fears and doubts about the commitment of the Russian population to the cause of independence. Because ethnic Russians constituted a significant part of the population, they could control the balance of power in the republics through democratic means. Third, ethnic nationalism was also fuelled by the presence of the Soviet Army in the region. Any protest action of local Russians, especially if it was supported by the Soviet Army, could easily destabilize the situation in the republics. Finally, nationalist parties used ethnic nationalism in the hope that this

would encourage ethnic Russians to leave these republics for Russia, and as a strategy to compete for electoral votes.

The imposition of ethnic dominance by the titular nationalities proceeded through attempts to institutionalize an 'ethnic democratic' system in Latvia and Estonia. Citizenship laws were enacted that excluded ethnic Russians from participation in national politics.⁴ As a result, no ethnic Russians were elected to the Estonian parliament in 1993 despite the fact that ethnic Russians constituted a third of the republic's population. In Latvia, only 7 ethnic Russians were elected (out of a 100-member parliament) when the Russian population constituted close to half of the republic's population (Smith *et al.* 1994).

As a reaction to disenfranchisement, small but vocal organizations of ethnic Russians in Latvia began to emerge with the intention of protecting the rights of ethnic Russians in this republic (Terechov 1993). In Estonia reaction to disenfranchisement was much stronger. In the north-eastern part of Estonia attempts to restrict rights to citizenship were met with anti-government demonstrations. In 1993 a referendum on the question of political autonomy for this region of Estonia was organized (*RFE/RL Daily Report*, 23 July 1993).

As ethnic tensions in the region were increasing, the Russian Federation, as well as international organizations such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe, and the Helsinki Watch on Human Rights, began to put pressure on the Estonian and Latvian governments to modify their citizenship legislation. Under the impact of the protests of local Russians, international pressure and pressure from the Russian Federation, citizenship laws in Latvia and Estonia were significantly modified. Both countries began to move gradually towards majoritarian democracy.⁵ This significantly improved the ethnic situation in the region (Grishaev 1995; Raskazov 1995).

Despite recent positive political developments, the dismantling of the 'ethnic democracies' in Latvia and Estonia remains a conflict ridden and contradictory process (Kahar 1997; Pettai 1997; Rikken 1997). Ethnic tensions will most likely continue to vacillate in the near future, although probably not at the amplitude at which it occurred during the last decade. It is likely that both the policies of gradual enfranchisement currently being pursued by Estonia and Latvia and the ethnic Russians' competitiveness and willingness to integrate into the eponymous communities will lead to increasing social divisions within the ethnic Russian community. No doubt there will be continuous growth in the size of the ethnic Russian upper and middle classes, which will lead to their increasing integration into the eponymous societies.

At the same time, a sizeable Russian ethnic underclass will develop consisting of those who could not manage successfully to adapt to the radical ethno-political and economic changes in the republics, and/or those who were excluded by cultural and language barriers. The underclass will

consist of Russian blue-collar workers with low skills and limited education who only recently migrated to the Baltics and were stranded there by the collapse of the USSR. The ethnic divisions within the Baltic societies will perpetuate the conditions necessary for the formation of an ethnic Russian underclass. It is the disproportionate concentration of ethnic Russians in the underclass that will continue to be the cause of social and ethnic tensions in the Baltic states.

Moldova: ethnic transformation from attempts to displace non-titular élites to ethno-territorial federation

The developments in Moldova were characterized by attempts to radically transform its ethnic structure by displacing ethnic Slavs (Russians and Ukrainians) from positions of privilege and power and also by the imposition of an ethnic hegemony by the titular nationality in the republics (Figure 3). This happened in part because Moldova is made up of a coalescence of territories from two formerly different states: an annexed part of Romanian territory and Soviet territory historically settled by Slavs. Moscow's socio-economy did not succeed in closing deep historical, linguistic and cultural gaps between the Moldovan population and ethnic Slavs. Once the process of liberalization of the country began, the ethnically divided Moldovan state began to unravel quickly. The Bessarabian part pushed for Moldova's unification with Romania, whereas Slavic Transnistria pressed for unification with the Russian state (Fane 1993; King 1994).

The effort to unify Moldova and Romania was met with strong opposition by ethnic Russians and members of other non-titular ethnic groups living in the republic. First of all, ethnic Russians argued that the Dniester region populated by Slavs had never belonged to either Romania or Moldova. Second, the reunification of Moldova with Romania threatened to change radically the ethno-demographic balance in the republic. As a result of unification, ethnic Slavs would become a numerically insignificant minority with almost no political and economic influence in the state of Romania. Third, economically, Romania was even more underdeveloped and had a lower standard of living than Moldova. In addition, Romania during the late 1980s was extremely politically unstable. The anti-government violence that spread throughout Romania's cities, and which resulted in the overthrow of the Ceaușescu regime in 1989, had put the country on the brink of civil war. Finally, the Romanian state's very poor treatment of ethnic minorities, especially ethnic Hungarians and Gypsies, made the unification of Moldova and Romania simply unacceptable to the Russians (Ganelin 1990; Romanova 1992).

Therefore, attempts by the Moldovan nationalists to embark on a course towards reunification with Romania led to a rapid escalation of an ethnopolitical conflict, which by 1992 erupted into open military

warfare. The bloodshed was stopped only when the Soviet Army intervened in the conflict on behalf of the Dniester region.⁶ The result was a *de facto* partitioning of the Moldovan state along ethnic lines into an independent 'Dniester Soviet Socialist Republics' and Moldova proper. In this ethnic conflict, nearly 600 people were killed and about 100,000 of the population became refugees (Human Rights Watch 1993).

The intervention of Soviet troops and resulting partition of Moldova produced a stalemate in the struggle between the two parts of Moldova. Due to the stalemate, Chisinau had abandoned its course towards unification with Romania. Instead of attempting to convert Russians into an ethnic minority within the Romanian state, intensive élite negotiations began over the political autonomy of the ethnic enclave.

What motivated the Moldovan side to instigate such negotiations? First, Moldova came out of the conflict in Transnistria as a loser and faced the catastrophic consequences of the drive towards unification: partitioned territory, a bitterly divided society, a ruined economy, hundreds of people killed and thousands of refugees. Second, the negotiations were initiated because of the change in leadership of the Moldovan state. The devastating failure of the drive towards unification produced a split in the ruling élites of the republic. When former communists and bureaucrats from the powerful agricultural establishment in Moldova came into power in 1992, they were, by far, more willing than Moldovan nationalists to share power with the Russian community in the country. Unlike Moldovan intellectuals, agrarians and former communists were not enthralled with the idea of Moldova's unification with Romania. For them unification would mean loss of control over the country and subordination to functionaries in Romania. Finally, the protracted ethnic war had led to the decline of popular mass mobilization in the republic. As the economy in the country collapsed, the populace became increasingly preoccupied with day-to-day survival and were exhausted and weary of the violence and uncertainty.

In order to consolidate the independent Moldovan state and to preserve its territorial integrity, the new government was exceedingly accommodating to its ethnic minorities' demands. This was accomplished by including members of the ethnic minorities in a 'national consensus' government. Furthermore, the new government also began negotiations with ethnic minorities over the creation of national-territorial units within the Moldovan state.⁷

However, until very recently, Dniester leaders have rejected Chisinau's proposal to create an autonomous territorial unit in the region. They demanded either separate statehood, a confederation of their self-proclaimed republic with Moldova proper, or a unification with the Russian Federation. A major break in the protracted conflict within Moldova came in June 1997 when leaders of the breakaway region agreed to begin negotiations with Chisinau. The deciding factors which

pushed the breakaway region to negotiate were the economic bankruptcy of the unreformed Transnistria's economy and its isolation within the international community (Globe 1997; and *RFE/RL Daily Newslines*, 9 May; 21 and 25 July 1997).

However, in the current situation it is not Chisinau but Moscow that dictates the conditions of the conflict settlement in Moldova.⁸ The Kremlin seems to be interested in preserving the current situation in which it plays the role of mediator between two sides of the divided country. Its position as intermediary allows Moscow to retain its military presence in the region. Moscow also delays solving the Transnistria problem because the conflict in the region remains a 'hot button' issue in Russia's domestic politics. Any attempts by Moscow to disengage officially from the region will be interpreted by nationalist and communist opposition as a sellout of Russia's land and interests, and an abandonment of the brethren in the face of ethnic oppression.

Conversely, Moscow's overwhelming military presence in Moldova is not conducive to stabilization of the country either. Moscow's active interference in Moldova's internal affairs can unravel Moldova's ruling coalition and lead to a consolidation of Moldova's nationalist opposition. Because of the volatility of the situation, it is difficult to talk about future ethnic developments in the country. The best case scenario would be stabilization of the situation in the form of an ethno-territorial constitution of the Moldovan state. Three conditions appear essential for such a development: (a) economic improvement in the country; (b) the withdrawal of Russian military forces from the country, and (c) the development of a close bilateral relationship between Moldova and Russia, similar to the type of relationships being developed between Kazakhstan and Russia, and Kyrgyzstan and Russia. Without Moldova's close association with Russia, Dniester will not agree to relinquish its powers to Chisinau.

Central Asia: élite-negotiated ethnic transformation

The third type of ethnic transformation, élite-negotiated, is characteristic of the Central Asian republics. Unlike the Baltics, Moldova, or Ukraine, in Central Asia (with an exception of Uzbekistan⁹) there were no mass-based nationalist, anti-colonial or anti-Russian movements. Therefore ethnic transformation proceeded within the framework of unreformed Soviet institutions.

The weakness of nationalist opposition to the Communist regime in Central Asia can, to a large degree, be explained by the character of the social stratification of the titular societies. Although the process of modernization had produced eponymous educated classes and political élites, the lives of the rest of the population in the region were little changed by Moscow's policies of development. The majority of Central

Asia's population remained rural, with the relatively unchanged ways of life of a traditional peasant society. The eponymous working class was small (Fierman 1991).

The titular élites, 'sandwiched' between the imperial Centre and the primarily rural population of the region, had little economic or political interest in promoting separatism or nationalism. Their existence was highly dependent on the functioning of the centralized imperial bureaucracies. In addition, the local élites were interested in remaining part of the USSR because of the deepening economic, ecological and demographic crises in the region. Thus, instead of promoting nationalism and separatism, the eponymous élites chose, simultaneously, to repress or tightly control activities of the emerging political opposition, and to lobby Moscow for increasing investment in the region (Zaslavsky 1992).

The weakness of mass-based nationalism and separatism in this region can also be partially accounted for by the absence of widespread anti-Russian sentiment. Ethnicity was a rather new phenomenon in the region, brought in and constructed predominately by the Soviets. Therefore Moscow's rule was perceived much more favourably in this region than in the European part of the USSR (Dannreuther 1994). Finally, the Russian population in the region did not represent a demographic threat to the titular populations because the size of the Russian communities had been declining since the early 1970s (Tishkov 1995).

Because of the relatively weak nationalist sentiment and tight control over political activities, the major factor affecting the situation of local ethnic Russians was not the policies of the eponymous élites, but the change of Moscow's policies towards the region. Since the late 1980s the Kremlin was increasingly disengaging from the region. With an ailing Soviet economy there were simply no economic resources available to continue to rule a vastly overstretched empire. In addition, public pressure was rising in Russia itself for dissociation from a poor and under-developed Central Asia. The majority of Russia's population perceived Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan as corrupt, inefficient, and ruled by criminal mafias.

Since independence there was a consolidation of autocratic regimes in Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Few attempts were made to carry out political or economic reforms in these republics. Instead, the sudden and quite unexpected withdrawal of the former colonial rulers undermined the economic and political base of local Russians and initiated a bitter struggle for power among different regional and clan factions within the state and party apparatus. Disintegration of the colonial economic and political infrastructure and intra-fighting among eponymous élites initiated mass Russian migration from the region. By 1994 about one million ethnic Russians had left Central Asia, including almost 500,000 from Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (Makarova 1995).

Mass emigration had disastrous effects on the Russian Federation, as

well as on the economy of Central Asia. Russia had neither the political will, nor the ability to accept such a significant number of repatriates (Nahaylo 1994; Shumarin 1995). Local economies and social services in Central Asia were also badly hurt as skilled Russian personnel, such as doctors, teachers, and engineers, were leaving the region in large numbers (Pulatov 1990; Tishkov 1995).

In attempts to curb migration, negotiations over the future status of ethnic Russians in these three states began. Governments of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, prodded by Moscow's active lobbying, were promising extensive state patronage of local Russians so as to stabilize their population.¹⁰ Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and, to a lesser degree, Uzbekistan provided extensive cultural, and political rights to ethnic Russians (Chinn and Kaiser 1996, pp. 211–38). Turkmenistan and Tajikistan even made bilateral agreements with Russia that provide dual citizenship to local Russians (Terechov 1993; *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 19 July 1994; *OMRI Daily Digest*, 11 July 1995).

An extensive (in comparison with the other ethnic minorities in these countries) state patronage was provided, in part, because the Russian populations in Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were relatively small and therefore did not constitute a challenge to the dominant eponymous élites. At the same time, the role of ethnic Russians in the economies of these countries remains very high. In addition, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan remain vulnerable to Moscow's military, economic and political pressure.

The high degree of legal accommodation to the demands of ethnic Russians in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan seems paradoxical, especially taking into account the present characterization of the regimes in these former Soviet republics as ethnocratic. However, this paradox dissolves if one takes into account the clan-based social structure of Central Asian societies. Power in Central Asia functions not so much through law, but through regional and/or kinship networks of patronage, personal loyalty and nepotism. It is not the state, but the networks of kinship and patronage, that provide security, support and protection for their members (Rashidov 1992). Consequently, whatever laws and rights are accorded to ethnic Russians, they, as *inordosty* (foreigners, in Russian), are excluded from power, their position in the republics is insecure and their social mobility blocked.

Unless there is significant improvement in the economic situation, ethnic Russians will continue to leave Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Because of the raging civil war between former communists and the Islamic opposition, almost all ethnic Russians have already left Tajikistan. The situation of ethnic Russians is more favourable in the politically stable, but least reformed, Turkmenistan, which is endowed with enormous gas and oil resources. For now, the neo-Stalinist rule of Turkmen president Niyazov is able to assure the protection and security

of ethnic Russians, while the gas and oil riches of the country hold promise in converting Turkmenistan into a second Kuwait.

Uzbekistan, similar to Turkmenistan, is politically stable. At the same time, ethnic Russians in Uzbekistan are subjected to pressures of nativization. One reason why this is happening is because Uzbekistan, as the most populous nation in Central Asia, tries to project itself as the leader of the region (Starr 1996). The 'Uzbekinization' of the society, along with vulnerability to informal harassment, and lack of prospects for economic and social mobility are pushing ethnic Russians to migrate back to the Russian Federation (Dunlop 1994; Ivanov 1994). Arguably, the stabilization of the ethnic Russian population will most likely occur only when most of the best educated, younger, and higher-skilled ethnic Russians have left the state. The process of pauperization will push the Russian population to the fringes of Uzbek society.

In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan there was formation of the regimes that represent a mixture of ethnocratic and consociational features. Both republics are ruled by autocratic regimes led by moderate reformers Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan and Askar Akayev of Kyrgyzstan. Although Kyrgyz and Kazakhs are the dominant ethnic groups within Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, the leadership of these two countries agreed to share the power with ethnic Russians. Thus, ethnic Russians are accorded limited participation in the government and state bureaucracies, and enjoy cultural autonomy and equal citizenship and voting rights,¹¹ while the state and its institutions remain under the control of the 'clans' led by Nazarbayev and Akayev.¹²

Four major factors explain implementation of the consociational arrangements in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. First, the size of the Russian population in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan was much larger than in Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Because of the significant size, Russian communities could not easily be pushed to the fringes of Kazakhstani and Kyrgyz societies, especially because of their crucial role in the economies of both countries. Second, the degree of ethnic Kazakhs' and Kyrgyz's Russification was much higher than in the other three Central Asian republics. In addition, nationality policies in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are directed towards the creation of territorially-based Kazakhstani and Kyrgyz nations (Nazarbaev 1995). Finally, the Kazakh and Kyrgyz regimes have agreed to share control of their states with ethnic Russians because of Moscow's political pressure and Kazakhstan's and Kyrgyzstan's economic and political dependence on the Russian Federation.

The consociational policies pursued by Kazakhstani and Kyrgyzstani regimes were rather successful in stabilizing the ethnic situation in these two new countries. This was especially the case in Kazakhstan (Gudkov 1995). However, the consociational features of the Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan remain very unstable. First, this is because the access to the

positions of privilege and power by ethnic Russians depends on the personal authority of the current Kazakhstani and Kyrgyzstani leaders. If something were to happen to Nazarbayev or Akayev, the power sharing arrangements between titular ethnic groups and Russians can be renegotiated again. Second, consociational features will most likely decline unless there is improvement in the economic situation. This is especially true in the case of Kyrgyzstan. Because of the poverty and continuous decline of the Kyrgyz economy, Russian repatriation to the Russian Federation had significantly diminished the size and socio-economic status of the Russian community in this country. The declining size of the Russian community, combined with a high degree of inter-clan rivalry and conflict in Kyrgyzstan, will most likely lead to a consolidation of the ethnocratic regime similar to that in Uzbekistan.

Unless Russia actively promotes secessionism in northern Kazakhstan, the process of ethnic transformation in the country will most likely fluctuate between ethnocratic and consociationalist features, without a decisive prevalence of one or the other. If there are changes in the current top leadership of Kazakhstani, or if Kazakhstan lapses into a deep and protracted economic crisis, the ethnic assertiveness of Kazakhs and Russian separatism will most likely increase. Conversely, economic improvement, combined with the Russian Federation's demands for protection of ethnic Russian minorities, and a high degree of political and economic dependence on Russia, will constrain the development of an ethnocratic regime in Kazakhstan.

Ukraine: ethnic transformation through reform and abolition of ethnic hierarchy

The fourth and final type of ethnic transformation is characteristic of the developments in Ukraine. In Ukraine the emerging opposition to colonial Moscow's rule and, later, formation of the administration of the independent Ukraine were based on a delicate coalition between Ukrainian-speaking nationalists from the Western part of the country and ethnic Russians from the Eastern Ukraine. Willingness of Ukrainian nationalists to share power with ethnic Russians can partly be explained by the high degree of assimilation of Ukrainians. Because of assimilation, the Russian-Ukrainian ethnic divide (defined by common ancestry) did not coincide with Russian-Ukrainian linguistic and cultural divisions. Therefore attempts by the Ukrainian nationalists to assert Ukrainian ethnic hegemony would likely generate resentment, protest and backlash, not only among ethnic Russians but also among Russified Ukrainians. The result was the development of the consociationalism in Ukraine, when ethnic Russians and Ukrainians, Russophones and Ukrainophones share equally the power over the state.¹³

However, as illustrated in Figure 3, ethnic transformation in Ukraine did not proceed without creation of ethnic tensions between ethnic Ukrainians and ethnic Russians. Mild attempts to Ukrainize the population in the republic were usually followed by periods of decreased inter-ethnic tension. This vacillation of inter-ethnic tensions can be explained by the deep regional divisions in Ukraine. In other words, ethnic discord in this country is expressed in the form of regional tensions and conflict. Two regional 'fault lines' emerged in Ukraine: (a) one between the nationalistic, anti-Moscow and anti-communist Western Ukraine and the more Russified and conservative Eastern Ukraine; and (b) one between the ethnic Russian enclave in the Crimean peninsula¹⁴ and Ukraine proper.

Because of deep regional divisions, the eastern and western parts of Ukraine responded differently to the policies of liberalization initiated by Gorbachev. In western Ukraine, as in the Baltics, there was a consolidation of the national-democratic opposition to the communist regime. It sought to promote democratization in the republic and ensure the protection and development of the Ukrainian language and culture. In the highly Russified eastern Ukraine, mobilization proceeded not along ethnic but class lines. In eastern Ukraine, the Donbas region miners organized the first independent labour union in the Soviet Union. The miners agenda was limited strictly to economic issues. Although both groups were in opposition to the Communist Party, there was little cooperation between them (Marples 1991).

In early 1990 regionally fragmented opposition in Ukraine began to consolidate under the leadership of the national-communist faction within the Ukrainian Communist Party. The policies pursued by the national-communist leadership in asserting Ukraine's sovereignty from Moscow were able to moderate nationalists' demands. The communist leadership was also successful in ensuring the support of the miners by promising economic prosperity to the entire population in an independent Ukraine. The result was the creation of wide political opposition to Moscow's colonial rule, leading Ukraine to independence.¹⁵

However, the dramatic deterioration of the economic situation during the first years of independence had negatively affected the ethnic situation in Ukraine. Most ethnic Russians supported Ukraine's independence for economic reasons, in the hope that Ukraine would quickly achieve economic prosperity. The collapse of Ukraine's economy following independence and rapidly spreading poverty led to the rise of pro-Russian sentiments in the Russified regions of the country. In addition, ethnic tensions increased as a result of the policies of the first independent Ukrainian government which chose to promote the Ukrainian language and culture.

In 1993 ethnic tensions reached their highest point when the leadership of the Russian enclave in Crimea took a course towards unification with

the Russian Federation. As the political conflict between Kiev and Crimea escalated, ethnic tensions between Ukrainians and Russians increased, especially in Sevastopol where the Russian Black Sea fleet is based. Military skirmishes between the Ukrainian and Russian paramilitaries were avoided only through last minute negotiations (Kuzio 1994).

Pro-Russian sentiments were also on the rise in the highly Russified regions of Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine. The leadership in these regions in 1994 organized a consultative referendum. The plebiscite produced massive votes in the region in favour of closer ties with Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS], as well as limiting the gradual Ukrainization of these regions (*RFE/RL Daily Report*, 24 and 29 March 1994). However, tensions in eastern Ukraine had not reached as high a point as in Crimea because Kiev pursued accommodationist policies and did address the complaints of the restless regions.

Since the 1994 elections ethnic tensions in Ukraine have declined (Shaw 1994). This occurred, in large part, because the élites from the Russified eastern Ukraine were able to defeat representatives of western Ukraine in the national elections. The new administration moderated the nationality policies of the previous government and pursued greater cooperation with the Russian Federation.

In sum, since the late 1980s a consociational regime has developed in Ukraine. Unlike the 'classical' cases of consociationalism (for example, Belgium, or Switzerland in which power among ethnic and/or religious groups is shared through mutual vetoes, grand coalition government or proportional division of government and bureaucratic posts), consociationalism in Ukraine is not legally codified. Instead, power is shared through delicate coalitions between representatives of the nationalist west and Russified and the more conservative eastern part of Ukraine (Wilson 1996, p. 40).

Whether there will continue to be a periodical rise in Ukrainian-Russian tensions will depend on a variety of factors. First of all, it will depend on the capacity of Ukrainian élites to resist the long-term and gradual tendencies towards 'nativization' of the Ukrainian state. Second, it will depend on an evolution of relationships between Ukraine and Russian Federation. As the developments during the first post-independence years show, liberal nationality policies pursued by Kiev are not enough to preserve ethnic stability in Ukraine. The establishment of close economic, social and cultural relationships of Crimea and eastern Ukraine with the Russian Federation are also necessary.

Conclusion

The collapse of the communist regime in Moscow initiated a complex and protracted process of ethnic transformation throughout the vast periphery of the former USSR. In all the successor states institutions that

promoted and sustained Russian political, economic and cultural domination declined. In their place new institutions and mechanisms regulating the access of people of different nationalities to power, resources and prestige have been developed.

This article identified three major characteristics of the process of ethnic transformation. First, there were significant differences in the outcomes of ethnic transformation across the former periphery of the USSR. These outcomes varied from the creation of ethnocratic regimes in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, to ethnic democracies in the Baltics, and a consociationalism in Ukraine. A second feature of the transformation of the imperial ethnic order was its changing 'trajectories'. In Moldova attempts to impose ethnic hegemony of Moldovans were abandoned, and instead, liberal nationality policies were promoted. In the Baltics the ethnic transformation process fluctuated between the predominance of civic versus ethnic nationalism. In Central Asia transformation proceeded in the tensions between promotion of ethnocratic as well as consociational features. In Ukraine there was the development of consociationalism. Finally, ethnic transformation was profoundly shaped by developments in the Russian Federation and Moscow's policies towards the new states.

Prevailing approaches in the study of ethnic transformation in the ex-Soviet republics proved to be of weak explanatory power when dealing with a rapid process of fragmentation and differentiation of a previously unified geopolitical space. This is because such approaches are based on an analysis of the degree to which institutions created in new states deviate from the liberal-democratic ideal. While such deviational approaches worked reasonably well while the Soviet Union was still intact, their usefulness declined significantly once the USSR collapsed. Under the dramatically changed circumstances, deviational models could account for neither the different outcomes of the process of ethnic transformation, nor the varied dynamics of ethnic change.

The approach presented here is based on the use of a much more nuanced analysis of the varied conditions of the successor states, including those influenced by the Russian Federation. It enables the provision of a systemic description of the multiple patterns of ethnic transformation as they have evolved across the periphery of the former USSR. In addition, instead of using generalized explanations and prognostication, as is the case with deviational approaches, the proposed model remains open-ended. It is because the new ethnic orders in the successor states remain vulnerable to changes, despite some degree of stabilization. Attempts to change the distribution of power, resources and status among ethnic groups can occur not only because of the internal political struggle, or success or failure of reforms in Russia and the successor states, but because of other factors as well. Among them are the long-term implications of the changes in the ethno-demographic balance that

is currently under way in the new states. The size of the ethnic Russian population in the successor states will most likely continue to decline due to out-migration and a lower birth rate of ethnic Russians *vis-à-vis* the titular populations (this is especially the case in Central Asia and Moldova). As the Russian population declines, so will their clout in the national republics. This could trigger attempts to renegotiate, yet again, the ethno-political order in the successor states.

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Notes

1. In this article *ethnic group* is defined as a group of people who 'are, or feel themselves, or are thought to be, bound by common ties of race or nationality or culture sharing language, culture, religion, or other cultural values and practices' (Morris 1968, p. 167). *Ethnic stratification* is used to denote unequal access to power, resources and status among individuals of different ethnic origins. Ethnic stratification is achieved through, and stabilized by, institutions, laws, norms and values. *Ethnic transformation* is defined as the process by which legal, political, economic and social institutions upholding an ethnic order in a society, are replaced by new social institutions. These new institutions formalize and stabilize the changes that occur in access to power, resources and prestige among individuals of different ethnic origins. In the case of the new states of the former USSR, elements of the new ethnic order are: a constitution that defines citizenship; legislation on languages regulating the use of the titular and Russian languages; regulations on residency permits; participation in the privatization process and participation in elections; and access to housing, government employment (including the National Armies and Police), and education and other social welfare services.

2. With independence the 'Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldavia' was renamed the 'Republic of Moldova'.

3. In the 1989 Soviet Census the number of ethnic Russians was determined according to the subjective ethnic identification or affiliation (*natsional'nost'*) of a respondent. Therefore in this article the term 'Russians' will be used for convenience on the understanding that it also includes other Russophones (first of all Ukrainians and Byelorussians) who in the 1989 Census identified themselves as ethnic Russians. For more on how categories of ethnicity and nationality were defined in the 1989 Soviet Census see Anderson and Silver (1989).

4. In Estonia resident non-citizens (the predominant majority of whom were ethnic Russians) were eligible to vote in local but not in national elections. For more on policies of citizenship in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, see Brubaker (1992); Bungs *et al.* (1992); and Smith *et al.* (1994).

5. In Estonia all Soviet era settlers (with the exception of former Soviet military personnel) were eligible for citizenship, provided they passed the language proficiency test and took an oath of loyalty to the Estonian republic. In Latvia, the requirements for citizenship are more complicated and restrictive. However, beginning with the year 2003, all

individuals who moved to Latvia during the Soviet era will be eligible for citizenship, providing they pass a language proficiency test and take an oath of loyalty to the Latvian republic (Smith *et al.* 1994).

6. Soldiers of the 14th Russian Army stationed in Moldova were not outsiders in the Chisinau-Transnistria conflict. Russian soldiers often tended to be locals with ongoing close personal and social relationships between conscripts and local population (Socor 1993). Currently Russian military in Moldova is represented not only by the 14th Russian Army, but also by a contingent of Russian soldiers within the trilateral (Russian, Ukrainian and Moldovan) peacekeeping force (Globe 1997).

7. The negotiations began over the creation of two national-territorial units within Moldovan state: the Transdnister, in which ethnic Russians and Ukrainians constituted a numerical majority (about 52 per cent of the population of the region) and the Gagauz region inhabited by the Gagauz minority (a Christian Turkic group) (Socor 1992a; 1992c).

8. The exact nature of this conflict is debated. Moldovan leadership as well as some commentators see confrontation between Chisinau and Transnistria as a political conflict, in which ethnicity is of secondary importance. In such interpretation the Moldovan side is represented by pro-reform leadership which is currently pursuing liberal nationality policies directed towards the creation of territorially-based Moldovan nation. The Transdnister side in a political confrontation is represented by hard-line communists, military-industrial interests of Russia and civil and military officials who want to preserve centralized and state-run enterprises on which the economy of this territory is based. The communists and other patriotic forces in Russia as well as leadership of the Transdnister Republic see the confrontation with Chisinau as first and foremost an ethnic conflict. In such interpretation, Transdnister's leadership is fighting against the ethnic hegemony of Moldovans, who are threatening not only to convert ethnic Russians and Ukrainians into 'second class' citizens but also forcefully assimilate them into the Moldovan ethnos (Socor 1992b). Majority of the analysts, however, see the Chisinau-Transdnister confrontation as ethno-political conflict in which two incipient ethnic societies are struggling for the control over the Moldovan state (Fane 1993; Kolstø 1993; Crowther 1997).

9. Uzbek intellectuals had managed to create a sizeable popular movement, the *Birlik* (Unity), which was highly influential during the later part of *perestroika*. At the peak of its activities the *Birlik* claimed a membership of approximately 500,000 individuals (Olcott 1996, p. 115). The *Birlik* was created following the example of similar organizations in the Baltics to promote the protection of Uzbek culture and language and to increase the autonomy of Uzbekistan *vis-à-vis* Moscow. The Uzbek intelligentsia was successful in mobilizing political opposition, in part, because the Uzbek capital, Tashkent, was a hub of the region with a large concentration of the scientific, educational and industrial potential of Central Asia. Political mobilization was also facilitated by the fact that two great historic centres of Islamic culture, Samarkand and Bukhara, both of which are considered foundations of Turkic identity, are located in the territory of Uzbekistan. Finally, by the late 1980s the Uzbek communist leadership's grip on the republic was weaker than in the other Central Asian countries. This happened because Moscow purged hundreds of the highest Uzbek communist officials implicated in a massive corruption and bribery scandal in the republic's cotton industry (Starr 1996; Fierman 1997).

Despite its initial success, the *Birlik*'s influence by the early 1990s had declined rapidly. Its fate closely resembled the fate of other oppositional groups that were created during the years of *perestroika* in Central Asia. Similar to the other Central Asian republics, there was a consolidation of Karimov's authoritarian presidential regime in Uzbekistan that severely limited political freedoms, and harassed or eliminated its political opponents. Personal differences among the *Birlik* leadership led to a split within and the weakening of the organization. There was also a decline in public support for liberal-democratic reforms in the republic because of the rapid decline of the economy, the spread of massive communal violence through the region, and the rise of a militant Islamic opposition in neighbouring Tajikistan.

10. The term 'state patronage' is used here to denote the fact that ethnic Russians in Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were accorded political and cultural rights far exceeding those of the other ethnic minorities in these states.
11. In 1994, 28 per cent of the Kazakhstani parliament were ethnic Russians (they comprise 38 per cent of the population) (*RFE/RL Daily Report*, 19 March 1994). In 1995, in the Kazakhstani government, there were 9 non-Kazakh ministers (out of 21); 7 heads of regions (out of 19) are non-Kazakhs; and in 5,000 of the country's high schools (out of 8,500) teaching is conducted in Russian. The Russian language is the *lingua franca* of the country's mass media, and is the official state language (Makarov 1995).
12. Under the notion of 'clan' it is understood informal networks of nepotism, clientism and patronage the members of which are united by blood, marriage and territorial origins. Kazakhstan is currently dominated by the representatives of the Kazakh Greater Horde, (in Kyrgyzstan representatives of the North (Naryn-Issyk-Kul') are holding the power in Bishkek (Rashidov 1992; Kobischanov 1994).
13. Abolition of ethnic hierarchy does not mean that there is evolution of the liberal democracy in Ukraine, although relevant institutions and legislation are existent (if not necessarily effective). Arguably, the consociationalism in Ukraine is taking a form of state-corporatism in which key economic and interest groups closely tied to the old system-command system are lobbying the state for resources and protection. Because of the struggle among different corporate groups, central government in Kiev is paralysed, reforms are slow. Corruption, patronage and regionalism are widespread. However, unlike in Central Asia Ukrainian networks of patronage are of a different character. In Central Asia territorially based 'clans' are organized along blood, marriage and ethnic lines. In Ukraine networks of patronage and nepotism are based not so much on ascriptive characteristics of their members, as on the 'functional' criteria, such as sector of economy (for example, political party of Agrarians representing largely unreformed agricultural establishment of the country) and class (for example, Ukrainian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs which unite most of the business organizations and directors of the state-owned enterprises; Ukrainian Trade Unions which represent predominant majority of the Ukrainians workers in this country; the Communist Party of Ukraine that represents the members of the former communist nomenclature). For more on corporatism in Ukraine see Kubicek (1996).
14. Crimea is a Black Sea peninsula that in 1954 was transferred from Russia to Ukraine. Its population is 2.7 million, 75 per cent of which are ethnic Russians (Usov 1996).
15. It is estimated that 45 to 70 per cent of ethnic Russians (depending on a particular administrative region) voted for Ukraine's independence from the USSR (Kolstoe 1995; Kuzio 1994).

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