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POST-SOVIET ETHNIC POLITICS AND PUBLIC GOODS PROVISION

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science  
in the Graduate College of the  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2019

Urbana, Illinois

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## Abstract

What explains the pattern of public goods distribution across ethnic groups in the states of the former Soviet Union? In this dissertation, I seek to demonstrate how the unique pattern of nation-state formation in the former Soviet states interacts with other institutional legacies in a manner that differentiates it from other regions. Rather than the logic of “ethnic diversity deficit” applied in most analyses of the theme, I explain post-Soviet public goods provision through a logic of *ethnic domination* and its relationship to other salient features of sociopolitical organization, including informal social networks and ethnodemographic configurations. The unintended institutionalization of an enduring *ethnic titular / non-titular* binary combines with the Soviet legacy of informal social networks of access that are endemic throughout the region and structure state-society relations. Thus, I propose that Soviet institutional legacies determine both the *supply* and *demand* sides of public goods and service provision: ethnic titular political domination ensures preferential targeting to titular coethnics, while the continued significance of informal networks of access disproportionately allows elite and non-elite titulars to demand state resources successfully.

I demonstrate the effects of this relationship in three empirical chapters. Analyzing large-N data from Kyrgyzstan, I show that ethnic Kyrgyz titulars are not only more positive than non-titulars in their evaluations of public goods provision in general, but also that more extensive integration into informal social networks exacerbates this intergroup distributive differentiation. My next chapter presents qualitative data collected during fieldwork in Kyrgyzstan and illustrates the causal mechanisms and grounded understandings of the previous chapter’s findings. The third empirical chapter presents an analysis of large-N data from eight post-Soviet countries in which I explore the extent to which individual coethnicity and coregionality with national leaders is predictive of

public goods outcomes. As suggested by much existing research, the findings are dependent on the outcome one studies. Coethnicity and coregionality with national leaders is related to education outcomes in an additive fashion. However, there is no relationship coethnicity or coregionality and first year child survival. I find a more complex interactive relationship between the two explanatory variables and child immunization.

*To those I would code as “1”  
for the binary variable family.  
(But mostly to my mom.)*

## **Acknowledgments**

This dissertation would not exist without the encouragement and support provided by professors, peers, family, and friends. There are so many people to thank and this dissertation is already unwieldy; please forgive me if I do not mention you by name.

The chair of my dissertation committee, Carol Skalnik Leff, has been a magnificent advisor throughout my time in the Department of Political Science. Her seminars on ethnic conflict and qualitative methods were formative in regards to both how and what I wanted to study. Moreover, she has been endlessly supportive of my research ideas and the approaches that I have applied to them. Whereas other advisors might have questioned my sustained efforts to spend time learning a number of lesser-used post-Soviet languages, Carol understood the value of these tools on the ground for communicating both ideas and respect to respondents and others.

The other members of my committee also played important roles in the shaping of this dissertation. Matthew Winters has been a great source of insight on themes of governance and development from my first year in the department. He has also consistently provided thorough, constructive feedback and served as a model of academic vigor. I was fortunate that Sarah Hummel joined our department when she did, as I had only just begun to study the politics and societies of Central Asia. Her expertise on the area and responses to my research have been a great help. Cara Wong was a late addition to the committee. Serving as Teaching Assistant for her US Racial and Ethnic Politics course shortly after I had returned from my time in the field was a significant influence on my way of thinking about varieties of ethnic and racial power configurations, their foundations, and their consequences.

I would also like to express my gratitude to a few others at the University of Illinois. I would have achieved little in my graduate studies without the efforts of Brenda Stamm, who has always guided me over and around bureaucratic hurdles with kindness and grace. The Central Asia and Caucasus Study Group provided a cohort with whom it was always a pleasure to discuss regional issues from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. Additionally, the Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center and the Center for Global Studies provided me with critical support in the form of Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships.

During my year of FLAS-funded fieldwork in Kyrgyzstan, I was affiliated with American University of Central Asia, which could not have been a better base of operations. I also benefited from the assistance of countless individuals and organizations throughout the country. Given space and confidentiality restrictions, I can list only some of these here. First, I want to thank the numerous research assistants, focus group organizers, and translators without whom the most rewarding part of this research process would not have been possible. I would further like to relay my gratitude to those individuals who were willing not only to speak with me about my substantive themes, but also to put their trust in me that I would not judge them or place them in harm's way. Among the talented, kind, and courageous individuals with whom I have formed lasting friendships in Central Asia are Syrgak Arkabaev, Begimai Bekbolotova, Anvar Rasakhodzhaev, and Alessandro Russo.

The Baimyrzaev(a) family is deserving of distinct recognition. Before setting off for the field, I knew that I was lucky to have found an apartment to rent from a Kyrgyz-American professor, Mahabat Baimyrzaeva. I could never have foreseen, however, the extent to which her and her family would contribute to my experience in Kyrgyzstan. From the moment of my arrival, I knew that I had someone to call in case of misfortune or misunderstanding. More than that, I was with

time treated as a member of the family. I was honored to attend the wedding of Maha's brother, Ismadiar, and was overjoyed at being able to spend some refreshing days at the family home in Kerben.

I have been lucky to make wonderful friends both at the University of Illinois and elsewhere throughout this process. It was a particular delight for David Bowden and I to listen patiently to Paul Testa's considered thoughts on sports and society as we watched basketball or baseball games. I wish I had written them down... Many others from the Department of Political Science should be mentioned, including, but not limited to, Bryce Dietrich, Luke Plutowski, Matt Powers, Bryce Reeder, Jason Renn, Gina Reynolds, Julian Scheirer, Ashly Townsend, Kaye Usry, and Tarah Williams. Time spent with friends outside of the department was helpful to unwind. I often watched obscure Art Theater films, completed *New York Times* crosswords, and devoured Sunday morning tamales with the incomparably intelligent and selfless Anika Jain. Finally, my Half Moon Bay crew have always helped to bring me back to Earth. Thank you, gentlemen.

Family has been a constant source of support and welcome distraction. My mother, Mary Estes, has provided an example of hard work and benevolence throughout my life. None of this would have been possible without her unconditional backing. My zeal for reading and travel were substantially shaped by my father, Guy Estes. My stepfather, Helmut Erhard, has always been a source of good humor and delectable Bavarian cuisine. My "second parents", Liz and Terry Taylor, besides being wonderful people, have also shaped my way of thinking about the world and what is important in it. Their son, and my brother, Collin Brewington, is the best *Cranium*<sup>TM</sup> partner a guy could ask for. Finally, much love and many thanks to the extended Brunton and Woods/Estes clans.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Why are public goods produced and distributed abundantly and relatively equitably in some settings, while in others they are often wanting and distributed unevenly among subgroups of the population? In particular, what role does ethnicity and ethnic diversity play in this process? This dissertation presents a mid-range theory on the relationship between ethnic and distributive politics focusing on the successor states of the Soviet Union. Overwhelmingly, theories analyzing the role of ethnicity in public goods provision have focused either on the baleful role that ethnic diversity plays in cooperation and informal sanctioning (A. Alesina, Baqir, and Easterly 1999; Fearon and Laitin 1996; Miguel and Gugerty 2005) or top-down coethnic favoritism by political leaders (Ejdemyr, Kramon, and Robinson 2017; Franck and Rainer 2012; Kramon and Posner 2013). As to the first approach, there is a growing consensus that the “diversity deficit” hypothesis, once accepted as almost a law of social science,<sup>1</sup> may rest on less sturdy foundations than once assumed (Gisselquist 2014). In fact, there is growing evidence of a sub-state “diversity dividend” established on logics of optimal sorting (Gerring et al. 2015b), greater development of formal state-society interactions in more heterogeneous settings (Charnysh 2019), and local ethnic segregation (Tajima, Samphantharak, and Ostwald 2017).

The latter set of studies demonstrating top-down preferential targeting of state resources predominantly focus on states of Sub-Saharan Africa, a world region with unique precolonial and

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<sup>1</sup> It has been described as “one of the most powerful hypotheses in political economy” (Banerjee, Iyer, and Somanathan 2006, 636) and has been so widely accepted that a valuable and well-regarded book-length research project was dedicated to understanding the causal mechanisms behind the negative diversity-public goods provision relationship (Habyarimana et al. 2009).

colonial legacies that influence both levels of ethnic diversity and patterns of ethnopolitics. The average level of ethnic fragmentation among Sub-Saharan African states is nearly fifty percent higher than that of the global average and the average of the post-Soviet states (Alberto Alesina et al. 2003).<sup>2</sup> In terms of ethnic politics, per se, the rate of turnover in national level ethnic power configurations since the Soviet collapse in 1991 is more than four times higher in Sub-Saharan African states than in the successor states of the USSR (Vogt, Bormann, Ruegger, et al. 2015).<sup>3</sup>

One might chalk this up to a relationship in which ethnic diversity leads to instability in ethnopolitical configurations. Yet examination of a few extreme cases in each region contradicts such an assumption. Uganda, which has the highest level of ethnic fragmentation among the Sub-Saharan African states (*Ethnic fractionalization index (EF) = .93*), has not experienced a single instance of ethnopolitical turnover since 1991. Burundi, which is among the region's least diverse states (*EF = .31*), has experienced three.<sup>4</sup> The two most diverse states in the post-Soviet space, Kyrgyzstan (*EF = .68*) and Kazakhstan (*EF = .62*), began their period of independence with ethnic coalitions wherein titular groups were the senior partner and Russian speakers the junior. Titular groups became dominant within a decade and have remained so. In both Estonia and Latvia, ethnic Russians constitute close to 40 percent of the population, yet ethnic titulars have been dominant since independence. Finally, it is not uncommon for demographically small ethnic groups to be dominant or in an ethnic ruling coalition in Sub-Saharan Africa. Some illustrative cases are the

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<sup>2</sup> The ethnic fractionalization index is a measure that describes the likelihood of any two randomly chosen individuals in a given setting being representatives of different ethnic groups. The average value for Sub-Saharan African states is .65 and that for post-Soviet states is .43. The global average is .44. Source: Alberto Alesina et al. (2003).

<sup>3</sup> The average for post-Soviet states is 0.33 and that for Sub-Saharan African states is 1.34. Here I define an instance of turnover in ethnic power configuration as a case in which an ethnic group loses either *monopoly*, *dominant*, *senior partner*, or *junior partner* status in a state's ethnopolitical hierarchy. See Vogt et al. (2015) for conceptual definitions. It is worth mentioning that, in all five post-Soviet cases of turnover, the move has been towards ethnic titular dominance and loss of *junior partner* status for the ethnic Russian/Russian speaking community.

<sup>4</sup> The four less diverse states are among the smallest and least populated in the region. They are Comoros, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Seychelles.

Papel ethnic group (7 percent), who were the senior partner in a coalition in Guinea-Bissau from 2006 to 2009, and Niger's Djerma-Songhai (22 percent, as compared to Hausa, at 56 percent), which were either dominant or senior partners in a coalition from 1996 to 2011. The largest ethnic group in the Soviet successor states, meanwhile, has always been a senior partner in an ethnic coalition at worst (ibid. 2015).

Clearly, then, the logics of ethnic politics vary across regions. Political elite ethnic group representatives in Sub-Saharan Africa are likely to have short time horizons and minimum winning coalitions that consist of nearly their entire ethnic group. In the post-Soviet states, elite political representatives of ethnic titular groups have little reason to fear any alteration in the ethnopolitical hierarchy. Additionally, the relatively large demographic proportions represented by ethnic titular groups suggests that titular politicians would be strategically unwise to broadly target coethnics and instead would need to determine locally relevant and useful coethnic subgroups to target for preferential distribution.

This project's aim is to shed light on how institutionalized *ethnic dominance*, rather than *ethnic diversity*, influences the distribution of public goods and services. As opposed to the literature focusing overwhelmingly on diversity and its effects, I follow the lead of others in studying how intergroup power relations at the state level determine the outcomes that we care about (L. Cederman, Wimmer, and Min 2010; Vogt, Bormann, Rügger, et al. 2015; Wimmer 2013). While it is far from controversial to suggest that institutionalized power differentials should be related to public goods production and distribution, my research aims to increased understanding of how ethnic domination state interacts with other characteristics of social organization. Moreover, the literature on ethnicized production and distribution of public goods overwhelmingly focuses on the *supply side* of the relationship, whether it be how diversity affects

the ability to cooperate on production of local public goods in a setting of low formal institutionalization (Habyarimana et al. 2009; Miguel and Gugerty 2005) or top-down coethnic favoritism by national leaders (Franck and Rainer 2012). However, there is little attention given to horizontal state-state or vertical state-society linkages: it would appear that local communities are either forced to fend for themselves in settings of minimal formal governance or are inert recipients of favorable distribution by politicians and administrators.<sup>5</sup> On the ground, however, there are significant interactions across not just different levels and organs of government and administration but also between non-elite actors and representatives of the state (e.g. local politicians, bureaucrats, law enforcement officials) or providers of state services (e.g. school administrators and teachers; hospital administrators and doctors).

For that reason, I equally emphasize the bottom-up and horizontal dynamics in the production and distribution of public goods—the *demand side*. While a critical element in the analysis of state-society relationships regardless of setting, it is particularly relevant in settings where governance is constituted by abundant intermingling of formal and informal practices and institutions that are deeply embedded in social relationships and networks. I will focus primarily on the effects of the legacies of Soviet era *blat* networks of access employed to attain goods and services in the shortage economy (Ledeneva 1998). Given the continued informality of post-Soviet governance practices (H. Aliyev 2015) and institutional dominance of ethnic titulars, along with the relative ethnic homophily of informal networks, network ties to those with control over state

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<sup>5</sup> The work of Tajima, Samphantharak, and Ostwald (2017) represents a welcome exception. Analyzing data from Indonesia, they find that local ethnic diversity, if paired with ethnic segregation, presents an opportunity for communities that feel they are being comparatively underserved to make pleas to governing authorities. While a valuable acknowledgment of the *demand side* of public goods provision, this approach assumes the absence of institutionalized power hierarchies between locally segregated groups. In many settings of “nationalizing nationalism” (Brubaker 1996), including the post-Soviet states, the success of group-level entreaties would largely depend on the group making the claim for relative deprivation: it might be seen as a legitimate injustice if brought by the “state-forming” nation, whereas it might be ignored or even considered a threat to stability if presented by another group.

resources are both more abundant among ethnic titulars and generally stronger.<sup>6</sup> Thus, I argue that post-Soviet ethnic titular political domination combines with a relatively distinctive pattern of state-society relations to produce outcomes that push past the narrow focus on production and supply of public goods and allow us to embed the state in society.

A recognition that both state-level ethnic diversity and intergroup power relations are contingent on geographical location (Michalopoulos 2012), precolonial and colonial legacies (Cadiot 2002; Wimmer 2016), and purposive state strategies to inculcate national-level identities and encourage homogenization (Darden and Mylonas 2016) should make analysts much warier of sweeping generalizations about how these factors influence governance. I focus on the Soviet successor states as a set of cases that arose from explicitly anticolonial ideologies establishing substate ethnofederal republics and policies of affirmative action for ethnic titulars and posit that the construction of these Soviet-era policies was historically contingent. There was nothing inherent in Marxist-Leninist ideology that suggested formation of a territorial administrative hierarchy along ethnic lines. Conversely, many early Bolshevik elites argued that to establish such ethnoterritorial borders would only perpetuate the “false consciousness” that they imagined national self-identification to represent, instead proposing borders based purely on their conception of economic rationality. It was only intraelite contestation and, above all, the gradual accrual of power to Josef Stalin, that determined the enduring significance of ethnicity in defining territorial administration and, with time, the emergence of fourteen Soviet successor states demonstrating idiosyncratic relationships between ethnic and distributive politics.

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<sup>6</sup> For a critique of Granovetter’s (1973) “strength of weak ties” argument as it pertains to interethnic relations and information sharing, see Larson and Lewis (2017).

In what follows, I will discuss in broad strokes the production and distribution of public goods and some of the obstacles that it faces across settings. Next, I will discuss the theoretical and policy significance of my project. This introduction concludes with a brief summary of what is to come in subsequent chapters.

### **The production and distribution of public goods and ethnic politics**

Distribution of resources in the form of goods and services is one of the primary and legitimate activities of governments. States take up this responsibility in recognition that the delivery of essential goods (e.g. roads, schools, healthcare facilities) and services (e.g. electrical and water infrastructure) is unlikely or inefficient through unmediated market mechanisms. Pure public goods are non-excludable, non-rival and indivisible in production and consumption. Non-excludable goods, such as public parks, can be utilized or consumed by all, independent of whether users contributed the resources necessary to create them. Non-rival goods, like lighthouses or national defense, are those for which the consumption by one user does not reduce the quantity or quality available to other consumers. The marginal cost of providing such non-rival goods to an additional individual is zero.

Due to the free rider problem, if left solely to market mechanisms pure public goods will be produced at low levels or not at all. However, states can and do provide quasi-public goods. This designation describes those goods and services that are only partially rival or excludable. Consider roads and schools: while most roads can be driven on by individuals who contributed no portion of the revenue necessary for their construction or upkeep, in many cases tolls are taken to make use of an expressway or to cross a bridge into a congested urban area. Additionally, such infrastructure is only imperfectly non-rival, as anyone who has experienced gridlock traffic can attest. Publicly funded schools in some regions face a persistent challenge of overcrowding and

high student-to-teacher ratios, a phenomenon that is related to poor learning outcomes. The quantity of the good (e.g. education), then, may not suffer, with students still required to complete a set number of years of schooling, but the quality is hampered by the rate of supply. These goods can be, and in many cases are, provided privately; yet pure private provision is likely to be insufficient to meet demand.

The standard assumption regarding governmental motivation underlying the provision of public goods is that they do so to maximize social welfare efficiently and broadly. Yet various types of governmental failure complicate the provision of public goods (Olson 1965). Interest groups of all stripes influence the distribution of public resources in an efficiency-reducing manner. Moreover, government officials are not purely benevolent actors and have interests in accumulating resources to themselves. Elected officials are additionally prone to employing “pork barrel” strategies of targeted resource distribution that maximize their own political support. Government failure of this type presents a variety of dilemmas. Citizens busy with their own lives and lacking technical knowledge on issues of urban planning or the logistics of healthcare provision have neither the incentive nor skill to invest resources in the monitoring of public officials’ activities. No one private citizen wants to be the sole investor of time and energy into the monitoring of public policy while others benefit from this oversight without cost to themselves, a classic free-rider problem. A principal-agent relationship also complicates matters: even assuming the existence of a measure of public oversight of governmental activity, as we might under conditions of electoral democracy and a developed civil society, the measurement of governmental output relative to inputs presents great obstacles given the scope and technical nature of administrative activity (e.g. McCubbins and Schwartz 1984).

The quality of governance and efficient state provision of goods also depends upon the relationships and power configurations of salient social groupings. While there are abundant meaningful cleavages which affect preferences over how government resources are spent—the young versus the old; urban versus rural; female versus male; and so on—among the more significant categorical differentiators is ethnicity. Where ethnic identity is “thick” (Hale 2008), as characterized by commonly-held understandings of group characteristics and a significant influence of ethnicity on life chances, ethnicity is often understood as a principal basis of collective interest groups. There is a significant element of “linked fate” among coethnics, as policies that affect one member of an ethnic group are also felt by other group members (Dawson 1994). According to Horowitz (1985, 35), the salience of ethnic identity, “may affect the distribution of important material and non-material goods, including the prestige of the various ethnic groups and the identity of the state as belonging more to one group than another.” Ethnic groups are additionally unlike other interest groups in the extent to which membership is durable and “sticky.” Though ethnic identity does allow for flexibility under certain settings (Bryant 2002; Chandra 2006; Kalyvas 2008), the ascriptive foundations of ethnicity place it at the extreme end of the spectrum of identity malleability. Ethnic groups thus form what Kimenyi (1989) refers to as “permanent interest groups,” among which competition for resources is the more severe for its unremitting character.

Because ethnic group members are often in competition over control of the state and the attendant ability to transfer benefits to coethnics, it can be assumed that they have little interest in producing non-excludable goods. Government officials representing ethnic groups have been described as creating and distributing targetable and excludable “club” goods, such as ethnicized public employment, a crucial tool of ethnic politics (Horowitz 1985, pp. 224-226, 238-240).

Despite this, the maintenance of domestic and international political and social legitimacy, and thus stability, requires at least minimal provision of goods and services including transport infrastructure, public education, and drinking water. Given intergroup competition over limited resources, ethnic politics influences governmental production and distribution of goods and services in a number of ways. The next section will discuss how my research adds to the academic understanding of this relationship.

### **Contribution of the project**

This project provides novel insights into the relationship between ethnic and distributive politics in the developing world. My approach emphasizes the historical contingency of ethnic diversity and intergroup power relations, focusing on a region—the former Soviet Union—which possesses a distinctive set of institutional legacies. Unlike most other postcolonial settings, successor states had been provided with all of the tools for existence as a modern nation-state: a state forming (titular) ethnic group that formed a significant proportion of the population and had experience of state administration from decades under authoritarian ethnofederalism. While aided critically by relatively novel historical approaches to Soviet nationalities policy and identity construction (Hirsch 2005; Martin 2001), my research is among the first political science ventures to systematically examine the role that legacies of Soviet state building and governance practices have on contemporary ethnic and distributive politics.

Rather than focusing on the effect *ethnic diversity* has on public goods provision, my research attempts to add to a still limited literature on the ways in which *ethnic domination* and discrimination influences patterns of public goods provision (An, Levy, and Hero 2018; Lee 2017). A simple hypothesis would posit that institutionalized and long-term political domination by an ethnic group should eventuate in widespread intergroup disparities in access to state resources.

Beyond the recognition that different government outputs may be more or less easily targeted to coethnics because of factors including cost and (de)centralization of production and distribution, oversight by international donors or development agencies, and a number of other factors, my approach argues that the manner in which ethnic domination manifests itself in distributive politics is conditional on various mediating characteristics.

First, I bring together various strands of literature to evaluate the interactive effect of titular dominance, ethnic networks, and the continued significance of informality in state-society relations. Although my analysis in Chapters 4 and 5 does not explicitly model the social networks of Kyrgyzstanis, the heterogeneous effects of integration into informal social networks among ethnic Kyrgyz titulars and non-titulars, as well as responses from interview and focus group respondents, suggests that the lack of strong intergroup ties has a profound effect on governance (or, at least, popular perceptions of the same). This is broadly in accord with the findings of Larson and Lewis (2017) suggesting that, while intergroup ties may be quite dense, the quality of interactions among in-group members and that between members of different groups differs significantly. One can imagine that, while titular Kyrgyzstanis may be situationally acceptant of interactions across group lines, access to strong informal ties and the material and informational benefits that they provide are subject to, as I argue in the next chapter, Tilly's (1998) *opportunity hoarding* mechanism. This serves as an important means for both elite and non-elite titular Kyrgyzstanis to maintain group level social and political dominance. Moreover, it produces in-group differentiation, as those ethnic titulars that are more densely networked with "useful" coethnics are more capable of influencing the distribution of state resources in their favor. Existing research of the continued salience of informal connections in post-Soviet governance provides important insights into how network form and functions have altered (Kuehnast and Dudwick

2004; Ledeneva 2006; Oka 2019), but fail to make the connection between ethnic dominance and informality.

My research additionally expands on the literature that focuses primarily on politicians' top-down supply of goods and services to coethnics. Extant examination of the relationship has provided notable findings. While national leaders may indeed be motivated to target coethnics for "club" good-type benefits (Franck and Rainer 2012), there is variance across outcomes and countries (Kramon and Posner 2013). Additionally, local-level demographic context conditions the likelihood of favoritism, as insufficient group segregation increases the difficulty of strategic targeting (Ejdemyr, Kramon, and Robinson 2017). Yet the overwhelming concentration on cases in Sub-Saharan Africa, a region in which a unique logic of ethnic politics plays out, necessitates a novel way of thinking about how elite ethnic favoritism may relate to distributive politics in other settings. In examining the post-Soviet cases, the approach of Chapter 6 takes into account that the institutional legacies of the region have produced politically dominant ethnic groups that compose significant majorities of the population, a move which takes heed of recent calls to consider the historical foundations of both state strength and ethnic configuration (Singh and vom Hau 2016; Wimmer 2016). Thus, in opposition to the Sub-Saharan African cases that exhibit both extreme ethnic diversity and high levels of turnover in ethnopolitical configurations, Soviet successor states are characterized by sustained political dominance of ethnic majority populations. Yet, given the relatively poor institutionalization of formal mechanisms of accountability throughout the region and a norm among elites to form vertically organized patronal power structures (Hale 2014), I propose that a variant of favoritism is still likely. More precisely, I contribute to the literature by finding that post-Soviet ethnic favoritism is mediated by national leaders' regional allegiances. Additionally, the variance in how favoritism relates to different outcomes that I find in Chapter 6

provides further grounds to suggest that separate logics inhere in the production and provision of distinct goods and services (Kramon and Posner 2013).

Not only does this project fill a gap in the academic literature, but it should also be valuable to policymakers. In particular, it suggests a need to avoid exporting understandings of state-society relations and approaches to development and governance reform from one region to another without considering the manner in which state and society are embedded and the institutionalization of intergroup relations. As to the first, efforts at formalizing governance in developing areas need to account for the ways in which informality has structured state, society, and economics in a setting over time and integrate these understandings into practice. Rather than attempting to do away with the influence of informal ties in the former Soviet states, for instance, it is crucial to understand variance in the structure and function of networks among individuals of different social backgrounds (i.e. titular/non-titular; poor/non-poor; rural/urban). Moreover, recognition of the manner in and extent to which ethnic hierarchy has been institutionalized in developing settings ought to determine certain aspects of both bilateral and multilateral donor policy. In settings of ethnic domination, such as Kyrgyzstan, there is a tendency for non-governmental organizations receiving funding from international donors to be disproportionately staffed by non-titulars. While this may seem a useful, if partial, antidote to titular domination of formal institutions, it often serves as a source of popular resentment and can be a basis for anti-NGO propaganda and legislation that has diffused from the Russian Federation to a number of other states in the region. While funding of these groups should continue, it should be accompanied by extensive focus on decentralization of both revenue collection and distribution of state resources to local levels, as well as effectual training in the requisite management and accounting skills for local politicians and bureaucrats.

## **Plan of the dissertation**

The layout of the dissertation proceeds as follows. In Chapter 2, I review existing theories linking ethnicity to public goods provision and discuss a number of theoretical and empirical shortcomings. Much of the extant literature relies on a theoretical foundation whereby, due to a varied assortment of mechanisms (nearly all of which amount to obstacles associated with localized intergroup cooperation), ethnic diversity is productive of suboptimal public goods provision. In this view, public goods are produced and distributed at the local level. In practice, however, throughout much of the developing world, decision-making on the distribution of scarce state resources is often highly centralized. Additionally, an approach reliant on ethnic diversity as the primary explanatory factor implicitly suggests that ethnic groups are equal in the political power that they possess. I instead propose that politics be brought back into the discussion. While ethnic diversity may indeed play an important role, any effect it has will be secondary to *ethnic domination*, or the disparity in political power among different ethnic communities. Furthermore, due to variant colonial and precolonial legacies, the salience of ethnicity and the character of ethnic configurations varies across countries but tends to be relatively consistent within world regions. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the site of much of the research on ethnicity and public goods, country-level ethnic diversity is relatively high and there tends to be fairly consistent ethnic rotation of national leadership. The post-Soviet states, however, exhibit a much different pattern of ethnic politics. As a result of Soviet delimitation of sub-state territories along ethnic lines, extensive investment in the development of distinctive national identities among the titular groups in the fourteen non-Russian Union Republics, and a Soviet variant of affirmative action for these same titular communities, a categorical binary of *titular/non-titular* became deeply institutionalized. Ethnic titulars have maintained and even expanded their political dominance over the period of

independence. This is the foundation for what I term the *supply side* of my theory of post-Soviet ethnicized public goods, as titular politicians and bureaucrats direct resources to coethnics for reasons both strategic and affective.

Equally determinative of public goods provision patterns is how this titular ethnic dominance interacts with another, seemingly unrelated, legacy of Soviet rule: informal social networks of access. Initially developed as a means of coping with persistent shortage under Communism, these informal networks and the variant of state-society interactions that they produced continue to structure post-Soviet forms of governance. As these networks are overwhelmingly monoethnic and exist within a state infrastructure that is dominated by ethnic titulars, integration into such networks allowed for both elite and non-elite titulars to influence the distribution of state resources in a manner unavailable to other ethnic communities. This is the *demand side* of my theory of post-Soviet ethnicized public goods.

Chapter 3 details the historical development and path dependent transition into the period of independence of the institutional factors I propose to be fundamental to explaining the supply and demand elements of post-Soviet ethnicized public goods provision. First, I illuminate the elite decision-making process that concluded in a determination to form sub-state ethnofederal administrative territories and to invest in the construction of “modern” national identities among the titular groups in the non-Russian SFSR Union Republics. Further, I describe the function, form, and progress of the Soviet program of “affirmative action” for these titular ethnic groups and how these institutions and ideological underpinnings adapted themselves within the Soviet successor states. This is followed by discussion of the development of Soviet informal networks of access under conditions of ubiquitous shortage of goods and services. While these networks and the variant of state-society interactions that they entail have survived into postcommunist conditions,

monetization of social life and growing socioeconomic inequality have altered their function and form.

Chapter 4 tests my theory of supply and demand in post-Soviet public goods provision through analysis of data from Kyrgyzstan. Examining large-N data from the *Life in Kyrgyzstan* survey, I am able, first, to evaluate the extent to which ethnicity is determinative of public goods and service provision and, second, whether the effect of integration into informal social networks varies among titulars and non-titulars. I find that, not only do ethnic Kyrgyz have more positive evaluations than non-Kyrgyz across a number of public goods outcomes, but this effect is compounded when respondent ethnicity is interacted with various measures of integration into informal social networks. While the strength of results varies dependent on the operationalization of informal ties, compelling evidence is provided that social networks are more useful for ethnic Kyrgyz titulars in influencing the distribution of state resources than for non-titulars. I further demonstrate that this relationship holds for both northern and southern Kyrgyzstan, when analyzed separately, and that it is largely the case that ethnic Kyrgyz see better outcomes than do nearly all other ethnic communities.

While the previous chapter illustrates *what* Kyrgyzstanis of varying ethnic backgrounds perceive their relationship to the supply and demand elements of public goods provision to be, Chapter 5 aims to provide context that increases understanding of *how* and *why* these evaluations of state-society interactions are produced. The chapter is composed from qualitative data collected in Kyrgyzstan from 2016 to 2018. I conducted 45 semi-structured interviews and 12 focus group sessions with representatives from various sectors of society, including local politicians and administrators, civil society actors, and non-elite Kyrgyzstanis. Focusing on the variance in perceived ability to make demands of the state among ethnic titulars and non-titulars in southern

Kyrgyzstan, this chapter allows me to explicate causal mechanisms for the findings of the previous chapter and finds Kyrgystanis of various ethnic backgrounds explaining how and why they perceive the state and its representatives to operate in the manner that it does.

In Chapter 6, I broaden the analytical aperture to include a larger subset of country cases. If post-Soviet ethnicized public goods provision is founded in part upon, as I argue, the unique categorical binary of *titular/non-titular*, the distributive patterns found in Kyrgyzstan should be replicated in other states of the region. Moreover, given the intentional Soviet era construction of ethnofederal republics with titular majorities and institutionalization of the *titular/non-titular* categorical binary, ethnicized public goods distribution should follow a different logic from that in regions with particularly ethnically diverse states. Specifically, analysis of supply side ethnic favoritism in Sub-Saharan is, implicitly, structured by the fact that the diversity of many of the region's states is associated with relatively consistent, if irregular, contested, and sometimes violent, ethnic rotation of power. Political elites in the region have relatively short time horizons within which they can amass as much resources for themselves and members of their ethnic, linguistic, regional, or differently defined winning coalition as possible. The logic of post-Soviet ethnic and distributive politics differs as a result of lower levels of diversity and institutional dominance of ethnic titulars. In this chapter, I analyze the role that ethnic and regional favoritism of national leaders—nearly all of them ethnic titulars—plays in the distribution of nominally “public” goods and services. Because of titular majorities of various proportions in each of the post-Soviet states, titular leaders must be strategic in constructing their “minimum winning coalition” so as not to include all coethnics, which suggests the importance of regional identification. Thus, I analyze both the additive and interactive effects of coethnicity and coregionality with national leaders. Aggregating and analyzing USAID's *Demographic and*

*Health Surveys* data from the eight post-Soviet countries for which such data exists, I find results that strongly suggest coethnicity and coregionality with national leaders interacts in a manner that is dependent on the nature of the outcome variable under analysis.

Chapter 7 provides a summary of my theory and findings, their potential policy significance, and a roadmap for future research on the relationship between ethnic and distributive politics both within the post-Soviet space and beyond.

## Chapter 2

### **Ethnic Politics, Institutional Legacies, and the Provision of Public Goods in the Post-Soviet States**

Stimulating thought experiments aside (see Brubaker 2015, pp. 10-11), ethnic and distributive politics are inseparable empirically and theoretically. One's life chances are intricately intertwined with ethnic identity and the historical baggage that constitutes it. In focusing on the relationship between ethnicity and distributive governance in the post-Soviet states, I present an argument that takes seriously the effect of ethnic identity on access to the resources of the state. My approach contributes to the existing literature in a number of ways.

First, whereas much analysis has focused on the role of *ethnic diversity* in the production and distribution of public goods, under the assumption that local public goods are more efficiently produced under conditions of relative homogeneity, I emphasize the role of politics and posit the importance of *ethnic domination*. It is not only the demographic fragmentation of a setting that determines how decisions are made over the distribution of resources, but also the constellations of intergroup power relations. Of course, it is uncontroversial almost to the point of redundancy to suggest that *ethnic domination* should be related to all manner of political outcomes, including public goods provision. The particular contribution of this research is to better understand how ethnic domination of the state interacts with other salient features of social organization, in particular social networks and demographic configurations.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Demographic configurations should not be taken to mean *ethnic diversity* in the manner the political science literature tends to operationalize it (i.e. the likelihood that any two randomly selected members of a political community are from a different ethnic group). Analysis of configurations of ethnic groups ought to include both raw proportions and the power constellations attached to them. Let's assume that, in the state of Blurgistan, the Blurg group constitutes 70 percent of the population and Snurgs 30 percent. Blurges have historically held political power in Blurgistan and

Whereas much analysis of ethnic politics and public goods provision focuses on the top-down targeting of resources by coethnic politicians—what I label the “supply side” of ethnicized public goods provision—I equally emphasize bottom-up and horizontal dynamics—the “demand side”. This is a critical element in the analysis of state-society relationships in any setting. However, it is of particular import in underdeveloped settings, where governance is often constituted of an intermingling of formal and informal practices and institutions that are deeply embedded in social relationships and networks. The most substantial Soviet institutional legacy in this context is the widespread presence of informal social networks of access—*blat* in the Russian-speaking world—which Soviet citizens utilized as a means of attaining goods and services in the shortage economy (Ledeneva 1998). Given continued institutional dominance of ethnic titulars in the post-Soviet period, in combination with relative ethnic homophily of social networks, the construction of such network ties is both easier for ethnic titulars and significantly more effective in influencing public resource allocation. Soviet nationalities policy not only had the effect of naturalizing the leadership of an ethnic group in a given state but, in regards to the demand side of ethnicized public goods provision, laid the foundations for the gradual, intergenerational, accrual among coethnics of the state-dominating community of informal ties and webs of interdependence with those likely to have an influence over distribution of government resources.

A second defining feature of my approach is the recognition that the social, economic, and political character of ethnic configurations in many regions of the world are determined in significant part by colonial-era institutions of rule. Much of the literature on ethnicity and public goods provision focuses on regions in which ethnic fragmentation and intergroup competition was

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continue to do so. In neighboring Snurgland, the ethnic proportions of the groups are identical to those in Blurgistan, yet Snurgs are politically dominant. Thus, the level of ethnic diversity is not only identical in both states, but so are the ethnic proportions. Yet, conditional on the form of government, we would expect quite different modes of ethnic politics in the neighboring states.

supported and often intensified by imperial administrations and explicit strategies of placing representatives of ethnic minorities in highly placed administrative and military positions. This is associated with numerous independence-era patterns, including wars of secession from multiethnic states and *coups d'état* to topple ethnically exclusivist regimes (Horowitz 1985, Ch. 11, 12). Alternatively, a Soviet nationalities policy that established ethnofederal republics with ethnic titular majority populations and *de jure* and *de facto* policies of affirmative action for ethnic titulars in appointments to governmental administration and many other spheres has exhibited path dependent properties that significantly influence the distribution of resources for public goods in a manner at odds with other regions. The dominance of a single ethnic group with control over the levers of state at any one time is not a characteristic unique to the states of the former Soviet Union. Yet the long-term institutionalization under conditions of non-democracy of the rule of a single ethnic group as unquestioned proprietors of a state, as opposed to the alteration among ethnic groups of power seen, for instance, in much of Sub-Saharan Africa, is exceptional.

I further argue that the construction of these Soviet-era policies was historically contingent and depended upon contentious decisions made by a limited coterie of early Soviet elites. Given the secondary importance assigned to the construction of national identities and promotion of members of peripheral ethnicities in the Union Republics, as compared to “hard line” policy interests such as regime stability and economic restructuring (Martin 2001, pp. 255-260), one can imagine a counterfactual in which early Soviet intraelite and interbureaucratic competition resulted in compromises the significance of which might be significantly less or even non-existent political autonomy for leading nationalities in the fourteen non-Russian Union Republics. This would have negated the promotion of titular nationalities as a norm and, in turn, the post-Soviet domination by ethnic titulars of state administrations and the resource allocation patterns attached to it. More

fundamentally, and in accordance with the desires of a subset of highly placed early Soviet elites, it could easily have been the case that the subnational Union Republics were formed in a manner minimally attendant to ethnic settlement, instead laying emphasis on the internal economic rationality of federal units.

In the first section of this chapter, I will review the existing literature on the link between ethnic politics and public goods provision, emphasizing areas in which my approach departs from them. I then discuss differences in the patterns of governance and ethnic politics among sub-Saharan African states—the region from which much of the literature on ethnic politics’ relationship to public goods emanates—and the post-Soviet states. I continue by previewing a discussion of the particular Soviet institutional legacies I argue to be most relevant to ethnicized public goods and service provision in the post-Soviet space. I conclude with the presentation of a theory based upon a modified version of Tilly’s concepts of categorical *exploitation* and *opportunity hoarding* (Tilly 1998), arguing that the dominant position of ethnic titulars in the post-Soviet states is overlaid by the impact of largely monoethnic informal social networks and the embeddedness of informality in state-society relations.

*The power of proportions (or the disappearing diversity deficit)*

The recognition in the closing period of the twentieth century that the states of the Global South were not developing as hoped, along with widespread separatism and episodes of violence along identity lines in the postcommunist world and beyond, spurred a search for explanations. A commonsensical first step was to interrogate the role of aggregate demographic proportions. Thus ethnic diversity was posited to lead to many undesirable outcomes, including the slow economic growth of the states of sub-Saharan Africa (Easterly and Levine 1997), the onset of civil wars (Reynal-Querol 2002; Sambanis 2001), and political corruption (Dincer 2008).

What is true for these other political outcomes has also been argued to be the case for the provision of public goods: greater ethnic and racial diversity has been proposed to not only be associated with, but cause, lower quality and quantity of state resource distribution. In one of the earliest empirical explorations of the relationship, Alesina, Baqir, and Easterly (1999) examine the effects of ethnic and racial diversity in the United States, finding that localities with higher levels of ethnic and racial diversity have lower funding for infrastructure and public education.

A number of causal mechanisms have been put forward to explain the relationship between ethnic diversity and poor public goods provisioning. They can broadly be grouped in three categories that, in turn, explain their findings through non-overlapping preferences of ethnic groups, the difficulty of intergroup cooperation, and the relative ease of sanctioning coethnics. For instance, Alesina, Baqir, and Easterly (1999) rely on an explanation suggesting that members of different ethnic groups, because of variant life circumstances, hold different preferences over types and amounts of public goods and services, halting progress towards their production and distribution.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, interethnic coordination is argued to present greater difficulties than coordination among coethnics, in part because of ethnic egotism of the type described by Tajfel (2010), but also due to incompatible “technologies” (i.e. language and culture; non-overlapping social networks). Habyarimana et al. (2007) employ field experiments to find that successful public goods provision in more homogeneous settings is due to a strategy selection mechanism, wherein coethnics play cooperative equilibria and non-coethnics employ uncooperative equilibria. Alesina and LaFerrara (2000) postulate that, as a result of coethnic associative affinities, ethnically homogenous formal organizations are more likely to form than mixed ones. As a result, ethnically

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<sup>8</sup> It is remarkable that Habyarimana et al. (2009) do not find evidence for a strong preference mechanism: their urban Ugandan subjects do not exhibit particularly similar tastes with or display a significantly higher level of altruism towards coethnics as opposed to non-coethnics.

diverse areas will exhibit less evidence of shared community ventures and fewer community-produced goods. Additionally, cooperation often requires the social sanctioning of defectors, who must be identified and individually targeted for these mechanisms to be effective. In-group policing is substantially more effective than inter-group policing (Fearon and Laitin 1996) due to the relatively free flow of information within coethnic social networks and the resultant “findability” of defecting coethnics (Habyarimana et al. 2007). Miguel and Gugerty (2005) additionally explain their discovery that higher levels of local ethnic diversity in rural Kenya are associated with substantially lower primary school funding and shoddier school facilities by arguing that voluntary contributions to local revenue through the *harambee*<sup>9</sup> are lower where social sanctions for non-payment are less frequent. Taken to their logical conclusion, each of these mechanisms suggest that an ideal setting for public goods provision would be one of perfect ethnic homogeneity.

Research into the causal mechanisms underlying the “diversity deficit” phenomenon implies that the deleterious relationship between ethnic diversity and public goods provision is a settled issue. Yet there are a number of theoretical and empirical inconsistencies that beg further exploration. First, many analyses assume the local production and dispersion of public goods, yet many decision-making processes on their production are largely centralized in the national government and distribution by local politicians and administrators is conducted in the knowledge that the center is monitoring them. Second, rather than a focus on raw demographic proportions, it is imperative to examine explicitly *political* aspects of ethnicity: the institutional foundations of intergroup hierarchy and their means of reproduction. Third, the existing literature has focused too

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<sup>9</sup> An event for the collections of public donations, which serve as a source of revenues to pay for local public goods and services.

extensively on the supply aspects of ethnicity and public goods, to the exclusion of bottom-up or lateral demand elements. Finally, the particular institutional legacies that brought these patterns of intergroup relations into being are related to particular colonial strategies of rule, such that the relation of ethnic politics and its relation to resource distribution ought to be examined in a manner conditioned more extensively on regionally prevalent institutional factors.

*Who gives the goods?*

While much depends on data availability, those researching the relationship between ethnic and distributive politics must constantly consider the appropriate level of aggregation to employ as their unit of analysis. And, to answer this question, there must be some agreement over the precise mechanisms through which ethnicity has an effect. The above are particularly oft-cited theoretical foundations for the diversity deficit thesis. Yet these mechanisms, in the main, tend to assume local-level provision of public goods: village residents refusing to invite those who have not paid into the community fund to life cycle rituals; neighbors sanctioning one another for non-cooperation in the renovations of a primary school; etc. However, particularly in countries of the developing world, the central government often possesses dominant authority in determining where and how revenues are utilized. Lee (2017, 2) notes that, “in many nations there are considerable practical difficulties in identifying ‘pure’ locally provided public goods outside of an experimental setting, and this has led many tests of the diversity hypothesis to focus on allocation processes in which nonlocal actors play an important role.” This suggests a paucity of external validity in studies reliant on the explanatory role of these mechanisms. Elite, national level politics determines to a significant extent the level and type of resources provided to regional governments or municipalities. And, though sub-state administrations may exist and even be popularly elected,

the primary task of these bodies is often to execute the governing priorities of the national administration.

This fact has frequently been elided in the literature on ethnic diversity and its negative relationship with public goods provision. One widely-cited article focuses on ethnic diversity as a detriment to local-level funding of schools, but concedes that more than 90 percent of funding for primary and secondary schools in the country is provided by the national government (Miguel and Gugerty 2005, 2341). Many studies which show a negative relationship between ethnic diversity and public goods explicitly focus on provision via local communities (e.g., Algan, Hémet, & Laitin, 2011; Bardhan, 2000; Fearon & Laitin, 1996; Khwaja, 2009; Miguel & Gugerty, 2005). Yet analysis that emphasizes the role of the central government and its agents in distributing resources for public goods arrive at findings less supportive of a diversity deficit (Banerjee and Somanathan 2007; Egel 2013; Gao 2016)

An additional theoretical argument weighing against finding a sub-state diversity deficit is that optimal sorting of individuals—that is, the option of moving from one location to another, more desirable location—is significantly easier within states than across them. Gerring et al., (2015) find evidence of a diversity dividend at the sub-state level in their multi-country empirical study and no consistent evidence in one direction or another at a cross-country level. They posit that those who relocate to more diverse areas are also, on average, more open-minded and ambitious than those who decide to remain in or move to ethnic enclaves, such that, “patterns of diversity that develop at subnational levels are less likely to be accompanied by the pathologies posited by the Diversity Debit thesis. Diversity achieved under conditions of voluntary choice is different from diversity achieved by arbitrary place of birth” (174). Thus, there exists reason to

doubt both the empirical significance attributed to local level production of public goods *and* the theoretical logic underlying the diversity deficit approach.

### *Diversity versus dominance*

Closely linked to questions regarding the locus of decisionmaking over resource allocation is the aspect of interethnic relationships we should be focusing our attention on. Ethnic proportions, as constructivists have noted (Chandra and Wilkinson 2008; Posner 2004), provide scant information regarding the substantive relationships between ethnic groups. There may be extensive ethnic or religious diversity within a country, as in the United States, without political structures being formed explicitly along ethnic categories or coalitions thereof. Alternatively, there are groups that compose a significant part of certain states' populations and are largely excluded from the political process. One such example are the Dalits and groups defined as Other Backwards Castes (OBCs) in India, who were politically marginalized until the 1980s. Constructivists thus argue with good reason that not all groups should be counted equally in our analyses.

A particularly significant question is whether, in trying to explain sub-optimal production and delivery of public goods, we should emphasize ethnic diversity or ethnic dominance. The first would predict poor public goods provision for all, given the systematic inefficiencies resultant from diversity that are proposed to operate through the mechanisms described. The second would predict better public goods provision to some groups than others, irrespective of their overall production or the aggregate ethnic diversity present in a political community. Ethnic groups may gain political dominance through demographic supremacy, path-dependent institutionalization of political and administrative control, elite (often military) opportunism, or—most likely—some combination thereof.

Institutional legacies of colonial governance influence each of these factors. For instance, as will be discussed in more depth below, the deliberate drawing of the borders of the USSR's Soviet Socialist Republics to encompass (proto-)national, rather than economic, units ensured that titular ethnic groups comprised if not the majority of a republic's population, then a plurality.<sup>10</sup> This was combined from the first decade of Soviet rule with a policy of indigenization, whereby titular ethnic groups were given preference in entrance to higher education and competition for administrative posts.

Political and administrative decision-makers from a dominant ethnic group are likely to direct resources to coethnics due primarily to political expediency and inherent preferences for coethnic welfare. Much existing research provides evidence that both politicians (Brockerhoff and Hewett 2000; Franck and Rainer 2012; Lindberg 2003, 2010; McClendon 2016) and voters (Adida 2015; Carlson 2015; Chandra 2004) prefer coethnics for strategic reasons. Politicians are primarily concerned with their own political survival, such that their decisions regarding how and whom to target for public goods provision are a reaction to perceptions of potential threat. Domestically, politicians fear of being ethnically outflanked by coethnic radicals (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972), pushing them to distribute as much resources under their control as possible to in-group members. On the international stage, they fear transnational ethnic configurations and their possible influence on territorial sovereignty and integrity, including transborder ethnic kin (L. E. Cederman et al. 2013), and often combat these perceived threats through strategic public goods provision, including abundant spending on assimilatory educational programs (Darden and Mylonas 2016).

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<sup>10</sup> Political domination need not stem from demographic preponderance, however, as cases ranging from the Tutsi in Rwanda to the Alawites in Syria attest, where both dominant groups constitute only 15 percent of the population.

Apart from purely strategic considerations, politicians exist as self-identifying members of their ethnic group, with the upshot that they often behave as “ethnic egotists”. Social psychology research illustrates that in-group biases can be formed even under conditions of “minimal groupness,” or arbitrary assignment to groups in a laboratory setting (Tajfel 2010). Horowitz’s (1985, 52) characterization of ethnic groups as being founded upon “a myth of collective ancestry” and Hale’s (2008, 36) conceptualization of the shared fates stemming from the “thickness” of ethnic identity support the contention that ethnic self-identification has the significance of conveying strong, arational, and affective attachment to coethnics. Politicians, then, can be expected to direct resources to coethnics because they perceive their identity to be tied up with those who share their language, customs, and life experience.

This suggests a far different empirical picture in regards to the conditions affecting public goods provision than the standard “diversity deficit” approach. Along with the recognition that a great deal of decisionmaking over resource deployment in less developed states tends to be centralized, a theory positing the significance of institutional ethnic dominance accounts primarily for the ethnic group that controls the levers of state and the impact that this might predictably have on the supply and quality of public goods to different groups. This provides a theoretical improvement on the assumption implicit in much of the “diversity deficit” literature that the ethnic groups in these settings are politically equal. Ethnic groups holding political power should instead be expected to transfer greater benefits to members of their own group and “make it difficult for other groups to capture the instruments of wealth transfer” (Kimenyi 2006, 70). Centralized revenue collection and subsequent redistribution of government resources, in combination with relative territorial concentration of ethnic groups, allow representatives of politically dominant

ethnic groups to direct the surpluses created by other ethnic groups to areas where coethnics reside.<sup>11</sup>

Lee (2017) provides a lucid and well-designed empirical illustration of these dynamics, finding in the Indian case that the presence of socially powerful Brahmin groups in a locality is more determinative of services provided than is local ethnic diversity. This gap, he argues, stems from the fact that central governments provide many “local” public goods, and that ethnic discrimination presupposes some ethnic diversity: there can be no intergroup discrimination in a setting of total homogeneity. One of the obstacles in the identification strategy differentiating the mechanism of ethnic dominance from ethnic diversity is the frequent collinearity of the two: “In countries or regions where the powerful group is a majority of the population, the local presence of these groups is highly collinear with ethnic fractionalization... In many countries, this will mean that more diverse areas have worse public services even if this difference stems from discrimination by central institutions rather than a lack of cooperation among local people” (3). Lee overcomes this by examining two states in northern India, where population proportions of high castes do not correlate with caste diversity in the villages that serve as units of study.<sup>12</sup> He further replicates models from A. Alesina, Baqir, and Easterly (1999) and Miguel (2004) to illustrate that the local presence of the dominant ethnic group in the United States and Kenya,

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<sup>11</sup> This ability has been shown, however, to be conditional on the level of local ethnic segregation: in settings where groups live substantially removed from one another, politicians may successfully target “club” goods; whereas in areas of relative spatial integration, such targeting is made more complicated and thus fewer goods may be provided (Ejdemyr, Kramon, and Robinson 2017).

<sup>12</sup> Lee also provides a striking hypothetical that makes vividly clear the folly of applying the diversity deficit logic without deep consideration of intergroup power dynamics: “The diversity thesis implies differences in group power, however strong, should not matter. An area with a minority from the powerful group and a majority from another group (for instance, a city that is 90% Black and 10% White) will be expected to have an identical probability of goods provision from an area with a majority from the powerful group and a minority from another group (for instance, a city that is 90% White and 10% Black), due to their identical probability of interethnic cooperation. In many countries, this seems a challengeable contention” (Lee 2017, 9). This is not to argue that demographics play no significant role in governance, but they are likely to do so only in a manner secondary to power differentials and their institutional reproduction.

respectively, are better or equivalent predictors of public goods provision than is local ethnic diversity.<sup>13</sup>

Ethnically discriminatory governance of this kind is not only productive of inefficiencies, but can additionally be a causal factor in various types of instability. According to Rabushka and Shepsle (1972), as groups depend progressively less on state activity for goods and services, replacing publicly-provided goods and services with those produced and directed towards ethnically-defined “clubs,” formal governing institutions are robbed of legitimacy. This further provides incentive to substitute for state action, drawing out the vicious cycle. Groups without control over institutions of resource distribution create rough substitutes through community action and patron-client networks, as well as religious and secular philanthropy. Ethnic exclusion from state control has likewise been shown to increase the probability of violent conflict (L. Cederman, Wimmer, and Min 2010) and particularly so where excluded ethnic groups have demographic strength approaching or greater than that of the governing group (L. E. Cederman, Buhaug, and Rød 2009).

#### *The power of ethnic networks*

States that feature some level of ethnic diversity along with intergroup hierarchy not only experience maldistribution of public resources through the top-down, “supply” side of provision, but should also exhibit patterns of bottom-up and/or horizontal “demand” for goods and services that operate along ethnic lines. Such demand operates in significant part within and through preexisting social networks. While previous work has analyzed the mechanism of coethnic

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<sup>13</sup> Waring and Bell (2013) and Waring (2011) find additional experimental evidence from India that cooperation is less likely under conditions of intergroup status domination as compared to overall ethnic diversity.

networks in processes of public goods provision (Habyarimana et al. 2007), they have failed to analyze how such networks interact with intergroup hierarchy. Specifically, there has been insignificant recognition of the significance of ethnic homophily of networks across all varieties of organizational structures and how this supports the reproduction of ethnic dominance in the production and distribution of public goods. A crucial boundary within any state is that separating governing elites from non-elites. To varying degrees, this boundary may overlap with salient ethnic categories. When there is a significant overlap, ethnically exclusive networks will tend to reproduce domination through the hoarding of useful information. This will be particularly the case where informal institutions and practices operate to the exclusion of, or strongly in conjunction with, consolidated formal institutions.<sup>14</sup>

It has generally been assumed that the relationship between ethnicity and network configurations operates through social trust, with cross-national analysis showing that generalized social trust—and thus the likelihood of cooperation—is higher in more homogeneous countries (Knack and Keefer 1997). While recognizing that low interethnic trust is conditioned by factors including the level of local ethnic integration (Kasara 2013), identification with a supraethnic national identity (Robinson 2016), and even gender (Fershtman and Gneezy 2001), network density—a trait associated with efficient information sharing and, thus, social sanctioning and cooperation (Fearon and Laitin 1996; Miguel and Gugerty 2005)—has largely been assumed to be greater in more homogenous settings. Larson and Lewis (2017), however, usefully disentangle ethnicity, network density, and social trust, showing that more heterogeneous regions may have higher network density. This would be particularly likely where ethnic groups exhibit economic

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<sup>14</sup> Lee (2017, pp. 14-15) is an exception to the research lacuna linking ethnic power differentials to social networks. Analyzing Indian survey data, he analyzes regions in which high castes are a minority and finds that even non-elite members of this subgroup were multiple times more likely to be socially tied to a government representative than members of other castes or religious communities.

specialization. Yet higher density of networks does not necessarily correlate with trust and information transmission. Recognizing that Granovetter's (1973) "strength of weak ties" approach does not sufficiently take into account the possibility that network nodes might be of different categorical "types" and thus interact with one another in manner laden with sociological context, they propose that "people in dense social networks may interact frequently, but some may lack sufficient trust or motivation to share information, especially somewhat sensitive news, in the same way with every social contact" (pp. 353-354). Through simulation, they demonstrate that higher network density in a heterogeneous setting may in fact be associated with *less* sharing of information (361).

In sum, it is not necessarily ethnic diversity that is determinative of network density. Nor is it flatly the density of networks that determines cooperation and information flows. Rather, social segmentation along ethnic lines and the relation of ethnicity to political power takes precedent in constituting the significance of social networks. Particularly as overlaid by ethnicized structures of political power, social networks have the ability to reproduce inequities through bottom-up or lateral mechanisms that have rarely been attended to in the literature.

#### *Taking account of institutional legacies*

As described, ethnicity as a blanket concept encompassing all forms of ascriptive or quasi-ascriptive identity has been used to explain variation in public goods provision through various mechanisms and at different levels of aggregation. Yet the variation in ethnic configurations that is crucial to understanding differences in public goods distribution are the result of historical processes dependent on political decision-making and institution building under conditions of uncertainty. A burgeoning literature focuses on the endogenous elements of ethnicity's relationship to patterns of governance and, specifically, public goods and service provision. This

approach suggests the need to take into account precolonial and colonial legacies that had significant roles in the formation of group boundaries, their potential for malleability, and the path dependent effects that they have had on the processes through which state resources are produced and distributed. Crucially, it provides a route towards explaining substantial variation in patterns of ethnic diversity, as well as interethnic power relations, across world regions.

The renewed focus on path dependent institutional legacies militates in favor of a historically grounded approach to the study of ethnicity's effects on public goods provision. As Singh and Vom Dau (2016) make clear, most quantitative cross-country analyses of ethnicity's relationship to public goods provision employ temporally limited data, implicitly characterizing ethnic heterogeneity and hierarchy as an exogenous and historically stable variable. This would suggest that, given this supposedly "random" assignment of ethnic configurations, comparing countries in different regions of the world and with dramatically variant legacies of precolonial and colonial institutions would present no obstacles to analysis. On the contrary, these path dependent institutional structures necessitate the application of differentiated analytical approaches to the radically variant ethnic structures that they have helped to create.

Singh and Vom Dau analyze a number of patterns of nation-state formation and their particular capabilities and strategies for providing public goods, claiming that different variants of historically politicized ethnicity will have varying effects on how states distribute public goods. In particular, they argue against what they consider a misrepresentation of the way in which state institutions in ethnically heterogeneous settings function, wherein "lobbying by ethnic groups translates in an almost mechanical fashion into the provision of the demanded services by states" (1321). First, as I suggest in the preceding section, such a non-hierarchical and content-free variant of ethnic politics is unlikely to be in existence anywhere, as members of one or a few groups are

likely to be better positioned to receive and request resources for public goods than others. Moreover, the extent to which such a non-hierarchical ethnic political structure even roughly resembles observed patterns of governance at the state or sub-state level is dependent upon elite choices over strategies of nationalities policy construction, with *ethnic accommodation* being the closest to and *ethnic exclusion* the farthest from this theoretical ideal. This choice may be heavily influenced by demographic factors, with the numerically dominant group constructing institutions that aid in the maintenance of the ethnic hierarchy. However, this is far from the only option, as exemplified by the Soviet Union's nationalities policy, the construction of which was influenced by strategic goals, ideological—specifically, Marxist-Leninist—constraints, and the strong personalities of political leaders to create an “affirmative action empire” providing substantial institutional resources to ethnic minorities in the Soviet periphery.

Singh and Vom Dau's framework is augmented by a focus on state capacity, a characteristic composed of bureaucratic capabilities and infrastructural power. High-capacity ethnically accommodationist states have generally positive path dependent effects on public goods provision across ethnic groups, as they are “likely to generate a political consensus in favor of universal public goods provision because citizens share a mutual concern for the collective responsibilities of the state toward all citizens, regardless of their ethnic background and the distinct services provided”. However, low-capacity accommodationist states, such as India, actually encourage further ethnic diversity *and* intergroup tensions by “signal[ing] and open[ing] up the space for making ethnic-based claims [while] their limited bureaucratic competence and territorial reach to deliver on these demands generates grievances” (1313). States that promote an inclusive nationalities policy, then, are not guaranteed interethnic harmony if they lack the capacity necessary to materially deliver on their promises.

Accounting for strategies of nation-building and the extent of state capacities is a critical step towards grounding the study of ethnicized public goods provision in politics. But why do multiethnic states and empires construct the strategies of identity recognition that they do and why are some states less able to project power across their territory than others? Ethnic diversity, ethnic hierarchies, and, in turn, ethnicized governance are not exogenously assigned and, as Wimmer (2017, 1408) posits, “diversity and the state’s capacity to [provide] public goods may *both* result from a previous history of state formation.” In particular, states which possessed, in pre-colonial and colonial periods, the requisite institutional incentives and capabilities such that minorities chose to—or were made to—assimilate, and had strong indigenous bureaucratic capacities, are comparatively likely to be able to provide public goods broadly and effectively in the contemporary era. Additional research shows that pre-colonial state capacity affected decisions of colonial powers to choose indirect or direct colonial rule, thus further extending into the past the path dependent process (Gerring et al. 2011). In a broad sense, context-dependent institutional choices made in prior eras are likely to “lock in” both the extent and content of a state’s ethnic diversity, as well as the means by which resources for public goods are distributed.

Few would contest the banal position that “history matters,” so how is all of this relevant to the study of ethnic politics and public goods provision? I contend that the nature of institutional legacies is such that patterns tend to be regionally concentrated, as colonial ventures take place in distinct places in discrete times and emanate from particular metropolises, all of which constrain the ideological possibilities and strategic choice set of institutional innovators. A disproportionate amount of the research undertaken on the link between ethnicity and public goods provision focuses on cases in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is significant not only because the interethnic

dynamics of other settings are receiving less attention than deserved,<sup>15</sup> but also because Sub-Saharan Africa is a world region featuring a unique set of colonial legacies and, in part as result of this, exceptional ethnic diversity and a distinct pattern of ethnic hierarchies within states (see Chapter 1 for regional comparisons). The region is “home to over 2,000 distinct ethnic groups that are characterized by different language, culture and traditions... Heterogeneity in Africa is magnified by the wide range of religious beliefs” (Kimenyi 2006, 66). This has significant, and undertheorized, effects on the character of the ethnic politics that are witnessed in the region and how it might differ from that found in other settings.

Allowing for generalization, governments of Sub-Saharan Africa consistently pursue a strategy of maintaining limited, often ethnically determined minimum winning coalitions reliant on patron-client relations and the distribution of “pork” goods (see Fearon 1999). The variety of identity foundations for these coalitions is theoretically unbounded and determined in significant part by institutionally-determined incentives for more or less broad categories of identification (Posner 2005). A particular driver of narrow ethnic coalitions has been the gradual constriction of African authority structures in the independence period. Sub-Saharan African political constituents in the immediate post-independence decades are characterized by Bates (2015) as having perceived political patrons as “agents whose job it is to bring material benefits to the local community,” with elections coming to resemble “a political marketplace in which votes were exchanged for material benefits.” Voters took advantage of the opportunity to extract promises and delivery of particularistic goods—roads, housing supplies, sacks of grain—from political candidates or their agents in exchange for votes. With time, however, political structures took on

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<sup>15</sup> I know of not a single empirically rigorous study on the relationship between ethnicity and public goods and services provision from the post-Soviet states.

an increasingly vertical, authoritarian structure, with political elites learning that the president was the proper target of “competitive bidding,” rather than non-elite constituents. This led to the diminishment of the overall pot of public goods over time, as they were replaced by personal goods distributed overwhelmingly to loyal clients of the president.

Sub-Saharan African executives maintained this equilibrium through the employment of personally loyal security services and judicial branches, which they have employed to sanction potential elite defectors and co-opt political actors. A major determinant of long-term regime (in)stability derives from the central thrust of the theory of minimum winning coalitions: those within the coalition have an incentive to maintain or increase their share of the spoils of rule by systematically excluding new entrants (Baron and Ferejohn 1989). Presidents thus formed minimum winning coalitions that maximized the proportion of national wealth that ended up under their control. Bates (2015, pp. 46-47) describes an extortionary system in which taxes were universally levied, while the benefits of state centralization only went to those within the presidential coalition, giving rise to a norm under which regime insiders have continually narrowed the set of characteristics signaling potential loyalty to the regime. Political institutions of the region’s states took on an increasingly exclusionary cast, with the significance that a very few had meaningful political power and economic disparities rose rapidly.

In relation to ethnic politics, minimum winning coalition members were incentivized to exploit strategically the relatively high levels of ethnic diversity in Sub-Saharan African states to their benefit by putting forward ethnic and tribal boundaries as signals of eligibility for entry into the ruling coalition. Bates (*ibid*, pp. 133-4) argues that ethnicity became relevant to politics in the region primarily as a result of political instability, state failure, and the regional concentration of both natural resources and ethnic groups. Yet the comparatively poor alignment of state boundaries

with ethnic groups in the region, along with the other predictors of national-level ethnic diversity in Sub-Saharan Africa, also ensure that there exist a large number of “natural” categories that might be used to determine potential entrants into minimum winning coalitions within any one state. Exclusion of political opposition from the ruling coalition on the basis of ethnicity, a highly instrumental use of the boundary marker, further serves to activate ethnic identity in groups out of power.

Ethnic patronage is then in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa a mechanism for maintaining political stability (Kimenyi and Brough 1986) as well as one of the foundations of its absence. It is a core element of the vicious circle evident in the region’s politics, wherein the political insecurity of ruling elites and the resultant contraction in time horizons gives rise to extortionary predation that, because of ethnically aligned minimum winning coalitions, takes on an ethnic cast. This generates grievances among groups outside of the coalition which motivate attempts to forcibly seize power. If successful, newly ascendant groups are soon faced with the same insecurities as their predecessors and the associated “shadow of the future,” as gains from short-term predation are valued above the risk of long-term national economic decline (Bates 2015, 26). State failure and the poor and unequal provision of public resources, then, is in important ways determined by the presence of many relatively equally sized ethnic groups within states in combination with an equilibrium of predatory governance in which state disorder itself offers “attractive prospects for those willing to invest in the building of political organizations” (*ibid.*, 215).

This scenario is distinctive of the Sub-Saharan Africa region and is founded upon both the extent of ethnic diversity in the region and the institutions of ethnic hierarchy that prevail there. Neither of these factors have been exogenously assigned, but are instead in significant part the

consequences of precolonial and colonial natural and sociopolitical legacies, including the slaving economy, colonial construction of geographically large states that generally ignored extant societal divisions, the dominance of British and French colonial influence, tropical location, and the long duration of human settlement in the region (Ahlerup and Olsson 2012; Blanton, et al. 2001; Green 2013). Without these precolonial and colonial legacies, ethnic diversity might be significantly lower and the incentives for ethnicized patron-client regimes to prey upon state coffers to as large an extent possible before a regime representative of another ethnic group or coalition takes power might not exist. This would be likely to have as significant an effect on governance and provision of public goods as it does on regime stability.

The post-Soviet region has a far different set of colonial legacies as compared to Sub-Saharan Africa and other postcolonial regions.<sup>16</sup> In particular, ethnic politics and state capacity varied from the colonial situation in Africa in multiple respects. First, the construction of an ethnofederal system under conditions of bureaucratic totalitarianism, within which titular groups composed significant majorities or, at the least, pluralities in all Union republics, provided fewer bases for ethnic rotation in power than had sub-state delineation of borders proceeded under non-ethnic logics. Second, because of assiduously pursued policies of affirmative action for ethnic titulars in the fourteen non-Russian Union republics from the earliest years of Soviet rule, titular political elites, bureaucrats, and intelligentsia faced minimal opposition from other groups

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<sup>16</sup> I am not expressing a scholarly variant of the “reflexive disapproval that attempts to compare the post-Soviet world with the ‘Third World’, especially Africa, evoke among former Soviet citizens.” As Dave (2007) points out, this resistance to objectively reasonable comparisons stems from the internalization of Soviet understandings of teleological development and the “obsession [among Soviet citizens] with becoming ‘civilized’”. Post-Soviet citizens may find it unseemly to be compared to African or other postcolonial societies, but far from being a reason to ignore governance problems often studied in the African context within the post-Soviet region, this presents an interesting field of inquiry in its own right. Have these widely held understandings of comparison spaces changed in the post-Soviet period? What sorts of evidence do post-Soviet citizens put forward when justifying their choice of comparison countries or regions?

regarding their leading role. And, as I will demonstrate in the following chapter, both the foundational ideas underlying nationalities policies and methods of governing from the Soviet period have transitioned into post-Soviet conditions. Third, postcolonial African state weakness and instability is tied to the vicious cycle of predation and regime turnover described above, exacerbated by the legacy of colonial institutions that failed to produce governing ethnic majorities. This is in contrast to post-Soviet states that, in the main, entered the period of independence with a comparatively strong and centralized governmental and coercive infrastructure to a significant extent controlled by ethnic titulars. As a result, the phenomenon of “weak state, strong society” (Migdal 1988) displayed in other postcolonial regions is less applicable in the post-Soviet region. Instead, the centralized and comparatively competent post-Soviet administrative and security organs have overwhelmingly “maintained firm control over state authority by keeping society demobilized and politically disengaged” (Dave 2007, 142). Finally, the development of titular-dominated states through policies of affirmative action coincided with the emergence of strong and stable informal networks of access necessitated by persistent shortage of goods and services under the Soviet command economy in a manner that unintentionally exacerbated the intergroup divides in political efficacy. These networks and modes of acquisition became socially embedded in a manner that has ensured their transition to post-Soviet conditions.

Such legacies of nation-building and state capacity substantially differentiate the contemporary trends that we see in post-Soviet ethnic politics from that in other postcolonial spaces. The categorical containers in some cases already extant in the early years of the USSR were provided material content by Bolshevik elites through the delimitation of explicitly ethnoterritorial administrative regions within which the republics’ titular groups were granted

preference in access to education and administrative positions relative to other, non-titular categories. Distribution of crucial administrative and other resources in the Soviet Union was in this way inextricably linked to the nationality written on one's passport. The "usefulness" of one's ethnic identity—excluding the colonizing, Russian/Slavic, group—depended on whether or not it matched up to the titular group of the Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) within which one resided. To be an ethnic Georgian in the Armenian SSR was to automatically experience a relative diminution of one's life chances as compared to her coethnic living in Tbilisi. The accumulated stock of benefits from the Soviet affirmative action policies meant that, at the time of the Soviet collapse, members of the Union Republics' titular ethnic groups were disproportionately represented in all manner of positions. The long-term existence of such policies, along with other factors to be discussed further, had the effect of not only to a certain degree naturalizing this state of affairs but making ethnic titular groups in the newly independent post-Soviet states guard jealously their institutional privileges.

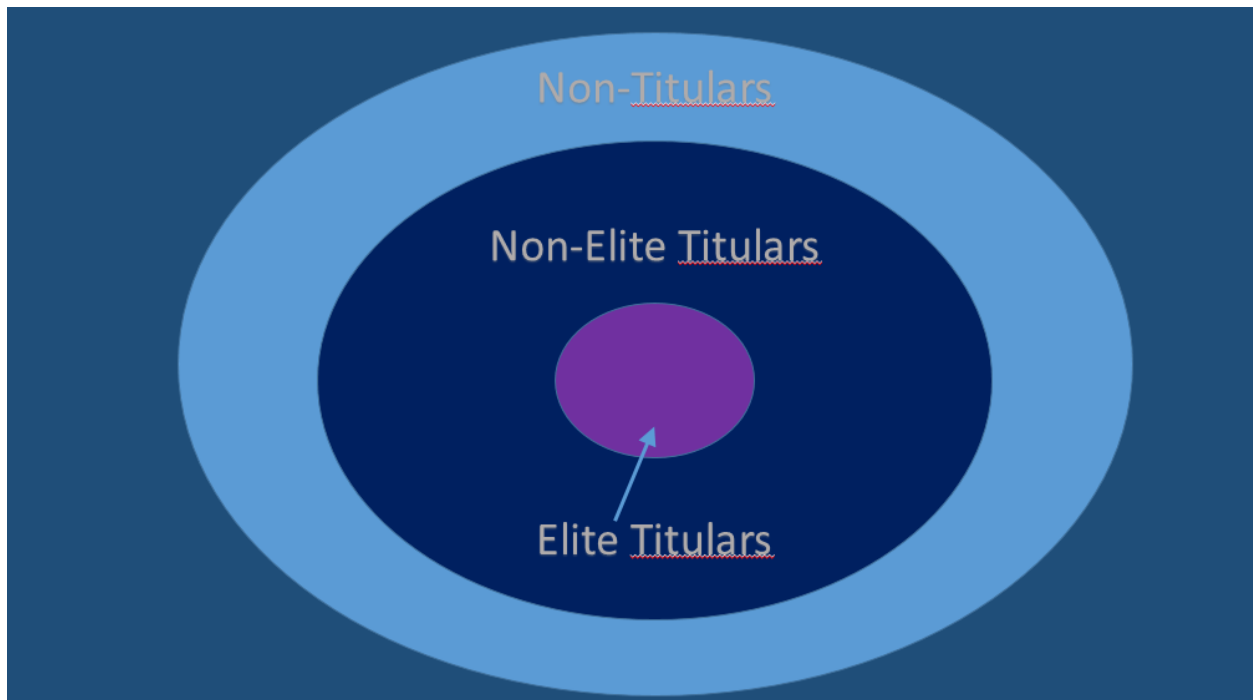
### **A theory of post-Soviet ethnic politics and public goods provision**

The theory of post-Soviet ethnic politics that I present rests on the foundational premise that *categorical boundaries* between groups are determinative of the outcomes we are interested in, as opposed to the cultural or other content of group identities (Barth 1969). Rather than culture accounting for various aspects of intergroup relations, for good or ill, institutionalized boundaries themselves are productive of self-reinforcing scripts, as "people draw on interaction, fear, hope, and imagination to construct boundary-maintaining stories" (Tilly 1998, 76). In particular, I will focus on the post-Soviet categorical pair *ethnic titular/non-titular*. The Soviet and post-Soviet construction of administrative and more banal, everyday incentive structures that respond differentially to representatives of either side of this categorical boundary evolved into localized

variants of the same binary of state-owning (Russian, Christian) / “state-consuming” (non-Russian, non-Christian) categories that Soviet ethnofederalism was , in part, designed to allay, a theme I will expand on in the next chapter.

Two interrelated concepts elaborated by Tilly (1998) serve as building blocks of my theory: *exploitation* and *opportunity hoarding*. *Exploitation*, as practiced by social and political elites within a given society, “operates when powerful, connected people command resources from which they draw significantly increased returns by coordinating the efforts of outsiders whom they exclude from the full value added by that effort” (7). In the context of post-Soviet ethnic politics, this exploitative faction consists of state elites, almost all of whom, for path-dependent reasons to be traced in the following chapter, are ethnic titulars.

Non-elite ethnic titulars lay claim to their own means of benefiting from the core titular/non-titular categorical boundary in a manner that aids in its social reproduction. Specifically, *opportunity hoarding* is at work, “when members of a categorically bounded network acquire access to a resource that is valuable, renewable, subject to monopoly, supportive of network activities, and enhanced by the network's *modus operandi*” (7). The modern state might easily be described as just such a resource: the lengths to which social groups are willing to go to gain control of the state suggest its substantial value; the state and its agents reproduce themselves in a path-dependent process; monopoly over the state by demographically limited groups or cliques has been the historical norm throughout much of the world; and the differentiated resources over which the state has control provide the means for intragroup transactions of goods, services, and



**Figure 2.1 Illustration of relevant post-Soviet ethnic categorical boundaries**

information that reinforces networks of access. Opportunity hoarding can then be conceived of as a particularistic “weapon of the weak” (Scott 2008). It provides those who might otherwise possess little influence over the distribution of valued goods in a society with a means of differentiating themselves from those categorically excluded from key networks.

Particularly in the former Soviet republics, where informal networks of access are socially embedded in a manner unique even among post-Communist cases (H. Aliyev 2015), opportunity hoarding is a productive concept. Moreover, as the use of the term “hoarding” suggests, the effect of this social mechanism is cumulative. Barring a critical juncture destructive of the relevant categorical boundary, the returns from being a networked individual of the dominant categorical group, even a non-elite, are exponential. Not only might an individual from such a favored group

benefit at any given moment in time from their ability to utilize nodes of their categorically-bounded network, but “previous categorical experience also strongly affects the information and social ties these individuals and groups already have at their disposal, not to mention the means they have of acquiring new information and social ties” (Tilly 1998, 10). The longer a categorical boundary persists, then, the greater the social, economic, and political chasm resultant from differential network access.

Variants of these categorical dynamics are at work in all settings, not just in states where ethnicity is highly salient. “Old boy networks” that limit the spread of both information and resources flourish even in consolidated democracies with a largely civic conception of national identity. However, I argue that the effects of *exploitation* and *opportunity hoarding* are exacerbated in ethnicized states, where founding “state elites were neither sufficiently independent from the surrounding social forces nor sufficiently rich in resources to be able to offer social security, legal protection and welfare for all citizens independently of their ethnic background” (Wimmer 2002, 104). That is, where the state and its administrative structure were intentionally constructed to interact with members of different ethnic groups in a differentiated manner due to circumstances at independence—as was the case at the fall of the Soviet Union—these mechanisms should be more obviously in operation along lines of ethnic categorization.

Another strength of these concepts as an analytical tool in the post-Soviet space is the “thickness,” clarity, and level of institutionalization of the categorical boundary of *ethnic titular/non-titular*. Tilly (1998, 56) asserts that, “With a well-marked boundary present, not only organization members but also third parties such as governments can adopt low-cost rules of thumb for the reinforcement or denial of claims to deploy an organization’s resources or occupy its dedicated space.” The ethnic boundary was during the Soviet period and continues to be

reproduced from an individual's birth. There is no more glaring instance of this than the Soviet practice of including a line for ethnicity (Russian: *natsional'nost*) in every citizen's internal passports.

I argue further that the titular/non-titular boundary has path-dependent characteristics that have guaranteed that it not only maintained relevance through the Soviet collapse but over the course of more than a quarter century of independence. Tilly suggests two primary mechanisms by which categorical boundaries productive of inequality are reproduced. First, the beneficiaries of exploitation and opportunity hoarding serve as a natural constituency of support for the institutions that reproduce the categorical boundaries. These agents will defend various aspects of the extant categorical barriers vigorously, as political struggle over attempts to remove the “nationality” line in internal passports attest (Dzhanibekova 2017). Second, the transaction costs that would be required to restructure an institutional arrangement—even assuming a support coalition for such reform exists—are significant. This type of institutional “lock-in” is particularly relevant within the context of the modern state, as “current control of crucial resources [e.g. the administrative and coercive apparatuses] augments the capacity of any actor to mobilize political support through elections, influence networks, and even social movements, [such that] in ordinary circumstances the operations of states sustain existing patterns of categorical inequality rather than subverting them” (Tilly 1998, 155). The state, and the categorical group boundaries its institutions and their functions are reflective of, continually reproduces itself barring a dramatic critical juncture.

### *Supply and demand in post-Soviet ethnic and distributive politics*

The ethnicization of the post-Soviet state, in combination with social embeddedness of informality, strongly influences both the *supply* and *demand* elements of public goods production and distribution. On the *supply side*, strategic incentives and ethnic egotism suggest that a state administrative system dominated by members of the titular ethnic group increases the likelihood that officials will administer the type and quantity of resources in a way that is most beneficial to coethnics. Such a top-down dynamic has been the empirical focus of much of the research on ethnic favoritism in public goods provision (Ejdemyr, Kramon, and Robinson 2017; Franck and Rainer 2012; Kramon and Posner 2013). Yet the stylized version of the Sub-Saharan African pattern described above, in which leaders are successively replaced through coups and civil wars as a result of ethnically exclusionary coalition-building in a setting of ethnic fractionalization, is avoided in the post-Soviet region by legacies of territorial delimitation that—albeit imperfectly—matched borders to ethnic group settlement and, more significantly, established norms of ethnic titular administration. There is a sense among members of the titular ethnic groups, for many decades promoted by both Union republican elites and—though less explicitly—central Soviet authorities, that the territory designated with the titular ethnonym is the rightful possession of the group as a whole. Valery Tishkov (1997, 158), a scholar and one-time head of the Russian Federation’s State Committee on Nationalities, summarizes the phenomenon in the following manner:

The doctrine of ethnonationalism, set in a system of so-called national state government and in an ideology of 'socialist federalism', envisions the presence of a titular nation. It is from this titular nation that the proposal of national autonomy is seen as having originated, and it is this group who consider the resulting autonomy 'their own' state thus bringing inequality to the formal and real status of the titular and the non-titular groups.



**Figure 2.2 Supply side of post-Soviet ethnicized public goods**

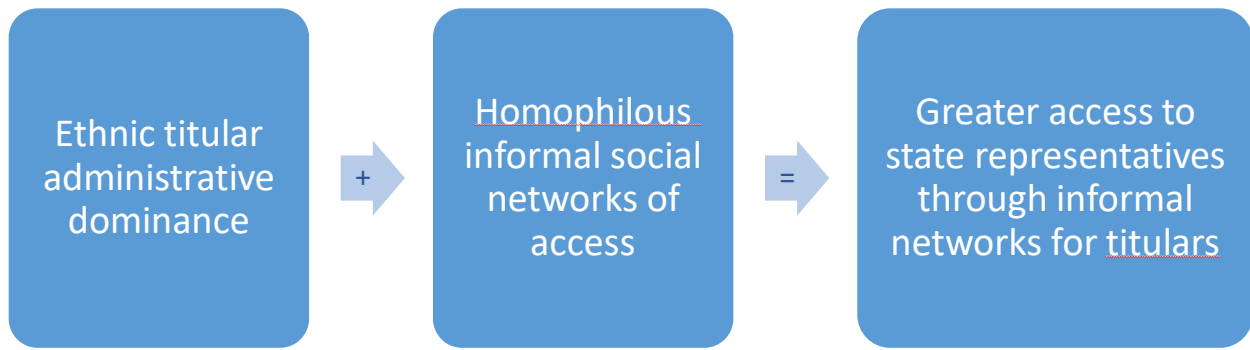
Ethnic “others,” then, are recommended to accept these conditions quietly or, if they belong to the titular group of another republic, to join their coethnics there. Given these conditions, all else equal, more state resources should be seen to be targeted towards ethnic titulars in the post-Soviet states.

Equally significantly, and largely overlooked in the literature, is the *demand element* of public goods and service provision. Local and national political elites tend to be portrayed as making decisions with minimal input or pressure from citizens aside from indirect pressure on coethnic politicians through electoral accountability (Carlson 2015). In many settings, however, particular categories of citizens have the potential to be laterally integrated into social networks with both elected politicians and unelected bureaucrats and administrators who possess some amount of discretion over the distribution of government resources. In Soviet and subsequent postsocialist conditions, these “networked” citizens may utilize their personal relationships to lobby representatives of the state for more and higher quality public goods and services. The particular manner in which the Union republics and later independent republics favored ethnic titulars plays a significant role in this process. With path-dependent foundations in the informal responses to the Soviet-era shortage economy and the development of a “second economy” formed around networks of social connections (Grossman 1977), informal networks of access remain a

foundational characteristic of distributive politics in the wider post-Soviet space (H. Aliyev 2015; Ledeneva 1998, 2006; Schatz 2004). It is commonly accepted that one uses personal connections to attain scarce resources such as funds for road improvement and access to space in public educational institutions.

In general, these networks display a high degree of ethnic homophily. This is particularly so when informal ties are strongly bound to kin relations, as is the case in much of the non-European former Soviet states, including the states of the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Even barring kin relations as a fundamental basis of social organization, however, existing research across settings and circumstances suggests that social networks exhibit extensive ethnic and racial homogeneity and that ethnically and racially homophilic ties tend to be stronger than heterophilic varieties (Kao and Joyner 2004; Lewis et al. 2008; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook 2001; Mollica, Gray, and Trevino 2003; S. Smith, Maas, and van Tubergen 2014).

In the post-Soviet setting, where the institutional legacies of the Soviet state hold the significance that both elected officials and nonelected administrative personnel across sectors are predominantly from the titular group, this tendency toward the continued import of informal social networks of access and social network ethnic homophily has an unambiguous effect on the demand side of public goods provision. Ethnic titulars have, on average, access to social networks within which there is a comparatively shorter mean distance to and a higher density of individuals with some influence over the distribution of government resources than do non-titulars. This is a critical resource for the mechanism of *opportunity hoarding*. Extensive informal social connections should thus be seen to positively affect the attainment of valued public goods for members of the titular ethnic groups in ways that are not possible for non-titulars.



**Figure 2.3 Demand side of post-Soviet ethnicized public goods**

At the individual level, then, it is crucial to emphasize the independent and interactive elements of these factors. First, ethnicity—more specifically, identification with the titular ethnic group—is likely to be independently influential in being provided with public goods: the strategic incentives and affect of ethnic titular politicians and administrators towards coethnics is expected to lead to a disproportionate quantity and quality of resources for public goods and services in this direction (Figure 2.2). Elected titular politicians are likely to apportion larger shares of the budget to projects, including the building or repair of schools, roads, and public medical clinics, that will primarily benefit coethnic communities. Administrators, in a scene replayed in government offices throughout the world, will tend to assist coethnics when given a choice to exert their energies assisting individuals with whom they share linguistic and cultural characteristics (Giulietti, Tonin, and Vlassopoulos 2015; Hemker and Rink 2017; Keiser, Mueser, and Choi 2004; Schram et al. 2009; White, Nathan, and Faller 2015).

An individual's ethnic identity and their level of informal social connectedness have variant effects depending upon the nature of their combination. Ethnic titulars will, *ceteris paribus*, gain greater access to government resources through greater embeddedness in informal social networks

(Figure 2.3). Conversely, given that ethnic homophily and titular domination of formal institutions suggests relatively low density of and high network distance to individuals with either direct or indirect influence on government resources, non-titular access to these government resources should not be influenced by the extent of their informal social connectedness.

There is thus an additive effect of the supply and demand elements of public goods provision for ethnic titulars. The ethnic titular community is supplied with greater resources in the first place due to coethnic dominance of the state. Titular administrative dominance, coupled with ethnic homophily of networks of access and the social embeddedness of post-Soviet informal state-society interactions, further provides ethnic titulars the ability to employ social network connections to demand both personal and community-oriented goods and services delivered by the state.

## **Conclusion**

The institutionalization from the first decade of Soviet rule of “titular nation” status and the categorical boundary *titular/non-titular* in the fourteen non-Russian Union Republics is posited here as the most significant aspect of ethnic politics to influence the distribution of public goods. While in other settings featuring ethnically heterogeneous populations, there is a non-zero probability that “ownership” of the state will transfer from one ethnic group to another, the post-Soviet states exhibit strikingly little variance: of 117 post-Soviet national leaders in the fourteen non-Russian successor states, only three have been non-titular.<sup>17</sup> This is the foundation for an equilibrium in the ethnic element of distributive politics in the post-Soviet states that differs

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<sup>17</sup> Two of these, Viktor Yanukovich (Russian, Polish) and the newly elected Volodymyr Zelenskii (Jewish—as a result of Soviet legacies, considered a nationality rather than simply a religious confession), have been presidents of Ukraine. The other, Vasile Tarlev (Bulgarian), was Prime Minister of Moldova from 2001 to 2008.

significantly from that of other postcolonial settings. In other states, and in particular in Sub-Saharan Africa, there tends to be semi-regular rotation in the ethnic identity of the president or ruling coalition, with the significance that multiple ethnic groups within a state can imagine one day controlling the national treasury, with all that this means for hoarding and strategically distributing resources to coethnics. The benefits of controlling administrative organs—both from the supply and demand sides of ethnicized public goods provision—do not only accrue to one group, but instead, over time, are directed towards a number of communities and regions when previously excluded ethnic groups or coalitions take power. Post-Soviet states, conversely, display persistent dominance of state organs by titular groups and, through Tilly's mechanisms of *exploitation* by elite titulars and *opportunity hoarding* by all ethnic titulars, accumulate benefits in the form of ethnicized resource distribution. The constancy of a single ethnic group's control over formal institutions, as opposed to ethnic shuffling at the elite level, has the further consequence that elite and non-elite representatives of ethnic titular communities have the ability and incentive—given their relative certainty in  $t_1$  that titulars will continue controlling the levers of power in  $t_2$ —to build up expedient coethnic relationships. These connections are additionally capable of being transferred across time and even passed down generationally, deepening the material significance of *opportunity hoarding*.

The experience of nearly three decades of independence for these post-Soviet states could be argued, as those in the transitology school may aver, to have lessened the causal significance of Soviet-era formal and informal institutions (see Huntington 1993; Linz and Stepan 1996; Przeworski 1991; for a variety of critical approaches to "transitology," see Bunce 1995; Gans-Morse 2004; Schmitter and Karl 1994). I take the contrary position that the significance of these institutional legacies has not been erased by time. Soviet era institutions and the casts of mind that

both constituted and were constituted by them are undergoing an “ongoing adaptation and reconfiguration in a changed context” rather than replacement (Dave 2007, 28). In order to demonstrate this, in the next chapter I will, first, discuss the nationalities policy of the Soviet Union, including the delimitation of national borders, the brief period of active *korenizatsiia* (ethnic indigenization of social and political life), and the more temporally proximate development of titular affirmative action through patron-client networks under Brezhnev’s “stability of cadres” policy. I will then connect these Soviet institutions to ethnic politics and administrative representation in the former Soviet republics, suggesting that these legacies—both formal and symbolic—are the basis of continuing ethnic titular dominance.

In the latter half of the chapter, I will discuss the development and operation of informal social networks of access in the Soviet Union. These networks were utilized throughout the communist period in a relatively uniform manner and thus became deeply engrained in the Soviet social fabric and in norms of informal state-society relations. Given that they were founded on the premise of systematic shortages of goods and services, however, it falls on me to explain in what form and by what means these informal networks of access have survived into the present day despite economic liberalization and abundantly available—though, to most, unaffordable—goods and services. I suggest that, to an extent not apparent in the Soviet period, these informal networks have become bifurcated, with affluent, primarily state-affiliated elites employing highly monetized forms of informal social connections—what might generally be perceived as “bribes”—while the masses continue to employ a form of reciprocity founded on relations of particularized trust.

## Chapter 3

### Soviet Institutions and Their Legacies

In the post-Soviet states, rather than a logic of ethnic diversity complicating efforts towards local-level coordination and thus the production and distribution of public goods and services, a logic of ethnic domination is at work. Specifically, the political domination of the “state-forming” ethnic titular groups (i.e. the Kyrgyz in Kyrgyzstan, Armenians in Armenia, etc.) over non-titular communities. This categorical distinction was developed in the first decade of Soviet rule and institutionalized throughout, with the consequence that ethnic titularity came to be a critical determinant of life chances in the fourteen non-Russian SFSR Union Republics.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the material and ideological infrastructure that supported this categorical binary has overwhelmingly survived, and even thrived, under post-Soviet conditions.

It should be evident that political domination ought to, almost by definition, be associated with the distribution of state resources. Indeed, we would be quite surprised to find that that a politically dominant group—categorized along lines of ethnicity, gender, or otherwise—received less than their “fair” share. Yet the methods by which this dominance is reproduced and mechanisms by which it influences outcomes such as public goods provision are contextually dependent. Societal relationships of dominance must be placed within and analyzed with respect to the non-political social structures that encompass them. In the post-Soviet space, informal networks and informal state-society exchanges are a crucial contextual factor structuring and

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<sup>18</sup> Slavs (i.e. ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians) were consistently dominant across the leading bodies of Party organs in Moscow, however. While these groups represented near 70 percent of the population of the USSR from the late 1930s onward, they consistently held nearly 80 percent of the positions in the CPSU Central Committee, the Politburo, and the Secretariat (Simon 1991, pp. 418-419).

interacting with ethnic titular political dominance. Initially stemming from adaptive responses to persistent shortages of goods and services under socialism, these informal networks transitioned—in somewhat altered form—to postsocialism as a result both of the harrowing conditions following imperial collapse and informality's high degree of social embeddedness. As described in the previous chapter, these informal networks play a critical role in the operation and reproduction of titular dominance, allowing for *opportunity hoarding* among titular elites and non-elites alike.

In what follows, I will trace the processes of these two conceptually distinct but ultimately interrelated institutional complexes. First, I will describe the process of forming substate ethno-federal administrative territories and the construction of national identities in the Soviet Union. I will then detail why and how Soviet elites developed and implemented a system of preferences for ethnic titulars in the non-Russian Union Republics and the path dependence of these institutions of preference under post-independence conditions. Following this, I will outline the development and application of informal networks of access in the Soviet Union. These informal practices and relationships were essential to Soviet stability, as they were among the only means of providing content to the Marxist-Leninist myth of socioeconomic equality that was so distinctly violated by the chasm between the Party *nomenklatura* and others. While these norms of informality traveled to the Soviet successor states, I will discuss how the forms and functions of such networks and state-society interactions were altered by the fresh significance of money and the resultant bifurcation of networks along lines of social class.

### **Soviet nationalities policy and its legacy**

The aims and mechanisms of Soviet nationalities policy have been the focus of significant study. Western academics of the Cold War period were pessimistic in their evaluation of the Soviet elite's motives in drawing national territorial boundaries and expending material and symbolic resources

on the construction of national identities (Carrère d'Encausse 1980, 1993; Pipes 1964). The underlying assumptions of these scholars were that, first, the delimitation of borders and construction of discrete national identities had—in the mode of divide-and-conquer—the goal of weakening the potential for unified opposition to Moscow's rule and, second, that these policies were overwhelmingly top-down, with Soviet elites in Moscow giving directives and native bureaucrats and societies in the peripheral republics taking them.

With the benefit of greater access to Soviet archives and a less Moscow-centric focus, recent approaches complicate this Cold War-era understanding of Soviet nationalities policies. In the following sections, I will discuss the origins and evolution of Soviet ethnic federalization and titular promotion, followed by a discussion and illustration of their lasting effects and adaptation to the conditions of the post-Soviet period. I hope to illustrate the historical contingency of the nationalities program in the Soviet period. The peculiar character of ethnic hierarchies in the Soviet Socialist Republics and the independent states that they became, along with the demographic and—more significantly—political dominance of titular ethnic groups, was not something that occurred without contestation, but came about due to a chain of policy decisions that can be traced to the earliest years of Bolshevik rule. This began with the decision of early Bolshevik elites to form a hierarchical system of ethnic territories, from the Soviet Socialist Republics to the as-near-as-possible ethnically homogeneous national village soviets formed during the period of *korenizatsiia* (indigenization), which lasted from 1923 to 1938. The program also introduced ethnic titular affirmative action across all sectors of Soviet life. Finally, following a period of stagnation in the active promotion of non-Russian nationalities after the period of *korenizatsiia* came to a close, the Brezhnev era and its “stability of cadres” policy signaled a renewed interest in affirmative action for ethnic titulars that remained in effect nearly until the Soviet collapse.

Independence signaled the beginning of differentiation, in terms of institutions and outcomes, across the range of post-Soviet states. Despite these differences, however, one near-constant has been the dominance of titular ethnicities in state administration and more or less successful attempts to institutionalize this dominance by formal (i.e., constitutional or legislative) or informal (i.e., clan/regional ties, group violence) means.

*The search for nations and delimitation of ethnofederal territory*

The territorial demarcation of the Soviet Socialist Republics (SSRs) would have significant and long-lasting political, cultural, and economic resonance in Eurasia. Given the path-dependent role that national territorial delimitation has had, scholarship has placed a great deal of emphasis on this process and on those factors that influenced the borders that came to be. The fact of the establishment of plausibly “national” borders, rather than, for instance, economically oriented political units is primary in these explanations. As Marxist-Leninist theory expresses especial ambivalence towards nationalism and the ascendancy of national identity, why was ethnicity the organizing logic of Soviet territorial delimitation? Relatedly, how devoted were the Soviet authorities to creating borders that were an authentic and—as far as could be possible— accurate encapsulations of national groupings, as opposed to being a tool of divide-and-conquer?

The decision to create sub-state borders encompassing substantial ethnic majorities was the result both of the ideas that former tsarist administrators brought into their work under the new regime as well as the strategic and ideological considerations of key Bolsheviks. A longstanding idea is evident within Russian ethnographic theory that ethnic “peoples” (*narodi*) are naturally connected to the land on which they are found. Their placement in geography is not considered to

be the contingent result of thousands of years of war, famine, and dynastic dynamism, but a primordial marriage of people and place:<sup>19</sup>

The landscape molded in the eighteenth century proved extremely durable, and the territorial principle of ethnic classification turned out to be as useful as it was convenient. The English lived in England; *russkie/rossiiane* resided in Russia; and the Kamchadal “inhabited” Kamchatka. England, Russia, and Kamchatka were all geographical concepts that defined people found within their borders. (Slezkine 1994, 174)

The period before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, was an era during which the primary function of tsarist imperial holdings was to ensure the timely and full delivery of various forms of tribute and taxation to the center. There was no overarching imperial ideology or attempt at social revolution to complicate matters. This changed rapidly with the Bolshevik defeat of White and other counterrevolutionary forces in the Russian civil war and the progressive stabilization of authority that occurred in the early 1920s. The leaders of the 1917 revolution possessed well-developed theories regarding the content of nations and their significance to the success or failure of the Soviet experiment, with one authority on the subject going so far as to assert that, “Soviet nationality policy was devised and carried out by nationalists” (Slezkine 1994b, 414).

One such figure was Josef Stalin, an ethnic Georgian acting as nationalities commissar in the years before the revolution, characterized nations as material, objective phenomena that required taking into account, rather than being ignored or assimilated into a “Greater Russia.” The leader of the Bolsheviks at the time of revolution, Vladimir Lenin, was a radical pragmatist in all matters. He recognized the significant distrust among non-Russian groups towards Bolshevik

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<sup>19</sup> This phenomenon is noted as early as the late-17th century, in Russian historian and geographer Semyon Remezov’s maps of the tsardom’s imperial holdings. In these cartographic constructions, Remezov’s “yurts and mosques represented spatially defined populations, based in identifiable territories with recognizable boundaries” (Kivelson 2006, 181). In comparison, other colonial powers’ mapmakers tended not to represent the indigenous groups on their maps at all, at best placing ethnographic caricatures of group members and their lifeways in the margins.

authorities as partial descendants of imperial Russian rule and, as such, the need to extend an olive branch. In 1916, he stated, “mankind can proceed towards the inevitable fusion (*sliyaniye*) of nations only through a transitional period of the complete freedom of all oppressed nations” (from Martin 2001, 7).<sup>20</sup> Gaining the trust of national elites and masses in the Soviet periphery was of utmost import to Lenin and the Bolshevik vanguard.

The Bolshevik leadership also believed that a liberal nationalities policy would pay dividends in foreign policy. According to what Martin (2001) describes as the “Piedmont Principle,” the Bolsheviks attempted from the early 1920s to use the promise of political and cultural autonomy along ethnic lines to influence cross border ethnic kin to support the socialist—and more particularly Bolshevik—experiment. This was directed most intensely at ethnic Ukrainians and Belarusians, who were in this period not granted any form of national autonomy within Poland and were widely perceived as mistreated minorities (274). It was also meant as a lure for “Moldovans” in the Bessarabia region lost to Romania in World War I, ethnic groups in Afghanistan, and Koreans under Japanese colonial rule.<sup>21</sup>

Political strategy and Marxist-Leninist ideology cannot be wholly separated in this decision-making calculus (see Connor 1984). In true dialectical fashion, there was a belief that erasing the conflictual axis of ethnic conflict by creating national borders would allow the “true” social delineations of class to reveal themselves. In short order, this would transport “backwards”

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<sup>20</sup> In Stalin’s experience of viewing the attitudes and treatment towards Abkhazian and Ossetian minorities by his Georgian co-nationals, however, even the “oppressed” nations could be oppressors in kind.

<sup>21</sup> The delimitation along national lines was a response to recent history, as well. A striking lesson taken from the collapse of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires in the preceding decade was the potential explosiveness of suppressed nationalist feelings in a multiethnic setting. Though Lenin generally distrusted federalism as a means of maintaining stability, due to the Russian empire’s dissolution in 1918 and the resultant transfer into German and Polish possession of significant parts of Ukraine and Belarus, he supported it as a means to reunite Russia’s lands and people.

societies into a realm of Marxist consciousness.<sup>22</sup> The early Soviet elites engaged in a project of “state-sponsored evolutionism” established on the basis of Marxist beliefs about cultural development and European ideas on social evolution. They held progressive views regarding the capability of all peoples to progress in group-historical fashion, understanding “backwardness” as resulting from material and sociohistorical circumstance rather than innate genetic or racial traits. Given this ideological starting point, the state engaged in what Hirsch (2005, 14) terms a “double assimilation” of indigenous groups: first, the assimilation of individuals into national categories, and, second, the assimilation of members of these groups into the Soviet system and culture. This was a means of taking territorial and institutional control, but also taught those in the non-Slavic periphery to “speak Soviet”; that is, to articulate their local, context-dependent concerns through a Marxist-Leninist frame.

This barrage of rationales for territorialization along ethnic lines suggests the overdetermination of ethnofederalism as an organizing principle. To the contrary, there was significant contingency in these events. In the early 1920s, tense and durable debate took place among Communist elites regarding the structure of sub-national administration. Despite anti-colonialism being a constitutive element of Marxist-Leninist ideology, at the 1920 Eighth All-Russian Congress of Soviets, borders premised solely on ethnicity-ignorant economic rationality were proposed. The proposal’s supporters argued that “state-sponsored colonization of resource-

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<sup>22</sup> A relatively concise representation of Lenin’s views on the matter is as follows: “Having transformed capitalism into socialism, the proletariat will create an opportunity for the total elimination of national oppression; this opportunity will become a reality “only”-“only”!-after a total democratization of all spheres, including the establishment of state borders according to the ‘sympathies’ of the population, and including complete freedom of secession. This, in turn, will lead in practice to a total abolition of all national tensions and all national distrust, to an accelerated drawing together and merger of nations which will result in the withering away of the state” (Lenin, “Itogi diskussii o samoopredelenii” (1916), in *Voprosi*, 129).

rich regions was critical for economic progress—and thus imperative for the transition to socialism” (*ibid*, 78).

The contrasting visions of national as against economic territorialization took the form of bureaucratic rivalry, with the former supported by an agency composed primarily of tsarist-era ethnographers called *Narkomnats* (the National Commission for Nationalities), and the latter backed by *Gosplan* (the State Planning Commission) and *Goskolonit* (the State Colonization Research Institute). The ethnographers believed the road to socialism went through national consciousness and class struggle within discrete national units, whereas those who preferred a “humanist” colonial strategy saw nationalities policy as a road to nowhere, if not to ruin. Stalin, himself a proponent of stimulating national consciousness among the “backwards peoples” of the USSR, proposed and pushed through at the April 1923 Twelfth Party Congress a plan that would please all parties by means of “a program of intensive economic development coupled with a program of promoting nationhood among the Soviet Union’s ‘feudal-era’ and former colonial peoples” (*ibid*, 96-7). Despite being presented as a compromise, however, it would become clear that those advocating for national delimitation gained greater influence than their bureaucratic rivals.

In order to carry out the project of national categorization and territorial delimitation, Soviet authorities were compelled to form alliances with indigenous elites. This took different forms in the various regions of the USSR. In Central Asia, for instance, key among the modernizing local forces were the Jadids, who were mobilized as a means of restructuring power relations and removing from authority the prevailing traditional *khan* leadership of the region (Khalid 1998). Such alliances between Moscow and local elites were rarely ideological in nature: Marxism was a European ideological construct that held little relevance to the socioeconomic

realities of Tbilisi or Tashkent. Instead, these unions were often opportunistic and grounded in economic advantage. Edgar (2014, 37) posits that the “homeless and hungry” among the Turkmen were equally likely to fight on the side of the Whites as the Reds in the civil war, depending on the relative offers of spoils.

The construction of national republics required not only a willing cohort of indigenous elites, but also coherent ethnic and national categories around which borders might be drawn. Given the comparatively greater salience of sub-ethnic (i.e. locality, tribe, kin group) and supra-ethnic (i.e. khanate, religion) identities among local populations in regions outside of the imperial core,<sup>23</sup> ethnographers were tasked with aggregating tribal and kinship groups into viable nations. This endeavor significantly blurred the boundaries between an understanding of ethnic and national identity through the lenses of primordialism and constructivism, as generally understood. The primordialist straw man would aver that there *are* in fact ethnic Uzbeks and ethnic Tajiks “out there” and these peoples are essentially capable of being placed into different categorical boxes, if only one pays heed to the correct lines of ethnic division (i.e., language and lifeways, or the enigmatic Russian cultural descriptor labeled *byt*’). Constructivists, to the contrary, would argue that such groupings come into being only, or particularly, when institutional mechanisms—among them Anderson’s (2006) census, map, and museum—provide the necessary impetus.

The First All-Union Census took place in 1926 and represented a critical juncture in the construction of subjective identification of Soviet citizens as members of national groupings. The Soviets were like other European colonial powers in their use of the census to “achieve the intellectual and actual mastery of diverse lands and peoples” (Hirsch 2005, 102). In this earliest of

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<sup>23</sup> Goble (1994, 184) estimates that nearly 70 percent of the 400 ethnic groups recognized in the 1989 All-Union census had group names that translated simply to “human being,” suggesting the likelihood of significant puzzlement when strangers had arrived in the 1920s and asked individuals to state their nationality.

Soviet censuses, respondents were allowed to, in a constrained manner, self-report their nationality, with the explanation coming from census enumerators that a respondent's nationality (*narodnost'*) need not match up with their primary language, their citizenship, or their republic of residence. Ethnographers gathered information pertaining to the potential for aggregation of sub-national groupings into a coherent (from the imperial, European perspective) national form.<sup>24</sup> Having achieved this, however imperfectly, they then aided the state in developing comprehensible and mutually distinct—though the latter was often an issue—national cultures and languages. Such “state-sponsored evolutionism” was founded, “on the belief that ‘primordial’ ethnic groups were the building blocks of nationalities and on the assumption that the state could intervene in the natural process of development and ‘construct’ modern nations” (*ibid*, 8). Primordial identities were capable, Bolshevik leaders posited, of being re-constructed.

In contrast to the top-down framing proposed by Carrère d'Encausse (1980, 1993) and Pipes (1964), indigenous elite strategies and motivations often worked at cross-purposes to the goals established by Moscow. As much as those at the center invested efforts in an “authentic” representation of national groupings through the territorial delimitation process, local elites continually evinced motives equally concerned with power and resource accrual. The

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<sup>24</sup> Soviet citizens were not entirely without limit in their freedom of national self-identification, as the list of nationalities from which Soviet citizens could choose to associate shrunk in a linear fashion over time. The census bureau, at first, brought the “List of Nationalities of the USSR” down to nearly 200 groups, which would be the only groups eligible for recognition. Moreover, while many of the nearly 200 thousand census-takers were young professionals and students from Russia with weak command of local languages, there were also significant numbers of locals involved in the process. These native census takers possessed extraordinary agency, given their linguistic aptitude and knowledge of the local social landscape, and this was particularly beneficial for ethnic titular nationalities within the newly delimited ethnofederal republics. Where titulars conducted the census, there were comparatively few members of non-titular nationalities counted. This worked in conjunction with Stalin's directive in 1927 to create a less inclusive list of “Major Nationalities,” as titulars at the local level could argue that they were following orders from on high as they attempted to further consolidate nationalities and gain more state resources in return. At the height of the Great Terror in the late 1930s, Stalin called for a reduction in the number of groups listed in the official “List of Nationalities” to be reduced from 109 to 60 nationalities, folding still more tribes and sub-groups into the titular nationality categories (Hirsch 2005, 285).

representatives of demographically dominant local groups exercised extensive agency through their assistance conducting the many censuses of the period. This often led to conflict over territorial control between groups at a local level who now saw themselves in national terms, something that would not have been imaginable before the Bolsheviks put their nationalities policies into action. As a 1926 Central Asian Bureau report griped, “local party and Soviet officials not only do not want to solve one or other national question objectively from the point of view of the overall government interest, but they themselves take active part, often even the leading role in inflaming national antagonism” (from Martin 2001, 69). Local indigenous elites recognized the national territorial delimitation as a critical juncture that would determine their resource base, as well as their cultural and political constraints, for an unknown future period.

These elites were particularly perceptive when it came to the adoption of the situationally appropriate discursive mode of bargaining. Once the process of delimitation began, they began to assume and employ to their instrumental benefit the lexicon of nationality. There was a widespread appreciation that application of such a discourse would be the most effective means of legitimizing their own, elite, claims to territory and resources. Hirsch suggests that the nationalist discourse quickly assumed broad currency among the wider population, too: “Through one-on-one interviews with census-takers—and through the institutionalization of a multitude of official documents asking for one’s *narodnost*’ [nationality]—Soviet citizens learned that they were supposed to define themselves as members of an official nationality” (2005, 146). The process of negotiating from the point of view of a member of a national group was, over repeated interactions, constitutive of the identity itself. Elites and non-elites each began to feel their life chances and social boundaries increasingly tied to their national identity and, for this reason, became

overwhelmingly attached to what they saw the identity to contain within it as well as to those with whom they were linked under the national label.<sup>25</sup>

By the late 1920s, barely a decade having passed since the October Revolution, national territorial delimitation had achieved two noteworthy goals. First, in each of the existing and soon-to-be<sup>26</sup> Soviet Socialist Republics, census-taking and boundary drawing had combined such that ethnic titulars were significant majorities in “their” Union Republics (see Table 3.1). Additionally, the Soviet state’s mobilization of material and ideological resources led the population of the Union Republics to adopt national identities. By attaching access to Moscow-controlled resources to a claim to titular national identity and otherwise inculcating ethnic content into these new Soviet “nations”, the Bolsheviks had begun the process of anchoring ethnic identity—and particularly the *titular/non-titular* boundary—in society.

#### *Ethnic titular affirmative action*

In addition to border delimitation along ethnic lines, Soviet policies ensured the national groups that were provided with ethnic titular status in Soviet Socialist Republics would be provided a measure of not only cultural and political autonomy, but also positive socioeconomic promotion. In what Martin (2001) describes as a policy of “affirmative action imperialism,” beginning in the early 1920s systems of national recognition and ethnic titular promotion would be extended all the

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<sup>25</sup> Edgar provides a concise description of this process in the case of the Turkmen, whose elites “were expected to negotiate with other Central Asian nationalities over the division of the region’s land, population, and economic assets. This process required them to pit the needs of their own future republic against those of neighboring peoples, reinforcing a sense of common Turkmen identity and destiny” (Edgar 2014, 43).

<sup>26</sup> The Kyrgyz and Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics (ASSR), previously subordinate to the Russian Federal Republic, were each provided full Union Republic status in 1936. The Tajik ASSR, which had been an element of the Uzbek SSR from 1924, gained its full Union Republic status in 1929.

way down to the village soviet level. This created multiple, overlapping ethnic majorities at different levels of territorial administration, each with their own perquisites.

In the period from the early 1920s to the immediate prewar years, the policy of *korenizatsiia* (indigenization) saw to it that members of the Union Republics' titular ethnic groups were educated, trained, and given key positions in governmental administration and economic management. After a period of increased administrative centralization and russification in the high Stalinist and Khrushchev eras, Brezhnev instituted a "stability of cadres" policy that not only reanimated the focus on ethnic titular affirmative action, but also served as the institutional foundation for the ethno-clientelist political systems that hold great currency in contemporary post-Soviet states.

The period of active *Korenizatsiia*. The program of *korenizatsiia* began in 1923 and was underwritten by the belief that the promotion of indigenous elites into positions of responsibility across the ethnically defined Soviet Socialist Republics and lower levels of administration would allow non-Russians to conceptualize Soviet power as local and popular, rather than being imposed from outside, and thus would legitimate Bolshevik rule. In Stalin's article in *Pravda* from late October 1920, the Bolshevik nationalities expert laid out his vision of the program: "It is necessary that all Soviet organs in the borderlands—the courts, the administration, the economic organs, organs of local power (as well as Party organs)—be composed to the greatest possible degree of people who know the customs, habits and language of the local population" (Stalin 1934). Aside from the explicit anti-colonial line of Marxism-Leninism, elites feared the potentially fatal destabilizing effects of dissatisfied minorities on the periphery, a threat that they perceived as dooming the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires only a decade before. Additionally, the development of native languages and their increased use in education and administration would

make the new, often complex Soviet system of governance comprehensible to the masses. In this way, Soviet government and society would be, in Stalin's favored turn of phrase, "nationalist in form, socialist in content."

In spite of these intentions, one of the primary paradoxes of early Soviet nationalities policy was that, although there had been a good faith effort by the center to undertake territorial delimitation in a manner adequately aligning Union Republic territorial borders and the settlement of major ethnic groups, substantial ethnic minorities remained. Moreover, as there was an implicit Bolshevik preference against assimilation of minorities or the formation of nationally minded non-territorial organizations in the period of *korenizatsiia*, these substantial minorities represented an institutional lacuna. What was to be done, for instance, with the Poles of the Ukrainian SSR, the Uzbeks of the Kyrgyz SSR, or the Armenians of the Georgian SSR? The Bolshevik response in this early period was, as Martin (2001, 33) terms it, ethnoterritorial proliferation: the administration would "extend their system of national-territorial units downward into smaller and smaller territories, the smallest being the size of a single village." Within these national soviets, "the entire array of Soviet nationality policies was to be implemented: use of the national language, formation of national cadres, promotion of the national culture" (35). Indigenization was to reach from the level of Union Republic down to the village, creating a *matryoshka* of national autonomy and ethnic affirmative action.

Aligned with the ethnofederal territorial delimitation that allowed for *korenizatsiia* and early Bolshevik nationalities policy was the development and promotion of national cultures. Each nation was meant to have a distinct "Great Tradition" that was to be "protected, perfected and, if need be, invented." Whereas there was an implicit ranking of national greatness through assignment of different levels of administrative status to different ethnicities, with groups who

possessed their own Union Republics situated at the top of the heap, within each administrative hierarchical tier all national cultures were to be on a par one with another (Slezkine 1994b, pp. 446-7).<sup>27</sup>

Language policy was a particular concern of the architects of Bolshevik nationalities policy, as the relevant elites perceived it as the primary means of expressing national and cultural distinction. The development of native language administration and schooling was thus put forward as a priority of the indigenization campaign. All official administrative business was to be carried out in the native languages both of Union Republics and, given the *matryoshka* character of ethnic territorialization, nationally defined local communities. Attaining this goal required, first, the “modernization” of existing national languages, which consisted in most cases of the creation of a literary standard with a phonetic alphabet. Second, and more significantly, it demanded a drive to design official languages that were as distinct from one another as possible. This was crucial to the proponents of national culture promotion across the Union, because, as Slezkine (*ibid*, 431) neatly lays out, “if nationalities were by definition culturally different (in form) and if language was ‘the most important characteristic that distinguished one nationality from another,’<sup>28</sup> then languages had to become as different as possible.” Finally, and largely in recognition of the hegemony of Russian culture that resulted from decades—and in some cases centuries—of imperial domination, there was an attempt to remove all foreign influences from indigenous languages. Native intelligentsia were tasked with developing extensive new vocabularies in areas, such as technology, where foreign loan words had long been employed as needed.

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<sup>27</sup> The only exception to this cultural egalitarianism in the period of *korenizatsiia* was Russian national culture, which was downplayed to the extent that it represented a hegemonic, imperial force and was not deemed to require any positive promotion inside the Russian SFSR or in other territorial administrations

<sup>28</sup> As argued by Stalin, in *The National Question*.

**Table 3.1 Party indigenization, 1922 to 1933**

Party Organization	Ethnic titulars of Party administration, (% in 1922)	Ethnic titulars of Party administration, (% in 1927)	Ethnic titulars of Party administration, (% in 1932)	Ethnic titulars in administrative territory (% in 1926)
Ukrainian SSR	24	47	59	80
Belarusian SSR	21	47	60	81
Georgian SSR	62	55	66	67
Armenian SSR	89	92	90	84
Azerbaijani SSR	39	32	44	62
Kazakh ASSR	8 (1924)	38	53 (1933)	57
Uzbek SSR	--	36	58	65
Turkmen SSR	--	40	--	72
Kyrgyz AO	--	52	57	67
Tajik ASSR/SSR	--	49	53 (1933)	75

*Source:* Adapted from Simon, Gerhard, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union: From Totalitarian Dictatorship to Post-Stalinist Society* (trans. Karen Forster and Oswald Forster) (Boulder, CO, 1991), pp. 32-33.

Indigenization was intended to not only affect the soft-line areas of culture and language, but also to encourage the preferential social and economic promotion of the titular ethnicities. In this sphere, there were notable differences in mechanisms employed and success achieved among “western” and “eastern” nationalities. Owing to relatively high rates of literacy among the populations of the western SSRs, it was comparatively easy to train indigenous cadres to a level from which they could take up administrative tasks. The low literacy and education rates in the

**Table 3.2 Ethnic titulars as a percentage of administrative organs (1929)**

	Republic level organs	Rayon (district) level organs	Ethnic titulars in Union Republic (% in 1926)
Ukrainian SSR	36	75	80
Belarusian SSR	49	72	80
Azerbaijani SSR	35	69	62
Georgian SSR	74	80	67
Armenian SSR	93	94	84
Turkmen SSR	8	24	71
Uzbek SSR	11	41	65
Tajik SSR	14	44	74

*Source:* Adapted from Simon, Gerhard, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union: From Totalitarian Dictatorship to Post-Stalinist Society* (trans. Karen Forster and Oswald Forster) (Boulder, CO, 1991), pp. 37.

east, however, meant that there was a need for a more fundamental reconstruction of society.<sup>29</sup> Whereas in western republics there was a greater focus on linguistic *korenizatsiia*, characterized by a drive to ensure that all state institutions functioned both orally and in writing in the language of the ethnic titular group, the lack of a resource base to adequately train indigenous representatives in the east led to what Martin (2001) describes as “a crude form of Affirmative Action,” wherein ethnic titulars “mechanically” replaced non-titulars in administrative positions. Indigenization

<sup>29</sup> The literacy rates by nationality perfectly align with the official categorization of “eastern” and “western,” with the lowest proportion among the “western” nationalities, the Armenians, boasting a population that was 34.0 percent literate, while the first among the “eastern” groups, the Tatars, had a population that was 33.6 percent literate. The “eastern” groups that were geographically situated within the Russian SFSR were also more literate than groups in the southern Caucasus and Central Asian regions, of which less than 10 percent of the population was literate (*Natsional'naiia politika v tsifrakh* (Moscow, 1930 ): 271-272 from Martin 2001, 127).

commissions established quotas, known as the “reservation system”, mandating how many titulars each government body was required to hire, and complemented this by actively seeking out available ethnic titulars and directing them to open positions (pp. 136-7).

By the “Great Transformation” period of the early 1930s ethnic quota systems began to be employed more broadly. Administrative and Party positions, as well as admission to institutions of higher education, were affected by ethnic quotas designed to align demographic ethnic proportions with representation in these institutions. As Slezkine (1994b) points out, this was a process greatly complicated by the variety of administrative levels at which demography and representation were measured. Yet there is no doubt that ethnic titulars came to occupy a larger proportion of administrative and Party positions than they had when *korenizatsiia* was enacted (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2). Additionally, despite the great diversity of administrative levels at which different national groups could claim ethnic titularity, the titular nations of the Union Republics were placed in the most advantageous position in the affirmative action system. Because administrative levels were not equal, “with the republican identity frequently dominating all others,” in SSRs it was “assumed republic-controlling (non-Russian) nationalities to be more indigenous than others, so that if the share of Armenian office-holders actually exceeded the share of Armenians in the total population of ‘their own’ republic, no one seemed to allege a violation of the Soviet nationality policy” (439). As I will demonstrate later, the *korenizatsiia* era’s implicit yet systemic preference for ethnic titulars of the SSRs would have path dependent effects on the rhetoric and realities of ethnic representation in later periods.

The effect of indigenization was broad, in terms of the range of institutions that it affected, as well as deep. As Table 3.1 demonstrates, while in most Union Republics and future Union Republics the titular ethnic group represented a vanishingly small proportion of Party members at

the beginning of the reform period, a decade later the numbers were approaching parity with demographic realities. Although not matching the pace of growth for Party membership, ethnic titulars came to occupy a significant number of posts at the Union Republic and *rayon* (district) levels in the same period (Table 3.2).<sup>30</sup> This suggests a broad drive to make the Party organs as representative as possible, and to thereby gain legitimacy in the eyes of the populace.

Although results did not match up to the pie-in-the-sky aspirations of the staunchest early supporters of indigenization—the training of indigenous industrial laborers in “eastern” regions was slower than desired and ham-fisted “mechanical *korenizatsiia*” often produced intergroup antagonism—the program had momentous consequences for ethnic identification and politics in the Soviet period and thereafter. Ethnicity became a “thick” identity category, with great significance in determining life chances, as a result of the nationalities policies of the initial decade of Soviet rule. The institutional structures developed in this period additionally ensured the path dependence of titular promotion at all levels and across the vast geographical range of the Soviet state. Ethnofederalism became a self-reinforcing phenomenon, with newly placed indigenous elites in Union Republic and lower level bureaucracies as well as those in all-Union organs who had a stake in maintaining strong national identifications (e.g., cadres of the Commissariat of Nationalist Officials; ethnographers; etc.) calling for both a steady—and, if at all possible, increasing—flow of resources and institutional autonomy (*ibid*, 422).

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<sup>30</sup> One remarkable facet of indigenization in this period is the much swifter progress at sub-republic levels of administration than the level of Union Republic. The success of ethnic titular promotion at lower levels of administration likely had the desired salutary effect on regime legitimacy: while residents rarely had cause to interact with republic level officials, interactions with local and district functionaries were necessary whenever an individual needed an official document. Finding someone in lower level administrative organs who not only looked more or less like the people one normally interacted with but spoke the local language would have been much appreciated by titular nationals.

Most imperative, perhaps, is the continued support of Josef Stalin for the promotion of indigenous cadres. In spite of persistent complaints from subordinates professing who professed support of socialist internationalism in the face of narrow nationalism, elite debates in 1929-1930 were the final concerted attempt to alter the nationalities policy of the Soviet Union. Stalin rejected out of hand proposals for a reformation of the Union's nationalities policy and administrative composition. As Martin (*ibid*, pp. 248-9) confirms, this moment "marked the last time under Stalin that the idea of creating a united Soviet nationality was seriously considered [as well as] the last time that the regime had sufficient energy and purpose to pursue such a radical strategy." The ethnic politics of titular preference was here to stay.

Indigenization in antebellum high Stalinism. There were two primary features of nationalities policy in the period preceding the Second World War. First, affirmative action and ethnic titular administrative representation remained broadly stable at its early 1930s level during this period. Previously held aspirations for fully indigenous governance were deprived of their most aggressive local advocates through widespread political purges of "national communists". Second, ethnic identity became more intensely tied to territory. In particular, titular nations represented at the Union Republic level were provided additional resources and levers of influence.

The "Great Retreat" of the 1930s was characterized by a deceleration, rather than a course change, in the policy of indigenization. A leading factor underlying this slowdown in ethnic titular affirmative action was the systematic early 1930s purges of "national communists" from Union Republic organs. In the search for capable cadres who could present Bolshevik rule as both local and legitimate, the regime had in the 1920s recruited many ethnic titulars with exceedingly weak

socialist credentials into positions of administrative authority.<sup>31</sup> Yet Stalin and many other Soviet elites from the beginning distrusted these ethnic titulars, an apprehension embodied in a Stalin-era practice whereby ethnic titulars were systematically appointed to leadership positions in the Republic administrative bodies, but a non-titular—more often than not, an individual of Slavic background—held the position of Republic First Secretary.<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore, following the ambitious linguistic and administrative indigenization of the 1920s and early 1930s, non-titular groups—and particularly Russians and russified Europeans—were growing increasingly dissatisfied. In many parts of the Soviet Union, the contingent of the titular ethnic group that could arguably be deemed equipped for technical labor or administrative responsibilities had already been absorbed by the extensive ethnic preference systems. This, along with the purge of “national communists,” resulted in an affirmative action freeze on Party organization membership, with all except the South Caucasian SSRs seeing ethnic titular representation decrease from 1932 to 1937 (Simon 1991, pp. 28-29, 32-33).

Even taking into account these setbacks, the proportions of ethnic titulars in key positions remained significantly greater than the levels seen at the beginning of the *korenizatsiia* period. Martin (2001, pp. 379-87) compiled invaluable data from the often incomplete and anecdotal Soviet documentation of the indigenization program, displaying the broad trends in titular

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<sup>31</sup> In the Soviet east, where the pool of talent from which to draw was comparatively shallow, Stalin demanded that all minimally capable ethnic titulars be recruited into administration, ideological considerations notwithstanding. This is expressed in the following 1926 statement made by the Soviet leader: “In cultural work, you should be guided by the principle that even the most minimally loyal Uzbek *intelligenty* [member of the intelligentsia] should be recruited into government work instead of being driven away. One must not view the Uzbek noncommunist intelligentsia as a single reactionary mass and threaten them with widespread arrests, as some comrades do, instead of appealing to them and attracting the best of them” (from Martin 2001, 232).

<sup>32</sup> The precise opposite pattern would hold under each Soviet leader following Stalin, with titulars holding positions of First Secretary and those of some other nationality—often a Slav—would be second in command. As in other facets of indigenization, even during Stalin’s reign the Armenian and Georgian SSRs were outliers in that representatives of the titular ethnic group held the position of First Secretary throughout Stalin’s decades-long reign.

representation from 1926 to 1939. According to the 1939 census, what Martin terms the *korenizatsiia* rate—the proportion of titular representation divided by the population proportion of ethnic titulars in their titular republics—for leadership positions was not below 70 percent for any Union Republic, with most situated around 85 percent or higher. There is a larger gap between western and eastern republics when considering the highest positions in the republic leadership apparatus. This is demonstrated by comparing the examples of the Kyrgyz and Turkmen republics, with *korenizatsiia* rates each close to 28 percent for these top positions, with the Armenian and Georgian SSRs, with rates of 119 and 108 percent, respectively. Excluding these outliers, however, most Union Republics had *korenizatsiia* rates for top leadership positions between 45 and 65 percent. Promotion of ethnic titulars to administrative positions had the effect, in a period of just over 15 years, of making leadership at the republic level match quite closely the composition of the republican population.<sup>33</sup>

Equally significant for the long-term significance of ethnic politics was the accelerated institutionalization of national identity in this period. This was accomplished, first, through more extensive documentation of ethnicity. Soviet citizens received internal passports at the age of 16, and Soviet children from the late 1930s were born with a centrally recorded, inherited national identity.<sup>34</sup> Slezkine (1994b, 444) posits that, “individual ethnicity had become a biological category impervious to cultural, linguistic or geographical change”. This was connected to a

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<sup>33</sup> A “hole in the middle” remained, however, as titulars in the eastern Union Republics were well represented primarily in leadership and cultural (i.e., academia, media, teaching) positions, but were almost nonexistent among technical and engineering cadres. In 1939, there were a sum total of 12 Turkmen and 12 Tajik engineers, in comparison to 993 Belarusian and 896 Armenians. Moreover, in the eastern Union Republics, leadership and cultural positions represented 75 percent of the white-collar workforce, as compared to 49 percent in the western republics (Martin 2001, pp. 383-385).

<sup>34</sup> Underwritten by the belief that members of “enemy nations” might change their passport nationality in order to go undetected and continue their anti-socialist sabotage, the NKVD—predecessor to the KGB—declared in 1938 that passport identity was to be determined by the nationality of the parents, rather than by individual choice, excepting in cases of mixed parentage.

broader shift in the Soviet conceptualization of ethnicity. Whereas Lenin and Stalin for many years had discussed ethnicity as if it were a wholly modern category associated with the processes of capitalist industrialization, in the pre-World War II years the understanding of national identity became increasingly associated with a primordial timelessness. This shift was predictably accompanied by a greater emphasis on the exotic aspects of national identity: national music, dance, folk tales, and costumes. Paradoxically, the state-directed construction of socialist nations through *korenizatsiia* policies and lifelong documentation of national identity were productive of this primordial understanding.

Ethnic identity not only developed into an immutable individual characteristic, but also became increasingly territorialized in this period. The territorial delimitation of the previous decade had created borders that were a defining element of the national groups encompassed within, and those ethnic groups that possessed their own territory were treated by state institutions as more legitimate targets of resources than other “non-status” nationalities. However, the *matryoshka* character of ethnicized territorial administration was reduced significantly in the mid-1930s, as the Soviet leadership abolished nationally defined soviets, villages, and districts. Only those select groups that possessed their own Soviet Socialist Republics or Autonomous Republics were urged to continue their efforts towards indigenization. Contemporaneously, the ethnic proliferation of earlier stages of *korenizatsiia* was replaced by ethnic consolidation, as the number of national categories that Soviet citizens were free to identify themselves with to census enumerators decreased from 172 in 1927 to 59 “major nationalities” in 1939.<sup>35</sup> “Rootless nationalities” were abandoned in favor of a few “full-fledged, fully equipped nations” (Slezkine

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<sup>35</sup> This was primarily the result of Stalin’s unheralded proclamation in 1936 that, “The Soviet Union, as is well known, consists of 60 nations, national groups, and ethnicities.” This likely provided an effective stimulus for ethnographers to aggregate previously distinct groups and do away with others altogether in order to make reality concur with the *vozhd*’s words.

1994b, pp. 444-5). The nationalities policy of the high Stalinist period thus reduced the number of groups benefiting from positive promotion to those holding institutional power at the highest levels of territorial administration.

The Brezhnev era “Stability of Cadres”. Soviet nationalities policy during the Second World War and in the years prior to Stalin’s death in 1953 was overwhelmingly pragmatic. For instance, the abolition of national military units in 1938 was overturned in 1941, providing all national republics their own units. And, apart from continued instability in the newly acquired western territories of the Baltics, Bessarabia, and western Ukraine, the national republics in the years between the war and Stalin’s death enjoyed a constancy in leadership that provided some scope for the further consolidation of national cultures and societies.<sup>36</sup> The Khrushchev era from 1955 to 1964 was characterized by relative continuity in titular promotion at the Union Republic level, with consolidation of the tradition that the First Secretary of each Union Republic should be an ethnic titular.<sup>37</sup> For much of the Khrushchev period, little attempt was made to disturb or upend republican

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<sup>36</sup> The annexation of Polish and Romanian lands resulting from the 1939 signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact further entrenched the conceptualization of the Soviet Union Republics as representing titular groups. This was achieved, in part, by 1944-46 population transfers in which more than a million Poles were deported from the newly acquired Soviet territory and close to one and a half million ethnic Ukrainians were brought in (Smith 2013, 184). A similar story unfolded in the Moldovan Union Republic, first created as an ASSR within the Ukrainian republic in 1924. Ethnic Moldovans at that point comprised less than a third of the population of the territory. Before being retaken by Romanian forces in 1941, the USSR annexed Bessarabia in 1940 and made Moldova a full Union Republic. By the end of the war and a series of territorial exchanges with the Ukrainian SSR, almost 70 percent of the population of the republic was ethnically Moldovan. The Baltics represented a starkly different pattern, as the considerable Soviet mistrust of Baltic elites and masses alike translated to a policy in the immediate postwar years of bringing in nonnative cadres to serve as administrators and security personnel. The locals given positions of authority in this period were overwhelmingly ethnic Russians. Ethnic titulars were named as First Secretaries, with ethnic Russian second secretaries. Despite Moscow’s suspicions, there was a recognition that administrators ought to be able to work comfortably in local languages. Thus, Soviet authorities recruited Latvians and Estonians whose ancestors had immigrated to Russia, primarily during World War I. No such pool of potential titular cadres existed for Lithuanians, with the significance that in this early postwar period comparatively more Russians held administrative posts in that republic (ibid, pp. 178-183).

<sup>37</sup> The only exceptions throughout the remainder of the USSR’s existence were in the ethnic Russian-plurality Kazakh SSR, with the promotion of Lev Brezhnev in 1955 and the replacement of First Secretary Dilmuhamed Kunaev by an ethnic Russian in 1986, the latter of which was followed by violent demonstrations in the republican capital, Alma-Ata.

leadership. Cadres in the republics were, as such, capable of building both institutional and popular followings among coethnics (Roeder 1991, 212). Stalin's successor contemporaneously introduced an economic reform program increasing Union Republic autonomy, with each coming to possess an independent economic council and, in effect, to control enterprises within their borders. The reforms were naturally followed by increased economic localism (*mestnichestvo*), as republican leaders prioritized their own republics' economic needs over those of the Union (*ibid*, 202).

While the late Stalinist and Khrushchev eras generally represented stasis in ethnic titular affirmative action in the republics, it was in the tenure of Leonid Brezhnev as General Secretary of the CPSU, from 1964 to 1982, that indigenization came into its starkest relief. Brezhnev implemented a "stability of cadres" policy that provided leaders in the Union Republics "ample leeway to build their own political machines and promote their own groups' cultures" such that "minority nationalities [i.e. non-Russian republican titulars] tended to dominate republic-level and local party and government posts" (Hale 2008, pp. 98-99). The "stability of cadres"<sup>38</sup> policy additionally served as a catalyst for the construction of ethnicized, titular-dominated patron-client networks in the Union Republics that would carry into the Soviet collapse and beyond.

Personnel recruitment and appointment at the republic level remained broadly attentive to the objective of national self-administration through affirmative action for ethnic titulars.<sup>39</sup> The

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<sup>38</sup> To give a sense of just how stable republican leadership structures were during this period, once a titular attained the post republic First Secretary, they were likely to remain in it for an extended period. The average term of republic First Secretaries more than doubled from 1960 to 1980, at which point it was 12 years (Hodnett 1978).

<sup>39</sup> That this was a policy deliberately pursued by those in All-Union leadership is evidenced by a fragment of Brezhnev's report at the 1971 Twenty Fourth All-Union Party Congress: "Many new comrades with good political and specialist qualifications have been promoted to the leadership of local party and Soviet organs, including to the post of first secretary of republican, *krai* and oblast party committees. Moreover, *the Central Committee has pursued a consistent policy of promoting local personnel; people have been promoted to these posts from the center only in exceptional circumstances*" (from Miller 1977, 19; emphasis my own).

thorough analysis carried out by Hodnett (1978) permits us to examine titular representation in republican leadership positions through the late Khrushchev and early Brezhnev periods (see Table 3.3). Analyzing the backgrounds of occupants of seven core positions at the republic level from 1955 to 1972, the highly visible positions of Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, and Head of the Writer's Union exhibit unbroken representation by a representative of the titular nationality. Hodnett asserts that consistent titular control of such positions in republics where the titular group makes up half or less of the population "can only be explained as the result of a deliberate policy reserving jobs for the natives [i.e. titulars]" (94). Ethnic titulars controlled more than 80 percent of all posts in the propaganda and culture sectors, where mastery of the local language and a contextual understanding of local culture was invaluable.<sup>40</sup>

As with the period of early *korenizatsiia*, the Brezhnev era saw significant recruitment drives to bring non-Russians into Communist Party structures. In this period, as McAuley (1980, 472) demonstrates in her study of Party recruitment in the republics, leaders "decided to expand the ranks of the party to bring in more workers and peasants but to recruit simultaneously from all sectors of society—to spread the party thicker everywhere, to make it more of a popular national organization." The most dramatic narrowing of difference in Communist Party membership between titular groups in their republics and ethnic Russians/Slavs occurred in the 1960s. Increases in relative Party membership rates were recorded for all nationalities, with a particular spike in representation among Baltic titular groups.<sup>41</sup> These trends continued, albeit

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<sup>40</sup> There is some evidence that non-titulars were appointed to less visible positions, such as Central Committee department heads, at a higher rate than for more visible posts. This is particularly true for agricultural management, industry/construction, and law enforcement (Hodnett 1978, 95).

<sup>41</sup> Armenians and Georgians, who had already been "outperforming" Russians/Slavs in terms of representation in their republics, maintained this distinction throughout the period.

**Table 3.3 Ethnic titulars in leadership positions within Union Republics (1955-1972)**

	Republic level leadership	Republic Politburo	Ethnic titulars in Union Republic (% in 1959)
Kazakh SSR	46	55	30
Kyrgyz SSR	55	61	41
Moldovan SSR	37	47	65
Lithuanian SSR	85	88	79
Latvian SSR	82	80	62
Estonian SSR	84	81	75
Ukrainian SSR	85	93	77
Belarusian SSR	63	77	81
Azerbaijani SSR	91	86	68
Georgian SSR	97	83	64
Armenian SSR	98	89	88
Turkmen SSR	59	61	61
Uzbek SSR	76	63	60
Tajik SSR	66	71	53

*Source:* Adapted from Hodnett, Grey, *Leadership in the Soviet National Republics: A Quantitative Study of Recruitment Policy* (Oakville, Ontario, 1978), pp. 37. Data on titular representation in leading republic positions, pp. 90-93. Data on titular representation in Republic Politburos is an average of yearly titular representation (1955-1972), pp. 377-380.

more slowly, into the 1970s owing to improved access to higher education and industrial careers for ethnic titulars.

Among the more salient developments in the Union Republics during this period was the construction of extensive, titular-dominated patron-client networks. In order to maintain positions for extended periods, republic leaders were obligated to not only remain in the good graces of Moscow, but to appeal to the their mass publics and fellow local administrators. Given that the 1920s and later delineation of Union Republic boundaries guaranteed a significant proportion of the population to be from the titular ethnicity,<sup>42</sup> it was a politically safe decision to appeal to this group.

Primary among the permissive factors underlying the construction of ethnicized patron-client networks was Brezhnev's "stability of cadres" policy. Buttressed by the decentralization policies initiated by Khrushchev and continued under a different label by Brezhnev, SSR First Secretaries were able to build "verticals of power" composed of coethnics within which large portions of the leadership and administrative bureaucracy owed their positions, either directly or indirectly, to the good favor of the former. The ability to appoint cadres that would maintain loyalty was critical for republic leadership. As a first step, appointing and promoting members of the titular ethnic group was generally an unspoken requirement that held the additional virtue of signaling to the population at large that the republican government was authentically "national". Appointing those with yet closer ties to the leader, such as blood relatives, regional clan members, or close personal acquaintances was a means of further entrenching one's own power. Such tactics formed

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<sup>42</sup> In all republics barring the Kazakh and Kyrgyz SSRs, the titular group represented greater than a majority of the population from 1959 until the Soviet collapse. In the case of the Kazakh SSR, ethnic Kazakhs only became a plurality of the republic's population by the 1989 All-Union Census. Ethnic Kyrgyz consistently represented a plurality of the population in the Kyrgyz SSR.

networks of dependence throughout the system, creating a situation in which threats by Moscow or from within the republic elite itself to remove the First Secretary were met with the potential for comprehensive destabilization. Republican leaders had constructed an administrative edifice within which they represented the undisputed keystone.

The relative autonomy provided to republican leadership in this period allowed for the development of a culture of administrative informality and even criminality to thrive. Suny (1993, 118) asserts that the above factors, paired with a lack of institutionalized democratic control over elites, resulted in the emergence of rule by “national ‘mafias,’ centered within the Communist parties and state apparatuses [which] promoted a corrupt system of patronage, favoritism toward the titular nationality, and the widespread practice of bribe-taking and payoffs.” The clearest example of such license was illustrated in the case of the Uzbek SSR, where the “stability of cadres” policy allowed longtime First Secretary Sharif Rashidov to construct a vertical of Uzbek clients owing their positions and the connected perquisites (apartments, automobiles, access to special shopping centers, etc.) to his benevolence. The autonomy given Rashidov to construct this network was tightly tied up with his ability to, on paper, show that greater and greater volumes of cotton were being produced and processed in the republic. The First Secretary simultaneously, with the implicit permission granted by Moscow’s silence, built up Uzbek national identity and culture, including elements of Islamic practice. This included promotion of a “pure,” non-russified Uzbek language, as well as the replacement of republic and lower level officials of European nationality with ethnic Uzbeks.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Following Brezhnev’s death, Rashidov was removed from his position in response to the “Cotton Affair.” The incoming Moscow leadership accused him of being at the head of a system of corruption and falsification of cotton production levels. The ensuing Moscow-directed reshufflings of the early and mid-1980s meant that ethnic Uzbeks lost their majority in the republic party bureau to Russians, though at lower levels of administration Uzbek

The Uzbek SSR was considered the periphery of the periphery by Moscow authorities and was inhabited by a solid majority of ethnic Uzbeks throughout the Soviet period, providing a basis to suggest it might be an outlier. Yet the example of the Kazakh SSR, significant as a locus of Soviet industrial and military resources and the home throughout the Brezhnev period of an ethnic Russian plurality, suggests otherwise. Upon gaining membership to the Communist Party Politburo in 1971, Kazakh First Secretary Dilmuhammad Kunaev was granted particular autonomy in the management of his republic. Among the steps taken to solidify his position, Kunaev constructed a patron-client network dominated by ethnic Kazakhs throughout the republic administration, with Kazakhs holding majorities in the Central Committee of the Kazakh Communist Party and the Council of Ministers. Combining ethnic favoritism and regionalism, many of those appointed and promoted by Kunaev were from his native, Kazakh-majority southern province. In this way, patron-client relations “reinforced the salience of nationality as well as clan-*zhuz* markers which formed a major axis of informal networks.” The primary concern of the central authorities was that all economic quotas were met and there was no direct challenge to Moscow’s authority, while otherwise the emergent ethnocracies were permitted to look after their own affairs (Dave 2007, pp. 84-85).

The foregoing suggests that, by the end of Brezhnev’s tenure, the Union Republics had developed a reliable indigenous elite structure in large part owing to the “stability of cadres” policy. This was combined with national intelligentsias that had been provided the latitude to develop local, titular cultures to a degree not seen since the earliest years of *korenizatsiia*. Titular elites in the republics gradually became less responsive to Moscow’s dictates and more enmeshed

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administrative representation remained dominant and even increased in the latter period of Gorbachev’s reforms (Critchlow 1991, 44).

in local politics, persistently ignoring or substantially customizing orders from the center. The titular ethnic groups of the Union Republics possessed, along with discrete ethnoterritorial containers, the complete set of tools for independent existence.

*Reflections on ethnicity at the collapse of an affirmative action empire*

The political and economic reform packages established by the final Communist Party General Secretary, Mikhail Gorbachev, had little directly to do with altering interethnic relations or remaking ethnic identity.<sup>44</sup> The crucial aspects of policy had been thoroughly institutionalized by the initiation of his tenure. The policies initially developed under early *korenizatsiia* emphatically did not have the intended long-run effect of weakening the significance of ethnic identity. Walker Connor (1973) notes the irony, “that a society predicated upon an ideology which predicts the withering away of both state and nationality should find that each of them has grown immensely in power since the October Revolution.”

The ethnofederal structure of the USSR supplied the levers to coopt indigenous cadres through the granting of privileged access to Party resources. These dependent Union Republic elites in turn possessed the exclusive ability to mobilize the populations that shared their ethnic background and culture in a structure designed to head off any unsanctioned organization around ethnic ties. More broadly, by the Gorbachev period the notion that ethnic titulars were the natural proprietors of “their” Soviet homeland had become widely accepted. Slezkine (1994, 450) posits that Soviet nationalities policy, “had resulted in almost total ‘native’ control over most Union Republics: large ethnic elites owed their initial promotions and their current legitimacy

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<sup>44</sup> This is an omission that some have posited to be a crucial factor in the Soviet Union’s demise (Carrère d’Encausse 1993; for a contrary reading, see Tishkov 1997, pp. 43-45).

**Table 3.4 Titular representation in Union Republic and local soviets, 1989-1990**

	<b>Republic Supreme Soviets, 1990 (%)</b>	<b>Republic local soviets, 1990 (%)</b>	<b>Union Republic titulars (% in 1989)</b>
Kazakh SSR	54	54	40
Kyrgyz SSR	64	69	52
Moldovan SSR	70	77	65
Lithuanian SSR	87	--	80
Latvian SSR	70	83	52
Estonian SSR	77	--	62
Ukrainian SSR	75	86	73
Belarusian SSR	74	86	78
Turkmen SSR	74	81	72
Uzbek SSR	78	79	71
Tajik SSR	75	69	62

Source: Data adapted from Tishkov, Valerii, "Ethnicity and Power in the Republics of the USSR", *Journal of Soviet Nationalities* (1:3), 1990, pp. 33-66. Local soviets include those at the oblast (first sub-state level), district (*rayon*), city, and rural levels.

(such as it was) to the fact of being ethnic.” For members of the titular ethnic groups, this had the effect of decreasing the sense of discrimination within a context of Russian dominance at the highest levels of Soviet power. As Table 3.4 illustrates with data on Union Republic and local popularly elected Soviets, it was broadly assumed by voters that not only should like be represented by ethnic like, but that ethnic Union Republics should be represented by their “historical” proprietors. The control of top administrative positions in governance, cultural institutions and, to a lesser extent, industry, provided titulars with self-assurance that they were the foundational elements on which the success or failure of their republics depended.

In the same way, by making ethnicity a determining factor in nearly all aspects of a Soviet citizen’s life, indigenization “thickened” ethnic identity to the extent that, even in mixed marriages of ethnic titulars and Russians in the southern republics of the USSR, the parents would often choose the titular nationality for their children to obtain a “leg up”.<sup>45</sup> Ethnic titulars moved forward in the world with the knowledge that they gained by outwardly exhibiting their ethnic affiliation, whereas non-titulars perceived themselves as being disadvantaged from birth. Quota systems for ethnic titulars, “discriminated against ‘minority’ ethnic groups living within the homelands of other ethnic groups” (Roeder 1991, 208). Perceived discrimination at the hands of ethnic titulars was a primary driver of political mobilization in the chaotic final years of the Soviet Union. In many cases, allegations of relative material deprivation were connected to a lack of non-titular representation in republic administrative institutions and higher education. Titular communities mounted counter-mobilizations designed to guarantee the preservation of gains from affirmative action and, as importantly, to maintain or even raise the status of the titular language within their

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<sup>45</sup> It has also been noted, however, that ethnic Russians in the Muslim-majority southern Union Republics were significantly more likely to marry non-titulars than they were to marry ethnic titulars (Topilin 1995, 80).

republic, a measure that non-titular groups feared would result in a sharp decrease in their life chances and the immediate loss of those few positions in the administrative hierarchy that they controlled (*ibid*, pp. 219-223).

To a significant extent, titular elites of the Union Republics derived their legitimacy—both in the eyes of the leadership in Moscow and of their constituents—from their position as representatives of their ethnic communities. However, while the material rewards and status granted by Moscow co-opted these indigenous elites, Dave (2007, pp. 94-95) argues convincingly that titular leaders perceived themselves to lack agency or autonomy relative to Moscow. The insecurity that resulted provided the stimulus to enmesh themselves in patron-client relationships that both required and guaranteed loyalty and material benefit in their local environment. Elites' position as intermediaries marked them as bearers and transmitters of relatively empty ethnic symbolism—"national in form, Soviet in content"—that masked the lack of an authentic link to their populations, a deficiency partially capable of being concealed through manipulation of titular language media and propaganda outlets. Both of these features, the construction and maintenance of patron-client networks along ethnic lines and top-down propagation of hollow nationalism as a means of social control, would survive the transition to independent statehood.

The case of Soviet nationalities policy provides a vivid demonstration of the way in which institutions designed with one goal in mind might lead to quite different and, from the perspective of the institutional innovators, wholly undesirable results. Many scholars have posited convincingly that titular control of republic institutions and the granting of ethnofederal territorial boundaries provided abundant opportunity and resources to transition from pseudo-federal colonialism to nation-state sovereignty (Bunce 1999; Leff 1999; Roeder 1991). The ethnic cadres from republics once most successful at exploiting Soviet developmental policy—in the South

Caucasus and Baltics—were by the Gorbachev period expressing their apprehensions regarding the “pressure of potential counterelites, the difficulties of further expanding elite positions and material rewards, and...the threat to their positions” (Roeder 1991, 215). A dominant complaint expressed by the elites of these republics was the transfer of resources to less developed republics, particularly in Central Asia.<sup>46</sup> Institutionalization of ethnicity and federalized titular domination was thus not productive of ethnic harmony in the manner that the early Soviet elite had desired. It instead provided a demonstration of the extent to which the immensely successful inculcation into the Soviet citizenry of ethnonational self-identification, encapsulation of national groups within territorially delimited borders, and provision of titular ethnic administrative elites with all of the tools necessary for sovereign governance represented a reservoir for intergroup competition and independence-seeking separatism.

*Ethnic titular domination in the post-Soviet states*

The collapse of the Soviet Union and transformation of the fourteen ethnically defined Union Republics into independent states might have been an opportunity to reconfigure ethnic structures of titular dominance. Given that there was no longer any far-off authority in Moscow making many of the key policy decisions affecting circumstances in the *de jure* autonomous republics, elites might be imagined to have redesigned the ethnic composition and activities of state institutions in a manner more aligned with civic, as opposed to ethnic, conceptions of national identity, shifting the primary categorical distinction from *titular/non-titular* to *citizen/non-citizen*.<sup>47</sup> As with any

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<sup>46</sup> Roeder (1991, pp. 217-18) further suggests that the less desirable effects of interrepublican transfers had, in the period of moderate growth before the stagnation beginning in the mid-1970s, primarily been shifted onto the minority populations of the Union Republics through systematic discrimination, ensuring that titular groups felt few ill effects.

<sup>47</sup> As described in the country profiles in Appendix A1, post-Soviet Latvia and Estonia are cases of attempts—primarily directed towards the substantial Russian-speaking minorities in each country—to layer these categorical distinctions one upon the other, such that *titular/non-titular*  $\approx$  *citizen/non-citizen*.

instance of state formation, the successor states and their political elites were faced with obstacles of legitimation and its relation to a sense of collective territorial ownership.

The USSR's dissolution made unambiguously material one of the definitive aspects of the Soviet nationalities edifice: the significant non-congruence between territorial nationhood, as embodied by the Union Republics, and personal nationhood, the deeply institutionalized ethnic categorization of each Soviet citizen. The Soviet regime's persecution of any hint of dissent had the consequence that this issue had gone largely unvoiced by the "double minorities" who were neither a member of the ethnic Russian/Slavic Soviet majority or the republican titular group. However, the nearly quarter of the Soviet population living outside "their nation's" territory or not affiliated with such a status-bearing national category were now faced with existence as minorities under sovereign, titular-dominated states. This produced a circumstance observed in many instances of postcolonial state formation, in which "group legitimacy provides a foundation for the recurrent psychological denial that another group owns an equal share in the land" (Horowitz 1985, pp. 201-2). This was compounded by titular communist-turned-nationalist elites' eagerness to endear themselves to a mobilized population demanding collective redress for historical injustices at the hands of the Russian-dominated Soviet regime.

Although the imperial link to Moscow had been broken, the titular former Soviet elite maintained preeminence throughout most of the non-Baltic successor states. These individuals had long promoted themselves as conduits of the national will in their relations with Moscow. Independence freed political entrepreneurs from certain constraints but required a new set of expressed commitments to "their people" as against all others, signifying the "replacement of a tyranny of political party programs by a no less rigid tyranny of group thinking and myths" (Tishkov 1997, pp. xiii-xiv). One crucial legacy of affirmative action policies was a highly

educated titular elite possessing the intellectual resources necessary to mobilize a mass audience made receptive to all kinds of symbolism through the disappearance of Marxist-Leninist hegemony and the ideological abyss that resulted.

The broad continuity of elite strata was among the factors aiding the persistence of the Soviet relationship between state and ethnicity and the casts of mind that supported them. Systems of ethnic preference were designed by a limited number of Bolshevik elites under conditions of uncertainty as pragmatic short-term solutions. However, they became permanent features of Soviet sociopolitical life and have subsequently shaped interethnic relations in the post-Soviet states. These institutions not only constrained actors, but constituted them—determining their preferences, modes of discourse, and potentialities for understanding the events surrounding them (Brubaker 1994). Individual post-Soviet actors, elite and non-elite, exist within a system of categorization that significantly narrows what can be accommodated within a “logic of practice” (Bourdieu 1990) and the scripts and common knowledge accumulated within the framework of Soviet ethnic structures reduced transaction costs such that institutional innovation would have required a sizeable investment of organizational resources (Tilly 1998). Furthermore, the legitimization potential available to elites from portraying themselves as the voice of the titular nation—at least a plurality of the population across all post-Soviet states—was not something easily relinquished.

Popular Soviet understandings of nationality and its relation to territorial statehood were aided in their transition to independent statehood by the fact that the only partially fulfilled Soviet promise of “ethnoterritorial autonomy” could now be presented as a potential reality. Despite the significant non-titular population of the successor states, titulars understood these territories to be their property, an element of their identity that constituted their “groupness”. This ownership

mentality merged with the powers and relative impunity granted by sovereignty, as the relief from Moscow's moderating effects meant that projects of "authentic" state nationalization could flourish.<sup>48</sup> Noting the paranoid and ultimately insecure character of this ideology, Tishkov (1997, 152) suggested that among post-Soviet titulars, "Any discrepancies in this exclusive shared world picture...are dismissed as absurd contradictions to the truth, a conspiracy by the enemies, and so forth."

Further legitimation of policies favoring ethnic titulars was pursued through claiming a history of group repression under Soviet (i.e. Russian) domination. Ethnic entrepreneurs portrayed titular groups as having been at a political and socioeconomic disadvantage relative to the state-forming ethnic group and elites gained popularity by way of calling for redress not only in the realm of economic opportunity, but also in politics and culture. "Post-Soviet republics considered themselves national in character and, at the same time, repressed, oppressed, unfulfilled according to national identity, so their policy was composed of a 'full' and 'final' nationalization" (Abashin 2011). And to the extent that the former "double minorities" expressed their preferences, their demands were delegitimized precisely because their claims tended to be framed under the Soviet understanding of ethnonational autonomy and group rights, as opposed to claims of individual rights. Titular-dominated regimes have primarily responded to these group claims as threats to sovereignty and group redress as designated for the "state-forming" ethnicity alone.

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<sup>48</sup> Primordial articulations of national identity, most particularly the sociobiological approach favored by Soviet-era ethnographers Yulian Bromley and Lev Gumilev, have thrived in post-Soviet conditions. These authors' defining works were published in the final decades of Soviet rule and thus shaped much of the academic and popular discourse on identity in the transition period. Both scholars posited the existence of "ethnoses" as indivisible units preternaturally linked to a territorial homeland. Gumilev's theories, in particular, have substantially influenced intellectual development in the post-Soviet period and are widely featured in school textbooks to this day (see Bassin 2014).

All of this has supported the continued domination by ethnic titulars of posts both elected and unelected throughout the post-Soviet states. Non-titulars are afforded little descriptive representation and, where some level of descriptive representation is apparent, norms of non-inclusion in governing coalitions and ethnoclientelist systems controlled by titular elites diminish substantive representation (see Pitkin 1967). It has mattered little whether regimes have had formally liberal democratic institutions, as with the Baltic states, or, as with Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, or Turkmenistan, personalistic regimes lacking in liberal democratic characteristics.

In none of the post-Soviet states have consociational institutions—multiethnic coalitions, proportional representation in legislative and bureaucratic bodies, or group-level autonomy—been institutionalized. Most of the regimes are better described as *ethnic control regimes*, wherein a dominant group guarantees stability by way of restricting political opportunities to subordinate groups through coercion or its recognized potential (Lustick 1979). Some regimes—particularly Estonia, Georgia, and Latvia—might be better classified as *ethnic democracies*, which are distinguished by the “inherent contradiction between...civil and political rights for all and structural subordination of the minority to the majority”, an acceptance that titulars “own” the state, and a sense of potential threat from internal and external “Others” (Smootha and Järve 2005, pp. 21-22, 32). The primary distinction between these systems of managing ethnic diversity is that, while under systems of ethnic control the institutions of political representation and governance are more or less explicitly—if not *de jure*—closed to subordinate groups, in ethnic democracies some rather constrained institutional opportunities exist for advancement of non-titular interests.

As I illustrate in Appendix A through brief overviews of ethnic political and administrative representation in each of the fourteen non-Russian Federation Soviet successor states, in most

cases *titular/non-titular* remains the critical social boundary in the composition of the state.<sup>49</sup> A core determinant of whether or not states have been “nationalized” appears to be the extent to which indigenization was undertaken in the Soviet period, with independent Belarus and Moldova maintaining relatively inclusive institutions. Ukraine, too, is an outlier: cross-cutting cleavages of language, region, and ethnicity have tended to significantly diminish the extent to which political competition runs along lines defined by ethnic titularity.

### **Society in the (post-)Soviet state: informal networks of access across regimes**

Concurrently with the design and implementation of Soviet nationalities policy, citizens of the USSR from all ethnic backgrounds were attempting to creatively adapt to life under centralized economic planning. While little else could be depended on under this system, it was consistently able to produce one result: a shortage of desired goods and services. And, given the relative equality in access to hard currency across Soviet society, a dilemma presented itself: outside of being among the first to queue in front of a distribution center or administrative office, how was one supposed to differentiate oneself in their ability to acquire goods and services, all of which were officially distributed by the state? Informal connections and reciprocity networks of access developed to fill this gap. Many, but not all, Soviet citizens intentionally constructed networks such that they could influence the distribution of a wide variety of resources in the direction of themselves and their communities. And, as I will describe below, independence and the end of shortage in goods and services did not lead to the extinction of these tools of *Homo sovieticus*. Informal ties and networks of access, often simply dubbed connections (*sviazy*), remain a structuring element of society in the successor states. However, they exist in forms and exhibit

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<sup>49</sup> I only take into account major nationalities, although groups that have been statistically assimilated in one way or another into the titular nationality, such as Svanetians, Adjarians, and Mingrelians in Georgia, Pamiris in Tajikistan, and Tajiks in Uzbekistan, to name just a few, also commonly claim underrepresentation.

functions at variance from those under Communism. Crucially, they have evolved from a means of maintaining relative socioeconomic equity to a mechanism productive of growing class disparities.

### ***The Soviet era shortage economy and blat networks of access***

One of the defining features of the Soviet experience was a shortage of goods and services—the omnipresent *defitsit*—with the interminable lines that accompanied them for most citizens of the USSR. Acquiring foodstuffs and home appliances, telephone connections and clothing, all required a meeting at the interface between state and individual. It is natural under such conditions that people searched for means not simply to bypass the lines, but also to ensure that one was able to *dostat* (acquire with difficulty) goods and services of a quality higher than what one would generally be able to obtain. One of the primary means by which this was achieved was through the construction and maintenance of informal networks that could be employed to minimize the time and anguish often entailed in the process of acquisition. These were commonly known as *blat* networks.

Though precise manifestations of *blat* were colored by the formal social, economic, and political institutions within which they took place, it was consistently utilized owing to its inherent interpersonal advantages—the production and conservation of strong relationships—as well as the constant political and economic insecurity experienced by the great majority of residents in Soviet Eurasia. *Blat* was a highly adaptive social institution that could, and did, survive changes in formal political regime or economic system.

What, then, was this highly persistent informal practice, and why did it take on such a universal character under Soviet conditions? Acquisition of goods or services “by *blat*” is roughly

equivalent to the use of connections to reach desired ends. The networks through which *blat* operated were composed of highly personalized reciprocity ties. In opposition to impersonal exchanges of items bearing roughly equal value according to a widely agreed upon standard, the exchange of favors—whether they be in the form of a good, service, or access to a valued network—under the *blat* system concerned itself with the maintenance and strengthening of interpersonal, interdependent ties. Polanyi’s (1957, 73) description of primitive economies, wherein “reciprocity demands adequacy of response, not mathematical equality,” provides an approximation of the social sensibilities at work in *blat* relations.<sup>50</sup>

The use of *blat* in the Soviet Union was the response to a command economy that ensured a persistent shortage of valued items. Soviet citizens daily arrived at the public grocer with her *avoska*<sup>51</sup> and an often unfulfilled hope that there would be something beyond black bread and a few other staples to return home with.<sup>52</sup> As a means of supplementing the meager menu of goods and services widely available, individuals directed extensive efforts towards the formation and maintenance of useful social connections. That this was the case from the earliest decades of the USSR’s existence is made clear from a 1940 letter sent from a resident of the Russian SFSR to the

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<sup>50</sup> This reciprocal character was expressed in the oft-used Russian phrase, “*Ty—mne, ya—tebe*” (You help me and I’ll help you). Other, more colloquial turns of phrase were often used to describe the use of *blat*, including “I am from Ivan Ivanisovich” and the appellation of one’s own network as “*svoi lyudi*” (my/our people). Soviet citizens often described the route of acquisition of some desired good or service as simply “by acquaintance” (Ledeneva 1998, pp. 33-34).

<sup>51</sup> From the Russian term *avos’*, loosely translated as “God willing” or “Here’s hoping.” A heartbreakingly material manifestation of deficit, the *avoska* was a string bag that Soviet citizens in the period of “Mature Socialism” hauled with them nearly everywhere in order to ensure that they had something to transport home whatever good they found unexpectedly available.

<sup>52</sup> I use a gendered pronoun here to note, in passing, salient elements of *blat* networks. Men were widely perceived as those who used *blat* for “important” ends, most specifically business and manufacturing connections, while women were seen as employing it for smaller, primarily domestic, purposes. Despite this, Ledeneva (1998, pp. 120-1) notes that many of the non-official *blatmeisters* she met were single or divorced women who had little choice but to engage in *blat* in order to survive under Soviet conditions. The concentration of women in the trade and service sector also provided them critical access to everyday needs.

head of the Soviet of People's Deputies. In the letter, the concerned citizen voiced what he considered a general opinion:

[The absence of any] close connection with a swindler, speculator, fiddler, thief, flatterer and the like...is equal to having no civil rights...and [to being deprived] of everything. You can obtain nothing in the shops. In response to your legitimate demands you will get a simple and clear 'no' in response...If it is difficult or impossible for a passenger to obtain a train ticket, it is easy and possible by *blat*. If you have no apartment, never go to the housing department or anywhere similar, try to have a little *blat* and an apartment will become available. If you want an excellent promotion at work, at the expense of others, with no justice and legality, again you need *blat*. Finally, if you address a representative or executive of a state, mass or cooperative organization in order to solve some personal problem just try to achieve a decision without *blat*! You'll break yourself but gain nothing. (from Ledeneva 1998, pp. 22-24)

*Blat* was the unmistakable essence of the acquisition market, whether or not Soviet citizens looked approvingly upon the fact. Demand everywhere outstripped supply, and for this reason those who controlled desired goods and services were exceedingly hard-put to employ meritocratic or impersonal standards in their decision-making processes between two equally deserving applicants. Personal connections, shallow or long-standing, often served as the tiebreaker in such circumstances. Understanding this, many individuals constructed their *blat* networks with a great deal of intentionality, ensuring that there was an individual who could be appealed to in every relevant sphere. In turn, they would—implicitly or explicitly—make available their own future assistance in matters of acquisition, as well as access to the ties within one's own *blat* network. This series of interconnected networks allowed *blat* to take on a ubiquitous character, as individuals offered up their connections or access to shortage goods and services associated with

their position to others in the understanding that they could at some later point appeal in a reciprocal manner for assistance.<sup>53</sup>

Far from undermining Soviet state and bureaucratic institutions, *blat* was an adaptive, integral, and constitutive element under conditions of shortage. Ledeneva (*ibid*, 3) convincingly positions *blat* as the necessary mirror to an overly controlled market, a response by everyday citizens to chronic scarcity that not only “enabled the system to function and made it tolerable, but also subverted it.” These organic networks of reciprocal assistance existed as informal institutions the form and need of which was in great part determined by the structural, formal institutional environment within which they originated: *blat* could not have existed without the planned economy of shortage and, more strikingly, the Soviet state and its institutions likely would not have possessed either their character or their relative stability and durability without the socioeconomic pressure release valves of *blat* relations.

*Blat* was significant to the Soviet economy and society, possibly even vital, but how did it function in practice and how did Soviet citizens understand this phenomenon? There are a number

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<sup>53</sup> There was no particular sphere in which *blat* was used more than others. Everyday items were acquired through connections, and this included access to heavily discounted and/or better quality foodstuffs. Consumer items such as lemon, chocolates, and cars were also in short supply, but had crucial importance in signaling prestige and were thus persistent objects of *blat* acquisition. Health services were state-controlled and hospitals often woefully understaffed, which meant that one needed connections to meet the correct specialists or surgeons. One needed, moreover, to maintain good relations with the overworked doctors in order to ensure decent quality of care. Housing also came under the influence of *blat* relations. Although rents were formally very low, housing in urban areas was regularly in short supply. One could shorten the wait time for a house or apartment substantially through their social ties, also guaranteeing a higher quality and better location. Finding spaces for one’s children in overfilled kindergartens and quality primary schools was another *blat* task. Finally, acquiring a job or being promoted were nearly impossible without *blat* connections (*ibid*, pp. 28-33). Rather than fulfilling a specific area of need, *blat* came in handy in moments when a need became especially acute. Even those who rarely used their informal connections, for instance, would call in favors at critical stages in the life cycle—e.g. pregnancy, illness, and death—or social landmarks—e.g. starting school or university, avoiding military service, acquiring one’s first job and attaining subsequent promotions (*ibid*, 116). Given that such critical junctures were overwhelmingly significant in the determination of one’s life chances, they represented periods during which even the most upstanding Soviet citizen would feel the need to place his or her interests above the “greater social good”.

of defining characteristics of *blat*-type networks of reciprocity. Primary among them is the non-monetary nature of exchange. Given its existence within a broader command economy in which money was a relatively insignificant factor, the character of barter exchange founded in acquaintance, interpersonal trust, and affect that defined *blat* relations was encouraged. Related to this, *blat* transactions were inalienable: the goods or services attained through *blat* did not exist separately from the individuals involved in the transaction. The “personal stamp of the donor” on the *blat* exchange and its results signified that a favor could not be returned through an identical favor in a manner that balances or erases interpersonal debts (*ibid*, pp. 34-35). As was described by Mauss (2002 [1925]) in relation the economy of gifts, strict economic rationality in such systems is shrouded behind societal norms of behavior such that reciprocity is an implied but unvoiced aspect of the transaction. What appears at the moment of gifting as an independent act of selflessness and generosity is in fact one element of a broader chain of reciprocal acts constitutive of a social community.

Despite the ubiquity of *blat* under Soviet conditions, there was a widespread reluctance to openly admit to being involved in the practice. While individuals would acknowledge that they depended upon friends and colleagues for help under circumstances both major and minor, the use of *blat* as such was often described as something that “other people” did. *Blat* was often carried out under the pretext of “helping a friend,” whereas observers not party to the transaction recognized *blat*. This ability to switch perspectives dependent on personal participation both enabled individuals to personally integrate themselves in *blat* networks and, simultaneously, deny their involvement in antisocial behaviors.<sup>54</sup> The practice of misrecognition, by which participants

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<sup>54</sup> This is in opposition to “recognized *blat*”, which was understood as placing one’s personal needs above those of society and lent *blat* its negative connotations. This element of egoism was a primary factor in the broader critique of *blat* from both Soviet authorities and everyday citizens. There was a sense that, if everyone unilaterally ceased engaging in such practices, the reality of Soviet life might be that much closer to the oft-described communist utopia

convinced themselves that expected reciprocity was not a material aspect of the interaction, were the fundament of a socially accepted *blat* system, “establish[ing] the reciprocal ties and circulation of favors in the long run” (Ledeneva 1998, pp. 59, 61).<sup>55</sup>

The veiled recognition that *blat* favors would be reciprocated at some indefinite time, directly or indirectly, played heavily into decisions to engage and were both dependent on and productive of a variant of intense social trust that was limited to one’s social circle. This exchange of favors is characterized by Ledeneva as a reciprocal dependency: although shortage was systemic, each individual and their *blat* network possessed comparative advantages, such that A depended on B for, say, vital medication acquired through B’s former university chum who was now a player in the medical intelligentsia, and B depended on A for theater tickets acquired through A’s sister’s position in the Party’s cultural censorship organs. Repeated interactions through these channels produced a strong bond of trust and respect for the other’s ability to “come through.” The reciprocity was further engendered by a qualitative sense of fairness in the relationship, “in which each side takes responsibility as the recipient both for his/her satisfaction and that of the other” (*ibid*, pp. 140-142).

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of the future. The collective action problem raised by this proposition prevented a societally rooted, bottom-up campaign against *blat* relations. Only a particularly idealistic few were willing, out of a sense of righteousness, to be the “suckers” with poor quality boots incapable of standing up to the Leningrad winter, moldy bread, and sausage of unknown provenance.

<sup>55</sup> This character of “misrecognition” is elucidated elegantly by Bourdieu (1990), who suggests that participants in such exchanges are required to misrepresent the truth of the game and to embellish the construction with time, energy, and care. Acknowledgment by one or both parties of a roughly equivalent exchange of goods or services negates the constructed definition of the gift-giving relationship. *Blat* and gifts thus share the characteristics of non-monetary exchanges both encouraged by and constitutive of relationships. However, a crucial difference inheres in the, “compulsion and ‘contrived asymmetry’ of the gift, as opposed to the relative freedom and balance of *blat*” (Ledeneva 1998, 121). This difference originates both in the environmental causes of *blat*—systemic shortage—and the often circular, rather than dyadic, character of *blat* networks. Delay in reciprocation was a necessary element of the *blat* misrecognition game and was further accentuated by favors mediated through a third party not involved in the original transaction. A *blat* chain of the type  $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow A$ , as opposed to  $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow A$  was “even more efficient for avoiding practical and social constraints against immediate repayment” (*ibid*, 155).

Despite its apparent omnipresence, the ability to employ *blat* effectively was not innate. An individual who had not developed their social sense under Soviet conditions would likely be at a loss to recognize the elegant social cues indicating *blat* transactions. Whereas the skill indeed seemed for some an inborn trait, “routine, habitual and therefore fairly automatic”, for others it was either a challenge that required persistent and intentional exertions or beyond the remit of one’s boundaries of moral acceptability (*ibid*, 6). Members of the second category, for whom building up and calling on *blat* connections was an effortful process, “used their relationships only if need itself legitimized the request.” Those from the third group, even if they had the ability to participate in *blat*, often “did not wish to because they considered it distasteful and demeaning” (*ibid*, pp. 113-14). Even if they held negative attitudes towards Soviet living standards, a life uncompromised by the semi-legality of *blat* produced less cognitive dissonance and they enjoyed their relative independence from the webs of dependency constitutive of *blat* networks.

For those involved in them and from the standpoint of Soviet authorities, the existence of *blat* networks played a particularly important role in what might be termed “ideological maintenance”. Marxism-Leninism promoted a class-inflected variant of equality, wherein socialist toilers were promised not only relative socioeconomic opportunity, but also a rough equality of result. While this may have adequately described the early, post-civil war years in which nearly all citizens were living in a state of economic and social uncertainty, by the second and third decades of Soviet rule the cult of equality revealed itself an empty promise. Far from the capitalists having taken their revenge, though, by the 1950s it was Party officials that composed a class separate and above the rest of society, using their privileged access to state property in a manner that largely benefited themselves and maintained the stability of the system (Djilas 1959). Rather than the potential conflict along ethnic lines feared by Lenin, Stalin, and other Bolshevik

institutional designers, the disdained outgroup for the average Soviet citizen was the out-of-touch Party *nomenklatura*, who were perceived as having access to everything and sharing nothing with “the people” (Davies 1997; Inkeles and Bauer 1961). To the extent that access to and utilization of *blat* networks minimized the gap between these two classes—the simple folk (*narod*) and the “Party people”—it had the effect of maintaining the Soviet illusion of equality.

Another reason that Soviet authorities were loath to implement a substantial anti-*blat* program was that representatives of state institutions themselves benefited extensively from their positions as purveyors of shortage goods and services, providing them integral positions in broader *blat* networks. The system was in this sense highly path dependent, as individuals with control over state resources used their positions for acquisitive purposes and, concurrently, made the positions themselves synonymous with questionably legitimate acquisition. Party officials benefited from *blat* relations to a much greater extent than those outside such circles. Soviet citizens thus found themselves in an equilibrium that was difficult to approve of normatively, particularly given the hierarchical elements involved, but was just as difficult to abstain from categorically.

Thus a certain amount of direct or indirect access to state-controlled resources was a necessary condition for *blat* transactions and networks. Without participation from representatives of state organs, which, in the Soviet Union, was an expansive category, there would have been little of consequence to acquire through connections. In turn, the reality of systematic shortage under the controlled economy was that individuals were required to possess within their circle of contacts just such representatives of state organs. Public property of all sorts was acquired through the creation and maintenance of direct or indirect relationships with Soviet bureaucrats (*chinovniki*). Individual *blat* networks and their linkages with other such groupings formed the

skeletal structure of informal distribution. Given the spatial variation among individuals within these networked groups, there was significant differentiation at the individual and network level in regards to both the type of goods and services under state control that could be accessed and the quality and amount of the goods and services in question. Interlinking nodes between networked groups were crucial in taking advantage of *blat* specializations possessed by individuals and networks dependent on the particular ministries or state organs to which they were linked. The exploitation of these interlinking nodes was a critical factor in producing the relative social equality associated with *blat*, as everything was attainable given the right “friends of friends.”

Those who controlled points of distribution for goods and resources through their formal positions were well placed to access other resources as well. Under the Soviet command economy and its non-monetary markers of social distinction, these individuals possessed privileged access to other officials or state representatives and, in turn, the resources under their aegis. They thus, “gained favors, flattery, influence, use of the organizational resources, and pleasure from exercising control,” all of which could be utilized in further informal exchanges. By these means, state cadres gained a reputation of being *blatmeisters* of the highest order: “The fact that [they] had at their disposal decision-making and resource-allocation powers made them frequent recipients of *blat* overtures” (*ibid.*, pp. 125-127).<sup>56</sup>

*Blat* networks, then, were multileveled, numerous, and a product of the personalization of formal acquisition routes. Both horizontal and vertical networks composed the supranetwork, with the former made up of people of similar status and grounded in shared “standards of values, scales

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<sup>56</sup> All of this was generally met by organizational superiors with indifference or active encouragement: an underling’s use of organizational resources in *blat* transactions could be claimed to have occurred on the behalf of the organization itself, which expanded the bosses’ own *blat* opportunities. Furthermore, every bureaucratic position had some allowance for personal excuse, and Party membership allowed punishment to occur through non-state, Party channels. This formal inequity proved to be among the more poorly received aspects of the informal economy (*ibid.*, 78).

of needs, and scope for satisfying them”. Vertical networks, on the other hand, consisted of people of unequal status and positionality in the Soviet resource distribution hierarchy who were “interested in each other's connections and linked by kin, personal contacts or, most often, intermediaries known as 'useful people' (*'nuzhnye lyudi'*)”. The primary difference in the quality of interactions on the horizontal, as opposed to the vertical, plane was that the former were characterized by a constant stream of information, whereas vertical relations were less constant and more clearly burdened with the expectation of reciprocity (*ibid.*, pp. 121-123).

Friends and family were key in these networks, and this included extended kin relations. Particularly outside of the Slavic cultural core of the Soviet Union, kin networks significantly structured *blat* and similar informal relations.<sup>57</sup> Schatz (2004, 62) describes, in his study of the role of informal kinship networks in Kazakhstani politics, how kin-based ties generated high levels of trust which allowed for temporally diffuse exchange of goods or aid, whereas *blat* transactions among non-kin often necessitated immediate exchanges. Yet the shortage economy also had the effect of altering the structure of these preexisting kinship relations: whereas Kazakh kinship networks traditionally possessed a patrilineal structure, under Soviet conditions it was recognized that maternal ties were just as useful in the persistent search for scarce goods and services.

More fundamentally, these monoethnic clan networks generally were deprived of their social and cultural significance by the end of the Soviet period. This resulted, first, from an incessant and highly visible campaign against “clannishness” (*klannost'*) conducted by Soviet authorities. Additionally, and of greater significance, the Soviet experience had the effect of tightly

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<sup>57</sup> Adeeb Khalid argues that these kinship networks had the additional effect of supporting and being supported by “parallel”, non-state controlled Islam, particularly in rural regions: “The practice of Islam and Islamic ritual beyond the purview of the officially recognized religious directorates—the so-called unofficial Islam—existed in this realm of community-based solidarity networks that penetrated even state and Party institutions” (Khalid 2007, 102).

connecting, in the conceptualizations of those who possessed such an identity, kinship networks and the acquisition of state-controlled goods and services. Relieved of much of their cultural content, “clans emerged into the post-Soviet period as access networks to goods in short supply” (*ibid*, 19).

Regardless of the social foundations of *blat* networks of access, they held both immediate and significantly path dependent consequences for distributive politics. During the Soviet era, there was extensive differentiation within the rationing system. This socioeconomic differentiation was designed, in theory, to reward hard work and labor under especially strenuous conditions. Yet, as the Soviet experiment wore on, Party members gained ever greater access to resources, career opportunities, and impunity. The *nomenklatura* further benefited from the privileged status within *blat* networks that their positions granted them. The social stratification this entailed reached its apex in the Brezhnev period of economic stagnation, a condition that only made access and connections more salient to quality of life. All of this ensured the formation of interests who benefited from the prolonged existence of informal networks of access, and who created “informal property rights” which could be used to control and distribute public assets for private gain (Grossman 1977). Although the dissolution of the USSR would alter the precise form these informal networks of access would manifest, the control over resources wielded by the former Party elite and their associates guaranteed a significant degree of continuity.

#### *Post-Soviet informality and networks*

With the fall of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the planned economy, the necessity and function of informal social networks of access transformed significantly. As described above, informal social networks of access were required by individuals at all levels of the Soviet social hierarchy as a result of systemic shortages of goods and services. These networks played an

adaptive, even vital, role under socialist political and economic structures. The utilization of these practices was widespread and reacted to with a wink and a nod by the authorities who, themselves affected by shortages and the bearers of control over a proscribed range of goods and services, were constituent elements of the system of informal acquisition.

With liberalization of markets following the Soviet collapse, the primary structuring element of these Soviet-era networks of access—ubiquitous shortage—became obsolete. Rather than a shortage in availability of goods and services, in the aftermath of economic liberalization the primary shortage was in hard currency. Before, promising a Soviet bureaucrat that you would be able to acquire for them an additional pair of winter boots—on top of her yearly rationed pair—from one of your informal social connections in return for an expedited permit to travel abroad would be a perfectly normal phenomenon. Today, however, while post-Soviet stores and outdoor markets overflow with boots of all imaginable styles and levels of quality, the money necessary to purchase them is limited. These “changes in the political and economic foundations of the state-centralized economy have resulted in the monetization of *blat* and the reorientation of the use of personal networks towards a new type of shortage—a shortage of money” (Ledeneva 2006, 1).

Despite the altered structural conditions of economy and society, informality remains a defining characteristic of life in the post-Soviet region. This path dependency has been noted by a number of prominent area specialists (Gel'man 2003, 97; Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2013, 46), with some even claiming that reliance on informal ties has increased in the post-Soviet period (Kuehnast and Dudwick 2004, pp. 3-5). Oka (2013) posits that, in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, “[i]nformal practices circumventing official procedures...have so widely and strongly permeated into the life of common people that they have *de facto* become social norms.” Such practices are pervasive

across spheres of state-society interactions (Miller, Koshechkina, and Grodeland 1997; Oka 2015, 2019; Stepurko et al. 2013).

Persistence of informal practices is attributed both to the particularly difficult socioeconomic conditions across the region in the wake of the USSR's collapse and a high degree of social embeddedness after more than a half century of Soviet rule (H. Aliyev 2015). Due to the extent of economic precariousness in the transition period, "the ubiquitous nature of corruption and worsening state-society relations, such practices are an important part of everyday life for a far greater number of households than they are in more mature economies" (Round and Williams 2010, 184). Moreover, the Soviet state's monopoly over the provision of all manner of welfare and social services was followed in the transition period by the lack of well-funded and capably-regulated private or semiprivate providers (Polese et al. 2014). As a result, residents of the region depend, as before, on informal means of social and economic support to make up for a largely absent and unresponsive state.

Apart from the necessity of utilizing informal connections and networks to cope under conditions of post-Soviet insecurity, these practices are deeply socially embedded. As described by Rasanayagam (2011, 682), "[t]he formal and the informal were organically linked within the everyday lives of Soviet citizens" and, therefore, "informal economic activity is just one expression of a more general informalisation of state, society and life worlds following the collapse of the Soviet Union". In spite of economic and political transition, individuals continue to relate to one another and to representatives of the state in a manner that is deeply personalized. Moreover, it is increasingly recognized that, because of this embeddedness, the conduct of such practices "are much more than *ad hoc* measures" and thus should not be expected to abate over time, barring a critical juncture (Round, Williams, and Rodgers 2008, 172).

While informal ties and their relation to accessing state-distributed goods and services remains a fundamental feature, the nature of these connections and interactions has altered notably. In particular, due to the novel significance of money and growing inequality across the region, network structures and their functions are largely bifurcated along lines of social class. Informal social networks that contain either or both direct and indirect connections to those who control access to state resources are now a necessary but insufficient component of the process of influencing the flow of public funds. In addition, dependent on the strength of the tie(s) involved, individuals may need to be willing to advance economic resources to be able to “come to an agreement with” (read: bribe) officials. This will often occur within the wider ambit of informal networks as employed in Soviet-era *blat* transactions, to conceal in part the morally ambiguous nature of the interactions both from the direct participants and from potentially interested authorities.

The increasingly monetized character of informal social ties has been noted in various contexts and spheres of state-society interaction. In particular, there is a recognition that while money plays a role in informal networks of access, contextual insights and relations of preexisting trust are still required, in most cases. This is described in the context of Kyrgyzstan by World Bank researchers, who find that,

insider connections (*sviazy*) remain important, since it is often through such connections that one learns who can or should be bribed, what constitutes reasonable payment, and how to time the payment. Bribery requires specific techniques, depending on the organization involved (for example, a university, a tax or customs department, or a hospital). Such “technical” knowledge is local and specific, and depends on information provided through personal relationships. Even the non-poor who move from rural to urban areas must obtain access to local social networks in order to identify which powerful individuals they should bribe in order to achieve their specific objectives. (Kuehnast and Dudwick 2004, 24)

This is mirrored in Oka's (2015, pp. 337-338) description of informal connections in Kazakhstan, where she finds that, while those with strong ties have a higher ability to achieve their goals as it relates to healthcare, education, and social services, direct or mediated monetary exchange is still generally expected. Yet possession of strong ties with the immediate provider or intermediary may equate to a lower price point for the "favor".

Monetization of informal ties and interactions results in particularly poor outcomes for the least well off in society. De-linking of networks across social classes has the effect that, in many post-Soviet settings, networks among those with fewer means have "flattened" and become increasingly geographically narrow, whereas those for the non-poor have "become more extensive geographically and more dense socially, reflecting the importance of networks for enhancing social and economic mobility" (Kuehnast and Dudwick 2004, 5). Even traditional kinship relations have become less dependable as social networks bifurcate and those with fewer resources are unable to expend the significant resources necessary to participate in life-cycle events, where gifts of significant amounts of cash have become the norm (*ibid*, 17).

In summary, post-Soviet states continue to be rife with informal networks of access as a means of coping with economic uncertainty and state structures that are suboptimal producers and distributors of desired goods and services. Additionally, the construction of networks of mutual dependence over the course of many decades under socialism and embodied knowledge of how to influence the distribution of state resources through these ties is socially embedded in a manner that cannot be expected to alter simply as a result of market liberalization. Yet the unique importance of money as a shortage good in post-Soviet circumstances has crucial significance for the form and function of informal networks of access. First, while these networks may continue to provide direct or mediated access to nodes with control over distribution of desired goods and

services, a monetary transaction for the “favor” has been normalized. Thus, relations of particularized trust built up across countless, temporally distant, instances of inalienable acts of reciprocity, as under *blat*, have been replaced by more market-like transactions in which some level of trust is only a first stage in the process. Furthermore, whereas relative equality and the almost total state control over goods and services had the consequence that Soviet informal networks tended to include people of various social classes and positionalities in relation to the state, monetization of informal interactions is associated with an increasing bifurcation. The networks of the poor are relatively flat, sparse, and geographically limited, while those of post-Soviet citizens with means are dense and spatially encompassing.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have described the process by which two Soviet institutional complexes, ethnic titular administrative dominance and informal networks of access, developed and became embedded in individual and social identity such that they have not only survived, but thrived, under conditions of postcommunism. Soviet nationalities policy was largely designed to cultivate legitimacy among the non-Slavic populations of the periphery. In practice, this entailed the “discovery” and refinement of major Soviet nationalities, the most consequential of which were gifted proprietorship of ethnoterritorial Union Republics. This was accompanied by a simultaneously pragmatic and idealistic program of ethnic titular promotion within the republics across all sectors, including government and administration. By the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union, ethnic titulars dominated the republic administration and elites had in many cases developed extensive and predominantly monoethnic patron-client networks. These features transitioned into independence and even became more pervasive, as the Soviet center was no longer present to moderate the most predatory impulses of titular elites and non-elites. Thus, the

construction of territorially defined dominant groups had consequences that were not simply unintended, but diametrically opposed to their aims. Rather than providing the foundation for a Communist society within which individuals had shed their self-deceiving national and ethnic identities in favor of their authentic class identities, ethnonational identity came to dominate and Marxism-Leninism faded into oblivion.

The path dependent Soviet institution of informal social networks of access was yet another pervasive unintended consequence of Soviet policy, centralized economic planning. Soviet citizens made do in a setting of ubiquitous shortage by constructing networks of useful connections that could be called upon when needed, with variously situated representatives of the Soviet state as core nodes. More than half a century of endemic shortage and informal coping, as well as the economic precariousness for most of post-Soviet society, have led to a maintenance of these networks. Despite their persistence, they have taken on a character of bifurcation along lines of class that both alters their function and contributes to an expanding gulf between the “haves” and “have-nots”.

Critically, these informal networks are divided not only along lines of socioeconomic standing, but also along the boundary of titular/non-titular. Given that this feature of post-Soviet ethnic and distributive politics is layered on path dependent ethnic titular dominance of the state, the result is a variant of Tilly’s (1998) *exploitation* and *opportunity hoarding* along a categorical boundary. As I will attempt to demonstrate in the following chapters, these Soviet institutional legacies contribute to regional patterns that are largely dissimilar to those in other postcolonial settings.

## Chapter 4

### Individual Level Determinants of Public Goods Provision in Kyrgyzstan

What determines who is provided with adequate levels and quality of public goods in multiethnic Kyrgyzstan? As detailed in the previous chapters, I posit that Soviet legacies of titular nation status and affirmative action policies have had path-dependent effects. Based upon the Soviet era construction of ethnic identity in these states and the postcolonial belief in the rectitude of ethnicized reparations, titular ethnic groups in post-Soviet states conceive of the state, its institutions, and the resources that are distributed by them as belonging almost exclusively to the titular nation. Additionally, the Soviet-era economy of shortages was conducive to the construction of broad informal networks of access. Despite post-Soviet economic liberalization, these informal networks and their associated “economy of favors,” or *blat*, also have characteristics of path dependency (Ledeneva 1998, 2006). Citizens of these post-Soviet states employ direct and mediated relationships with individuals who influence channels of governmental resource distribution towards the end of gaining goods and services from state institutions.

I have posited the existence of separate and additive supply and demand elements to the ethnicized provision of public goods in the states of the post-Soviet space. In this chapter, I will test this approach through analysis of large-N data collected in Kyrgyzstan. On the supply side, I argue that—for reasons of coethnic affect and strategy—ethnic titular domination of state institutions and control over resource distribution has the effect that more and higher quality public goods and services will be directed towards coethnics. This suggests that officials with control

over state resources have the ability and aspiration to advance the interests of their ethnic group through the dispersal of resources for local public goods and services.

*Hypothesis 1: Ethnic Kyrgyz communities receive higher levels and quality of public goods and services than non-titular groups.*

The demand side of the argument relies on the operation of informal social networks. In part because these informal social networks are loosely formed around ties of real and fictive kinship in Kyrgyzstan and a number of other post-Soviet states, they tend to be overwhelmingly monoethnic. Even excluding the influence of kin networks, however, social networks across settings display high levels of racial and ethnic homophily (Ibarra 1995; Marsden 1987; Mollica, Gray, and Trevino 2003; Shrum, Cheek, and Hunter 1988). Keeping in mind that the state administration is dominated by ethnic Kyrgyz titulars, members of the titular ethnic group are likely to have access to informal social networks within which there is a relatively short average distance to and high network density of individuals with some influence over the distribution of government resources—bureaucrats, local or national politician, or even a school principal—as compared to non-titulars. Extensive informal social connections, then, should help ethnic Kyrgyz individuals access public goods, but provide no ameliorative effect to members of other ethnic groups.

*Hypothesis 2a: Informal social connections will provide ethnic Kyrgyz with an additive ability to receive high levels and quality of public goods and services.*

*Hypothesis 2b: Informal social connections will have no effect on the ability of non-Kyrgyz to effectively demand public goods and services.*

In what follows, I will present a description of ethnic politics in Kyrgyzstan, with particular attention to interethnic relations in the south of country, the site of qualitative research to be presented in the next chapter. I will then present data from Kyrgyzstan and large-N statistical analysis testing my theory of supply and demand in public goods provision. Finally, I will discuss the significance of my findings.

### **Ethnic politics and the state in Kyrgyzstan**

In order to contextualize my broader arguments and set up my analysis of Kyrgyzstani ethnic and distributive politics, in this section I will provide descriptive evidence of titular domination of state institutions. I will follow this with a detailed illustration of ethnic politics in southern Kyrgyzstan, and particular intergroup dynamics of ethnic Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks. At the time of the Soviet Union's collapse, the two most populous cities in Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek and the "southern capital" of Osh, had non-Kyrgyz majorities. Ethnic Kyrgyz had largely been confined by the *propiska* residence permit system to rural and high altitude locales. The loosening of enforcement of such restrictions, along with ethnic Russian emigration, increased the Kyrgyz proportion of the population from 53 percent in 1989 to 71 percent in 2009<sup>58</sup> and placed Kyrgyz and other ethnic groups in closer proximity as the former moved into urban and semi-urban areas. Each of Kyrgyzstan's sixteen independence-era executives have been ethnically Kyrgyz.<sup>59</sup> Administrative and representative structures at all levels are dominated by Kyrgyz, with experts estimating that from 90 to 98 percent of public officials are from the titular group (Abashin 2011b; International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) and Memorial 2006, 3).

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<sup>58</sup> Ethnic Russians as a percentage of the overall population fell from 21.5 percent to 7.8 percent in the same period. The Uzbek proportion of the population grew slightly, from 12.8 to 14.3 percent.

<sup>59</sup> Kyrgyzstan transitioned from a presidentialist to a mixed executive system with the adoption of the 2010 constitution. Former Prime Minister Omurbek Babanov (2011, 2012) has mixed Kyrgyz and Kurdish heritage, but his "passport nationality" is reportedly Kyrgyz.

Independent Kyrgyzstan's first president, Askar Akaev, innovated the slogan, "Kyrgyzstan-our common home" ("*Kyrgyzstan—nash obshchiy dom*"). Particularly in the more populous southern regions, where ethnic Uzbeks have consistently composed close to 30 percent of the population, Akaev's primarily northern-based regime co-opted non-titulars in order to balance against competing ethnic Kyrgyz power centers in the south.<sup>60</sup> Despite the inclusive slogan, the pattern of non-titular underrepresentation in parliament began under Akaev: in the 1995 elections ethnic Kyrgyz won 81 percent of seats. Additionally, although ethnic Russians have been well represented in national-level institutions in comparison to ethnic Uzbeks, their representation in parliament has diminished steadily over time, to only 4 of 120 seats in the 2015 election (Abaskanova 2016, pp. 25-27). Ethnic Uzbeks have been severely underrepresented in parliament and have made up only 2.5 percent of seats since 2010 (Minority Rights International 2018).<sup>61</sup>

Ethnic minority representation in state structures decreased further following the 2005 Tulip Revolution, as southern patronage networks pressured ethnic Uzbeks out of public employment (Melvin 2011, pp. 10-12). Even in areas where ethnic Uzbeks constitute a majority or near majority of the local population, they are poorly represented in government organs. In Osh, for instance, Uzbeks account for half the city's population but consistently control fewer than 25 percent of seats on the city council (Marat 2015, 355). The representation issue in the south became particularly acute following the June 2010 ethnic violence between ethnic Kyrgyz and ethnic

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<sup>60</sup> This translated to little power at the center, however, with Akaev's final ethnic Uzbek cabinet minister removed from his position in 1996, nearly a decade before the president was ousted in the 2005 Tulip Revolution. The Osh region, with an Uzbek population greater than 30 percent of the total, has had only one Uzbek governor, and this for only a few months in the post-2005 revolution transition period (Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission 2011, 8).

<sup>61</sup> Article 72 of the Kyrgyzstani electoral code mandates that no less than 15 percent of party lists should be composed of ethnic minorities. In practice, however, the systematic placement of non-Kyrgyz at the lower end of party lists has had the effect that far fewer than 15 percent of MPs are representatives of minority ethnic groups. In one glaring example, in the 2010 election the mainstream (i.e. Kyrgyz-dominated but non-nationalist) Respublika party placed 11 of its 24 minority candidates in slots 100-120.



**Map 4.1 Kyrgyzstan (Source: Google Maps)**

Uzbeks (see Abashin and Savin 2012; Melvin 2011; Wilkinson 2015). Osh mayor Melis Myrzakmatov replaced traditional ethnic Uzbek *mahalla* authorities<sup>62</sup> with ethnic Kyrgyz (Ismailbekova 2013, pp. 114-115). Throughout southern Kyrgyzstan, law and order structures are wholly dominated by ethnic Kyrgyz.<sup>63</sup>

Southern Kyrgyzstan is a region largely enclosed in the fertile Fergana Valley, an ethnically diverse setting where the borders of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan converge.

<sup>62</sup> *Mahallas* are dense neighborhoods primarily inhabited by ethnic Uzbeks. Each *mahalla* community generally has committees and subcommittees headed by *ellik boshi*, *yuz boshi*, and *ming boshi*—or authorities who are accountable for fifty, one hundred, and one thousand homes, respectively.

<sup>63</sup> In regards to law enforcement, a report found that there are no Uzbeks in the city and regional administration of the police and the financial police in the Jalal-Abad region, while the regional branch of the State Committee for National Security (GKNB) has only a handful of ethnic Uzbek officers. In the Osh region, fewer than 1 percent of employees in the regional department of the Ministry of Interior (MVD), the primary law enforcement administrative organ, are ethnic Uzbeks, and two Uzbeks work in the regional GKNB administration (International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) and Memorial 2006, 4). The judicial sphere is no better: an investigation following the 2010 interethnic unrest found that only one of the 110 judges in the courts of southern Kyrgyzstan was Uzbek (Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission 2011, 18).

As the crow flies, the “southern capital” of Osh city is not all that far from Bishkek. An airplane flight between the cities takes less than an hour. Yet due to the bisection of the country by the Tien Shan mountain range, for the large segment of Kyrgyzstanis that cannot afford air travel, transit between the cities by car or bus takes nearly 12 hours on treacherous roads.<sup>64</sup> Many northern Kyrgyzstanis—including those with the means to afford air travel—have never visited southern Kyrgyzstan.

While characterization of the valley as a backdrop for particular instability likely goes too far (see Shishkin 2013), Fergana does exhibit a number of notable features. The region’s relatively high population density places land at a premium and thus establishes control over space as a foundation of social tensions. Relatedly, the Soviet delimitation of republic borders resulted in a “checkerboard” pattern consisting of exclaves of the neighboring republics. Rationalization of borders has in many cases yet to be agreed upon by the relevant governments and the perception of imminent territorial conflict is often discussed and at times made material (Reeves 2014). Soviet citizens thought little of spanning republican borders with their agricultural acreage and accustomed themselves to regular cross-border visits to friends and family. Post-Soviet “thickening” of borders has thus presented significant obstacles to local residents.

Partially resultant from the historically nomadic lifeways of ethnic Kyrgyz, and additionally because of the strict Soviet *propiska* system of recording place of residence and limiting free internal migration, urban areas of southern Kyrgyzstan have long been settings of ethnic Uzbek concentration.<sup>65</sup> Uzbeks account for less than 15 percent of the country’s population

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<sup>64</sup> These north-south roads were only completed in the post-Soviet era, whereas earlier travelers would generally traverse the Uzbek SSR.

<sup>65</sup> The extant categorical boundary along ethnic lines was established by early Soviet ethnographers to a large extent on the basis of a preexisting social division between settled populations and nomadic or semi-nomadic groups. The former were generally categorized as Uzbek, even if they would not have self-categorized as such at the time (Hirsch

but are majorities or near-majorities in the three largest municipalities of southern Kyrgyzstan: Osh, Jalal-Abad, and Uzgen.<sup>66</sup> In Osh and Jalal-Abad cities, however, the collapse of the Soviet Union transformed what had been overwhelmingly Uzbek settings. The combination of an outflow of Slavs from southern Kyrgyzstan and slack enforcement of the *propiska* system beginning in the mid-1980s had the consequence that many ethnic Kyrgyz who had long been confined to rural and high-altitude regions desired to settle in urban zones.

Many locals remember this as a turbulent period. One respondent explained that spaces evacuated by Russians and other Slavs were taken up by Kyrgyz from rural areas, many of whom had little formal education and limited prior interaction with ethnic Uzbeks (Interview, Uzbek civil society activist, August 2016). Another Uzbek respondent described how, after Slavs abandoned her neighborhood *en masse* and were replaced by an inflow of ethnic Kyrgyz from rural areas, her family no longer felt comfortable in the neighborhood and soon moved to an area that was more ethnically homogenous (Interview, Uzbek non-elite respondent, November 2016).

In the Soviet Union's waning light, these factors coalesced in a manner propitious for intergroup violence. On June 4, 1990, Kyrgyz and Uzbek nationalist groups clashed over control

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2005, pp. 113, 129, 133). That this is a historical phenomenon well understood by many locals is suggested in an interview with Madina, a local Uzbek businesswoman: "Most of the people in Osh [during the Soviet period] were Uzbek, because originally this place was an Uzbek place. The people considered themselves Uzbek. Maybe they weren't Uzbek, but... You know the history. Most of the population were Kipchaks. But then when the Soviet Union comes, most of them were written down as Uzbeks because Uzbeks were less popular, and then they [Soviet authorities] just divided the people to not make any more revolutions" (Interview, Osh city, July 2017). It is widely argued by locals that many now categorized as either Kyrgyz or Uzbek would have self-identified as Kipchaks—a supra-ethnic Turkic identity once prominent throughout the Eurasian steppe—had they been given the option at the time of the initial Soviet censuses.

<sup>66</sup> Demographic predominance is a hotly contested issue in Osh and Jalal-Abad cities. According to Ahmedjon, a young ethnic Uzbek local elected official, "There is not a clear answer to this question [of the precise ethnic demographics of his city]. My father has told me that that the city used to be at least 75 percent Uzbeks. There were only a few Kyrgyz families. At some point, local politicians began to convince [Kyrgyz] people to come in from rural areas, luring them with promises of good infrastructure, educational systems, and the like. According to the official statistics from 2009, about 45 percent of the population is Uzbek. However, in my view, at least 60 percent of the population is Uzbek, maybe 70 percent" (Interview, November 2016).

of land that had only recently been a state-owned collective farm on the periphery of Osh city. By the next day, violent unrest spread to Uzgen and other points of Osh *oblast*'. Tishkov (1995, 134) lists the manifold foundations of the violence as, "low living standards, socio-economic crisis and political destabilization...increasing intergroup competition over resources (land lots), a struggle to gain control over power structures, social differentiation along 'city-village' lines, unemployment and lack of housing." Local security forces were unprepared and often unwilling to act as neutral mediators, instead being observed in many cases to provide material and tactical support to coethnic participants (*ibid*, 133). Recognizing this, Mikhail Gorbachev on June 6 deployed Red Army troops to quell the unrest. In less than a week of conflict across the southern Kyrgyz SSR, approximately 50 ethnic Kyrgyz and 120 ethnic Uzbeks were killed (*ibid*, pp. 134-135).

In the years subsequent to the 1990 unrest, ethnic Kyrgyz continued their relocation to southern cities and—due to the persistent land shortage—to mono-ethnic settlements along urban peripheries. Despite a history of ethnic Uzbeks and longtime ethnic Kyrgyz urban residents having amicably shared space for decades, a core element of the post-1990 unrest peacekeeping strategy was to encourage ethnically segregated housing patterns (Liu 2012, 94). Akram, a young ethnic Uzbek professional, recounted to me in detail how continued ethnic segregation severely limits any form of interaction and potential mutual understanding among members of the two communities:

In the past, we would put on seminars about human rights in schools, in universities. And we specifically conducted the seminars in neighborhoods of compact ethnic settlement, where Kyrgyz lived or where Uzbeks lived. One day we mixed it all up, called for participants from both sides, so we could see how they interacted with one another. People, for the first time in their lives, found out that On-Adir [an Osh city district of compact

Uzbek settlement] and Ozgur [an Osh city district of compact Kyrgyz settlement] are not so far apart: there is a descent [from On-Adir] and then you are in Ozgur. From one village to the other is maybe 500 meters. But those young people who live in On-Adir never see those who live in Ozgur. Even though we live within the bounds of one city, the cultural divide is great. Because of this problem, people divide themselves into groups. Even in the city, say, if three young guys come down from On-Adir, you can imagine that they all sit in one place, they will see only one another, discuss matters only with one another, and from all this is formed their social environment. A small one, a sort of Uzbek to Uzbek community. (Interview, Osh city, July 2017)

Apart from the absence of intergroup cooperation that such communal separation entails, rumors are likely to spread more effectively and support violence under conditions of ethnic segregation (Bhavnani, Findley, and Kuklinski 2009). This may be particularly the case where local ethnic concentration overlaps significantly with kinship networks (Larson and Lewis 2018), which describes much of Kyrgyzstan and the other post-Soviet states.

Violent communal conflict recurred under a similarly unstable authority structure nearly twenty years to the day following the 1990 riots. In April 2010, Kyrgyzstani President Kurmanbek Bakiyev was ousted from power through a mass movement largely initiated by ethnic Kyrgyz from the north of the country. Following his ouster, the deposed president fled to safe haven to Jalal-Abad, the region in which he began his political career and the location of his core constituency. Bakiyev supporters in May forcibly took possession of provincial government buildings in Osh and Jalal-Abad. There were legitimate fears that the country might be *de facto* partitioned, with a provisional government led by interim President Roza Otunbaeva in Bishkek and a parallel, competing, fiefdom under the leadership of Bakiyev and his loyalists in the south.

This might credibly be framed as one episode in a string of incidents, beginning in the Soviet period, in which northern and southern political factions struggled for preeminence (Luong

2003, pp. 56, 76, 78). A similar uprising to remove the northern-backed President Askar Akaev occurred only five years earlier. Yet a distinguishing facet of the more recent episode was the role of ethnic Uzbeks. Widely understood as victims of heightened ethnic discrimination during Bakiyev's presidency, a number of politically active ethnic Uzbeks were eager to provide support in bringing about his dismissal from power.

Given the significant demographic weight of Uzbeks in the south, the provisional government considered the minority community a useful foil to the ousted president's intransigence. The circumstances also provided an opportunity for Uzbek political figures to make a name for themselves on a national stage. To this end, a movement was organized among ethnic Uzbeks and a handful of southern Kyrgyz to displace Bakiyev supporters from power in the south and to remove the Bakiyev family from Kyrgyzstan altogether. This faction returned the provincial government buildings to the control of the central government and a group of demonstrators burned the Bakiyev family home to the ground. Though the Uzbek political leaders had achieved their aim of removing Bakiyev from the south,<sup>67</sup> these actions also served as potentially deployable material for southern Kyrgyzstani political entrepreneurs with an interest in fomenting antagonism between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks. Specifically, it might be used to instill fear in ethnic Kyrgyz that Uzbeks were attempting to take power in the south.

Kyrgyz communal resentment of a seemingly ascendant Uzbek minority, in combination with a lack of external controls and an inability of the interim government in Bishkek to effectively project authority in the south, provided foundations for potential unrest along group lines akin to countless other settings of interethnic violence (see Petersen 2002). On the night of June 10, 2010,

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<sup>67</sup> Bakiyev and his immediate family fled to Minsk, Belarus, where he still resides despite repeated extradition requests from the Kyrgyzstani government. Bakiyev was tried in absentia and found guilty in the 2009 assassination of a political opponent.

rumors began swirling in Osh city that Uzbeks were violently targeting Kyrgyz and that Kyrgyz female students had been assaulted in a university dormitory by ethnic Uzbek perpetrators.<sup>68</sup> With no broadly legitimate, cohesive central government to provide security and a police force that seemed more intent on aiding ethnic Kyrgyz in their vengeance against Uzbeks than delivering law and order, pogrom-like rioting raged for nearly a week. Consistent reports that dwellings were marked with spray-paint as either Kyrgyz- or Uzbek-owned before marauders arrived suggest a significant degree of organization. Property owned by ethnic Kyrgyz was largely spared. Estimates of those killed during the course of the riots vary, but it is clear that hundreds of people were murdered and ethnic Uzbeks comprised the vast majority of the victims (Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission 2011). In addition to those killed or wounded, tens of thousands of external refugees fled to Uzbekistan or, more rarely, Tajikistan. There were also many internal refugees of all ethnicities.<sup>69</sup>

The lack of external oversight and the central government's contested legitimacy in the post-revolution period set the stage for a campaign of selective justice in the south. Kyrgyzstani authorities opened thousands of criminal cases for robbery, arson, murder, property destruction, and so forth. Despite involvement of both ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in the crimes committed, in a setting of interethnic tension and ethnic Kyrgyz dominance of law enforcement and justice

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<sup>68</sup> In speaking with ethnic Kyrgyz who took part in the unrest, many suggested that it was specifically these rumors that prompted their action, and particularly the perceived necessity of protecting female relatives (Group interview, Osh city, February 2017).

<sup>69</sup> Despite interim President Roza Otunbaeva's calls for external mediation from an early period in the riot cycle, in particular directed towards the Russian Federation and two security alliances—the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe—no aid was forthcoming. Due to the vocal opposition of populist Osh Mayor Melis Myrzakmatov and the inability of the Kyrgyzstani central government to guarantee the physical security of foreign advisers and staff, the latter organization waited nearly a year after the riots ceased to send a police advisory mission.

institutions, ethnic Uzbeks were and continue to be the primary targets of punitive state actions connected to the June 2010 events, almost to the exclusion of ethnic Kyrgyz.<sup>70</sup>

Assigning guilt for the June 2010 conflict remains highly contentious. Kyrgyzstan's National Commission of Investigation into the June Violence released its findings to parliament in January 2011. The investigation's report recognized that the failure to cope with societal challenges remaining after the 1990 violence facilitated the June violence. The report also alleges that Uzbek community leaders bore significant blame for stoking tensions, but that they did not openly call for "autonomy," as many Kyrgyz nationalists and populists claimed at the time. Former President Bakiyev and his family came in for significant criticism and blame (Ferghana News Agency 2011). A rigorous independent report produced by the OSCE found that Uzbeks were greatly overrepresented among the fatalities and victims of property destruction. It additionally

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<sup>70</sup> This began in late-June 2010 with para-military sweeps of Uzbek neighborhoods, during which many residents were beaten, multiple civilians were killed, and security forces were alleged to have engaged in mass theft and property destruction. Hundreds of Uzbeks, mostly young men, were detained on unstated charges. Many were physically abused and held longer than Kyrgyzstani law allows, often without any knowledge of their whereabouts on the part of their family. Those that were released tended to gain their liberty only after family members transferred substantial amounts of money—from USD \$100 to \$10,000—to security officials (Human Rights Watch 2010). Many others remain in detention for crimes they did not commit. The trials of those accused were rife with intimidation and physical violence directed at the accused and their lawyers, with ethnic Kyrgyz security forces and the families of ethnic Kyrgyz victims crowded into and around courthouses (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2010a; Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2010b; Trilling 2010). Similar intimidation tactics continued to be employed in trials more than a half decade after the events. With the aid of accreditation from a local NGO, I attended the late 2016 re-trial in Bishkek of Uzbek human rights activist and recipient of the 2014 United States Human Rights Defender Award Azimzhan Askarov. Sentenced to life in prison for allegedly inciting ethnic antagonism and being complicit in the murder of a police officer during the unrest in his home municipality of Bazar-Korgon, irregularities in the initial trial cited by numerous international observers precipitated a call for a review of the case. While there were many procedural flaws in the re-trial procedure, two aspects were especially noteworthy. First, nearly the complete police force of Bazar-Korgon sat in on the trial. They were in full uniform, complete with truncheons. Engaging in an oft-practiced form of official intimidation, these law enforcement professionals discretely snapped photos of local and international journalists, representatives of international organizations and foreign embassies, and myself. During trial recess, officers linked arms and gathered near the exit to the courtroom, requiring that all present negotiate their way past them. More pertinently, a number of witnesses for Askarov's defense came to the stand to testify, nearly all of them having served or still serving extended or life sentences in penal colonies. When asked whether they saw in the courtroom any of the officers that had in 2010 attempted to beat confessions out of them, multiple witnesses responded affirmatively but refused to indicate which of the officers these were. One female witness tearfully predicted that, were she to point out specific tormentors, she had no doubt her male relatives in Bazar-Korgon—including her young son—would be subject to detention or worse.

made note of the active involvement or insufficient preventative measures taken by law enforcement and military personnel (Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission 2011).<sup>71</sup>

Official unwillingness to evaluate the June events in an evenhanded and comprehensive manner is reflected in the fragmentation of public narratives surrounding the events. Akram, despite being an ethnic Uzbek, manifested significant internal conflict on this question:

You comprehend, right, that many people do not understand what happened? They [ethnic Kyrgyz] think that they suffered more than the minority and because of that people here can do what they are doing [discriminating against non-Kyrgyz]. Well, in regard to victims, the victims of these events, there are many documents and the international community knows all about it...I do not have in mind that we need to reminisce about who is guilty, because in truth if we are going to unpack things... [Becomes reflective.] I did not see what happened there. There were those Uzbeks who called for force. Overall, both [ethnic groups] are guilty...The problem is that there are very good and smart people from the titular [Kyrgyz] ethnicity that do not admit that this was a type of pogrom. No, I will always know that this was a pogrom. Seventy percent of the housing stock in the city limits was destroyed. They were pogroms. There was a great deal stolen. A car was stolen from us. So, this was a pogrom. (Interview, Osh city, July 2017)

During a long conversation with Madina at the tourism organization she founded after losing much of her savings in the conflict, it became evident that the government's failure to adequately investigate the rioting provided ample space for conspiracy theorizing:

*KE:* Is it possible for you to talk to Kyrgyz about what happened in 2010?

*Madina:* We talk about it. There are several different options. Some people think that the Uzbek leaders were guilty for that because they wanted authority. Some say that the Kyrgyz were crazy and just did it for the money. But all of them think that it was done by somebody.

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<sup>71</sup> Following publication of the Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission's report, the Kyrgyzstani parliament declared the lead investigator, OSCE Special Representative for Central Asia Kimmo Kiljunen, *persona non grata*.

Maybe it is just easier to think like that. It is not easy for people to organize themselves like that. There was so much money—people were brought from the villages, fed, given drinks, alcohol, drugs, guns, weapons. So if it wasn't organized, how could it happen? And nobody is sure who organized it.

*KE:* There are a lot of rumors about different sides that organized it.

*Madina:* Russia, USA, Israel—I don't know why, but the religious people say that [about Israel]. Those who like the USA say Russia. Those who like Russia say USA. The Muslim contingent says it was Israel because they don't like Israel. Everybody blames somebody else but not themselves. (Interview, Osh city, July 2017)

The unrest and its unstable aftermath are also associated with a number of social and economic trends. Although Uzbeks have largely endeavored to remain settled in southern Kyrgyzstan, Ismailbekova (2013) found that the primary coping strategies are public avoidance, labor migration of young and middle-aged men, and early marriage of Uzbek women. The first two can be labeled strategies of evasion, as there is a fear that to do otherwise might allow non-titulars to become targets for incitement. Gulnara, an Uzbek woman with whom I discussed issues of local governance in a medium-sized southern Kyrgyzstan town, described the potential pitfalls presented for Uzbek men:

When it is clear that there are no Kyrgyz around, people may speak Uzbek with one another. For women the threat is not so great to speak Uzbek in public. However, if a man is seen to speak Uzbek in public, he can be provoked. But an Uzbek man can be jailed just for touching a Kyrgyz, whereas a Kyrgyz can get away with killing an Uzbek. (Interview, November 2016)

Another strategy, though anecdotal, was relayed to me by a journalist from Osh city. Her Uzbek neighbors decided to build their two sons houses in neighborhoods substantially removed from one another, in order that at least one might be spared should destructive rioting recur (Interview, Bishkek, November 2016).

The acute violence and extended aftermath of the June 2010 events remain touchstones in the social and political environment of southern Kyrgyzstan. Residents remember this as a period when society lost control and people had little choice but to act as they did. Surprisingly, however, many of my respondents expressed the view that the substance of governance—how decisions are made and who makes them—has been relatively consistent before and after the events. Administration has been ethnicized throughout the period of independence, with minority communities woefully underrepresented in all public institutions, and informal connections have consistently represented vital means of accessing state resources. It is also the case that a similar maldistribution of posts across ethnic groups and significance of informal networks is seen in comparatively tranquil northern Kyrgyzstan, where ethnic Russians compose the largest minority group (Commercio 2011).

The life chances of individuals throughout Kyrgyzstan and their ability to receive high qualities and/or quantities of nominally “public” goods is critically dependent on their ethnic identity and the social connections they can fall back on. Thus, while ethnic difference may appear more salient in southern Kyrgyzstan than in other regions of the former Soviet Union due to relatively recent conflict, the mechanisms that I propose to influence the distribution of state resources should still be relevant.

### **Ethnicity and informal social networks as determinants of public goods provision**

In this section, I will analyze the individual-level determinants of public goods provision evaluations in Kyrgyzstan. Why do some individuals evaluate the quality and level of public goods that are provided to them as adequate, while others do not? I will test the hypotheses laid out above regarding the supply and demand elements of public goods provision and their interactive effects.

The decision to observe *evaluations* of public goods provision and services here, rather than a direct measure of their delivery, can be defended on both pragmatic and analytical grounds. From a pragmatic standpoint, this is necessary due to the lack of availability of direct measures of public goods and service delivery at the individual level in the *Life in Kyrgyzstan* dataset. My interest in the joint effects of ethnicity and embeddedness in informal social networks has the significance that I cannot conduct an analysis at the aggregate (locality) level: suggesting that a high proportion of ethnic Kyrgyz in a highly networked locality is predictive of public goods provision would be a violation of the ecological fallacy (Kramer 1983; Piantadosi, Byar, and Green 1988; Seligson 2002). I would not be able to ascertain, in this hypothetical case, whether it was in fact the ethnic Kyrgyz who were highly networked in these settings and not representatives of other ethnic groups, and thus my conclusions asserting the significance of ethnicized networks would be unjustified.

The choice of these subjective measures is defensible from a theoretical standpoint due to the nature of the phenomena under analysis. Although the construction of schools and kilometers of roads delivered to communities presents a “clean” measure of public goods provision, these measures are poorly equipped to take into account the operation of informal social connections. Direct or indirect informal social connections and the linkages therein with resource-controlling officials and bureaucrats would be minimally effective in influencing large-scale projects such as these, which might be hypothesized to be more directly influenced by the operation of informal networks among government officials themselves. Additionally, many of these potentially measurable items, such as hospitals or primary schools, are “stock” variables: they were built in a prior period, before the “flow” of recent informal network-generating acts might have influenced them. In the case of Kyrgyzstan and other states of the post-Soviet region, this means that much

of this infrastructure was built in the Soviet period, under a governmental apparatus that had far different operating procedures, priorities, and capabilities than what is contemporarily in existence.

The analysis of subjective evaluations of government performance is widespread in the literature on urban governance. The “man on the street” does not possess reliable information regarding objective indicators of government performance, and thus depends on personal experience and information conveyed by their social contacts and the media. Personal experience is a much more salient factor for individuals than aggregate statistics, as “these interactions provide citizens with personal insight into service-rendering efforts, in a context in which they have a clear stake in the outcome of such efforts” (Percy 1986, 70). Not surprisingly, then, the extent to which there is mismatch between citizen perceptions of government performance and indicators collected by governmental agencies is a contested issue (Brown and Coulter 1983; Percy 1986; Stipak 1979).

This lack of alignment between objective measures and citizen satisfaction gives rise to a foundational question: which is closer to matching up to broad conceptual concerns with good governance? While outputs are clearly important, the extent to which these outputs are seen by citizens as necessary and in line with their political and social development priorities seems the more significant concern. As Kelly (2003, 864) suggests, analysts “should take care not to confuse aspects of service quality and productivity that can be quantified with dimensions of service quality that matter to citizens.”

Just as significantly, given the argument that I present, the employment of informal social connections to improve access to public goods and services is a personal interaction that operates on the edges of the system rather than on the grand scale of infrastructure construction. One can easily imagine individuals utilizing their informal connections in order to free up a previously nonexistent space in the public kindergarten for their child, be seen by a specialist at the regional

hospital, ensure the full and timely receipt of their pension payments, or have the potholes on their street filled. None of these will appear as large expenditures in the city, regional, or national budget, but they will have a substantial effect on citizens' evaluations of governance and the particular categories of provision of public goods and services.

## **Data and methods**

I conduct this analysis employing the *Life in Kyrgyzstan* dataset. This dataset is longitudinal and has responses at the individual, household, and community level.<sup>72</sup> I will employ the most recent wave of the survey, collected in 2013, containing over 7000 individual respondents across each of Kyrgyzstan's seven sub-national regions (*oblasti*) and the country's two cities of republic-level importance, the capital, Bishkek, and Osh city. All model specifications in the primary analysis are analyzed using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression.

I construct my primary dependent variable, *Public Goods Satisfaction*, from a subset of questions regarding respondent satisfaction with various public goods: social security programs; education; healthcare services; housing and land; transport; and public services. I chose the particular public goods and services to include in this composite variable based upon extensive interview and focus group work conducted in four of Kyrgyzstan's regions in 2016 through 2018,<sup>73</sup> in which I asked Kyrgyzstani respondents the public goods and services they expected to be

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<sup>72</sup> However, there is a significant amount of within-household variance regarding who responds from year to year, making individual-level comparisons across waves difficult.

<sup>73</sup> My interviews and focus groups were conducted in the ethnically heterogeneous regions of Batken, Jalalabad, and Osh, and in Kyrgyzstan's two largest cities, Bishkek and Osh.

provided to them by various levels of government. The variable is an average of six variables and ranges from 1 (no satisfaction with any service) to 4 (very satisfied with all services).<sup>74</sup>

I employ two primary explanatory variables, *Ethnic Kyrgyz* and two measures of informal social connectedness. *Ethnic Kyrgyz* is a binary variable, in which those respondents who gave their ethnicity as “Kyrgyz” are denoted with a 1. In the 2013 wave of the *Life in Kyrgyzstan* data, 67 percent of respondents stated that they are Kyrgyz. This is slightly lower than the 71 percent figure recorded in the 2009 Kyrgyzstan national census (National Statistical Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic 2009).

I employ two primary measures of informal social connectedness. The first, *Reciprocity Network*, is the sum of four count variables containing respondents’ assertions of the number of times in the previous 12 months they have given and received financial or non-financial help.<sup>75</sup> As displayed in Table 4.1, there is evidence that this measure proxies for reciprocity, with many of those who report having received financial or nonfinancial assistance also having provided assistance, and vice versa.<sup>76</sup> This is an appropriate proxy for the concept I am concerned with, providing a succinct description of the extent to which a given individual is enmeshed in the post-Soviet “economy of favors” (Ledeneva 1998). It is a measure of the extent to which respondents are integrated into a network of reciprocity that might be leveraged to gain state resources for

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<sup>74</sup> Mean: 2.83; median: 3; standard deviation: .60. Regarding evaluations of the public goods that are combined to construct the variable, all are positively correlated with one another at levels ranging from  $r = 0.684$  (healthcare services and education) to  $r = 0.375$  (transport and social security programs).

<sup>75</sup> The survey items are worded as follows: “To/From how many people did you give/receive any financial/non-financial help [*in non-financial help items*: (e.g. repairing house, preparing celebrations, homework help)] during the last 12 months?” Respondents were asked to write in their response.

<sup>76</sup> It is unknown from the data, however, whether those who received and provided assistance were providing assistance to the individual from whom they also received it ( $A \rightarrow B$ ) or to someone else ( $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$ ). This simply represents the difference between *dyadic reciprocity* and *community reciprocity*, both of which would be hypothesized to redound to increased trust, but at different levels, with the first increasing the levels of trust between the direct participants and the latter increasing generalized social trust.

themselves and their families. This could include jumping the queue for a medical procedure at the regional hospital or the awarding of one among a limited number of spaces in a pre-school to a family’s child. These reciprocal ties could also be employed towards the end of having resources directed toward one’s local community, resulting in the asphaltting of a road or replacement of the roof of the local medical clinic.

Nearly 57 percent of respondents reported not giving or receiving any financial or non-financial aid in the previous 12 months. Among those that reported having given or received aid, there is a strong rightward skew, with one individual reporting to have done so in 145 instances. For this reason, I take the natural log of the variable. As an alternative, recognizing that one extra instance of giving or receiving assistance may be less significant than the overall extent of embeddedness in these informal networks of reciprocity, or the *type* of networked or non-networked individual that one may be, I also employ a categorical variable with four levels.<sup>77</sup>

**Table 4.1 Correlation Table for Component Variables of *Reciprocity Network***

	<b>SocialTies_GiveFin</b>	<b>SocialTies_RecFin</b>	<b>SocialTies_GiveNonFin</b>
<b>SocialTies_GiveFin</b>			
<b>SocialTies_RecFin</b>	0.65***		
<b>SocialTies_GiveNonFin</b>	0.47***	0.48***	
<b>SocialTies_RecNonFin</b>	0.48***	0.55***	0.71***

<sup>77</sup> The categories, and the corresponding range of instances of assistance provided and received, is: none; few (1-3); moderate (4-6); many (7 or more).

While the *Reciprocity Network* variable provides a description of the extent of an individual's embeddedness in reciprocity-type networks, an argument can be made that this embeddedness is endogenous to public goods and service provision in an individual's community. In communities that are poorly served by the government, reciprocity networks may emerge to function as a substitute.<sup>78</sup> At the micro (individual, household) level, the extent of embeddedness may be a proxy for unobserved need. Those individuals and households that possess fewer resources may rely to a greater extent on networks of reciprocity.<sup>79</sup>

For these reasons, I employ an alternative variable measuring the number of festive events that individuals had attended in the past 12 months (*Festive Events*).<sup>80</sup> This captures the extent to which an individual and their family exhibit centrality in informal social networks: those who have more informal social connections will be asked to come to more festive events, such as weddings, funerals, and birth celebrations. Most households attended at least one event in the previous 12 months, whereas 34.3 percent attended none. Due to rightward skewness, I employ the log of the variable in models. As with *Reciprocity Network*, I additionally create a categorical variable for *Festive Events* with four levels.<sup>81</sup> *Festive Events* and *Reciprocity Network* measure different aspects of embeddedness in informal social networks and, as such, they are weakly correlated with one another ( $r = .01$ ).

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<sup>78</sup> The bivariate correlation between *Reciprocity Network* and *Public Goods Satisfaction* is in the direction that supports this contention, with more instances of giving and receiving assistance associated with lower satisfaction. However, the relationship is relatively weak ( $r = -.06$ ).

<sup>79</sup> The bivariate correlation between *Reciprocity Network* and *Relative Economic Standing* provides no evidence that this is the case. The extent of assistance given and received is, in fact, weakly positively related to economic standing ( $r = .03$ ).

<sup>80</sup> The survey item asks: "How many [festive] events did your household attend in the last 12 months?" and provides a blank space for responses.

<sup>81</sup> The categories and the corresponding number of festive events attended are: none; few (1-3); moderate (4-7); many (8 or more).

### Control Variables

In recognition of the potential for confounding variables that may influence both my explanatory and dependent variables, I include a number of appropriate controls in my analysis. *Relative Economic Standing* is an important control, as individuals with varying levels of personal and household resource accumulations will have differing expectations and requirements regarding the types and amounts of public goods provided. The variable is derived from individual responses to the question, “How would you rate the household’s current economic situation in comparison with others in this town or village?” (0=Extremely unsatisfied to 10=Absolutely satisfied). The use of a subjective measure of economic standing is supported by research on poverty measurement in developing settings (Kingdon and Knight 2006; Ravallion and Lokshin 2001, 2002). The ability to find a standard and reliable measure of wealth in such countries is complicated by the widespread phenomenon of in-kind payments, irregular and informal employment, and the extensive sharing of resources within extended family groups.

Additionally, household wealth is a more relevant measure of economic standing than personal economic standing in the context of Kyrgyzstan. Most individuals consider their identity in significant part to be, at the lowest level of aggregation, constituted by membership in their single- or multigenerational household family unit.<sup>82</sup> The operationalization also constrains the respondent’s comparative referent to the town or village. As asserted by Kulik & Ambrose (1992, 212), “Depending on the particular referent selected, individual responses may be positive, negative, or neutral. Therefore, a main concern in using comparison theories to predict individual responses is identifying the referent used in the individual's comparisons.” Individuals often

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<sup>82</sup> Only 50 percent of respondents strongly agree with the statement, “I see myself as an independent individual.” However, 67 percent responded that they strongly agree that they conceive of themselves as “a member of my family” (Life in Kyrgyzstan Survey 2013).

concern themselves much more with their social and economic standing relative to those that they interact with and hear second-hand reporting about on a daily basis, such as fellow villagers, than those with whom they rarely interact and about whom they receive little information.

The inclusion of the binary control variable, *Post-Secondary Education*, is guided by the recurring assertion of interview and focus group respondents that a principal determinant of an individual's ability to acquire desired public goods and services is their level of education and/or *gramotnost'*.<sup>83</sup> According to this view, those who cannot write a proper appeal to local government bodies, or simply do not know or understand the *zayavlenie* (claims-making) process, are hampered in their ability to capably attain government-provided goods and services. Those who received a diploma or certificate at a level above secondary education, which includes technical training, are coded as having a post-secondary education in this operationalization.

I include respondent age (*Age*) as a control variable. Young interview and focus group respondents in a number of instances criticized the expectations of older generations that the state ought to take the initiative in providing public goods and services to the people, rather than being a result of popular demands and pressure. These young Kyrgyzstanis understood this dependency to be a Soviet legacy that will exit the scene along with the bearers of such ideas. As a result, I hypothesize that the unwillingness to engage with the liberalized state and lack of knowledge regarding claims-making processes among older Kyrgyzstanis will be reflected in less satisfactory evaluations of public goods and service provision.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> A direct translation of the Russian word *gramotnost'* would be "literacy." However, usage in the Kyrgyzstani context, where 99 percent of the population is literate, conveys a sense of everyday competence or capability, the ability to "get things done."

<sup>84</sup> These generational differences are not in tension with my assertion that path dependent institutions from the Soviet era determine public goods provision, however. Young Kyrgyzstanis may hold different views on the appropriate model of state-society relations than their elders, but this has not led to any significant institutional changes and—barring a critical juncture—it is not likely to do so in the future. There is also no strong evidence that people of different

Finally, I include a variable measuring general life satisfaction. The question asked to respondents in this case is, “How satisfied are you with your life, all things considered?” Possible responses range from 0 (“Extremely Unsatisfied”) to 10 (“Absolutely Satisfied”). This is an important variable to include, as it “controls” for the possibility that a respondent’s overall evaluation of the quality of her life at the time of the interview will affect her evaluation of various aspects of experience, including public goods provision, in a consistently biased manner. There is a risk of mutual causation with the inclusion of this variable. One’s ethnic identity and informal social network embeddedness may affect overall life satisfaction *and* their evaluation of public goods provision. Additionally, overall life satisfaction may influence one’s integration into informal networks—those who are less satisfied with life may be less willing to engage socially—as well as affecting one’s evaluation of the provision of public goods. For this reason, I also estimate a baseline model without contemporaneous evaluations of general life satisfaction. Results for both models are substantively and statistically identical.

All models feature region (*oblast*) fixed effects to control for any unobserved variance among the seven Kyrgyzstani regions and two cities of republic-level importance, the capital, Bishkek, and Osh. There are stark differences between these regions that should affect the ease and economies of scale in public goods and service provision, including population density and mountainous terrain, as well as the objective need for state involvement, such as economic depression and high levels of unemployment.

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age groups are likely to invest to a greater or lesser degree in informal social connections, with the variables for *Age* and *Reciprocity Networks* being only tenuously related ( $r = .03$ ).

## Results

I first examine Hypothesis 1, whether the “supply side” of ethnicized public goods provision is apparent in the Kyrgyzstani setting. In Table 4.2 (Model 1), we see that members of the titular ethnic group are more satisfied with public goods and service provision than non-titulars. This result is significant both statistically and qualitatively. Satisfaction with public goods provision is 5 percent higher among ethnic Kyrgyz, holding other variables constant, than among non-titular groups. Gender is also predictive of evaluations of public goods provision, with women more positive in their evaluations than men. However, the substantive significance of this relationship is quite small relative to the effect of ethnic group belonging. Relative household economic satisfaction is also positively related to public goods provisions evaluations.

Ethnic Kyrgyz are more satisfied with the provision of public goods and services overall. This may suggest that government officials target Kyrgyz communities with higher levels and/or quality of public goods as compared to non-titular communities. However, it is unclear to what extent the demand side of the approach presented above is productive of these results. Ethnic Kyrgyz may receive higher levels and/or quality of public goods and services because coethnic government officials target resource allocations in an ethnicized fashion, because ethnic Kyrgyz are better able to leverage their informal connections due to greater concentrations and less distance within informal social networks of resource-controlling individuals, or a combination of the two.

In order to explore this question in a more adequate fashion, I employ an interaction term to examine the mediating effects of involvement in informal social networks for ethnic Kyrgyz as opposed to members of other ethnic communities. Results from models containing this interaction term are displayed in Models 2 (employing the *Reciprocity Network* variable) and 3 (employing

**Table 4.2. OLS Regression Results**

<b>Table 2. OLS Regression Results</b>				
<i>Dependent variable:</i>				
	Public Goods Satisfaction			
	Ethnicity Only (1)	Reciprocity Network (2)	Festive Events (3)	Financial Assistance (4)
Ethnic Kyrgyz	0.142*** (0.018)	0.087*** (0.022)	0.107*** (0.026)	0.129*** (0.019)
Reciprocity Ties		-0.111*** (0.015)		
Festive Events			-0.022 (0.014)	
Financial Aid				-0.066 (0.057)
Age	-0.0002 (0.0005)	-0.0002 (0.0005)	-0.0002 (0.0005)	-0.0002 (0.001)
Female	0.033** (0.016)	0.025 (0.016)	0.032** (0.016)	0.033** (0.016)
Higher Education	-0.017 (0.019)	-0.011 (0.019)	-0.017 (0.019)	-0.018 (0.019)
Economic Satisfaction	0.021*** (0.005)	0.025*** (0.005)	0.021*** (0.005)	0.022*** (0.005)
Life Satisfaction	0.005 (0.005)	0.005 (0.005)	0.005 (0.005)	0.005 (0.005)
Kyrgyz*Reciprocity		0.072*** (0.018)		
Kyrgyz*Festive Events			0.031* (0.017)	
Kyrgyz*Financial Aid				0.123* (0.069)
Observations	5,427	5,419	5,427	5,404
R <sup>2</sup>	0.082	0.093	0.083	0.083
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.080	0.090	0.080	0.080
Residual Std. Error	0.575 (df = 5412)	0.572 (df = 5402)	0.575 (df = 5410)	0.575 (df = 5387)
F Statistic	34.605*** (df = 14; 5412)	34.640*** (df = 16; 5402)	30.494*** (df = 16; 5410)	30.551*** (df = 16; 5387)

*Note:* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01  
Region (oblast') fixed effects for all models.

the *Festive Events* variable). In Model 2, the coefficient for *Ethnic Kyrgyz*, which here represents the effect of ethnic Kyrgyz identity with no reciprocity network ties, as opposed to a comparable member of another ethnic group, is positive and statistically significant. Ethnic Kyrgyz without reciprocity network ties are approximately 3.5 percent more positive in their evaluations of public goods and service provision than non-Kyrgyz without such ties. To the extent that this separates

out the causal role of informal network embeddedness, it provides further evidence that the Kyrgyz ethnic community is targeted for public goods provision in a way that other ethnic communities are not.

There is additionally a strong and statistically significant negative effect on evaluations of public goods provision among non-Kyrgyz with informal social connections. Rather than having no relation to public goods provision among non-Kyrgyz, as posited in Hypothesis 2b, reciprocity network ties are seen in Model 2 to have a deleterious effect on evaluations of public goods and service delivery among non-titulars.

Examining the interaction term in Model 2, ethnic Kyrgyz are more satisfied with public goods provision than non-Kyrgyz, and the gap increases as their level of social connectedness increases (see Figure 4.1). Holding other variables at their means, an ethnic Kyrgyz at the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile of the distribution of *Reciprocity Network* will have a predicted value for *Public Goods Satisfaction* of 2.76, whereas a non-Kyrgyz at the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile will have a value of 2.63, a difference of approximately 4.3 percent. More saliently, an ethnic Kyrgyz at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile will have a predicted value of 2.72, while a non-Kyrgyz will have a predicted value of 2.5. This is a difference of more than 7 percent in evaluations of public goods provision.<sup>85</sup>

However, this does not represent a confirmation of Hypothesis 2a, which argues that ethnic Kyrgyz with more informal social connections will have greater access to those who control state resources, and thus a more positive evaluation of public goods provision, than those ethnic Kyrgyz

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<sup>85</sup> All predicted probabilities obtained using Zelig package of R.

Figure 4.1 Plot of interaction from Model 2 (confidence interval=.95)

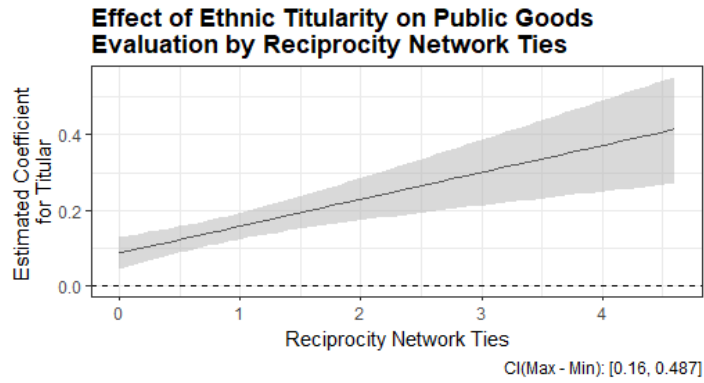


Figure 4.2 Plot of interaction from Model 2 (confidence interval=.95)

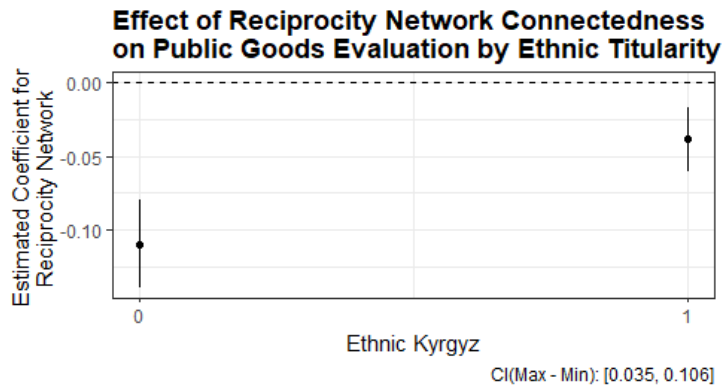


Figure 4.3 Interaction plot for categorical *Reciprocity Network* (confidence interval=.95)



who do not possess informal social connections. Among those with reciprocity network ties, the marginal effect of such ties conditional on being Kyrgyz is negative for all groups, but is significantly less negative for ethnic Kyrgyz (see Figure 4.2). Analysis of the effect of employing a categorical *Reciprocity Network* variable (see Figure 4.3) suggests that, compared to belonging to the group with no network ties, the effect for non-Kyrgyz of having "few" social connections is not significant statistically from zero or statistically different from the effect for ethnic Kyrgyz of belonging to this group. The effect upon non-Kyrgyz with a "moderate" number of reciprocity ties is negative and statistically significant, but not different in a statistically significant manner from the effect on ethnic Kyrgyz. Interestingly, the effect of non-Kyrgyz having "many" ties is negative and significantly more negative than the effect for Kyrgyz. Ethnic Kyrgyz at each level of reciprocity network embeddedness have statistically significant lower evaluations of public goods provision than those without reciprocity network ties. The extent to which different levels of reciprocity network embeddedness has a negative impact upon ethnic Kyrgyz' evaluations of public goods provision is relatively stable, as compared to the effect among non-Kyrgyz, for whom the difference between a "few" and "many" reciprocity ties is associated with approximately a 10 percent drop in public goods provision evaluations, *ceteris paribus*.

Given the potential that embeddedness in networks is endogenously related to evaluations of government provision of public goods and services to communities and households, I also examine the effects of the *Festive Events* variable. In Model 3, the coefficient for *Ethnic Kyrgyz* is again positive and statistically significant, providing further evidence that ethnic Kyrgyz are targeted with government resources in a way that other communities are not, independent of any effect that informal network embeddedness may have. As opposed to the coefficient for *Reciprocity Network*, the coefficient for *Festive Events*, though negative, is small and not

Figure 4.4 Plot of interaction from Model 3 (confidence interval=.95)

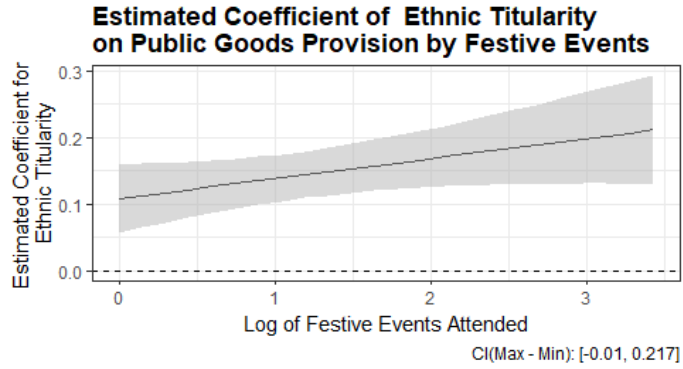


Figure 4.5 Plot of interaction from Model 3 (confidence interval=.95)

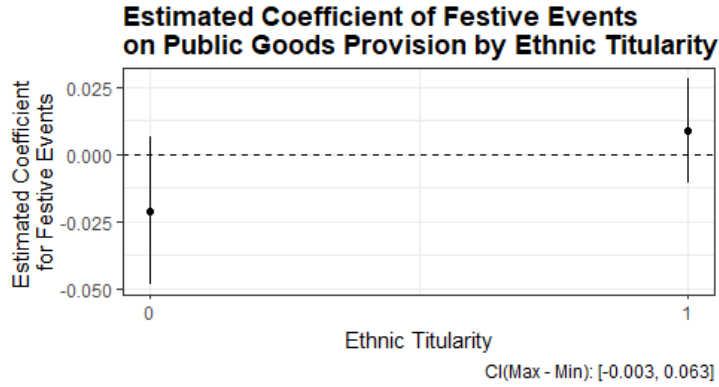
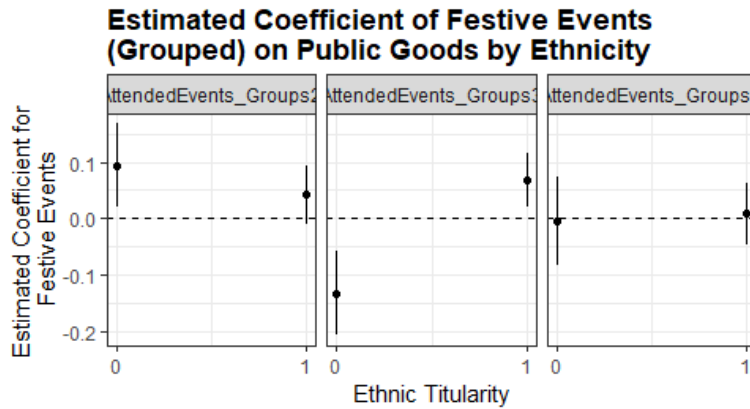


Figure 4.6 Interaction plot for categorical *Festive Events* (confidence interval=.95)



statistically significant. In line with Hypothesis 2b, this suggests that this variant of informal social connections has no effect on non-Kyrgyz.

Examining the interaction term from Model 3, it is clear that, as with the *Reciprocity Network* variable, the differentiating effect of *Festive Events* on public goods and service evaluations for ethnic Kyrgyz respondents increases to the extent that their household has attended more events. With that said, the slope is not as sharp as for *Reciprocity Network* (see Figure 4.4). An ethnic Kyrgyz at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of *Festive Events* will have approximately a 4.7 percent higher evaluation of public goods and services provision than a comparable non-Kyrgyz individual, *ceteris paribus*.

Comparing the effects of this type of informal social network embeddedness across groups leads to a different conclusion than for the *Reciprocity Network* models. Whereas *Reciprocity Network* was related to statistically significant negative impacts on evaluations among members of Kyrgyz and non-Kyrgyz communities (though significantly less negative for ethnic Kyrgyz), the effect of having attended *Festive Events* is more in line with Hypothesis 2a: the effect of this variant of informal network centrality is positive for ethnic Kyrgyz and negative for non-Kyrgyz, though neither relationship is statistically significant at traditional levels (see Figure 4.5).

Employing the categorical *Festive Events* variable presents a more complex picture (see Figure 4.6). As compared to those groups whose households attended no festive events, the effect of Kyrgyz and non-Kyrgyz having attended “few” events is positive. The relative effect of Kyrgyz attendance at a “moderate” number of events is positive and significantly different from the “none” category, whereas for non-Kyrgyz the effect is negative and significantly distinguishable from those non-Kyrgyz who did not attend any events. For both ethnic groups, attending “many” events did not have an effect that was significantly different from not attending any events. Thus, much

of the differential effect of *Festive Events* that we see in Model 3 can be explained by those who attended a “moderate” number of events, rather than there being a linear relationship.

### **Informal access to state resources: From an economy of favors to bridges of bribery?**

Thus far, I have assumed that the use of informal social connections in contemporary Kyrgyzstan is driven by similar factors and has the same consequences that *blat*, in its various forms, had in the Soviet period. Ethnic titulars—Kyrgyz, in this instance—are assumed to be capable of employing their involvement in reciprocal networks to affect the distribution of resources for local public goods to the benefit of both themselves, in a process of personalization of state resources, and their wider community. Owing to the ethnic titular dominance of state institutions and thus broad ethnic Kyrgyz control over government resources, non-Kyrgyz, even with extensive informal social ties, are assumed to be unable to affect the distribution of resources in a similar way due to the relatively low density of and relatively long-distance within informal social networks to resource-controlling individuals. As shown above, informal social connections are related to a high evaluation of public goods and service provision among ethnic Kyrgyz in comparison to non-Kyrgyz. However, even among ethnic Kyrgyz, in models employing the *Reciprocity Networks* variable the effect of informal social connections is negative in a substantively small but statistically significant fashion. One way of explaining this is to argue, as I do below, that these informal social networks serve a dual function as political discussion groups and, within these political discussion groups, the negativity bias functions such that evaluations of those with more informal social connections are negatively affected.

As described in the previous chapter, with the fall of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the planned economy, the necessity and function of informal social networks of access, transformed significantly. Whereas in the Soviet period, informal social networks of access were

required by individuals at all levels of the Soviet social hierarchy as a result of systemic shortages of goods and services, with the liberalization of markets and fiscal policies during the period of *perestroika* and that following the Soviet Union's collapse, the primary structuring element of these Soviet-era networks of access became obsolete. The opening of markets both domestically and to the outside world signified that there were no longer systemic shortages of goods and services, and thus many previously-held informal relationships—despite any inherent value that they might have possessed—faded away.

Rather than a shortage in availability of goods and services, as in the Soviet period, in the aftermath of economic liberalization the primary shortage was in hard currency. This transformation entails a more constrained range of informal connections that might permit access to state resources. Specifically, in the post-Soviet era informal social networks which contain either or both direct and indirect connections to those who control access to state resources are a first step, a necessary but insufficient element in the process of influencing the flow of public funds in the direction of oneself and one's community. In addition, individuals often need to be willing to advance economic resources to officials. Those ethnic titulars without the necessary connections, economic wherewithal, or desire to engage in such transactions will not be able to actualize their social connections to the same extent as those who control fungible assets.

In order to systematically examine the mediating role that monetized informal social networks have on ethnic titular abilities to gain access to public goods and services, I employ the *Reciprocity Network* variable in a disaggregated form.<sup>86</sup> In particular, I hypothesize that one of the four components of the composite variable employed above, providing financial help to others,

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<sup>86</sup> The intercorrelation among the variables for having provided financial help and relative household economic satisfaction is small ( $r = .012$ ), suggesting that this is unlikely to be a proxy for a dearth of personal need for government services.

will have a positive and additive effect on the evaluation of public goods for ethnic Kyrgyz in a way that will not be seen among non-Kyrgyz. The act of providing financial aid in an economy of monetary shortage should increase ethnic Kyrgyz ability to access state resources through norms of reciprocity. Due to titular domination of state institutions and the profound ethnic homophily of social networks, I would not expect that giving financial aid would have any mediating effect for non-Kyrgyz.

As above, I employ two measures of *Financial Aid*, one continuous and another categorical variable,<sup>87</sup> in separate models.<sup>88</sup> Model 4, employing the continuous, logged *Financial Aid*, provides results that support the above assertions. Supporting the supply side of my argument, ethnic Kyrgyz who have not provided financial assistance to any recipients have a more positive evaluation of public goods and services than comparable non-Kyrgyz. As shown in Figure 4.7, more instances of providing financial assistance among ethnic Kyrgyz are associated with a greater difference between their evaluations of public goods and services provision as compared to non-Kyrgyz with the same value for *Financial Aid*. Whereas the predicted value of *Public Goods Satisfaction* for a non-Kyrgyz individual at the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile of *Financial Aid* is 2.65, that for an ethnic Kyrgyz is 2.77, a difference of 4 percent. The effect of *Financial Aid* is still more substantial for those at the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile, with non-Kyrgyz having a predicted value of 2.61 and that of ethnic Kyrgyz being 2.79, a difference of 6 percent.

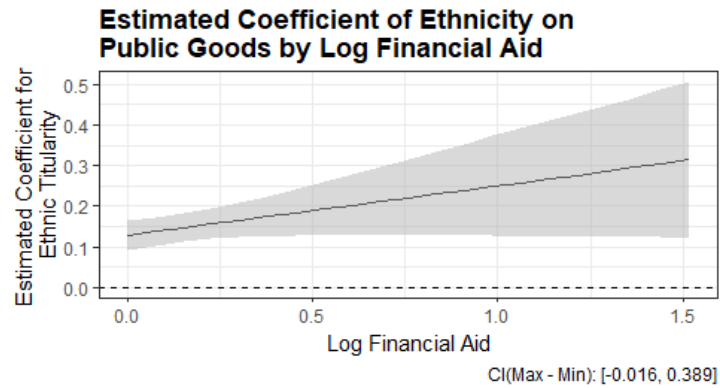
There is also some evidence that providing financial assistance plays the role predicted by Hypothesis 2a, with ethnic Kyrgyz who have provided financial assistance having higher

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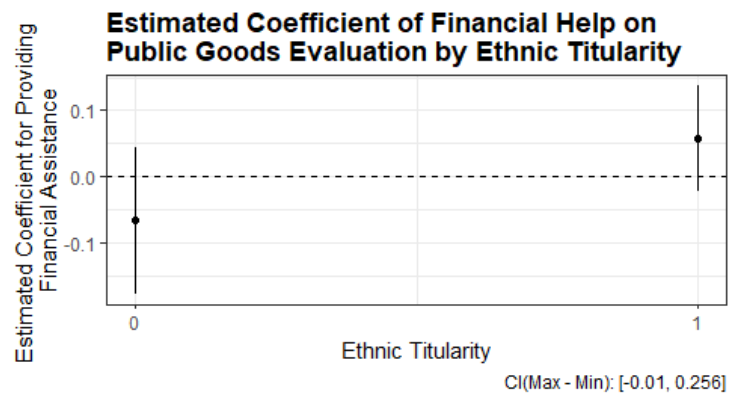
<sup>87</sup> The values corresponding to the groups for the categorical *Financial Aid* variable are: none; “few” = 1-2; “moderate” = 3; and “many”=4 and over. The highest value for *Financial Aid*, before taking the log of the variable, is 32 instances of providing financial assistance.

<sup>88</sup> For the continuous variable, I take the log because of rightward skew. As with previous models, statistical and substantive results are unchanged when the general life satisfaction variable is excluded.

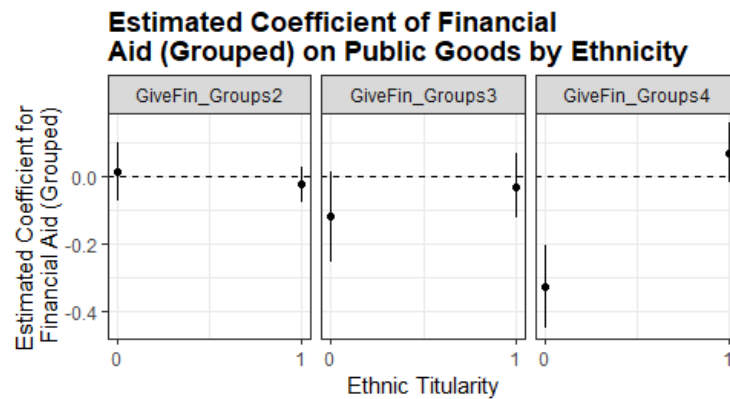
**Figure 4.7 Interaction plot for continuous *Financial Aid* (confidence interval=.95)**



**Figure 4.8 Interaction plot for continuous *Financial Aid* (confidence interval=.95)**



**Figure 4.9 Interaction plot for categorical *Financial Aid* (confidence interval=.95)**



evaluations of public goods provision than ethnic Kyrgyz who have not provided such assistance (Figure 4.8). If this were also true for non-Kyrgyz, we might dismiss this relationship as simply reflecting a relatively reduced need for state services. However, the results suggest that the effect of *Financial Assistance* for non-Kyrgyz is not statistically distinguishable from zero. The continuous operationalization of the variable thus provides some evidence that monetized informal connections assist ethnic Kyrgyz titulars in gaining access to government goods and services, whereas the effect for non-Kyrgyz is null at best.

Examining the model with a categorical *Financial Aid* variable (Figure 4.9), we see that among both Kyrgyz and non-Kyrgyz it is those who report having provided financial assistance to “many” recipients that are most positively and negatively affected in terms of public goods and service evaluation, respectively. The large negative effect on evaluations among non-Kyrgyz who provided financial assistance to “many” recipients may represent unobserved need in these communities that is, to some degree, made up for by financial assistance to individuals and families from “sponsors,” a practice noted by a number of non-Kyrgyz interview respondents (see Chapter 5).

For ethnic Kyrgyz, those who provided financial assistance to many recipients can be understood to represent possible attempts at influencing the distribution of state-controlled resources, thus raising their individual evaluations of public goods and service quantity and/or quality in a statistically significant manner. Ethnic Kyrgyz provision of financial assistance to a “few” or “moderate” number of recipients does not have this effect, suggesting that a broad and diversified strategy of building up useful informal connections through financial assistance is necessary to affect outcomes.

On top of relatively higher levels and/or quality of state supply of goods and services to ethnic Kyrgyz communities, these results provide suggestive evidence that centrality in financial networks of reciprocity provides ethnic Kyrgyz with additional access to government-provided goods and services. This lends support to the numerous assertions discussed in the previous chapter regarding the transformation of the form and function of informal social networks in the post-communist era. Material goods and services are widely available in the post-Soviet setting, yet the financial means to attain them are scarce on a society-wide level. Kyrgyzstanis and other post-Soviet citizens may then employ financial reciprocity networks as a means of gaining access to *de jure* publicly provided, non-commodified goods and services, including limited spaces in childcare or educational institutions or preferential treatment by social security bureaucrats. While from the outside this may appear as petty corruption, the existence of such transactions within the framework of a wider reciprocity network allows participants to perceive these transactions in a more benign and normatively condonable manner.<sup>89</sup>

### **Empirical extensions**

In this section, I will examine a number of extensions of the above models and discuss the theoretical significance of the foregoing findings. In particular, I aim to respond to the potential critiques of the construction of my dependent variable, *Public Goods Satisfaction*, as well as my primary explanatory variables, *Ethnic Kyrgyz*, *Reciprocity Network* and *Festive Events*. Additionally, given the salience of regional politics in Kyrgyzstan and throughout post-Soviet Central Asia (see Luong 2003), and in particular the political, economic, and sociocultural divides

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<sup>89</sup> Again, the constituent variables of *Reciprocity Network* are all highly correlated with one another, suggesting that these are indeed networks of reciprocity.

between the north and south of the country, I respond to the potential criticism that the results are driven by factors centered overwhelmingly in one region of the country.

One of the more contentious elements of the approach I take above stems from my desire to represent public goods provision with a single variable measuring the subjective evaluations of Kyrgyzstanis as regards the quality and/or quantity of provision of various public goods and services. My aim is to convey a respondent's overall sense of the extent to which the quantity and quality of public goods being delivered by the state to themselves and their community is satisfactory. There is empirical evidence to suggest, as well, that the public goods and services which constitute the dependent variable I employ in the above models are delivered—or are perceived by Kyrgyzstanis to be delivered—in a relatively coordinated manner: all correlations between the variables are positive and highly statistically significant (Table 4.3).

Despite this, existing research suggests that ethnic politics and coethnic patronage has an inconsistent impact on the delivery of different types of public goods and services. Kramon and Posner (2013) find evidence in six African states that some public goods and services are directed by presidents towards coethnics more effectively than others. In some cases, however, coethnicity is predictive of significantly worse outcomes on one of the four dependent variables employed.<sup>90</sup> Additionally, Banerjee and Somanathan (2007) find that the quality and quantity of public goods provision to villages in India with varying proportions of particular caste and religious group

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<sup>90</sup> Kramon and Posner (2013) look at presidential coethnicity's effect on infant survival, educational levels, electricity provision, and piped water provision.

**Table 4.3 Correlation Table for Component Variables of *Public Goods Satisfaction***

	Sat_Social.Sec	Sat_Educ	Sat_Healthcare	Sat_Housing	Sat_Transport
Sat_Social.Sec					
Sat_Educ	0.52***				
Sat_Healthcare	0.46***	0.68***			
Sat_Housing	0.39***	0.51***	0.56***		
Sat_Transport	0.37***	0.46***	0.44***	0.59***	
Sat_Public.Services	0.54***	0.47***	0.44***	0.44***	0.52***

**Table 4.4 Disaggregated *Public Goods Satisfaction* for *Reciprocity Networks***

<b><i>Reciprocity Network</i></b>	<b>Supply Side (Titular)</b>	<b>Demand Side for Kyrgyz (Titular * Reciprocity Network)</b>	<b>Demand Side for non-Kyrgyz (Reciprocity Network)</b>
<b>Social security</b>	+	+	+
<b>Education</b>	+	+	-
<b>Healthcare</b>	+	+	-
<b>Housing and Land</b>	+	+	+
<b>Transport</b>	+	-	-
<b>Public Services</b>	+	-	-
<b>+ Positive coefficient</b> <b>- Negative coefficient</b> <b>Statistically significant (p &gt; .10)</b>			

members has changed over time, as they hypothesize, but that these changes are not consistent across the many categories of public goods and services measured. Gerring et al. (2015) find similarly inconsistent results for the effect of ethnic and religious diversity on human development outcomes in cross-national and sub-national analysis across 36 developing states. Thus, there are firm foundations from which to hypothesize that ethnicized distribution of government resources has varying effects across the range of public goods and services.

In order to examine the effects of ethnic titularity and informal social connections on discrete public goods and services, I disaggregate the dependent variable into its constituent parts and analyze each independently. I employ ordinal logit estimators with errors clustered at the region level. The models are otherwise identical to the full models featuring interactions terms presented above. The results employing models with the *Reciprocity Networks* variable are displayed in Table 4.4. A summary of results from models with ethnicity interacted with *Festive Events* can be found in Table 4.5. As displayed in the left-hand columns of Tables 4.4 and 4.5, the coefficient for *Ethnic Kyrgyz*—which represents the relative satisfaction for those ethnic Kyrgyz who have a value of zero for *Reciprocity Network* or *Festive Events* as compared to non-Kyrgyz with a value of zero—is positive for each of the public goods and services, excepting for *Housing and Land* in the *Festive Events* model. The positive relationships are statistically significant at the  $p < .10$  level for all dependent variables excepting *Housing and Land* and *Transportation* in the *Reciprocity Networks* models.

As would be expected from the results in the main section, the “demand side” of the ethnicized public goods argument provides a much less straightforward conclusion. The middle column of Tables 4.4 and 4.5, which represents the effect of these two types of informal social ties on public goods evaluations for ethnic Kyrgyz, displays unexpected results. For the *Reciprocity*

**Table 4.5 Disaggregated *Public Goods Satisfaction* for *Festive Events***

<i>Festive Events</i>	Supply Side (Titular)	Demand Side for Kyrgyz (Titular * Reciprocity Network)	Demand Side for non-Kyrgyz (Reciprocity Network)
<b>Social security</b>	+	-	-
<b>Education</b>	+	-	-
<b>Healthcare</b>	+	-	-
<b>Housing and Land</b>	-	+	-
<b>Transport</b>	+	-	+
<b>Public Services</b>	+	+	-
<b>+ Positive coefficient</b> <b>- Negative coefficient</b> <b>Statistically significant (p &gt; .10)</b>			

*Networks* models, ethnic Kyrgyz are seen to be provided with an additive benefit to their public goods provision on top of that received from being a member of the titular ethnic group in four subcategories. For *Transport* and *Public Services*, on the other hand, the relationship is negative. However, none of the relationships meet standard thresholds of statistical significance. This variation in the effect of the “demand side” across the constituent public goods and services that make up the *Public Goods Satisfaction* variable goes some way to explain the results in the primary analysis.

Examining the middle column of Table 4.5, we see that, as opposed to in the primary model above in which the constituent variables were combined and *Festive Events* had a positive (though not statistically significant) impact on ethnic Kyrgyz evaluations of public goods and services, the

effect is negative for all but two of these constituent dependent variables. The relationship is negative in a statistically significant fashion for the *Healthcare* dependent variable. It is difficult to ascertain what precisely is behind the variance in these results due to the fact that I employed OLS for the semi-continuous *Public Goods Satisfaction* dependent variable and ordinal logit for the disaggregated variable. However, it is likely that the rather large and consistent positive effects for *Housing and Land* and *Public Services* swamps the comparatively small and unstable effects of the other variables in the primary models above. Why this variety of informal social connections should have such an effect on precisely these goods and services is something to be considered in future work.

The right-hand column of Tables 4.4 and 4.5 display the effects of my two informal social connections variables for non-Kyrgyz. Hypothesis 2b posited that there should be no effect of informal social connections on public goods and service provision among non-Kyrgyz, and the lack of statistical significance for all but one of the constituent dependent variables supports this. The direction of the relationship is negative for all but three of the variables using both informal network explanatory variables, suggesting that it is unlikely informal social connections ameliorate the comparatively poor provision of public goods and services to non-Kyrgyz communities.

There is an additional question as to whether each of the components of the dependent variable equally have the character of public goods and services.<sup>91</sup> The distribution of housing and land is under significant state control in Kyrgyzstan, including a constitutionally mandated right to housing and the provision of free or affordable housing by the state (Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, Section II, Ch. 2, Art. 46). The inclusion of housing and land in the composite dependent

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<sup>91</sup> Lee (2017, 5) correctly points out that in much of the political economy literature, what are classified as “public goods” tend not to be non-rivalrous and non-excludable, as the concept is discussed in classical economics.

variable is unique among the literature on ethnicity and public goods, however. It is possible that the results in the main analysis are affected to a significant extent by the inclusion of the variable, as ethnic Kyrgyz may be able to access quality housing and land to an extent not seen among other ethnic groups.<sup>92</sup> However, employing a dependent variable without housing and land produces substantive and statistical results identical to those in the primary analysis, on the supply and demand side, for each of *Reciprocity Network*, *Festive Events*, and *Financial Aid*.

Another possible critique of my approach is my implicit assertion that Kyrgyzstan's ethnic and distributive politics are a statewide phenomenon, rather than being limited to a particular region. Kyrgyzstan is divided geographically and culturally between its north and south, with the country bisected by the Tien Shan mountain range. The northern region, containing the capital city, Bishkek, is the more "Russified" segment of the country. An overwhelming proportion of Kyrgyzstan's significant ethnic Russian minority lives in the northern *oblasts* of Chui, Issyk-Kul, and Talas, and Russian is more widely spoken as a *de facto* language of communication in this region of the country.

The southern region of the country has been historically less intensely Russified and, instead, is a setting of ethnic Uzbek compact settlement. Ethnic Uzbeks are the largest ethnic minority in the country, composing close to 15 percent of the population. More importantly, they are the most salient minority in regards to ethnic politics and interethnic relations, a fact most glaringly evidenced by the deadly ethnic rioting in the region in 1990 and 2010 (see Abashin and

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<sup>92</sup> However, the opposite could just as likely be the case. In the Soviet era, ethnic Kyrgyz were prohibited by strict prohibitions against internal migration from moving away from their rural, often high-elevation collective farms. Relative freedom of movement in the period of independence has translated into competition for limited space in urban and semi-urban areas, particularly in the densely populated Chuy and Fergana Valleys of northern and southern Kyrgyzstan, respectively. Urban areas and towns have historically been inhabited by majority non-Kyrgyz populations: at the fall of the Soviet Union, the two largest cities in the country had Russian and Uzbek majorities (see Alymbaeva 2013).

Savin 2012; Megoran 2000, 2016). If localized ethnic violence is an indicator of particularly intense ethnic conflict,<sup>93</sup> we might expect that the findings presented above are driven by ethnicized distributive policies that are particularly discriminatory towards the ethnic Uzbek minority. However, separate analyses of responses from the north and south do not provide any evidence that the full-country results are being driven by one region only. On the supply side, concerned only with the effect of being Kyrgyz on evaluations of public goods provision, Kyrgyz in both regions have substantively and statistically higher evaluations than comparable non-Kyrgyz across models employing the various explanatory variables for informal social connectedness. The southern and northern models both show, additionally, that the effect of informal connections is consistent with the full models: informal social connections lead to more positive evaluation of public goods and services for ethnic Kyrgyz than non-Kyrgyz.

There may also be particular ethnic group-level comparisons that are driving the overall results. One would expect, in particular, that ethnic Uzbeks would have substantially depressed outlooks on the provision of public goods, given the recent history of ethnic conflict and post-conflict injustice (International Crisis Group 2010). Ethnic Russians, as the representatives of the former colonial power, may be expected to benefit from connections to state institutions that are remnants of the Soviet period. However, the available empirical evidence does not match up to these informed preconceptions. Examining the supply side of the model, concerned with the effect of ethnic identity on evaluations of public goods and service provision for those without informal

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<sup>93</sup> Rather than this type of ethnic violence arising as a result of particularly intense feelings of antagonism between ethnic groups, as primordialist approaches would posit, there is much to suggest that contingency and opportunity provide a much more reliable explanatory tale. In particular, localized ethnic violence occurs where: there is no neutral third party, such as a professionalized and ethnically mixed police force or military, to contain unrest; there is a sense in which the ethnic hierarchy has been altered; and those who have been demoted on the ethnic hierarchy have the ability (often determined by demographics) to redress the perceived threat to their status through mass violence. For a group-level explanation along these lines, see Petersen 2002.

social connections, there is significant variation among ethnic groups.<sup>94</sup> For the *Reciprocity Networks* model, ethnic Kazakhs and Dungans have statistically and substantively higher opinions of public goods and service provision than the baseline group, ethnic Kyrgyz. Alternatively, ethnic Russians and Uighirs have systematically lower evaluations than comparable ethnic Kyrgyz across models using *Reciprocity Networks*, *Festive Events*, and *Financial Aid* as proxies for informal social connections. Ethnic Uzbeks have statistically significant lower evaluations than Kyrgyz on the supply side for *Reciprocity Networks* and *Financial Aid* models.

Examining the effects of these various types of informal social connections on public goods provision evaluations suggests some consistent trends. For the *Reciprocity Networks* model, these informal social connections have a statistically significantly more negative impact on ethnic Uzbeks, Dungans, and Kazakhs than for Kyrgyz. For no ethnic group does *Reciprocity Network* have a positive relationship, and for five of the seven non-Kyrgyz ethnic groups it has a statistically significant negative effect on evaluations. The effect of *Festive Events* suggests a more differentiated picture across ethnic groups. Although the effect is positive for ethnic Kyrgyz, it is greater in a statistically significant manner for both ethnic Russians and ethnic Kazakhs. The effect is negative and statistically significant only for ethnic Uzbeks, who are also the only group for whom the effect is lower than ethnic Kyrgyz in a statistically significant way. Finally, for *Financial Aid*, the effect is positive in a statistically significant fashion only for ethnic Uighirs. They are also the only group for whom the effect is significantly more positive than for ethnic Kyrgyz. The effect is not significantly negative for any ethnic group. All of this suggests that these three explanatory

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<sup>94</sup> Full models employing all controls and region fixed effects.

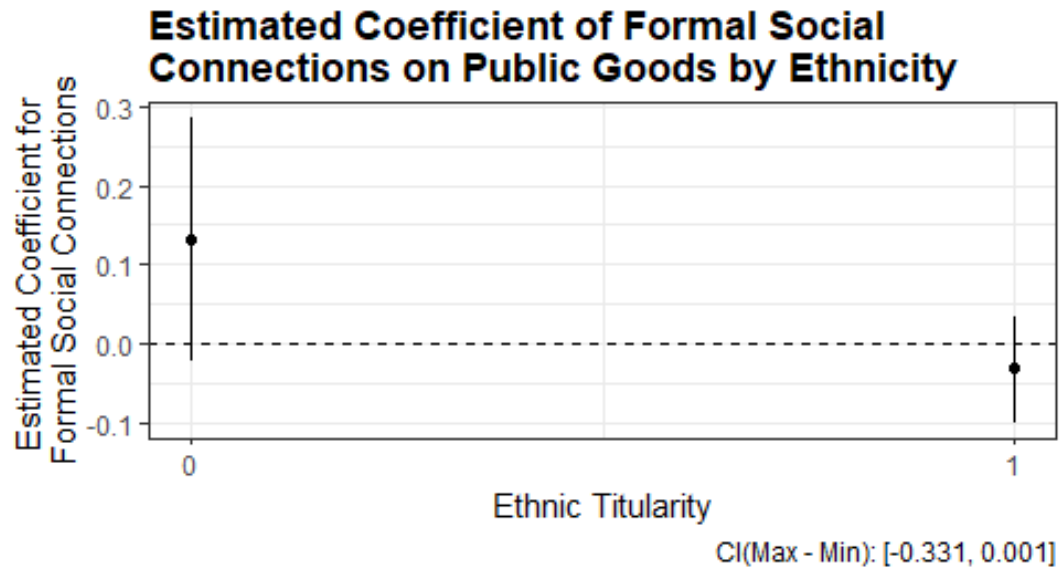
variables are related to variant aspects of the same overall concept (informal social connectedness) with different ethnic groups perhaps “specializing” in one or another form.

Finally, I examine the effect of formal social connectedness, in order to ascertain the extent to which the informality of social connections for ethnic Kyrgyz is the relevant factor in accessing state-distributed resources. It is possible that any type of social connections benefit ethnic titulars in a manner that affects the provision of state resources and the evaluation of the same. Such a result would suggest that it is interpersonal contact and the sharing of information, rather than a mechanism having to do with the institutional path dependence of *blat*-type networks and their associated in-group trust and norms of reciprocity, that explains the relationship. I measure *Formal social connectedness* by an individual’s membership in a variety of non-political organizations at the local level.<sup>95</sup> Participation in this type of formal organization is vanishingly rare in Kyrgyzstan: among those who responded, only 6.6 percent were members of any one of these types of organizations. For that reason, I use a binary variable indicating whether individuals were a participant, in the last 12 months, in any of these types of organizations. As evidenced in Figure 4.10, the role that formal group membership plays in the provision of public goods is the opposite of that played by the informal social connections variables employed above. Non-Kyrgyz with formal group membership have higher evaluations of public goods and service provision than those without such group membership, though the difference is not statistically significant. The predicted value of *Public Goods Satisfaction* for those non-Kyrgyz with formal group membership is approximately 3 percent higher than for those without. There is no significant effect on public goods provision for ethnic Kyrgyz. Although more research on this topic is needed, this finding

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<sup>95</sup> These groups include: community development committee; agricultural cooperative; parents committee; health committee; youth committee; cultural groups; religious groups; groups of joint borrowers; non-governmental organizations.

Figure 4.10 Formal social connections (Confidence interval = .95)



may suggest that non-titular ethnic group members seek access to governing bodies and their resources through organized, interest group pressure rather than informal, one-on-one interactions with coethnic officials, as seen among ethnic Kyrgyz.

## Discussion

How should the negative sign for both ethnic Kyrgyz and non-Kyrgyz for the *Reciprocity Network* variable be understood? Taking into account the results from the primary models employing the *Festive Events* and *Financial Aid* variables, this does not represent a clear refutation of the proposition that informal social networks play a different, and more positive, role in the process of demanding government resources for public goods among members of the titular, ethnic Kyrgyz community, than among non-Kyrgyz. However, it does suggest that certain types of informal

network ties may, first, be endogenous to poor government provision of public goods and services, or second, serve a potential dual function as political discussion groups. This is particularly relevant considering that the dependent variable captures *subjective* evaluations of the quality and/or quantity of public goods and services provided by the Kyrgyzstani state. Informal social networks are not only capable of influencing the distribution of resources, but also have a substantial impact on the way in which people understand political narratives and outcomes.

Reciprocity networks of the kind examined here are established through social trust: providers of financial or non-financial assistance must possess a certain amount of (generally unspoken) faith that there will be a *quid* in exchange for their *quo*. Often this trust is constructed across multiple transactions in many different categories of assistance, from providing small loans to the expenditure of one's own sweat in the repair or construction of an associate's home. The interpersonal trust developed through these channels additionally enables individuals to express their opinions and evaluations of governing institutions without fear of social or legal sanctioning. Informal social networks, in their guise as political discussion groups, provide a lens through which individuals develop a subjective understanding of political questions and discuss both their personal interactions and secondhand accounts with governmental institutions. In this sense, they are not only an arena within which individuals can both share and hear political perspectives, but one in which political perspectives and social identities are molded (Walsh 2004).

Informal social networks in Kyrgyzstan, as in other settings where race and ethnic identity is "thick" (Hale 2008), exhibit high levels of ethnic homophily. Informal Kyrgyzstani political discussion, then, is generally undertaken with coethnics who have broadly similar relations to governing institutions. "Information is received at no cost, typically comes from trusted sources, and potentially provides a relevant, on-point basis for gauging the actors in question" (Mondak et

al. 2017). When individuals of an ethnic or racial group that perceives itself as being discriminated against interact with coethnics, the probability that they are exposed to secondhand anecdotes of mistreatment or discrimination rises.

In the setting of Kyrgyzstan, it is not difficult to imagine the way in which this would contribute to, first, the overall negative relationship between reciprocity network ties and public goods provision evaluations and, second, the much more substantial negative effect of such ties among non-Kyrgyz. Regardless of ethnic identity, the Kyrgyzstani state is perceived by many residents as “weak,” personalistic, and opaque, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter. In such a context, the role of the negativity bias—that negative stimuli will hold more weight in forming an evaluation or opinion of an institution or individual than neutral or positive stimuli—will play an outsized role. Extensive research provides evidence to the effect that, “events that yield negative outcomes have a significantly greater psychological impact than equivalent events that yield positive outcomes” (Baumeister et al. 2001). This suggests that, for every few neutral or positive evaluations of governing institutions that a Kyrgyzstani is exposed to through their informal social connections, there is a second-hand or third-hand anecdote or personal experience with a significant negative valence. Potential examples abound, from descriptions of how government officials harassed a resident attempting to obtain documents, how a traffic patrol officer asked for a bribe, or how a road was shoddily asphalted by municipal authorities. This is likely to leave a more salient mark than the multiple neutral or positive interactions and helps to explain the overall negative relationship among the extent of one’s informal network of reciprocity and their evaluations of public goods and service provision. Non-Kyrgyz are more likely to be the victims of government harassment or poor resource distribution. This provides many more instances for potential critique and, as non-Kyrgyz discuss governance failures with those trusted coethnics with

whom they also share money, labor, and small favors in reciprocity networks, overall evaluations of public goods and service provision fall accordingly.

This mechanism may also go some way toward explaining the nonlinear relationship between *Festive Events* and public goods evaluations displayed in Figure 4.6. Whereas attendance at a small number of events may be expedient in the construction and cultivation of informal social networks that might then aid one's access to government goods and services, higher levels of attendance may expose Kyrgyzstanis to more opportunities to hear second- or third-hand anecdotes about the poor or corrupt functioning of state institutions. Due to the objective and subjective poor treatment of non-Kyrgyz by representatives of governing institutions, the threshold beyond which useful social ties built through attendance at such events is overwhelmed by the impact of negative anecdotes one is exposed to in the course of one's attending may simply be lower for non-Kyrgyz than Kyrgyz. This would explain the sign switch from a positive effect of attending a "few" festive events to the negative effect of attending a "moderate" number. However, the jump to an effect not distinguishable from zero for non-Kyrgyz attendance at "many" events complicates this interpretation.

## **Conclusion**

Through analysis of the *Life in Kyrgyzstan* dataset, I find that the "supply side" of my ethnicized public goods provision argument is supported empirically. Even accounting for and separating out the effect of their embeddedness in informal social networks, ethnic Kyrgyz are systematically more positive in their evaluations of public goods and service provisioning than non-Kyrgyz. Due to the affect of ethnic Kyrgyz state officials towards their coethnics, titular communities seem to be targeted more effectively with state resources than other ethnic communities. On the other hand, I am not able to confirm with as much confidence that the "demand side" of ethnicized public

goods provision is operational. For the *Reciprocity Networks* variable, higher levels of embeddedness are associated with lower evaluations for both ethnic Kyrgyz and non-Kyrgyz, though to a significantly greater extent among the latter. For models in which I employ the *Festive Events* variable, however, informal social connections appear to have a positive effect for ethnic Kyrgyz and a negative effect for non-Kyrgyz, though the relationship is statistically significant according to accepted standards for neither.

I also take into consideration the institutional changes in the post-Soviet period and the increasing importance of shortages in money, as opposed to the shortages of goods and services that were the driving force behind the construction of *blat* networks in the Soviet period. I find the hypothesized additive effect of informal social connections on access to public goods among ethnic Kyrgyz titulars when I analyze the particular impact of monetized informal transactions. The same effect is not found among non-Kyrgyz, for whom the effect is negative but not statistically significant. Even accounting for the relatively low correlation between centrality in informal financial assistance networks and household economic satisfaction, ethnic Kyrgyz are benefited through their informal financial reciprocity networks in a way that accords with what is known about the post-Soviet and, more specifically, the personalistic and quasi-privatized Kyrgyzstani state (see Engvall 2016).

The fact that informal social connections do not have as strong and consistent a relationship to evaluations of public goods provision as hypothesized might result from a couple of factors. It may be that my explanatory variables for informal social networks are not suited to answer this question. Even among ethnic Kyrgyz social networks, the density of individuals with control over state resources is likely not all that high, and the effects of political discussion and the negativity bias may be canceling out any effects of access that these informal social connections may be

having. Future research in Kyrgyzstan and beyond will explore this issue more deeply through the purposeful selection of a sample of individuals from titular and non-titular groups and extensive modeling of their informal social networks. This will provide an empirical sense of the difference in public resource-distributing nodes between the groups, as well as how and whether these connections are employed to influence distribution of public goods and services. I also intend to put into the field a list survey experiment in various post-Soviet states in order to examine the differences between ethnic titulars and non-titulars in the extent to which they believe that their informal social connections provide them access to state resources and services.

Another important next step is to put my assertion that these are actually post-Soviet, as opposed to simply Kyrgyzstani, phenomena to the test. Each of the Soviet successor states, excluding the Russian Federation, shares the legacy of titular nation status and the accrued benefits for the titular ethnicity of a controlling proportion of the population and preferential access to positions in higher education and the public sector (see Hirsch 2005; Martin 2001). Additionally, these ethnicized states are overlaid with path dependent legacies of a hierarchical, “vertical” assemblage of symbiotic formal and informal political institutions which have a dominant role in determining how power is transferred and the way in which those with political influence distribute resources (Hale 2014). In Chapter 6, I analyze data from a subset of post-Soviet states to examine whether the ethno-clientelist systems at work in Kyrgyzstan operate more widely.

## Chapter 5

### Ethnicized Visions of “The State”:

#### *A Grounded Analysis of Distributive Governance in Southern Kyrgyzstan*

In the previous chapter, large-N empirical evidence from Kyrgyzstan was presented showing that—even accounting for potential confounding variables—ethnic Kyrgyz have systematically higher evaluations of public goods provision than non-titulars. Further evidence is presented that informal network ties are more useful in gaining access to public goods for ethnic Kyrgyz than for members of other ethnic communities. Given the increased monetization of informal relationships over the post-Soviet period, alluded to in Chapter 3, it is additionally notable that these patterns of more effective access for ethnic Kyrgyz hold when focusing solely on informal ties of a purely financial nature.

These are broadly the results that would be expected given the supply and demand mechanisms of post-Soviet ethnicized public goods provision theorized in Chapter 2. Ethnic Kyrgyz dominance of representative and bureaucratic posts and the presence of coethnic affect among these decision-makers should be associated with higher quantities and/or quality of public goods and services directed to ethnic Kyrgyz communities. This disparity is exacerbated by the relative inability of non-Kyrgyz to find individuals within their social networks who control the distribution of resources for public goods. Thus, while both Kyrgyz and non-Kyrgyz may have extensive informal networks of all kinds, composed of kin ties, work and school colleagues, and general friend and acquaintance groups, the ethnicized nature of the Kyrgyzstani state is such that informal connections are substantially more useful for ethnic titulars than for non-titulars.

While this provides us with a systematic glimpse of *what* opinions or beliefs Kyrgyzstanis of varying ethnic backgrounds hold regarding public goods provision, it would be useful to

understand *why* they feel this way and *how* they come to their conclusions. Kyrgyzstanis of different ethnicities not only live within a single state, but also often reside within the same cities, villages, and apartment blocks. Yet those of varying social positions evidently perceive the “state” quite differently. Rather than assuming that these differences arise only due to a jaundiced view of a state apparatus dominated by the “Other,” we should explore and recognize how authority in the form of official institutions and their representatives is “performed” differently depending on the identity of the audience (Rasanayagam, Beyer, and Reeves 2014).

In this chapter, I am interested in “the cultural constitution of the state” as regards the demand, production, and distribution of public goods in Kyrgyzstan. I aim to present evidence of “how people perceive the state, how their understanding is shaped by their particular location and intimate and embodied encounters with state processes and officials, and how the state manifests itself in their lives” (Sharma and Gupta 2009, 11). This approach argues for a view of the state as not an entity “out there” to be found and interacted with and recognizes that the “state idea”—how citizens perceive the state and its relative omnipotence or absence—and the “state system”—the institutional structure and its representatives—require separate attention (Abrams 1988). The state is profitably conceptualized as a kaleidoscopic aggregation of material institutions (i.e. a legislature, a mayor’s office, the shabby and informal site of a Kyrgyzstani village council, or *ayil okmotu*), their inhabitants vested with the authority to speak and act for the state (i.e., MPs, local politicians, bureaucrats, law enforcement officers), and the interactions among these and the citizenry. The “state” as perceived by citizens is the effect that these interactions have on mass perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs. Critical to understanding this state effect is the elusiveness of the state *qua* “state,” with the result that many perceive it as separate and somehow above society rather than being a superstructure endogenous to social interaction and the performance of power

differentials (Mitchell 1991). In short, the state and citizens' experience with state institutions—either first-hand or secondhand—are subjective phenomena, with the result that the state may be “weak” for some subset of the population but quite strong for others.

Particularly in the context of post-Soviet Eurasia, there are a number of critical shortcomings to the binary approach to “state weakness”. The conceptualization of weak or failing states as those which “no longer deliver positive political goods,” where “governments lose legitimacy, and the very nature of the particular nation-state itself becomes illegitimate” (Rotberg 2004, 1), requires examination. Among the more salient questions raised is: “strength [or weakness] to do what” and for whom? (Heathershaw and Schatz 2017, 3). Given the multiplicity of actors involved, from citizens to international NGOs to members of the state bureaucracy itself, we should not assume that there is a single, homogeneous understanding of the state's proper role and capacity. Additionally, while states such as Kyrgyzstan have often been described as “weak” or even “failing,” this elides the multiple, fragmented reality of stateness.

The conceptual move of separating state from society, particularly prominent in the movement to “bring the state back in” (see Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol 1985), understands the former as an autonomous complex of formal institutions. This suggests that the influence on politics of non-state, informal institutions, such as social networks, clans, or kinship structures, represents an indicator of state weakness. Reno (1999, 2) notes that the term “weak state” is commonly employed to stand in for “a spectrum of conventional bureaucratic state capabilities that exists alongside (generally very strong) informal political networks.”

Particularly in the post-Soviet context (H. Aliyev 2015; Hale 2014), these informal institutions and relationships are often key elements of the state's integrity. Engvall's (2016) research depicting the Kyrgyzstani state as an investment market illustrates this poignantly.

Positions at nearly all levels of public service and law enforcement are auctioned to the highest bidder, who—understanding this as a medium-term investment similar to franchising—then gathers rents based upon the authority provided by the state’s imprimatur. Reminiscent of Henry Hale’s (2014) pyramidal sketch of Eurasian politics, income from franchising is passed up the hierarchy of each bureaucratic agency, and from there a variable amount is provided and/or demanded by the head of the pyramid—often the head of state or president—to whom the chiefs of the bureaucratic organs owe their profitable positions. This is a vivid example of the manner in which informal mechanisms provide an alternative means of state cohesion.

As regards the normative desirability of the dominance of formal institutions, much depends on context. Path dependence plays a crucial role in settings where informality has been the modal condition. Not only are formal institutions more difficult to successfully develop and provide with impersonal administrative substance, but longstanding informal practices and institutions are often comparatively effective in resolving contentious issues.<sup>96</sup> They can be a substantial support to the popular legitimacy of formal, centralized governing institutions.

As I have argued above, ethnicity is one contextual element with a fundamental role in determining access to the institutions of the state and the goods and services it nominally provides in the post-Soviet region. Ethnicity’s relationship to public goods provision arises from both the formal domination of state institutions by members of the ethnic titular group and the continued

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<sup>96</sup> Khamidov’s (2017) comparison of the Uzbekistani cities of Andijan and Yangiobod presents a clear example of this, referencing the legacies of Soviet-era mechanisms to soothe conflict among local officials and religious residents as a critical determinant of the diverging paths of the two cases. The central state authorities in 2005 became entangled in a conflict among Andijan’s local power networks, concluding in the massacre of some hundreds of unarmed protestors at the hands of government forces. Yangiobod avoided such a tragedy through negotiations among religious authorities and local politicians possessing longstanding kinship and personal ties, with little involvement on the part of Tashkent. The “informal, disaggregated, and inconsistent local state mechanisms for adapting central government policies to communities are effective at limiting rebellion against the state and maintaining the state’s hegemonic status in society” (170).

informality of interactions among society and representatives of the state. This path-dependent informality makes it more difficult for ethnic minorities to make demands of the state and thus contributes to ethnicized provision of state resources. With that noted, I hope to show in this chapter that ethnicity is a critical, but not monolithic, categorical boundary within which substantial variation persists. Kyrgyzstanis and other post-Soviet citizens also come to understand their relationship to the state through prisms that include economic standing, gender, and integration into informal social networks of access.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will first describe my qualitative methodology by which I collected my data in southern Kyrgyzstan. This will be followed by a discussion of the shortcomings of the formal democratic mechanisms of holding politicians to account, and thus the missing link between elections and public goods provision, in Kyrgyzstan. I will then describe, separately, the experience of ethnic Kyrgyz and non-Kyrgyz interactions with the state in southern Kyrgyzstan.

### **“If you add some gasoline, it can create a blaze”: a note on field methodology**

Nearing the end of an interview with Ravshan *aka*, a middle-aged Uzbek man generous in both time and insight, his face became serious and his voice grave. He relayed to me that information had reached him about a foreigner conducting a survey on the theme of ethnicity and governance in southern Kyrgyzstan. It was left to my judgment whether he was referring to myself. He continued, “After 2010, you know what our circumstances were, yes? There are still people who lost those close to them. They still feel it in their hearts, understand? Such a small fire [makes a small shape with his hands], if you add some gasoline like this, it can create a blaze” (Interview, June 2017). While many Kyrgyzstanis might argue that this rhetoric of insecurity is overstated, given the post-conflict setting in which I was conducting my research and the continued salience

of the ethnic divide in southern Kyrgyzstanis' understandings of their surroundings, maintaining the security and confidentiality of my respondents, intermediaries, and research assistants was and continues to be a primary consideration. To this end, in some cases I do not report the setting in which interactions occurred and all respondent names in this chapter are pseudonymous.<sup>97</sup>

The qualitative materials presented in this chapter are the result of informal and semi-structured interviews and focus groups conducted in Kyrgyzstan from August 2016 to July 2017, with a two-week stint of fieldwork in June 2018. Respondents included current and former subnational politicians, administrators, local civil society activists, and non-elite Kyrgyzstanis from a wide variety of occupations and backgrounds. Of the 45 interviews and 12 focus groups I conducted, there is substantial balance in the gender, age cohort, and ethnic backgrounds of respondents.<sup>98</sup> Many of the interviews and focus groups were conducted in the southern city of Osh. Others were conducted in semi-urban and rural regions of all three southern Kyrgyzstani provinces (*oblasts*) and in Kyrgyzstan's capital city, Bishkek.

Interview and focus group respondents were recruited via snowball sampling and through intermediaries in local government or non-governmental organizations. All potential focus group participants were invited via phone or social media by an individual with whom they had prior acquaintance. They would receive reminders the evening before or the morning of the planned focus group. We invited 15 to 20 potential focus group participants in the hope that between 5 and 15 would in fact participate. While research assistants and I initially invited potential focus group

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<sup>97</sup> This research was conducted under University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign IRB Protocol 17651.

<sup>98</sup> Focus groups, however, were largely composed of ethnic Kyrgyz. Exceptions were two focus groups of faculty in Uzbek-language schools and one focus group in which the respondents were members of a micro-district committee in an urban locale in southern Kyrgyzstan. As a result of intimidation from representatives of the state security services, I destroyed the physical and digital materials gathered from two focus groups of ethnic Uzbek non-elites at my respondents' request.

participants without consideration of ethnicity,<sup>99</sup> reluctance of members of the ethnic minority community to join potentially ethnically mixed discussion groups led us to attempt to form focus group discussions where only non-titulars would be present. Despite this, the political atmosphere of post-June 2010 southern Kyrgyzstan continues to be such that ethnic minorities—and particularly ethnic Uzbeks—are reluctant to openly discuss politics and questions of state-society relations, and we consistently had difficulties recruiting non-Kyrgyz participants.

There were Kyrgyz, Uzbek, and Russian language versions of all interview and focus group protocols, with language of discussion determined by the interview respondent or a joint decision by the focus group participants (see Appendix B for informed consent, interview protocols, and focus group protocols). Prior to each interview or focus group, myself or my research assistant<sup>100</sup> read an introductory statement of informed consent and a protocol guaranteeing the confidentiality of all disclosed materials. Respondents were informed of the broad themes of the research and that the information they provided would be used for academic purposes only. Additionally, they were assured that only the field investigator would have access to the collected materials. In some cases, interviewees and respondents were asked if they would be amenable to the discussion being recorded, accompanied by assurances that their preference not to be recorded would in no way reflect poorly on them.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Out of the nine focus groups that might have been potentially mixed, with each containing between four and fifteen participants, only one participant was an ethnic Uzbek. Considering that there was near-parity of ethnic proportions in many of the locales in which we conducted focus groups, this suggests highly ethnically homogeneous social networks among the primarily ethnic Kyrgyz research assistants who contacted potential participants and/or significant reticence among non-titulars to discuss questions of governmental performance openly.

<sup>100</sup> All interviews and focus groups conducted in Russian were led by me, while those conducted primarily in Kyrgyz or Uzbek were translated through one of my many excellent local research assistants and intermediaries. Almost all interviews were conducted in Russian, with a small number conducted in Uzbek. Language use was much more fluid in focus group discussions, as Kyrgyzstanis are often more comfortable discussing various themes in one language or another. Seven focus groups were primarily conducted in Russian, four in Kyrgyz, and one in Uzbek.

<sup>101</sup> In many cases, particularly in interviews or focus groups with local politicians or socially vulnerable respondents, I did not broach the subject of recording the conversation, as I felt that the mere mention of this potentiality might

Respondents were told that they could take a break from the interview or discussion process or declare it at an end if at any point they felt uncomfortable or emotional. They were instructed that they could and should refuse to answer any questions that they preferred not to discuss and were assured that they would not be judged in any manner by myself or my research assistants in light of their past actions or currently held opinions. Interviews lasted between 15 minutes and two hours, while focus group discussions generally ranged between one hour and nearly three hours. The location of interviews varied and were left up to the respondent. In the main, these were conducted in cafes, private residences, spaces provided by local non-governmental organizations, or in a private room at the American University of Central Asia. Focus groups were conducted in the conference halls of hotels and guesthouses, spaces provided by local non-governmental organizations, or within public buildings such as schools. In order to maximize confidentiality, non-participants were not permitted to sit in on focus group discussions. Because the participants of each focus group were gathered with the aid of a single research assistant or intermediary, many of the participants in focus group discussions had prior acquaintance with one another.<sup>102</sup> Individual focus group participants did not take part in more than one discussion. However, a small

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increase respondent discomfort. It is an unfortunate truth that recording and dissemination of compromising materials (*kompromat*) in audio or video form is a prevalent practice in post-Soviet political culture (see Darden 2001; Ledeneva 2006; Oates 2007; Pearce 2015).

<sup>102</sup> While this strategy was necessitated by the limited resources at hand to recruit participants in a more deliberate manner, there are pros and cons to conducting focus groups in which the participants may already know one another. Previous interactions may make participants less reticent to voice their opinions than they might be in a room of strangers. Additionally, participants would likely have some idea of one another's beliefs and biases and thus fashion their statements in a way designed not to inflame tensions that might derail a discussion. However, it is equally the case that "a group of participants without predetermined conceptions of each other and with little probability of encountering each other after the focus group would generate better data and enhance the prospects of maintaining collective confidentiality" (Kapiszewski, MacLean, and Read 2015, 202). Additionally, preexisting power differentials among participants are likely to affect the amount and content of discussion (Hertel, Singer, and Van Cott 2009). These factors require researchers to be aware and make note of how these hierarchical structures play themselves out in discussion and to include these insights in their analysis, but are far from negating the value of data collected from such groups.

number of focus group participants with whom I built rapport were later informal or semi-structured interview respondents.

All respondents were offered monetary or other (e.g. food, drink, souvenir) benefit for their time. Interview respondents who met me outside of their home or office were offered a meal and 200 Kyrgyz *som* (about USD\$3 at the time of fieldwork) for their travel expenses.<sup>103</sup> I brought some small souvenir from the United States—a refrigerator magnet, statuette, etc.—and/or food and drink when interviews were conducted in homes or offices. Focus group participants were offered a simple meal—some combination of the local variant of pilaf (*plov*), salad, stuffed pastries (*somsa*), and tea—during or after the discussion. In those cases where focus groups were not conducted in the participants’ place of work, they were offered 200 *som* to reimburse their travel costs.<sup>104</sup> Respondents were assured that their potential decision to not answer some or even a large portion of questions would not affect their receipt of monetary or other benefit.

### **Public goods in Central Asia’s “island of democracy”: an electoral connection?**

Kyrgyzstan has long stood in stark relief to its post-Soviet Central Asian neighbors in regards to both internal democratic processes and openness to the outside world. As the only country in the region to enter independence with a president—Askar Akaev—who had not been a prominent Communist Party *apparatchik*, consistent multiparty competition in parliament, and liberalization of the economy (Abazov 1999), there was a basis to label the country an “island of democracy” (J.

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<sup>103</sup> The cost of public transportation in Kyrgyzstan is 8-10 *som*, while a round trip taxi ride within a city costs between 100-250 Kyrgyz *som*.

<sup>104</sup> In almost all cases, this offer was rejected, as the Kyrgyzstani norm of hospitality (*mekhmorchilik*) dictated that I be treated as a guest in all ways—including answering questions about government performance and state-society interactions—without any expectation of monetary reciprocity. In a number of cases, interview and focus group respondents offered to buy me food, which I always politely refused. Alternatively, I nearly always accepted offers of food and drink if the interview or focus group discussion was taking place in the context of a home or office. Apart from a deep appreciation of Central Asian cuisine, this decision-making calculus reflected the fact that my refusal of such offers would have been considered enormously rude and damaged my rapport with respondents.

Anderson 2013). Moreover, popular ousters of Akaev in 2005 and Bakiyev in 2010 provided evidence that Kyrgyzstanis would not accept the lifelong sinecures of presidents that had—until the March 2019 “strategic” resignation of Kazakhstani President Nursultan Nazarbaev—been the norm throughout the region.

Yet a burgeoning body of evidence marks Kyrgyzstan out as something other than a liberal democracy. As a first cut, Freedom House has consistently rated the country as “Partly Free,” with ratings of “Not Free” in the latter periods of both ousted presidents’ tenures. Politically motivated arrests of opposition politicians on seemingly spurious charges are increasingly common, including a warrant for the arrest of the runner-up in the 2016 presidential election, Omurbek Babanov, who chose to flee the country.

The question remains as to how the “illiberal” character of Kyrgyzstan’s formally democratic representative institutions relates to the production and provision of public goods. A number of theories posit that democracies provide higher quantities of public goods (Lake and Baum 2001; Min 2015). Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003) eloquently arrive at the conclusion that, because democratic governance requires larger minimum winning coalitions—a majority or plurality of the electorate—than non-democratic regimes, it is more efficient for such regimes to produce and distribute public goods than to target private goods to those supportive of the regime. Additional research argues that representative democratic institutions are likely to provision public goods and services equitably across subcategories of society, as opposed to relying primarily on pork-barrel projects that might target strategic or affectively-favored groups (Weingast and Shepsle 1981).

The evidence gathered in my fieldwork provides evidence that, first, Kyrgyzstan’s representative institutions do not function as would be expected in a liberal democracy and,

second, the connection between government-provided goods and services and electoral mechanisms is overwhelmingly clientelist in nature, with promises of one-time transfers of small amounts of cash for votes or local infrastructure for community-level support. Political parties do not espouse programmatic proposals for governance, but rather tend to be coalitions of political elites with the primary aim of safeguarding their personal wealth through high office. For that reason, little attention is paid to party labels—this despite Kyrgyzstan’s party-centric proportional representation system—and instead more is paid to direct appeals.

As I discussed with Isa, a young civil society activist in Osh city, Kyrgyzstanis tend to place little trust in political parties and, in turn, are generally unaware of official party platforms:

*KE:* To what extent do people here think about political parties? Are political parties important to them?

*Isa:* To be honest, people are poorly informed. [They] do not even read [the parties’] plans for the development of the country. They only listen to what the main politicians say, the main political figures...Some people believe [the promises of politicians], some people do not. The main issue in all of this is that [the politicians] have learned to simply make empty promises...There are a few parties that really publicize their program, but people are divided. They have not become accustomed to the concept of a political program. They understand *plov* [rice pilaf, which is often provided at party festivities as a popular draw for support]. (Interview, Osh city, June 2017)

Isa’s sentiment suggests that there is little consideration of parties as entities autonomous of their political leaders—many of whom are local oligarchs—and more of what individuals can receive from party agents in the short term.

Limited notions of party responsibility and programmatic leadership hold as well for those who are dependent for their income on the state budget. For these individuals, parties in power can promise temporary added benefits or potential disincentives for opposing the party in elections.

This sense was relayed to me by a group of ethnic Kyrgyz teachers in southern Kyrgyzstan, as they described why they continued to support the ruling Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK):

*KE:* To what extent do you think the level of quality of the provision of public goods depends on the political parties of the mayor or members of the local council...if it is the SDPK, will it be better?

*Woman 4:* We depend on the budget. We depend on SDPK, because our president and our salaries depend on them.

*Woman 2:* Every time elections happen, people from different parties ask if we have problems. They hear us and promise to solve our issues but then they forget about it. But there are some candidates who really care about us and we vote for them.

*Woman 1:* There are people from other parties who work better than SDPK, but we are budget dependent people. (Kyrgyz language school, Osh city, April 2017)<sup>105</sup>

Given the cynical attitude of southern Kyrgyzstani citizens in relation to political parties, it is unsurprising that elections are perceived in a similarly pessimistic manner. The most common characterization of elections in the region is as a short-term agreement between candidates and/or parties and the electorate, rather than as a means of retrospective evaluation or prospective expression of policy preferences. In my discussions with local residents, there was widespread agreement that government activity was at its height just before elections, and the quality and quantity of government delivery of goods and services was much less at other times.

(Focus group, March 2017, Batken municipality)

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<sup>105</sup> A teacher in another school discussed how teachers' salaries would be raised 15 percent before upcoming elections (Kyrgyz language school, Osh city, April 2017).

*KE:* What is the role played by the local elections in the provision of public goods in your area?

*Man 1:* They serve people before elections very well.

*Man 2:* They serve people before elections, but then they extract from people for everything they have done.

*Man 1:* Prior to elections, they deliver transportation, water and the like.

*Man 2:* I think that after elections public goods are delivered not very well.

(Kyrgyz language school, Osh city, April 2017)

*Woman 4:* Before elections, they start to do something, but after the elections they disappear.

*Woman 1:* They go to Bishkek after elections and relax there.

*Research assistant:* But you said that the three members of parliament represent you well and support you.

*Woman 2:* They do not support us. Sometimes during celebrations, they meet us and do some road fixing with gravel because it is cheap.

Clientelist practices and vote-buying are widespread in Kyrgyzstan, further constraining the relationship of accountability between parties and the electorate. Isa, the southern Kyrgyzstani local civil society activist heard from above, summarized the issue in the following manner. “Probably, for most people, the elections are seen as, for instance, ‘Hey, I am going to get money.’ Most of the people think this way. And for [their votes] they get very little money” (Interview, Osh city, June 2017).<sup>106</sup> An extended fragment of a focus group discussion with a neighborhood

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<sup>106</sup> A standing question in regards to vote buying (or vote selling) is how political parties actually monitor whether or not the voter has held up her end of the deal. Ainura, a middle aged Kyrgyz businesswoman, described the process in the following manner, placing much of the emphasis on the moral conscience of the recipient: “Here the deputies give us money [for votes]. It is better to get the money. Elections mean money to us. [How do they check if you voted for

committee in a majority-minority setting in southern Kyrgyzstan sheds further light on how Kyrgyzstanis have come to understand the significance of the electoral process in their lives.

*KE:* In your opinion, do local and national elections play a role in the provision of public goods and municipal resources? When there are local elections, they spend better, yes?

*Man 1:* Yes, when there are elections, of course. When there are elections, we are necessary people.

*Man 2:* At election time they buy us like they are at the *bazaar*.

*KE:* Do they make promises and actually do something or just promise?

*Man 1:* They simply promise and give people small amounts of money.

*Man 2:* It seems as though we have a multiparty system and, during elections, every party tries to do something. If they [the party] wins, then everything is okay. They may do [what they promised]. But if not, they can take back [what they gave].

*Man 3:* In one neighborhood, a party—“Kyrgyzstan”, right? [appeals to others in the discussion for confirmation]—they installed street lighting. Everything was done. But then they did not get through [into parliament]. They took everything, all the cables, all the lighting [after the election failure].

*Man 1:* If the result is not there, they collect [what they provided]. If the result stands, it stays. (Meeting with neighborhood committee members, summer 2018)

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them?] Depending on your registration place, they give you money. People receive the money, and then their conscience forces them to vote how they promised. There are some places where politicians did not get the results they wanted and asked for the money back” (Interview with one Uzbek and one Kyrgyz woman, Osh city, March 2017). I conducted participant observation at a Bishkek-based non-governmental organization promoting democracy and good governance during an election in late 2016. The election monitors from the organization reported a variety of methods by which party agents verified that recipients or potential recipients held up their end of the deal, including receiving text messages with photos displaying voters’ ballots and having agents stationed outside of windows adjacent to voting booths so that voters could demonstrate their veracity in this manner. Despite this, many have boasted to me of their ability to collect money from multiple parties while still voting based upon their own preferences. Having not discussed the matter with Kyrgyzstani party leaders and agents, it is not possible for me to make a determination as to whether parties are engaged in “vote buying” of moderately opposed potential voters (Stokes 2005) or “turnout buying” of likely supporters (Nichter 2008).

The link between the electoral process and the government's delivery of goods and services, regardless of ethnic background, thus does not match up to the idealized model of representative democracy. First, parties do not promote coherent programs of development, but are instead personalistic and volatile. Everyday Kyrgyzstanis, then, exhibit almost no party loyalty, excepting the unified support of whatever party is in power from those dependent on the government for their salaries. As a result, representatives of parties offer material incentives in the form of one-time payments to potential voters or local infrastructure (i.e. lighting, power generators, road improvements), with the implicit recognition that both can be revoked *post facto* if the political party does not attain its desired result.

### **Determinants of success in making appeals to the state: the titular perspective**

In the previous chapter, I provided large-N evidence that ethnic Kyrgyz systematically hold higher evaluations of public goods provision than members of non-titular ethnic groups. This is as would be expected given the top-down mechanism of elite favoritism towards coethnic titulars that serves as the supply side of my ethnicized public goods argument, as well as the relatively greater effectiveness for ethnic titulars of bottom-up or horizontal mechanisms of utilizing informal networks to influence the distribution of government resources. With that said, there remains significant variance across members of the ethnic Kyrgyz majority in regards to personal experiences in demanding and receiving public goods and services.

My qualitative investigation suggests that, while ethnic Kyrgyz tend to believe that the quality and quantity of public goods and services has improved over the period of independence, critical shortcomings persist. Ethnic Kyrgyz similarly vary in the extent to which they feel themselves capable of making demands of the state, with issues of economic standing and integration into useful social networks impinging greatly on this question. After a general

discussion of these themes, I will focus on the specific, intensely contested issue of ethnic Kyrgyz from Osh region requesting and receiving—or failing to receive—government compensation following the 2010 conflict.

Public goods: What is well-provided, and what is wanting?

Ethnic Kyrgyz respondents expressed opinions regarding which goods and services are provided more or less adequately by the state. While respondents often expressed criticism of both the level and quality of the goods and services provided, many of the same individuals believed that the situation had improved since the early post-Soviet period and were confident that this positive trend would continue.

The provision of government resources for education and childcare was a salient theme for many ethnic Kyrgyz. Post-Soviet disinvestment in this area has come as a particular social shock after great emphasis had been placed on the sphere under communist administration. Low salaries paid to teachers and professors mean that these individuals often must work multiple jobs to supplement their primary income. Almaz, a young civil society activist, felt particularly strongly on this issue:

Why did the educational system decline? First of all, they do not give teachers a decent salary. [Teachers] are forced to find additional work. They do not have any time to educate the students... There need to be higher salaries so that educated people will want to enter [the teaching profession]. So that the youth will become educated and become teachers. Right now, I would not study to become a teacher, because they have a [monthly] salary of around 10 thousand *som* [at the time of the interview, this would be approximately USD\$150]...They should be able to live, feed their families. (Interview, June 2017, Osh city)

In addition to a shortage of intellectual capital willing to fill the teaching ranks, the combination of degradation of Soviet educational infrastructure, the urban in-migration described above, and natural population growth means that physical space in educational institutions is at a premium. This was repeatedly relayed to me as it pertains to kindergartens, once a critical element of the Soviet Union's social welfare apparatus. Nurgul, a middle-aged Kyrgyz mother otherwise quite satisfied with the performance of the Kyrgyzstani state, described these circumstances, openly alluding to conditions in the Russian Federation as an (unrealistic) goal:

There is not enough space in the kindergartens. Each bed is shared by two kids. In Moscow, one group has 15 to 20 kids, but here we have up to 80 kids per group. They say that in Russia there is one kindergarten for every 2 or 3 apartment blocks. I would not, cannot, ask for the same here, but some improvements would be good. I wish they had built more kindergartens...The private kindergartens are clean and good. The public kindergarten principals only want our money. If you do not give them money, they will not take your kids. (Interview, March 2017, Osh city)

Despite some negative evaluations of the educational system, ethnic Kyrgyz respondents tended to perceive it as one of the issues most well attended to by the government. A number of respondents considered other sectors of public goods and services in relation to the state's efforts in education. This was the case for a male focus group participant in a homogeneous ethnic Kyrgyz municipality, who provided the following comparison of the state's efforts in supplying education and medical care: "The state first of all puts efforts in education. Well, healthcare is provided, but unfortunately, we do not see positive results from it, reforms are delayed, medications [pills] are given by the state but I cannot see where they are going. That is mysterious" (Focus group, March 2017, Batken municipality).

As with education, however, there was acknowledgment that many of the issues in the sphere of healthcare were the result of structural economic deficits rather than official mismanagement as such. Symptoms include the personalization and informality of transactions with healthcare providers—provision of gifts in kind or cash rewards for services rendered or to be rendered, a practice common in the region (Oka 2019; Polese 2014; Stepurko et al. 2013). Much of this was perceived as being driven by a mismatch between the prestige and responsibility of the medical profession and the relatively meager salaries received by practitioners. A female participant in the same focus group discussion described the issue in the following manner:

I think that in the healthcare system, the human factor is playing a huge role because if I would be a doctor with a 30-50 thousand *som* salary [per month; about USD\$425-700 at the time of the focus group], I would not be doing a cesarean section for women. They usually persuade patients to do this in order to get extra payment although it is officially free... Due to their low salary doctors tend to seek personal interest and gains from patients rather than treating them properly... The doctor says that you are sick in different types of ways. The doctor then says to purchase certain pills and, unfortunately, in reality doctors have connections with pills sellers. They receive a share of the money from them. (Focus group, March 2017, Batken municipality)

In other sectors of state-society relations, however, there was a recognition of a need for development of a new mentality among members of the Kyrgyzstani public, as opposed to a critique of top-down production and delivery of public goods. This was most apparent in relation to issues of environmental protection and pollution. The state is seen as a responsible actor in this sphere, while common citizens are seen to be engaging in practices that are damaging to the environment. This was well expressed by members of the Batken city focus group, who suggested that the state needed to engage in a form of social development training to alter the perceptions of Kyrgyzstanis' relationship to their natural surroundings:

*Man 3:* In order to decrease the amount of garbage everywhere, we need to start changing the minds of people. Of course, the state tries to clean everything but the majority of people are polluting areas.

*Man 4:* The state should do something about that.

*Man 3:* The state should conduct some training regarding pollution. Recently, we met international colleagues and went to the mountains. When we returned from the mountains, they all collected their garbage with them to car. Then I asked why they were doing that. They replied that they will throw it into trash bins in the city.

*Woman 4:* Recently, the city administration decided to conduct mass cleaning of garbage in the city once every three months. But there were no effect. First, we need to change people's minds. (Focus group, March 2017, Batken municipality)

While ethnic Kyrgyz respondents expressed evaluations suggesting that provision of public goods and services was far from ideal, when asked whether they believed the situation was changing for the better, most respondents answered in the affirmative. Among ethnic Kyrgyz, there is a widely held opinion that, in relation to the “bad old days” of the post-collapse 1990s and early 2000s, local and central governing apparatuses now have both the will and resources to provide many of the goods and services desired by the citizenry. This was summed up by a comment in a focus group with teachers in a Kyrgyz language school on the peripheries of an urban area in southern Kyrgyzstan. “Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, we were living really well. Now, we experience difficulties, but with every new day it is getting better” (April 2017, Osh *oblast*’).

#### Making demands of the state

Due in significant measure to the fact of coethnicity with elected representatives and governmental administrators, ethnic titulars in Kyrgyzstan and throughout much of the post-Soviet space feel themselves much more capable of making demands of the state, either directly-formally or

indirectly-informally, than do non-titulars. Although there is great variation among ethnic Kyrgyz in the extent to which they perceive their appeals to politicians and administrators as effective in resolving the problems at hand, there was widespread agreement that such an action was possible and potentially effective. This differs greatly, as will be seen, from the perspectives of ethnic Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan, who by and large believe that to make demands of the state would be, at best, ineffective and, at worst, detrimental.

Ethnic Kyrgyz respondents additionally reported that societal efficacy in its interactions with the state was increasing over time. This was often attributed to burgeoning civic literacy and technological advances that enable non-elite voices to be heard. Almaz, the young Kyrgyz civil society activist quoted above, proposed the following:

People are more likely to make appeals now. They understand that it is possible somehow to solve their problems. To live better. To exert influence on some decisions, some problems. So, everything is better, of course. The internet also appeared. There is now a great opportunity to somehow exert influence on the government, on local authorities. For instance, if a number of people with disabilities have issues, deputies will help them, the government will help. But before, this probably would have been difficult for people to get from the authorities. (Interview, June 2017, Osh city)

Titular southern Kyrgyzstanis generally evinced an understanding of the official process of making claims on the state. Even so, respondents presented different versions of the same process, ranging from an idealized society-state interaction in which citizens' appeals are translated directly into government action to a variant in which, despite perceived ability to make demands upon the state, responsiveness was not guaranteed or even all that likely. A local politician in a small southern Kyrgyzstan municipality described the first, idealized, variant in the following way:

We have a system where there are public hearings and surveys. The meetings [between citizens and representatives of the mayor's office] are transparent. All are invited to attend. The city council [Kyrgyz: *kenesh*] then makes some additions, discussing what the people have talked about in the meetings and then converting this into a budget. Everything comes from the needs of the local people... Local residents can, and often do, make appointments to come and meet with me. We should be available to the people. Even if we cannot resolve their problem, we should at least be able to tell them why we cannot resolve it.<sup>107</sup> (Interview, March 2017)

A common theme in discussions of claims making consisted in considerations of the proper level of government to appeal to. Although Kyrgyzstan has made significant—though uneven and sporadic (Alkan 2009; Baimyrzaeva 2005)—progress in the period of independence as regards devolution of administrative powers to municipal and village authorities, there continues to be a belief among many residents that an individual's or community's problem is more likely to be solved the higher up the institutional ladder an appeal is directed. This was illustrated neatly in my focus group discussion in the municipality of Batken:

*Man 1:* Sometimes people know too much about their rights. They do not approach local self-governance representatives; they go straight to the governor. But nowadays people understand that, no matter to which higher authority you approach, either way local self-governance bodies will end up solving the issue.

*Man 2:* But it all depends on abilities [of the administrative bodies]. If the village administration cannot handle some issue, then people approach the *akim* [district head], then the regional administration, then the national government. It all depends on the scale of the problem.

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<sup>107</sup> There used to be a “day of appointments” (Russian: *priyomniy den'*) but now people are permitted to make appointments on any day. As far as was visible, there was nobody waiting for an appointment with the local official on the afternoon of our visit.

*Research assistant:* What has changed over time? And how? To whom did people turn in former times?

*Man 2:* Sometimes during land disputes people become overly emotional. They go straight to the government registration system or *akim* without visiting local self-governance bodies. No matter whom these people approach, either way, the *akim* and governor's office will send this job to local self-governance bodies to take care of.

*Man 4:* Well, here we see the mentality of people. They think that it will be better to approach the *akim* or governor because only they can solve this issue. They think that if the governor or *akim* will order the local self-governance body to solve the issue they will do it faster. Both *akims* and governors should not accept those people for these issues. (Focus group, March 2017, Batken municipality)

Another element of the claims-making process that arose on multiple occasions was the practice of co-financing public works with the aid of funds collected by and from the relevant community. It was understood that this greatly increases the likelihood of a demand being realized. In no case did respondents complain or even mention the fact that, as taxpayers, this system amounted to a double levy on their personal wealth to produce public goods for their community: once through the universal tax system, and again through collection of community funds to be presented to local administrative units as co-financing resources. This process was described by focus group respondents at two Kyrgyz language public schools:

(Focus group 1, March 2017, Osh city)

*KE:* When people in your locality want some kind of public good—new roads, for example—whom can they approach?

...

*Woman 1:* First of all, we approach local governance units.

*Man 2:* We collect money first. We collect what we can from people and then propose to local governance units that we have some funds and that they also should support us and assist us. They add our inquiry [to the list] and resolve it, approaching a local council member.

(Focus group 2, March 2017, Osh city)

*KE:* And what do you think, are you satisfied with the level of public goods here in Osh?

...

*Woman 3:* Of course not. It is not fully enough! Of course, our country is not developed and people know it, so therefore people have a 50 percent to 50 percent system. We give that amount, and the government gives the other. We have that system in our *ayil okmotu* [village administration]...Our roads were in very bad condition and local residents collected money themselves in order to fix it. But now, we made an inquiry collectively and the *ayil okmotu* paid for road fixing. If you look near the dentist clinic, you will see a new gravel layer of road. They made the road flatter and wider.

This is clearly an imperfect process, as the state's decentralization of authority to lower levels in the past decades has to some extent had the significance of lessening the material impact of the state on society despite invocations of embodied "state-ness" among local officials (Beyer 2014). It is also overwhelmingly the case that, without the contribution of funding from community members or local businesspersons, these local administrative institutions do not have the material resources necessary to engage in the provision of desired public goods and services. More salient than this for our purposes, however, is the impression that Kyrgyz in southern Kyrgyzstan feel themselves capable of appealing to local representatives for public goods.

#### Who is the state for? The role of class and social ties

Despite the broad acknowledgment among ethnic titulars that it is possible to make demands of the state, there are a number of social divisions that determine to what extent the representatives

of the state will avail itself of these appeals. Two such factors operate both independently and jointly and were routinely cited by ethnic Kyrgyz as either instruments to increase their influence or hindrances to their political efficacy. These are economic class, or the level of wealth that an individual and/or their family has access to, and embeddedness in informal social networks that contain individuals located in useful administrative, political, and professional postings. The two reinforce one another, as wealth increases one's potential utility as a member of an informal network and thus often correlates with network density, while the density of one's network provides an ability to engage in both public and private transactions in a manner more efficient and beneficial to one's social and economic standing than were such transactions to be attempted in a purely formal manner.

Particularly in the realm of healthcare, there is widespread social acceptance of the use of social ties as a means of lowering or even eliminating informal fees for care. Simultaneously, there is an oft-stated desire that the state possess and expend the resources necessary to make such informal payments unnecessary. This was expressed succinctly by a young, female ethnic Kyrgyz focus group participant. "Nowadays people cannot get medical help without paying money. For example, my uncle was in hospital last week. We took care of it with the help of friends in that sphere. Without friends, it could be more expensive for us. The government should pay for them" (Focus group, March 2017, Osh city).

Social connections are a critical variable in ethnic Kyrgyz' ability to influence the distribution of state resources. As the above quote suggests, this factor plays an important role in matters as serious as gaining needed medical treatment. Ethnic Kyrgyz with connections are both more likely to be seen by doctors and to receive treatment without paying exorbitant informal fees to supplement the poor salaries of Kyrgyzstani healthcare professionals. A similar dynamic

presents itself with more mundane state-society relations around issues of demanding and providing public goods. While residents of southern Kyrgyzstan often provided idealized answers regarding the process of appealing to state officials for goods—an unsurprising fact given my positionality as a researcher from the US with whom almost all focus group participants and many interviewees had little prior interaction—a few respondents were more candid in their descriptions of the role of informal ties. This was the case with Timurbek, a young civil society activist from Osh, when I asked him and his colleague, Almaz, about the process of gaining access to administrative institutions:

*KE:* When people in your neighborhood want something from the local government, like a road, who do they appeal to?

*Almaz:* They appeal to the mayoral administration. Probably they appeal with an official petition.

*Timurbek:* This depends on who has what sorts of connections. For instance, if I have a friend who is a local deputy, I can simply ask him. (Interview, June 2017, Osh city)

This frank response from Timurbek brings to light a number of salient features of the public goods supply and demand process in southern Kyrgyzstan. First, it recognizes that, among the coethnic Kyrgyz who compose much of Timurbek and Almaz's points of social reference, variance in the density and type of informal connections that one has is a crucial determinant of success in making claims on the resources of the state. Ethnic Kyrgyz with dense and well-placed informal networks are more capable of favorably influencing public resources than are those who have less dense networks. Additionally, as we will see below in the description of non-titular experience with state institutions, titular dominance of electoral and administrative institutions allows ethnic Kyrgyz to contemplate approaching individuals such as local deputies directly or indirectly in

order to influence the likelihood of gaining desired goods and services for themselves and their community in a manner that members of the ethnic minority are overwhelmingly deprived of.

### Post-conflict governance and compensation in Osh city

Southern Kyrgyzstan's violent unrest of summer 2010 has left numerous social, economic, and political legacies in its wake. Among the more tangible is the complete or partial destruction of more than 2500 homes and businesses across the region. Of these, a substantial proportion were homes and businesses in the center of Osh city, a setting primarily inhabited by the ethnic Uzbek minority.<sup>108</sup> In response to the extensive internal displacement of southern Kyrgyzstanis, international donor agencies agreed in fall 2010 to allocate over USD\$1 billion to the reconstruction of Osh city and areas of Osh and Jalal-Abad regions worst affected by the conflict (BBC.com 2010).

A substantial share of these post-conflict development and renovation funds came to be controlled by Kyrgyzstan's State Directorate for Renewal of Osh and Jalal-Abad. As part of its responsibilities, this agency funded and oversaw construction of 24 multistory buildings in southern Kyrgyzstan, amounting to nearly 1400 apartments (Im 2016). A resolution designed and approved by the Kyrgyzstani government in May 2012 confirmed the classes of individuals who would be eligible to receive one of these apartment units as compensation (Government of the

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<sup>108</sup> The Kyrgyz ethnopolist mayor of Osh at the time of the 2010 unrest, Melis Myrzakmatov, had introduced in April 2010—two months before the violence occurred—a new design for the city's "General Plan" of development. A persistent suspicion among many ethnic Uzbeks stems from details within this proposed General Plan to the effect that many of the single-story, Uzbek-inhabited homes in central Osh city that were eventually destroyed in the June unrest were slated in the plan to be replaced with newly-constructed, multistory, apartment buildings. In the aftermath of the June unrest, Myrzakmatov further denied clearance for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to construct "transitional" housing in these areas of the city for internally displaced residents (Orange 2010). Individuals that were to be relocated out of the central Osh area were promised compensation and an opportunity to reside in the newly constructed accommodations. However, in many cases the legal documents attesting to victims' ownership of their property were destroyed by the fires that raged in the central city during the riots (British Broadcasting Company 2010). For insight into the governing style of Myrzakmatov and his role as a post-conflict spoiler, see Gullette and Heathershaw (2015) and Heuer and Hierman (2018).

Kyrgyz Republic 2012). Two primary shortcomings inhered in this policy. First, the supply of apartments—again, approximately 1400—was significantly fewer than the more than 2500 buildings destroyed during the conflict. Additionally, the description of the eligible recipient classes was so expansive as to guarantee that demand for compensation would greatly outstrip supply.<sup>109</sup> There was little effort to limit potential recipients to those directly affected by the 2010 conflict. To the contrary, those eligible for housing under rationales having nothing to do with the events of the summer of 2010 greatly outnumbered eligible victims of the conflict and their family members.

A crucial result of this policy was that it provided the interdepartmental commission charged with distributing apartments significant discretion in their selection of compensation recipients. Vastly fewer apartment units were constructed than existed eligible recipients. According to a representative of the Osh municipal administration, approximately 700 of the 1400 apartments were distributed to victims of the conflict. Of the remaining apartments, nearly 300 were distributed to members of the security services and the remainder were to be sold by the local administration through a mortgage lending operation (Im 2016).

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<sup>109</sup> The following is an abbreviated catalogue of the potential recipients of apartments, as laid out in the Kyrgyzstani government's resolution: individuals whose homes were fully or partially destroyed in the course of the June 2010 conflict; immediate family members of those killed during the conflict; representatives of the various state security services who suffered gunshot wounds during the conflict; individuals who suffered severe injuries during the conflict and who as a result are now officially categorized as "disabled"; individuals who suffered less serious injuries as a result of gunshot wounds during the conflict; immediate family members of those killed in the performance of their official duties during the conflict; family members of military service members killed during the Soviet-Afghan War; individuals who are now officially classified as "disabled" or suffer from chronic illness as a result of their participation in cleanup following the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster; the visually and/or hearing impaired; single mothers of two or more children up to 5 years of age who reside in the area in which housing is being distributed; individuals who receive legal right by Kyrgyzstan's courts to such housing as is being distributed; and other individuals who require improved housing according to the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic and currently reside in areas where housing is being distributed (Government of the Kyrgyz Republic 2012).

These circumstances were the basis for the formation of a non-governmental organization in Osh city led by Roza, an ethnic Kyrgyz woman of middle age, the goal of which was to guide applicants for the apartments and other forms of compensation through the bureaucratic process. Roza began writing letters to the government in December 2010. Before the resolution of 2012 promising apartments, the government provided 100 thousand *som* to those who could supply documentary evidence that they received injuries described as serious, and 50 thousand *som* to those who provided evidence that they suffered injuries of a less serious nature. After the resolution of 2012 was announced, Roza's primary mission was to attain apartments for her NGO's clients. However, by early 2016 the government announced that the departments had been distributed, and more than half of the NGO's nearly 300 clients were left without compensation (Interview, 2017, Osh city).

While data is not available regarding the ethnic backgrounds of all applicants and recipients of apartments, Roza reported that that all or nearly all of those who appealed to her organization for assistance were ethnic Kyrgyz. Under the assumption that those applying for compensation were qualified under the strictures of the governmental resolution, there seems to have been salient intra-ethnic variation as regards the ability of these ethnic Kyrgyz applicants to gain a desired good from the government. The primary rationales for denying the requests of these applicants emanating from the local administration were that, first, those who were being denied were being so treated because they were in fact among the initiators of the ethnic conflict and, second, that individuals who reside beyond the jurisdiction of Osh city are ineligible for such compensation.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> As for the first rationale, an individual's involvement in the ethnic conflict at any stage is an issue that ought to be taken up by Kyrgyzstan's courts and law enforcement bodies—a task that was in fact badly managed and, as noted above, overwhelmingly discriminatory towards the ethnic Uzbek minority—rather than summarily judged by local administrators with clear motives to create barriers to the attainment of a desired shortage good. In regards to the argument that those applicants who were not from Osh city were ineligible, the resolution clearly states that, for most

A number of other explanations for the variation among those who successfully applied for apartments and those who did not were supplied in a group interview arranged by Roza. Nearly thirty ethnic Kyrgyz individuals who unsuccessfully applied for compensation—almost all of them for apartments—participated and discussed their interactions with the interdepartmental commission. An overriding theme relayed by these unsuccessful applicants was that the commission was not competent or willing to distribute the apartments to the rightful recipients. Many interview participants claimed that the members of the commission were engaged in corrupt practices, including providing apartments to the highest bidders, in many cases those with the same or similar names to those who had properly applied for the apartments. Two individuals who were denied an apartment, Aziza and Bektur—of which the latter of whom was clearly suffering from a bullet still lodged in his hand—described the process in the following manner:

*Aziza:* They invite us here, there. After the investigation ends, people were diagnosed with serious conditions...[Those] who pay [received apartments]...Those who don't give money are left as poor people. "Give money, and then we will talk", they say. The committee ended. No house. No help. They only gave [us] 50 thousand *soms* and cheated.

*Bektur:* I received 50 thousand *soms* of compensation. Those who payed USD\$3 thousand, 5 thousand [received an apartment], but we did not. We do not have money. I have five children. The bullet is still in me. I cannot do physical activity. It hurts.

Another group interview participant, Chingiz, recalled in detail his interaction with a member of the commission:

I was shot in the head. I passed all medical commissions [attesting to eligibility to receive an apartment]. When I came to the housing commission, Bakytbaev Temirlan – a deputy governor—asked me for USD\$10,000 dollars, and after that we had a quarrel. He pushed

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categories of potential recipients, all residents of Osh city and Osh and Jalal-Abad regions were eligible (Government of the Kyrgyz Republic 2012).

me outside of his office, saying: “There is no home for you!” When I came six months later, [I found that] he started my case on behalf of me without informing me. He signed all necessary documents himself and gave my house to another person.

Another critical element in attaining access to apartments, at least as perceived by participants in the group interview, was informal connections with officials on the commission or those who could influence their decision-making. During the group interview, Nagima, a middle-aged ethnic Kyrgyz woman, made the connection between class, social connections, and corruption as co-determinants of governmental responsiveness: “I thought I was going to get an apartment. However, I was told that everything was distributed. In short, rich people got the apartments and poor people are left with nothing...Only those who had networks and were acquainted with the local authorities got the apartments.” This suggests that access to administration officials functioned as a necessary but insufficient stage in the process of laying successful claim to an apartment. Those who had informal or family ties to officials with control over the distribution of these valued and limited government-distributed resources had greater opportunity to lower or eliminate the monetary sums demanded by commission representatives, as they could explicitly or implicitly offer reciprocal goods or services.

From these and other accounts, one of the primary determinants—along with network or other informal ties—of successfully attaining an apartment was the economic standing of applicants and their willingness to pay substantial sums to commission members. Even if only those who were eligible for apartments according to the 2012 governmental resolution were considered, the potential applicants greatly outnumbered the available apartments, providing great scope for official discretion in their distribution. Thus members of the interdepartmental commission were able to transform the process of distributing the apartments from a compensatory program for victims of the 2010 violence into a market interaction in which demand greatly

outstripped supply. Eligible applicants unwilling or unable to provide commission representatives the thousands of dollars that were demanded were left without apartments.

This case of the post-conflict governance, along with the other evidence provided from interviews and focus groups with ethnic Kyrgyz, suggests a few primary elements of state-society relations in southern Kyrgyzstan. First, despite the dominance of titular Kyrgyz in electoral and administrative institutions, there is notable intra-group variation in the extent to which ethnic Kyrgyz can successfully demand goods and services from the government. Two factors noted by a number of respondents were economic standing and informal connections to governmental decision-makers. This reflects the evolution of Soviet-era informal networks of non-monetary reciprocity—or *blat* relations—into a tiered system in which a significant portion of non-elite society continues to rely on such relations of informal networks of generalized reciprocity, whereas state-society informal relations have become highly monetized (Ledeneva 2006; Morris 2013, 2019). Despite this, even among those who were unsuccessful in their appeals to representatives of the state, there was an almost unanimous perceived ability to approach administrative structures with requests for goods and services. This “demand” element differs sharply for ethnic Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan, as will be demonstrated below, with many representatives of the latter group perceiving themselves as incapable of making such appeals due to assurance of failure or even out of fear that it will bring unwanted attention to themselves and their family.

### **State avoidance and community-provided goods: the Uzbek perspective**

As might be assumed in a setting in which ethnicity is a salient categorical marker and governance is highly ethnicized, the process of supply and demand for public goods varies notably between the locally dominant ethnic group and other communities. During my fieldwork in southern

Kyrgyzstan, I particularly focused my attention on the ethnic Uzbek minority. Yet similar state-society relations exist among other non-titular ethnic groups in Kyrgyzstan, among them the Russian minority, a community which expresses concerns regarding titular dominance of governmental institutions and the associated role of ethnically-insular informal networks of access (Commercio 2011).

Above, I have presented qualitative evidence of ethnic Kyrgyz relations to the state and their conceptions of the production and distribution of public goods, with members of the titular community overwhelmingly assenting that they have the right and ability to make direct appeals. In what follows, I will illustrate the variance between this dynamic and that experienced by members of the ethnic Uzbek community. The absence of perceived ability to make demands upon the state among ethnic Uzbeks is understood as resulting from a number of factors, including lack of descriptive and substantive institutional representation and a dearth of understanding as regards procedures for and rights to make such appeals, often explained as a low cultural value placed on formal education. For these reasons, the minority community often relies upon community-provided goods and/or goods funded and provided by local “big men”. After a general discussion of these themes, I will focus on a specific case of post-conflict governance understood by some as necessary urban renewal and by others as ethnic discrimination.

### Demand and representation

In distinction to ethnic Kyrgyz, my ethnic Uzbek respondents overwhelmingly perceived that making direct appeals to representatives of the state would be ineffective and that making themselves “visible” to the Kyrgyz-dominated and often predatory state might bring harm. Misha, a young ethnic Russian whose non-governmental organization often brings him into contact with issues of interethnic discrimination in Osh city, summarized the matter in the following way:

Do you know about *mahallas*?<sup>111</sup> Our unique ghetto. Like Harlem...Here people never appeal directly to the authorities...Because many people are sure that the government will not help them. They think that it will all be done in vain, and may even create new problems for them. Or they [those in the governing organs] will ask for a lot of money. Unfortunately, yes, that happens. (Interview, July 2017, Osh city)

Leila, an ethnic Uzbek from southern Kyrgyzstan studying at a university in Bishkek at the time of our interview, noted the same reluctance among her coethnics to make direct appeals to authorities. She additionally makes a connection between titular ethnicity and political dominance, suggesting that kinship ties might allow an individual to successfully access government goods and services, but that Uzbeks are not included among the set for whom this is possible:

If you have some relatives that have some high positions in the office, you can go. If your family is Uzbek, it is better not to go. It is a waste of time. The biggest problem is that people do not know their rights. They do not know that they gave a right to ask from the mayor's office. Many friends did not go to university and their parents do not teach their children to demand [from the government] and about their rights...I think the issue of Uzbeks not getting things from government is explained well by the Russian proverb: *palka o dvukh kotsakh* [a double edged sword]. People, because of their lack of knowledge, do not ask for anything. But the city administration knows this and does not want for people to increase their knowledge. (Interview, February 2017, Bishkek)

Leila remarks that both individual members of the Uzbek community and those in the administrative organs in her medium-sized home municipality play roles in perpetuating the extant

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<sup>111</sup> In the context of southern Kyrgyzstan, the *mahalla* is a largely monoethnic Uzbek neighborhood and community. The ethnic homogeneity of these neighborhoods is preserved in significant part through *shari'a* norms which dictate that, when a house is put up for sale, it is to first be offered to immediate neighbors and next to other members of the *mahalla*. These are densely packed spaces with living structures that are often multigenerational. The *mahallas* streets are narrow, winding, and dead end unexpectedly. As Liu (2012, 107) describes, "The *mahalla* is not readily 'imageable' to outsiders...in that they cannot easily form a practical schematic image of its 'nodes' (point references in the cityscape) and the paths between them with which to get around". Property transfer customs that result in the maintenance of ethnospatial segregation and the relative spatial insularity of the *mahalla* have combined with post-conflict interethnic apprehensions such that, "Uzbeks [in Osh city] have adapted in a fractally recursive manner by relegating Uzbek life to their interior *mahalla* neighborhoods and by displaying Uzbek language in only the most private, inner spaces of local schools" (Canning 2016, 117).

state-society dynamic. Alternatively, a number of other respondents placed the onus squarely on ethnic Uzbeks lack of emphasis on formal education. Rather than understanding the situation as one in which ethnic specialization and division of labor between groups might soften intergroup competition (see Bates 2000), these respondents understood the choice made by ethnic Uzbek families to focus efforts on market trading of goods and services from an early age rather than pursue education as at the root of their failure to successfully make appeals. Umida, an ethnic Uzbek journalist, described the trade-off succinctly:

Of course, not everybody appeals to them [local deputies]. There are still many people that are uneducated and, maybe, for them, it is difficult [to get access]. I can only speak for the educated category of people because, for example, among Uzbeks a tendency has arisen that they very rarely educate their children. For example, a boy finishes [secondary] school and, instead of sending him to some kind of an institution of higher education, they tell him: Teach yourself to earn money. We have a huge market, Kara-Suu, and they [parents] send their son there to Kara-Suu in order to earn money. They are themselves guilty in that they do not educate their children. (Interview, April 2017, Osh city)

Apart from a perceived lack of competency to make demands upon the state, non-titular respondents described the relative dearth of non-titular representatives in electoral and administrative positions as a further impediment. In Osh city, which is almost evenly split in the its proportion of ethnic Uzbek and ethnic Kyrgyz residents<sup>112</sup>, local ethnic Uzbek journalist Sardor estimates that less than 30 percent of those serving in the municipal administration are non-titular. He explains that distribution of resources towards coethnics, in turn, is not an issue of inability to communicate across ethnic lines due to non-overlapping “technologies” (Habyarimana et al. 2007)

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<sup>112</sup> According to the most recent national census, ethnic Uzbeks accounted for slightly greater than 48 percent of the city’s population and ethnic Kyrgyz for 43 percent. However, if incorporated villages are included in the total, ethnic Kyrgyz (48 percent) outnumber ethnic Uzbeks (44 percent) (National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic 2009).

such as language and cultural cues. Instead, he proposes that informal governing practices—what he terms “corruption”—operate along lines of coethnic trust and affect:

But it does not matter if people approach somebody of a different ethnicity in the state organs... There are people there of Kyrgyz nationality who, of course, can understand Uzbek well. If they have lived here, then they know Uzbek...But representatives of local governmental institutions, no matter the nationality of the person coming with a request, will say that not enough money is coming from Bishkek, so they cannot fulfill the request...Of course, people receive more from representatives of their own ethnicities [in state institutions], but that is just corruption. (Interview, May 2017, Osh city)

This picture was complicated in my interactions with Rashad and Shirin, young adult siblings who had moved from an ethnically heterogeneous rural region of Osh *oblast'* to Bishkek. Amid general conversation over tea on matters of identity in southern Kyrgyzstan, I asked about their sense of the relationship between ethnicity and governmental provision of public goods:

*Rashid:* It does play a role. It is not always out in the open, though. Maybe it comes from the fact that Uzbeks are afraid to ask for services from the government, because they don't think they will receive anything...In our *ayil okmotu* [village council] in Aravan, it is not all Kyrgyz. I would say that it is 60 to 40 Kyrgyz.<sup>113</sup>

*Shirin:* But it is still true that all the highest positions are held by Kyrgyz.

*Rashid:* That is just because it is Kyrgyzstan. If Uzbeks learned and spoke better Kyrgyz then it would not be a problem. I applied myself and received a job in Aravan. It is not impossible. (Interview, April 2017, Bishkek)

My ethnic Uzbek interlocutors thus understood their relative (in)ability to demand nominally public goods and services through a number of lenses. First, and most significantly,

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<sup>113</sup> Although I was unable to locate data on the ethnic proportions of their village, specifically, the Aravan district of which it is a part has a population that is approximately 60 percent Uzbek and 40 percent Kyrgyz (National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic 2009).

there was abundant agreement that ethnic Uzbeks are less likely than members of the titular community to make such appeals to state organs. In part, this is explained by apprehensions about potential negative consequences that might arise from making oneself “visible” to the state. Yet many respondents—nearly all of them with at least some higher education—also explained the lack of bottom-up demand among their coethnics through a “culture” of devaluing education and the skills that it may provide in the realm of civic efficacy. Thus, as with ethnic Kyrgyz, ethnicity is not monolithic in Uzbek understandings of state-society relations, but instead is mediated by issues of class and social status.

#### Private provision and the role of the local “big men”

The perceived inability to make demands upon the state among ethnic Uzbeks, for the reasons detailed above, has the consequence that members of this community often depend upon community provision and self-sufficiency in the production and distribution of desired goods and services. Partially resulting from the lack of perceived competence to appeal in a successful manner to state organs, it is also a tactic with the aim of remaining relatively inconspicuous to an ethnicized state administration that many members of the local non-titular community conceive of as “Other” and potentially threatening. The types of goods and services that this has the most significant impact on are those that require consistent state-society interaction and thus have flow-like attributes. As Rashid describes, much of the stock for educational and medical purposes was constructed in the Soviet period and remains standing, while the necessary materials to make these institutions perform acceptably on an everyday basis are often in short supply. Coethnics in his region of origin also must be self-sufficient in providing critical flow-like goods such as roads:

From the socialist period, places like schools and hospitals were built and they remain there. They are still accessible and widely used by people. The government is not

economically strong, though, so these places are not perfect...In our *mahallas*, the government provides us with electricity.<sup>114</sup> However, the government does not build new roads. We have to go to sponsors for that... In schools, there are not enough books. The students have to go to libraries for books. Then they have to return them at the end of the year. As for Uzbek [language] books, they are old, from the Soviet time. When Uzbekistan changed to the Latin script, that meant that Uzbek schools received no new textbooks in Aravan. And no new books in Kyrgyz Uzbek [i.e. in Cyrillic script] were printed. (Interview, April 2017, Bishkek)

The local ethnic Uzbeks that I spoke with evinced an ability to “make do” despite the institutional dead ends that they encountered evocative of de Ceretau’s (1984) examination of the producer/consumer binary and its relation to the agency of non-elites. While local governments, as embodiments of institutionalized authority, were seen as devising “strategies” of subjugation and control, including making the *mahalla* more legible through “urban renewal” programs (see below), residents—rather than being agency-less consumers of this governance—applied “tactics” to creatively meet these challenges. Among these tactics is the maintenance of informal structures of local authority and community-level interdependence. Feruza, a university student in Bishkek from a rural region in Batken *oblast’*, told me:

People don’t go to the government where I am from, because they don’t get anything from the government. Instead, everybody depends on each other. For example, if it rains and there is a mudslide that destroys houses and other buildings, the government only gives 30 thousand or

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<sup>114</sup> While governmental or quasi-governmental entities provide electricity throughout southern Kyrgyzstan, the microlevel infrastructure for electricity and gas—wiring, maintenance of pipes, etc.—in *mahallas* is often constructed and maintained informally by community members. On a midmorning stroll through one Osh city *mahalla* in March 2017, a research assistant and I stopped to talk with an older Uzbek man tidying up his garden. At first, he had little that could be construed as negative to say about the state of governance in the *mahalla* and its relations to the local administration. After pleasantries were adequately exchanged and he became more comfortable in the conversation, though, his evaluations become more frank. He had lived in the *mahalla* for more than 40 years, he said, and in that time the local government had wholly ignored his community. Local residents were made to hook up and maintain their own electricity and gas infrastructure and did not consider making demands of the local administration out of the certainty that any response would be negative.

50 thousand *soms*. It helps, but it is not enough. Then we have to depend on other people.  
(Interview, April 2017, Bishkek)

Zamfira, another university student in Bishkek from southern Kyrgyzstan, described her community's interaction with the local government and the prescribed means of producing local infrastructure in her medium-sized, ethnically polarized home town:

In [my hometown] there is the *mahalla*, Samarkand *mahalla*. It suffered in 2010. They built the roads there themselves. When people in our neighborhood went to the city administration to ask them to improve our roads, they just told us to do like the people in the Samarkand *mahalla* and to take care of it ourselves. They explained that there was not enough money in the city budget to do such a thing. The roads that we have are terrible.  
(Interview, February 2017, Bishkek)

Critical in the process of production and distribution of community-provided public goods in non-titular communities is the role of local notables who provide funds and aid in the organization of mass projects. These are overwhelmingly local businessmen and are commonly described as “big men” (Uzbek: *katta odamlar*) or “sponsors”.<sup>115</sup> These individuals are seen to provide needed goods and overwhelmingly do not request anything material in return. Zamfira's father held this role in her home town, acting as a sponsor to pay for central heating in the local

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<sup>115</sup> The “local big man” is an anthropological entity with well-defined characteristics. Sahlins (1963) provides abundant description of the role in his comparison of the politically hierarchical chiefdoms of Polynesia with the informal, localized political structures of Melanesia. “The Melanesian big-man seems...so reminiscent of the free-enterprising rugged individual of our own heritage. He combines with an ostensible interest in the general welfare a more profound measure of self-interested cunning and economic calculation. His gaze is fixed unswervingly to the main chance. His every public action is designed to make a competitive and invidious comparison with others, to show a standing above the masses that is the product of his own personal manufacture...[The] indicative quality of big-man authority is everywhere the same: it is *personal* power. Big-men do not come to office; they do not succeed to, nor are they installed in, existing positions of leadership over political groups. The attainment of big-man status is rather the outcome of a series of acts which elevate a person above the common herd and attract about him a coterie of loyal, lesser men” (289). Intriguing parallels also exist among the horizontal power structure of the individual *mahalla* as it relates to other *mahallas* and that of Melanesian societies, with societal groupings which amount “on the ground to a small village or a local cluster of hamlets, each of these is a copy of the others in organization, each tends to be economically self-governing, and each is the equal of the others in political status. The tribal plan is one of politically unintegrated segments – segmental” (287).

school and to fund road construction in the *mahalla* following unsuccessful appeals to the local administration for funds. Rashid provided the following response when I asked him where people in his multiethnic home locality would go if they desired production and delivery of some public goods or service:

[People would approach the] *ayil okmotu* [village level administration]. But it is not certain that there will be any results. Or, if there are some rich people, they can sponsor or they can collect money from people for the repairs of schools, for example. They don't expect anything in return. (Interview, April 2017, Bishkek)

The element of provision by local big men in the form of “gifts” is integral to the societal role of these individuals in the Uzbek *mahalla*. As opposed to interactions with official administrative structures, where material reciprocation is overwhelmingly demanded up front, the informal exchange between local big men and the Uzbek communities which they are simultaneously “of” and “above” involves long term relations of trust, respect, and interdependence.

This community provision of public goods seems to have been integrated into the strategies of official institutions of local governance. The ethnic Uzbek minority in southern Kyrgyzstan is largely treated as self-sufficient by local administrations, and this position is internalized through self-stereotyping by ethnic Uzbeks. Akram suggested as much in his description of state-society relations in the region:

Among Uzbeks there are many businessmen who can distribute their money. In truth, this is how many roads are built in *mahallas*. They simply use their own money. It's just that we have this kind of stereotype, where the Uzbek population is seen as passive. And, on the basis of precisely this stereotype, all of the decisions are made [by the municipal administration]...[They] only remember [the Uzbeks] when elections come around. (Interview, July 2017, Osh city)

## Urban renewal and ethnicity on Brezhnev Street

In an earlier section of this chapter, I described a concrete episode of ethnic Kyrgyz appealing to representatives of the state for goods, in the form of apartments paid for with internationally donated development funds following the June 2010 ethnic conflict. This was an instance of members of Kyrgyzstani society attempting to influence how the state distributed resources. In this section, I will describe an event in which the “state”—in the form of a municipal administration in a medium-sized, ethnically polarized southern Kyrgyzstani city—desired to conduct a policy of what officials described in terms of modernizing “urban renewal”. Concretely, this would involve the widening of one of the main routes in the city by up to two meters. The issue quickly took on an ethnic shading, and was perceived by the immediate “consumers” of the policy—nearly all of them ethnic Uzbeks—as discriminatory.

A young man employed by a non-governmental organization providing legal representation and assistance to those whose houses were targeted for destruction, Islam, got me up to speed regarding the situation on Brezhnev Street. The process began in early 2015, when more than three dozen households on the street discovered notices informing them that they would be required to allow their properties—in part or in total—to be demolished such that the road could be widened. All of the families, excepting two, were ethnically Uzbek (Interview, August 2016).

The mayoral administration, from whom the notices originated, proclaimed that this was for the public good. Municipality officials also stated that the structures standing on Brezhnev Street—many of which had only just been reconstructed after being targeted during the 2010 ethnic conflict—had the effect of “ruining the city’s image.” The action, Islam informed me, had never been approved by representatives of the judiciary, as was required under administrative law.

The compensation offered for the property was alarmingly low, at 1000 *som* per square meter (or about USD\$16 at the time). Upon addressing the issue to a private evaluator in another city, Islam's organization found that the market price was in fact nearly 10,000 *som*. When it became clear that those whose houses were targeted for demolition would not release control of their property for the paltry amount on offer as compensation, the mayoral administration sought the help of Kyrgyzstan's national security services, the State Committee for National Security (Russian: *Gosudarstvenniy Komitet Natsionalnoy Besopasnosti*, or GKNB). Officers of the GKNB arrived at the houses, one by one, and informed the residents that submission to the administration's demands would be a means of avoiding further problems. More than two-thirds of the homeowners arrived at the offices of Islam's organization for support in early 2016. However, due to a variety of pressures, only three of the more than three dozen households persisted in their struggle against the administration into summer 2016.<sup>116</sup>

Islam arranged for me to speak with Brezhnev Street residents. Two of the three homeowners I spoke with were women who continued their resistance and demanded greater compensation.<sup>117</sup> The household of the first woman I spoke with, Dinara, consisted of herself, two

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<sup>116</sup> A similar situation had developed in Osh city in 2012, when the city administration announced that it would be demolishing, in part or completely, 250 homes and businesses in the city center, almost all of them the property of ethnic Uzbeks. The municipality's stated aim, as with Brezhnev Street, was to modernize the city by widening main roads and extending others so that they could connect to main transport routes through what had been densely-packed *mahalla* communities. All families affected were offered compensation—the rate of which was increased with the aid of a local non-governmental organization, though still not meeting market rates—and a plot of land in the microdistrict of On-Adir, a hilly region nearly 10 kilometers from the city center (Zholdoshev 2013). Among those to be resettled on the first street targeted for demolition, half refused to sign an agreement for compensation (Umottegen 2012). More than a year following the demolition of these residences, the area of resettlement in On-Adir still lacked provision of electricity and water from the city. Only one of those who had accepted compensation had begun construction of a new house in the location, while others opted to move in with relatives or found other accommodations (Ivashchenko 2013).

<sup>117</sup> Gender was understood by many I spoke with as a critical factor in the determination of where security service pressure was applied, particularly as the lack of adult males who were perceived by security services as viable targets for intimidation removed a potential means of influencing homeowners' decision calculus. Respondents suggested a relatively inflexible norm that women are not to be physically threatened by security services. Alternatively, a male neighbor of one of my Brezhnev Street respondents attempted to resist the demolition of his family home. He was at some point taken away in an automobile by security service personnel and, when he was returned to his home many

children, and a father-in-law of advanced age who was deaf, blind, and largely immobile. She described the city administration's approach in the following way:

The idea [to widen the road] had come about long before 2010. The 2010 events provided an opportunity, because almost all of the homes had been burnt down [on Brezhnev Street], however, there was no money to widen the road...The administration changed its mind after 2010, saying that there was no budget for the road. Then [in early 2015] they announced that there was a budget, but only for the road and not for the recompensation of people whose houses would be affected...[When people found out about the compensation offer of 1000 *som* per square meter], everybody was sad and disappointed. They found out during Ramadan, when everyone was fasting. Now the weather is turning cold. People will have no protection from the weather and do not have enough time or money to repair their homes. (Interview, November 2016)

Dinara's neighbor, an older Uzbek woman, dropped in for a visit during our conversation. After informing her of who I was and the content of our discussion, she described why, unlike Dinara, she elected to sign an agreement on the compensation offered by the local administration:

When my house was being destroyed, my blood pressure went up. My children called from Russia [where they are working]. They told me that they needed me, their mother, and not her house. After this I accepted the situation...I have been in Jalal-Abad almost 50 years. During the Soviet period, there was no allowance of road expansion, though there had been persistent rumors about it for as long as I can remember. The rumors intensified after the 2010 riots because the houses had been destroyed. Uzbeks went to the [offices of Islam's organization] and told them that there were three main roads [and that] on each of these roads, the market price should be close to USD\$600 per square meter. The city proposals were one thousand *som* per square meter, in some places 2 thousand *som*...They have used different kinds of pressure on us. At some point, the mayor's office shut off the electricity.

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hours later, it was discovered that he had signed the agreement on compensation. Another of the respondent's neighbors considered resisting the municipal administration. Yet apprehensions that the male head of household would be arrested in response to this lack of cooperation shortly encouraged submission.

A lawyer from [Islam's organization] came and re-connected it. (Interview, November 2016)

The second house we approached was that of, Lola, a single Uzbek mother of six children. Her house was less damaged than Dinara's, but there was still a large empty space that used to be part of her home. She did not know about the road expansion plans until early summer of 2015, as opposed to the others who had found out at the beginning of the year. When municipal workers came to the house to break down the walls facing Brezhnev Street only four days after initial notice, there was no warning. Lola claimed to have not signed any agreement on compensation. She showed me videos taken on her mobile phone of security officers climbing over her walls and forcing her off the premises as she resisted. City councilors and representatives of the mayor's office relentlessly drop by or call to pressure her; she regularly changes phone numbers as a result. She eventually had to go to the hospital as a result of her stress and high blood pressure resulting from these incidents.

Lola wants compensation for the physical and moral damage that has been caused to her and her family. She understands the Brezhnev Street project as the result of corruption at the city level, with infrastructure construction an effective means of spreading resources. The construction in front of her home was conducted without any consideration of quality, and the sidewalk outside of her house had to be repaired four times in less than 6 months. There was also no plan regarding the proper functioning of the *ariqs*, or roadside drainage systems. As a result, water builds up and floods directly into her home.

Ethnic identity played a central role in the understandings of those involved with the Brezhnev Street issue. Yet, on the part of the local administration, denial of the role of ethnicity in

the process of making administrative decisions on urban renewal was eminently practicable.<sup>118</sup> Brezhnev Street is the city's primary auto route and, as such, is prone to daily traffic congestion. Yet the coincidence of a mayoral administration dominated by ethnic Kyrgyz and the overwhelming proportion of those whose homes were targeted for demolition being Uzbek—along with the application of informal pressures of all kinds and clear instances of bargaining in bad faith on the part of the administration—produced a subjective evaluation of interethnic discrimination. Perceptions of discrimination are relevant no matter the objective goals of the ethnicized state: “To ask whether such policies, practices, and so on are ‘really’ nationalizing makes little sense. For the present purposes, a nationalizing state (or nationalizing practices, policy, or event) is not one in whose representatives, authors, or agents understand and articulate it as such, but rather one that is perceived as such in the field of a national minority” (Brubaker 1996, 178).

Those ethnic Uzbeks with whom I discussed the local administration's actions overwhelmingly interpreted the issue through a prism of interethnic discrimination. A local elected politician, Umar, who had negotiated with the mayor's office for better terms of compensation stated, unbidden by any mention of an ethnic element on my part: “There is no doubt that there is an ethnic element to this issue. One only needs to consider: there are many parts of Brezhnev Street that are planned to be widened. But why did they start on this part, where it is well known that most of the residents are ethnic Uzbeks?” (Interview, October 2016). Speaking with one of Islam's colleagues, a middle-aged Uzbek legal professional named Dastan, the latter became progressively more impassioned as we discussed the issue, concluding with the statement, “I heard that if they

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<sup>118</sup> None of my respondents possessed information on the level of compensation offered to the two ethnic Kyrgyz families on Brezhnev Street. However, many assumed that they were offered greater sums than the ethnic Uzbek homeowners, as the Kyrgyz families immediately agreed to the terms offered by the local administration.

[the residents of Brezhnev Street] would have been of a different nationality, things would have turned out differently” (Interview, August 2016).

The longstanding settlement of ethnic Uzbeks in central areas of urban southern Kyrgyzstan directly confronts a desire by contemporary local governments to adapt to the exigencies of increasingly dense urban settlement and increased car ownership, both of which present significant logistical challenges. Whether or not interethnic animus lay at the foundation of the administrative decisions to uproot minority communities in these settings, however, the titularization of the Kyrgyzstani state presents minority targets of the policies with a concise explanatory prism of interethnic discrimination. Bermet, a young ethnic Kyrgyz public relations officer for an Osh city legal aid organization with involvement in the Brezhnev Street issue and others like it, expressed particular empathy for those affected and their ethnicized interpretive frames:

“Why not other streets? Why our streets, where we live?” This is a question that can certainly be raised. There is also another bit of nuance. In the central parts of cities, these areas are made up in the main by food suppliers, buyers and sellers, *bazaars*. In the *bazaar*, for the most part *soodagarchilik* [merchant work] is work done by the ethnic minority—Uzbeks...This [the *bazaar*] has historically made up the city center. And in the city center arise, in general, these traffic jams, these same problems that require widening [of the roads]... In this sense, I would also be asking: “Why Monuev Street [a primarily Uzbek-inhabited street on which homes were demolished for road construction in Osh]?” But one needs to understand that they are upset because of their historic presence here...In this context...who wouldn’t be bitter, with them taking away their street, and especially when it happens after these [June 2010] events, which we all went through and all perceive in a different way? (Interview, July 2017, Osh city)

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have presented qualitative materials collected during a year of fieldwork, much of it conducted in multiethnic southern Kyrgyzstan. The analysis provides critical context for the large-N findings of Chapter 4, concentrating not just on the “what” of Kyrgyzstanis relationship to government-provided goods and services, but also the “how” and “why” elements underlying these evaluations. While ethnicity is a primary interpretive frame through which Kyrgyzstanis—and particularly members of the non-titular community—experience “state effects”, intragroup variation along the lines of integration into well-placed informal social networks, economic standing, class, and gender are also substantial determinants of political efficacy. Representatives of the state in Kyrgyzstan perform their roles in a fluid manner, dependent on the categorical placement of their interlocutor.

While most Kyrgyzstanis are critical of state performance, there are striking distinctions in modes of criticism among the representatives of varying ethnic groups. Top-down supply of goods and services by the government is perceived as lacking across southern Kyrgyzstan. However, ethnic Kyrgyz tend to be more likely to contextualize these shortcomings as a function of the country’s poor economic development and to feel that the state is becoming a more reliable supplier with time. It is in the realm of societal demand for goods and services from the government that titular and non-titular southern Kyrgyzstanis demonstrate the most salient variance. Ethnic Kyrgyz overwhelmingly report a level of political efficacy that enables them to make direct appeals to state organs in cases of need, even if their requests remain unfulfilled by the government or require the drawing up of a co-financing plan. Ethnic Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan predominantly reported a strategy of state avoidance. A dearth of coethnic administrative social relations and the lack of civic competence to make a formal appeal, along with fears of being

victimized by a state widely perceived by non-titulars as potentially predatory, substantially limit the demand element of government-provided goods and service provision for this subset of Kyrgyzstani society.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Bringing Home the Goods?**

#### *Ethnic and Regional Distributive Politics in the Post-Soviet States*

Public goods, despite both popular understandings and elite framings as being non-excludable and universally provided, can and often are employed as tools to reward key political constituencies or punish opposition, in essence functioning as “club goods” (Kimenyi 2006). This is true not only with goods that are localized in production and use, such as roads, but also with those that are generally perceived as being beyond the remit of political manipulation, with Brian Min’s (2015) research on electrification serving as a valuable example. Although there are a number of categorical lines along which favoritism in the governmental provision of goods and resources can take place, including region, class, gender, and age, for the path dependent reasons outlined in Chapter 3, ethnicity—and, specifically, titular ethnicity—is a particularly salient category in the post-Soviet states. In Chapter 4 I illustrate, first, that ethnic Kyrgyz in Kyrgyzstan have systematically higher evaluations across a range of public goods and services and, second, that informal connections play a role in exacerbating these intergroup differences. Specifically, higher levels of informal social connectedness for ethnic Kyrgyz are related to more positive evaluations of government-provided goods and service provision relative to non-Kyrgyz. In Chapter 5, I employed qualitative evidence collected during a year of fieldwork in Kyrgyzstan that provides a sense of how both elite and non-elite ethnic Kyrgyz and non-Kyrgyz comprehend their relationship with the state. These qualitative data suggest that, even in the highly ethnicized setting of Kyrgyzstan, ethnic identity is not monolithic.

Existing research on ethnicity's relationship to the production and distribution of public resources focuses primarily on the effects of ethnic diversity (A. Alesina, Baqir, and Easterly 1999; Gisselquist 2014; Habyarimana et al. 2007; Miguel and Gugerty 2005) or top-down coethnic favoritism (Ejdemyr, Kramon, and Robinson 2017; Kramon and Posner 2013; Lee 2017). My broad research goal is to demonstrate how Soviet legacies of institutionalized affirmative action for ethnic titulars in the non-Russian Federation Union republics and the social embeddedness of informal practices of utilizing social networks at the elite and non-elite level combine to create titular advantages in both the supply (top-down) and demand (bottom-up or horizontal) elements of public goods and service provision. This theoretical approach to ethnic politics should apply not only to Kyrgyzstan, but also to post-Soviet states more broadly. Towards that end, in this chapter I analyze large-N data from the USAID's Demographic and Health Surveys. This allows me to look comparatively across eight post-Soviet states and multiple dependent variables. The results suggest that ethnicization of representative and administrative structures, in combination with regionally-based "verticals of power," have varying distributional effects for coethnics and co-regionalists of national leaders for critical outcomes across key outcomes, with the clearest effects being for education. I find quite unexpected effects for immunization that may speak to the role of non-state actors provision of such goods in the less developed world.

### **Theoretical expectations**

An impressive and growing literature on the ethnic determinants of public goods and service distribution suggests a benefit for coethnics of those with influence over public resources. This has been found to be the case for education (Kramon and Posner 2012, 2013; Li 2018), electrification (Dickens 2016; De Luca et al. 2018), water infrastructure (Ejdemyr, Kramon, and Robinson 2017), and road building (Burgess et al. 2015). Ethnic titulars should benefit from government decisions

on the distribution of resources as a result both of the coethnic affinity of elected politicians and administrators (the supply side of my argument) and the relatively greater density and lesser informal network distance to these same actors among both elite and non-elite ethnic titulars (the demand side of my argument).<sup>119</sup>

Another implication of my argument would imply that the fall of the Soviet Union serves as a critical juncture in governance practices. Even assuming that titular dominance of administrative structures in the Soviet period positively influenced the distribution of state resources in the direction of ethnic titulars, large portions of union republic budgets were non-discretionary and determined in Moscow. Given the paramount concern among central Soviet elites to maintain social and political stability, there were almost certainly informal limits set on the extent of distributive coethnic favoritism. We should thus expect that ethnic titular advantage increases in the post-Soviet period, as external oversight is lifted, providing ethnic titular leaders at the national and sub-national level with extensive autonomy over resource distribution, a view supported by the analysis of a number of specialists on post-Soviet ethnic politics in the years following the USSR's dissolution (Brubaker 1994; Khazanov 1995; Tishkov 1997).

While much of the existing literature suggests that, given coethnic political and administrative dominance, ethnic titulars should be favorably targeted with public goods and services, a number of arguments can be made to temper these expectations. First, and most significantly, because of the intentional Soviet delimitation of Union republics to contain—excepting the Kazakh SSR—ethnic titular majorities, undifferentiated favoritism towards all

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<sup>119</sup> Unfortunately, and in contrast to the *Life in Kyrgyzstan* data analyzed in Chapter 4, the *Demographic and Health Surveys* data does not contain any variables that might serve as adequate proxies for the extent of individual respondents' informal social networks, prohibiting me from disentangling the effects of the supply and demand elements of ethnicized public goods provision.

coethnics by titular national leaders would be politically inefficient. This suggests serious consideration of the significance of Hale's (2014) patronal politics model of post-Soviet regime dynamics. Founded on the idea that a social equilibrium of low interpersonal trust aggregates to a cyclical pattern in which verticalized, elite patronal regimes of hierarchical reciprocity follow one after another, it suggests a rather constrained flow of resources to those outside of minimum winning coalitions. Given the titular dominance of post-Soviet electoral politics and administrative structures described in Chapter 3, it would be sensible to assume that patronal pyramids in the post-Soviet states exhibit a high degree of (titular) ethnic homogeneity. Even so, the limited horizontal extent across the ethnic group of such pyramids would mean that the benefits remain concentrated within one or a few verticals of power to such an extent that they may not cumulate broadly to lead to systematic difference in outcomes for ethnic titulars and non-titulars.

If favoritism were, then, to be motivated by political considerations of gaining and maintaining political power, it is necessary to consider more limited sub-populations that might be targeted in a favorable manner. Sub-national regions and regional loyalties, in particular, have played critical roles in the domestic political dynamics of post-Soviet states (Luong 2003).<sup>120</sup> For this reason, it is critical to examine whether there is evidence that national leaders in the post-Soviet states direct resources to favored regions in a disproportionate manner, and how this might relate to coethnic favoritism. In particular, I will examine whether or not both coethnic and co-regional favoritism co-exist and whether or not coethnics in leaders' home regions are additionally favored relative to coethnics elsewhere in the country.

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<sup>120</sup> Additionally, as a minor gesture towards bringing comparisons of the post-Soviet Eurasian and postcolonial African states into greater prominence (Beissinger and Crawford Young 2002), I note that recent research has found abundant evidence of co-regional favoritism by African leaders (Dreher et al. 2016; Hodler and Raschky 2014; Öhler and Nunnenkamp 2014).

Second, we should not take for granted that descriptive political representation of ethnic groups leads inexorably to substantive representation. Although Pitkin (1967) did not examine the issue in any systematic manner, she controversially suggested that descriptive representation might in fact decrease substantive accountability and responsiveness. Moreover, descriptive representation on one facet of identity—here ethnicity—may be cross cutting with other, similarly important, categorical groupings, such as class background, rural versus urban residence, or cosmopolitanism. Soviet social barriers between the *nomenklatura* and the average citizen, as well as post-Soviet distinctions between the well-off “New Russians/Uzbeks/Georgians” and those much more numerous individuals struggling to provide for themselves and their families, suggest that there might be large spaces of non-overlap in the preferences, worldviews, and interests of elite and non-elite ethnic titulars that might attenuate the distributional impact of coethnic administrative dominance.

Finally, coethnicity with political elites is associated with negative distributive consequences under certain conditions. Critically, Kasara (2007) found that farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa who are coethnics of the head of state were taxed at higher rates due to better vertical control of administrative structures in their home regions, where coethnics tend to be concentrated. A similar relationship may be present in the post-Soviet case, with politicians and administrators more capable of extracting scarce resources for their own private use from coethnics and coregionalists, about whom they have extensive information and thus levers of potential economic and social pressure.

## **Data and methods**

I explore how coethnicity and coregionality with national leaders influences the distribution of public goods and services using USAID’s *Demographic and Health Surveys* (DHS) data. The DHS

are national surveys that collect data on health, education, and childhood nutrition in developing countries across world regions. Survey waves generally take place once every 5 years and collect information from representative samples of thousands of households. The data are collected in a consistent manner across countries and waves, a fact that provides fertile ground for analysis.

The existence of household-level data, and individual responses from household members, also avoids the problems of ecological inference commonly found in research on ethnic favoritism. Rather than looking at locality-level data and making assumptions about the strategies of coethnic leaders in their targeting of resources to villages or municipalities that have higher or lower levels of coethnic concentration, the DHS data allow me to be relatively confident in my analysis of the role of individual ethnicity and coregionality in governmental goods and service distribution. Additionally, although the lack of any variables that would serve as fitting proxies of informal social connectedness in the DHS data do not allow me to measure its role directly, this mechanism should be seen to operate at the individual level, providing further reason to suggest that these are appropriate data on which to test my theoretical approach.

I examine all post-Soviet countries for which there are data and for all existing survey waves conducted within these countries. This gives me the following countries and waves: Armenia (2000, 2005, 2010, 2015), Azerbaijan (2006), Kazakhstan (1995, 1999), Kyrgyzstan (1997, 2012), Moldova (2005), Tajikistan (2012, 2017), Ukraine (2007), and Uzbekistan (1996). Although this is clearly not the full set of fourteen non-Russian Federation post-Soviet countries about which I am generalizing and there is likely a selection effect of which post-Soviet countries invite USAID to conduct such surveys, there is significant variation among the countries included on a number of variables that might be considered meaningful. The dataset includes countries from all subregions of the former Soviet Union barring the Baltics, including Central Asia, Eastern

Europe, and the South Caucasus. It additionally includes a significant range of ethnic configurations, with instances of extreme ethnic homogeneity (Armenia), moderate ethnic fragmentation (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Moldova, Ukraine), and ethnic polarization (Kazakhstan).<sup>121</sup> The post-Soviet countries represented in the DHS data also exhibit a range of economic models and levels of development. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are among the two most remittance-dependent countries in the world and remain comparable to many countries of Sub-Saharan Africa in their level of economic development. Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan are highly dependent on fossil fuel exploitation and have developed substantially since the collapse of the Soviet Union as a result. The other countries analyzed lie somewhere in the middle (Chart 6.1).

While the DHS data has the fortuitous characteristics that I have described, that which exists for these countries does exhibit two limitations. First, precisely because of the institutionalized titular dominance that is a constitutive element of post-Soviet ethnic politics, there has been very limited ethnic rotation of executive power in these states within the time period of these data.<sup>122</sup> As a result, I cannot take advantage of the arguably exogenous treatment of leadership coethnicity in the manner of Franck and Rainer (2012) and Kramon and Posner (2013) for Sub-Saharan African states. This makes it more difficult to claim that there is a causal relationship between coethnicity with national political leaders and favorable goods and service distribution. However, for five of the eight countries analyzed—Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan,

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<sup>121</sup> Armenia's population is approximately 98 percent ethnic Armenian. The titular ethnic groups of Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, and Ukraine compose 73.5, 77, and 78 percent of the population of these countries, respectively (CIA World Factbook 2019). Although Kazakhs now make up nearly 65 percent of the population of Kazakhstan, at the time of independence and throughout the 1990s—the period in which the DHS data were collected—the ethnic Russian and ethnic Kazakh populations were at near-parity.

<sup>122</sup> The sole non-titular national executive in the period of the DHS data that I analyze is Vasile Tarlev, an ethnic Bulgarian who served as Prime Minister of Moldova from 2001 until 2008. Additionally, former Ukrainian Prime Minister and President Viktor Yanukovich, who was orphaned as a child but is believed to be of Russian, Polish, and Belarusian descent, first became Prime Minister in 2006. Due to the one and two year lags placed on the ethnic match and region match variables for all models, however, this ethnic rotation of leadership is not recorded in the Ukraine data here, which was collected in 2007.

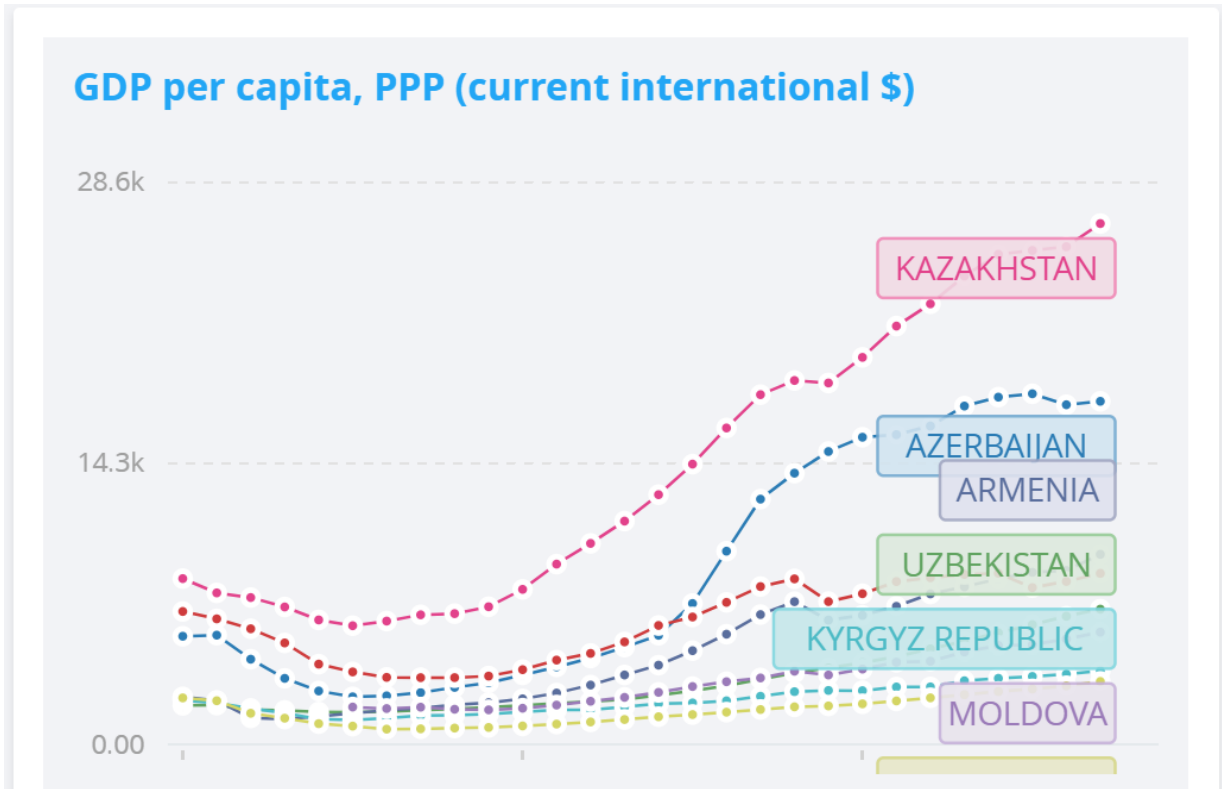
Moldova, and Ukraine—there has been regional rotation of leadership in the time period of the DHS data, which allows for more reliable inferences about the impact of co-regionality with national leaders.<sup>123</sup>

With the above caveat on the lack of executive ethnic turnover noted, to the extent that individual ethnic identity is endogenous to governance and, specifically, governmental goods and service provision, I would contend that it should be in the direction of moderating the positive relationship between ethnic titularity and public goods provision. Imagine that individuals from non-titular ethnic groups, with the set of background individual and social factors that this categorical identity carries with it, officially or unofficially alter their ethnic identity to become titulars. There is scant reason to believe that non-titulars who have particularly advantageous

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<sup>123</sup> In Armenia, the transition was from President Levon Ter-Petrosian (1992-1998; born in Syria but moved to Yerevan in childhood and lived there for much of his life, thus coded as being associated with Yerevan) to President Serzh Sargysyan (2008-2016; born in Stepanakert, in the contested region of Nagorno Karabakh, which is not included in DHS data. Instead, because of family ties to Syunik region, from which his father was exiled in 1937, coded as being associated with Syunik). Co-regionality with Armenian President Robert Kocharian (1998-2008) is not recorded, as he was born in Stepanakert, Nagorno Karabakh and had no notable ties to any other region of Armenia. Azerbaijan's first president, Heydar Aliiev (1993-2003), was born and began his political career in the autonomous region of Nakhichevan, for which DHS does not collect data and thus coregionality is not recorded. Aliiev's son and successor, President Ilham Aliiev (2003-present) was born and has spent much of life in Baku, and thus is coded as co-regional with residents of Baku and the surrounding region of Absheron. The two DHS waves for Kyrgyzstan have regional codings that do not match: the 1997 wave only records whether respondents are from north, south, east, or west Kyrgyzstan, while the 2012 wave has more granular data on sub-national region of residence. I aligned the waves such that the latter wave now fits with the former. President Askar Akaev (1992-2005) was born in Chuy region, and thus is coded as being coethnic with respondents from northern Kyrgyzstan. President Kurmanbek Bakiev was born in Jalal-Abad region, and is coded as coethnic with respondents from southern Kyrgyzstan. Moldova's regions are similarly divided into the cardinal directions, as the largest sub-national divisions in the country are quite small districts. The first two executives of post-Soviet Moldova, Presidents Mircea Snegur (1991-1997) and Petru Lucinschi (1997-2001), were from Floresti district, in northern Moldova. The first Moldovan Prime Minister after transitioning to a parliamentary system in 2000 was Vasile Tarlev (2001-2008), born in Bessarabia district, in southern Moldova. The DHS data for Ukraine is similarly divided into the four cardinal directions, in addition to a "Central" region. President Leonid Kravchuk (1991-1994) was born in western Ukraine's Riven region, while Presidents Leonid Kuchma (1994-2005) and Viktor Yushchenko were born in the northern Ukrainian regions of Chernihorski and Sumy, respectively. For those states in which no regional transition occurred, in Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbaev (1992-2019) was born in Alma-Ata region and is coded as co-regional with southern Kazakhstanis; President of Tajikistan Emomali Rakhmon (1993-present) was born in Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region; and longtime Uzbekistani President Islam Karimov (1992-2016) was born in Samarkand region.

Chart 6.1 GDP per capita (PPP) of post-Soviet countries under analysis



Source: World Bank (2019)

relationships to the state and its distributive mechanisms would take this opportunity. Alternatively, individuals are more likely to alter their ethnic identity in settings where being a non-titular is particularly disadvantageous in the competition for limited government resources. If that is the case, we should expect that, *ceteris paribus*, the effect of “passing” would be to decrease the positive link between ethnicity and governmental goods and service provision, with those who

have been more harshly discriminated against in the distribution of government resources having greater incentive to alter their ethnic identity.<sup>124</sup>

The other issue with the DHS data from these post-Soviet states is that not all of them have information on the ethnicity of the respondent or, in the case of child survival or immunization, the child's mother.<sup>125</sup> Apart from being suggestive of the highly contested nature of interethnic relations across the surveyed countries, this initially presents itself as an insurmountable obstacle to the estimation of the effect of ethnicity on public goods and service provision. However, in recognition of the historically strong link between ethnic identity and language in the Soviet period of national identity construction and, by extension, in the post-Soviet states (G. Smith et al. 1998), the DHS variable measuring the self-reported native language of the respondent represents a fitting proxy for ethnicity. The distribution of native language among respondents is generally close to the population proportions in the temporally proximate national census.<sup>126</sup>

In coding for the separate coethnicity and coregionality with national executives, each observation is coded as a match if they are of the same ethnicity or from the home region of a national leader during a period of time relevant for the dependent variable. Given that coethnic

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<sup>124</sup> A potentially persuasive counterargument would be that those (relatively rare) non-titulars with strong informal social ties to government administrators with some control over personal records and demographic data would be both more capable of having their official ethnicity altered in countries that still record this data *and* to influence the flow of government resources in their direction. While this is an intriguing avenue for further investigation, in my experience in the field, the only individuals I have met who have changed their "passport ethnicity" were those who, first, had mixed ethnic parentage and, second, perceived themselves as being economically and/or physically under threat due to their ethnic background.

<sup>125</sup> This is the case for Armenia (2005, 2010, 2015), Kyrgyzstan (2012), Tajikistan (2012, 2017), and Ukraine (2007).

<sup>126</sup> In Armenia, the 2011 census reports that 98.3 percent of those in the country are Armenian, while the proportions of self-reported Armenian speakers in the DHS data waves range from 99.4 percent Armenian in 2005 to 98.6 percent in 2015. Ethnic Kyrgyz are 73 percent of the population, according to the 2010 Kyrgyzstani census, while 77.3 percent of the 2012 DHS respondents are self-identified Kyrgyz native speakers. In Tajikistan, the ethnic Tajik proportion of the population in the 2010 census is 84.3, while Tajik native speakers account for 88.1 percent of the 2012 DHS and 86.9 percent in 2017. Ukraine has the largest gap, with the 2001 census reporting that 77 percent of the population is Ukrainian, while only about 65 percent of 2007 DHS respondents report Ukrainian as their native language. There are many russophone ethnic Ukrainians in the east and south of Ukraine, as well as in Kiev, and language is arguably a greater social and political cleavage in Ukraine than ethnicity.

and coregional favoritism likely take time to come into effect, I place one year lags on the match variables. Results are substantively and statistically identical when two year lags are employed. Thus, for the first year child survival dependent variable, the relevant time period is the year after which the child was born. For the full child immunization variable, the relevant time period is the first four full years of a child's life, and a match is coded if there is ethnic or regional overlap for any of these years.

### Dependent Variables

#### *Education*

Provision of education is a core element of the state's role. Although there has been a marked increase in the use of private educational institutions in the post-Soviet period, most residents of these countries continue to be educated within the public school system and to expect such schooling to be provided in an egalitarian manner (Silova, Johnson, and Heyneman 2007). However, as many of these states face persistent challenges of both resource scarcity and corruption, politicians and administrators must make distributional choices.

While Franck and Rainer (2012) and Kramon and Posner (2013) studied the effect of coethnic favoritism in Sub-Saharan Africa on primary education, the fact that primary education completion is nearly universal across the post-Soviet space leads me to focus on two different education outcomes: the completion of secondary school and enrollment in higher education (not necessarily completion). Both of these are dichotomous variables. To limit the scope of analysis to the post-Soviet period, I only include data for respondents who are likely to have begun secondary education or higher education in 1992 or later. That is, for secondary education, I only include those who would have turned 14 years of age in or after 1992, and for higher education I

only include those who would have turned 18 years of age in or after 1992. For both dependent variables, I only include responses of those aged 18 or over, as respondents younger than this would be very unlikely to have completed secondary school or enrolled in higher education.<sup>127</sup>

In the models for educational attainment, I control for type of region of residence (rural or urban) and respondent gender. I include birth year fixed effects to control for temporary shocks that could have an impact on access to education, as well as regional fixed effects for those countries that have had regional turnover in leadership. Regional and ethnicity matches are coded if it is likely that a respondent would have been of an age to be enrolled in secondary (higher) education during the period in which an executive whose ethnicity or home region matches theirs was in power, even if this were only for a single year of that period. Thus, for instance, since Kyrgyzstani President Kurmanbek Bakiev was in power from 2005 until 2010 and was from the southern region of Jalal-abad, I code as a secondary education regional match those residents of Bakiev's home region of southern Kyrgyzstan who would have been 14 to 18 from 2006 to 2011 (given a one year lag). I code as a higher education regional match those from that same region who would have been 18 to 22 years of age in that time period.

### *Child Survival*

Infant survival, a fundamental measure of health and well-being, is particularly responsive to governmental action (Franco, Álvarez-Dardet, and Ruiz 2004; Kudamatsu 2012; Wang 2003). It has also been shown to be subject to coethnic and regional favoritism in Sub-Saharan African countries (Brockerhoff and Hewett 2000; Franck and Rainer 2012; Kramon and Posner 2013).

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<sup>127</sup> Because ethnicity data exists only for women in Uzbekistan, I would be unable to control for gender were I to include these cases in my models. In models in which I include the Uzbekistani cases and do not control for gender, the coefficients are nearly identical across both dependent variables and all models. This is likely in part because the DHS has a very small amount of post-Soviet education data for Uzbekistan, given that it was conducted in 1996.

There are many determinants of child survival likely to be affected by governmental decisions about the allocation of resources, including women's access to education, availability of primary health care, access to clean water, first year vaccination, and sanitation technology.

In order to evaluate the effect of coethnicity and coregionality on first year child survival, I have assembled datasets that include the available surveys from these post-Soviet countries. The unit of observation is live births, and I have created a dichotomous variable indicating whether the child survived at least 12 months from birth. The DHS contains retrospective data from mothers about each live birth that they have given at any point in their lives, with dates of birth and, if it applies, infant death. The retrospective nature of the data means that it extends back many years, in some cases to the 1960s or before. In the models evaluating ethnic and regional favoritism's relationship to child survival across the post-Soviet period, I include all cases of live births from 1992 and later.

The DHS data contain many variables that are widely recognized to influence child survival. I include control variables commonly shown in the public health literature to be influential, including child gender, the child's birth order relative to other siblings (and its square), whether the child is a multiple birth (a twin, triplet, and so on), mother's age (and its square), and a dichotomous variable indicating whether the child was born less than 24 months after a sibling. I also include a dichotomous variable for type of region (urban or rural), under the assumption that medical facilities will be both better provisioned and more numerous in urban areas. I include birth year fixed effects to control for temporary shocks and region fixed effects to control for persistent interregional differences that might influence the factors underlying infant health and nutrition.

### *Child Immunization*

Similar to child survival, resources for immunization programs are to a large extent controlled and distributed by national governments. Lack of accessibility to vaccination sites, long distances from medical facilities, extended waiting times due to a dearth of resources, and maternal access to health care are some of the factors shown to be significant in determining child immunization (Abdulraheem et al. 2011; Etana and Deressa 2012; Jani et al. 2008). Full childhood immunization is a critical determinant of infant survival and a number of other positive outcomes (Bawah et al. 2010; Ozawa et al. 2012). I construct a dichotomous variable of whether a child has a complete immunization record.<sup>128</sup> Only children four years of age are included in the models, as multistage vaccination regimens are spaced out over a number of months and the data only are only recorded until children are 5 years of age. All children born during and after 1992 are included in these models. I include controls for child gender, an indicator for rural residence and child age. Coethnicity and coregionality with national leaders is recorded if there is a match in any of the first four years of a child's life (with a one-year lag from leader coming into power). I include region fixed effects for those countries that experienced regional turnover in executive leadership. Because of the presence of singularities, birth year fixed effects are not possible.<sup>129</sup>

### *Different goods, different expectations?*

Many of the existing explorations of favoritism—ethnic, regional, or otherwise—in the governmental distribution of goods and services have focused on a single outcome. In part, this is because collection of objective data pertaining to, as an example, road construction in less

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<sup>128</sup> This includes immunizations for BCG, measles, diphtheria-pertussis-tinnitus 1-3, and poliovirus 1-3 (Brockerhoff and Hewett 2000).

<sup>129</sup> Future versions of this work will include a linear time trend to somewhat take cognizance of the effect of time on full immunization, as rates have increased almost universally throughout the region in the post-Soviet period.

developed settings is time consuming and can require significant economic, social, and political capital. This narrow focus on discrete outcomes has important consequences for the types of generalizations we can make about distributive patterns. Kramon and Posner (2013) suggest that, while favoritism may have certain distributive consequences for one type of good or service, this relationship may not travel to others goods or services, and the relationship may even run in the opposite direction. Because governments operate with limited resources, preferential distribution for one output may need to be compensated for by diminished distribution of resources for others. As they suggest,

The problem lies in the fact that governments can favor constituencies through the targeting of multiple public and private goods—roads, schools, clinics, electrification, cash grants and transfers, irrigation schemes, subsidies, tax breaks, public service jobs, and so on. Yet nearly all of the studies in the empirical distributive politics literature focus exclusively on just one or a small subset of these goods. So while the inferences these analyses draw about favoritism with respect to the particular outcome being studied may be warranted, conclusions about who benefits from distributive politics *per se* rest on shaky foundations. And if inferences about who benefits are open to question then so too are the conclusions reached about which theoretical approaches are best supported by the data. (462)

Expectations about the extent to which governments have both the desire and ability to alter the flow of resources affecting the above outcomes varies. First, the persistence of goods and services over time varies widely. In the post-Soviet countries, much of the infrastructure for water and electricity provision—as well as for education—was constructed prior to independence, whereas individual data on child immunizations and survival can easily be linked to a relevant temporal period. These goods and services additionally vary in the extent to which they are principally dependent on production and distribution by the government, as opposed to sharing responsibilities with third parties such as international NGOs, domestic NGOs, or private/semiprivate utility companies. Post, Bronsoler, and Salman (2017), for instance, have

developed a useful framework that differentiates the political dynamics of local public goods provision on two dimensions: direct versus indirect provision by the state and the extent of formal state penetration in society. While national governments in less developed countries often maintain significant control over educational institutions and infrastructural investment, it is also the case that significant portions of the resources that go towards childhood immunization and maternal nutrition are provided by non-governmental sources.

Although donor states, multinational donor agencies, and both international and local non-governmental organizations may be assumed to have less stark incentives to engage in the sort of favoritism that is attributed to domestic politicians and government administrators, the valued goods that these entities provide have been shown to be targeted strategically to key constituencies of national leaders. Dreher et al. (2016) find that Chinese development aid in Sub-Saharan Africa has been systematically directed towards home regions of heads of state. Briggs (2014) shows that project aid in Kenya tends to find its way into the possession of core constituencies of the president, with Jablonski (2014) more specifically illustrating how foreign aid is redirected towards presidential coethnic communities in that country. National governments can place any number of informal roadblocks in front of aid agencies that might have the consequence of inordinately steering the distribution of resources towards one region or subpopulation. Thus, while the substantive extent of favoritism may be lessened by third-party contributions, we should not assume that some goods and services are inherently less likely to be subject to political favoritism simply because of their private or nongovernmental modes of provision.

## **Results**

My analysis is designed to observe whether coethnicity and coregionality with national leaders is related to outcomes that can be attributed to favorable distribution of public goods and services. I

explore this through statistical analysis of whether being an ethnic or regional match to national leaders during a relevant period of time translates to positive outcomes across multiple variables: completion of secondary education, some higher education, first year child survival, and complete child immunization. Primary results are described based on OLS regressions, for ease of explication. However, results from logit models are substantively and statistically identical and can be seen in Appendix C. Results from the regressions estimating the effect of favoritism on the distribution of these outcomes in the post-Soviet period are found in Tables 6.1-6.4.<sup>130</sup> As the regression results of interaction terms are often difficult to interpret, I display plots comparing the effect of coethnicity with national leaders for those within the leaders' home region and those without in Figures 6.1-6.8.

The direct relationships between coethnicity and coregionality with national leaders and educational achievement are strong and statistically significant. As shown in Table 1, which looks at the effect of these factors on secondary education completion, for the regressions in which all post-Soviet countries for which DHS data exists are included and there are no region fixed effects, the effects of coethnicity and coregionality are independently and jointly positive and significant (Table 6.1, Models 1-4). More saliently, Figure 1 suggests that while coethnics outside of the leaders' home regions have a statistically significant yet substantively rather small advantage in completing secondary education as compared to non-coethnics, that for coethnics over non-

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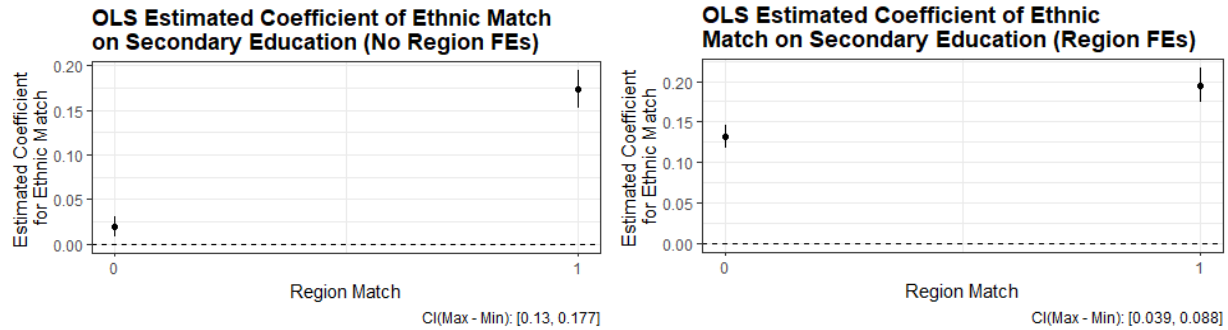
<sup>130</sup> Results tables with coefficients for control variables can be found in Appendix C.

**Table 6.1 OLS Regression Results (Completed Secondary Education)**

Table 1. OLS Regression Results								
Dependent variable:								
	Completed Secondary Education							
	Ethnicity (1)	Region (2)	Both (3)	Interaction (4)	Ethnicity (Region FEs) (5)	Region (Region FEs) (6)	Both (Region FEs) (7)	Interaction (Region FEs) (8)
Ethnic Match	0.052*** (0.005)		0.050*** (0.005)	0.019*** (0.006)	0.151*** (0.006)		0.151*** (0.006)	0.132*** (0.008)
Regional Match		0.087*** (0.005)	0.086*** (0.005)	-0.040*** (0.011)		-0.021*** (0.006)	-0.020*** (0.006)	-0.067*** (0.011)
Ethnicity*Region				0.154*** (0.012)				0.064*** (0.013)
Observations	58,132	58,132	58,132	58,132	33,791	33,791	33,791	33,791
R <sup>2</sup>	0.151	0.154	0.156	0.158	0.301	0.290	0.301	0.302
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.151	0.154	0.155	0.157	0.300	0.289	0.300	0.301

Note: All models include country and birth year fixed effects. Gender and rural/urban habitation controlled for in all models. Ethnic and region match variables are lagged one year from executive coming into power. \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

**Figures 6.1 and 6.2**



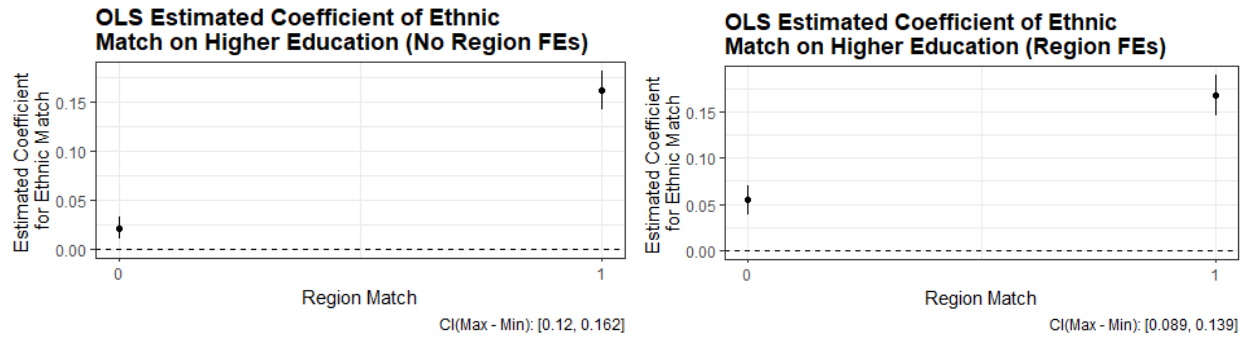
coethnics from the home region of national leaders is between 15 and 20 percent, *ceteris paribus*. The results for those countries that have had regional turnovers of executives and for which I can include region fixed effects are generally similar, excepting that the independent influence of coregionality—not taking into account coethnicity—is negative and significant (Table 1, Models 5-8). Looking at the interaction term (Figure 2), coethnicity for those outside of the leaders’ home region is equivalent to a nearly 13 percent increased likelihood of completing secondary education as compared to non-coethnics, whereas coethnicity within the home region of leaders is

**Table 6.2 OLS Regression Results (Some Higher Education)**

Table 2. OLS Regression Results								
Dependent variable: Some Higher Education								
	Ethnicity (1)	Region (2)	Both (3)	Interaction (4)	Ethnicity (Region FEs) (5)	Region (Region FEs) (6)	Both (Region FEs) (7)	Interaction (Region FEs) (8)
Ethnic Match	0.056*** (0.005)		0.053*** (0.005)	0.021*** (0.006)	0.093*** (0.007)		0.093*** (0.007)	0.054*** (0.008)
Regional Match		0.080*** (0.005)	0.078*** (0.005)	-0.035*** (0.010)		-0.038*** (0.006)	-0.038*** (0.006)	-0.123*** (0.011)
Ethnicity*Region				0.141*** (0.011)				0.114*** (0.013)
Observations	71,843	71,843	71,843	71,843	42,922	42,922	42,922	42,922
R <sup>2</sup>	0.106	0.109	0.110	0.112	0.151	0.148	0.151	0.153
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.106	0.108	0.109	0.111	0.150	0.147	0.151	0.152

Note: \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01  
 All models include country and birth year fixed effects. Gender and rural/urban habitation controlled for in all models. Ethnic and region match variables are lagged one year from executive coming into power.

**Figures 6.3 and 6.4**



significantly more influential and related to nearly a 20 percent increase in likelihood of completing secondary education as compared to similarly situated non-coethnics of the national leader.

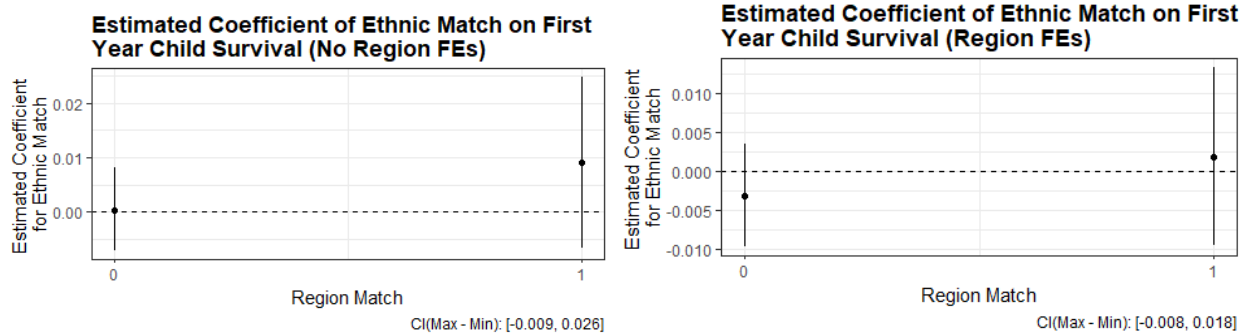
The same general trends hold for having completed some higher education. In models that include data from all post-Soviet cases, coethnicity and coregionality are independently and jointly related in a positive manner to higher education (Table 6.2, Models 1-4). The interaction between the two is significant, with coethnics outside of the leaders’ home region having a statistically significant 3 percent advantage over non-coethnics, whereas those coethnics from the home region of the leader have a nearly 17 percent advantage over non-coethnics, *ceteris paribus*. The results for post-Soviet countries with regional turnover are substantively identical to the secondary

**Table 6.3 OLS Regression Results (First Year Child Survival)**

Table 3. OLS Regression Results								
Dependent variable:								
First year child survival								
	Ethnicity (1)	Region (2)	Both (3)	Interaction (4)	Ethnicity (Region FEs) (5)	Region (Region FEs) (6)	Both (Region FEs) (7)	Interaction (Region FEs) (8)
Ethnic Match	0.002 (0.003)		0.002 (0.003)	0.0004 (0.004)	-0.002 (0.003)		-0.002 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)
Regional Match		0.001 (0.003)	0.001 (0.003)	-0.006 (0.008)		-0.001 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.003)	-0.005 (0.006)
Ethnicity*Region				0.008 (0.009)				0.005 (0.007)
Observations	86,629	86,629	86,629	86,629	48,179	48,179	48,179	48,179
R <sup>2</sup>	0.404	0.404	0.404	0.404	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.404	0.404	0.404	0.404	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044

Note: \* p<0.1; \*\* p<0.05; \*\*\* p<0.01  
 All models include country and birth year fixed effects. All models additionally control for birth order and its square, mother's age at birth and its square, and indicators for multiple birth and short birth interval. Country fixed effects for all models. Ethnic and region match variables are lagged one year from executive coming into power.

**Figures 6.5 and 6.6**



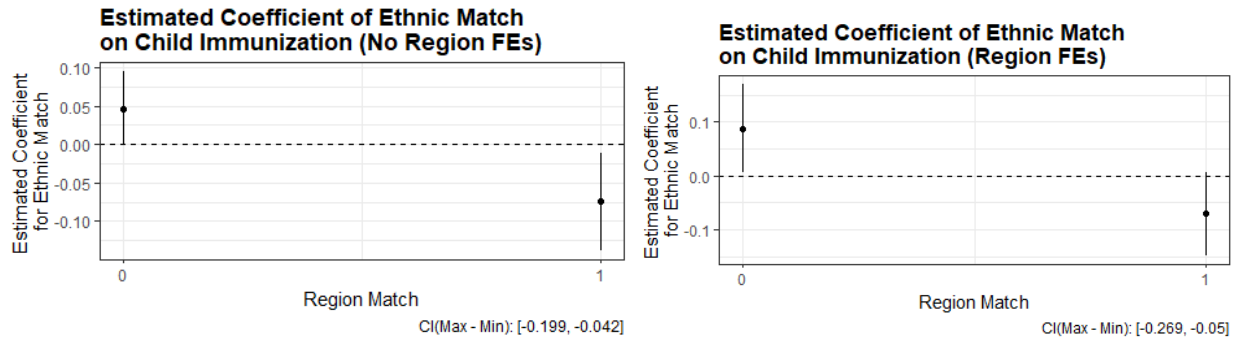
education completion variable. The independent influence of coethnicity is positive, while that of coregionality is negative and significant (Table 6.2, Models 5-8). Giving attention to the interaction term (Figure 6.4), coethnicity for those outside of the leaders' home region is equivalent to a 5 percent higher likelihood of attaining some higher education as compared to non-coethnics, while coethnicity within the home region of leaders is significantly more influential and related to 16 percent increase in this likelihood as compared to non-coethnics.

**Table 6.4 OLS Regression Results (Child Immunization)**

	Table 4. OLS Regression Results							
	Dependent variable:							
	Child Immunization				AllImmun			
	Ethnicity (1)	Region (2)	Both (3)	Interaction (4)	Ethnicity (Region FEs) (5)	Region (Region FEs) (6)	Both (Region FEs) (7)	Interaction (Region FEs) (8)
Ethnic Match	0.006 (0.020)		0.004 (0.020)	0.046* (0.025)	0.009 (0.028)		0.005 (0.029)	0.089** (0.041)
Regional Match		-0.016 (0.018)	-0.016 (0.018)	0.080** (0.037)		-0.034 (0.032)	-0.033 (0.033)	0.104* (0.059)
Ethnicity*Region				-0.119*** (0.041)				-0.160*** (0.057)
Observations	3,334	3,334	3,334	3,334	2,232	2,232	2,232	2,232
R <sup>2</sup>	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.057	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.091
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.053	0.053	0.053	0.055	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.084

Note: \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01  
 Controls for rural residence and child gender for all models. Country fixed effects for all models. Ethnic and region match variables are lagged one year from executive coming into power.

**Figures 6.7 and 6.8**



Observing the influence of coethnic and co-regional favoritism on first year child survival across all eight post-Soviet countries for which DHS data exist (Table 6.3, Models 1-4), there is little evidence that either explanatory variable has statistically reliable effects. The same conclusion can be drawn from the subset of countries that have had regional turnover of leadership (Models 5-8). No coefficients reach statistical significance, and there is no interactive relationship between coethnicity and coregionality (Figures 6.5-6.6), suggesting that the inputs for child survival are not clearly affected by favoritism in this subset of post-Soviet countries.

Child immunization (Table 6.4) is related to coethnicity and coregionality with national leaders in a manner much less straightforward than the other outcomes. In models including all country cases (Table 6.4, Models 1-4), coefficients for coethnicity and coregionality are not independently significant, nor are they significant when placed in a model together. However, significance is reached when the variables are interacted: coethnics outside of the leaders home region have a barely statistically significant, but substantively quite large (5 percent) advantage over non-coethnics, while coethnics within the home region of national leaders have a 5 percent negative relationship as compared to non-coethnics, *ceteris paribus* (Figure 6.7). The substantive results are identical for models including only states that experienced regional turnover of executives, however only the relationship of coethnicity and coregionality is statistically significant—with a nearly 9 percent advantage for coethnics outside of the home region—while the relationship for coethnics within the home region loses significance at the level of  $p < .05$ . It should be noted that, in almost all cases, there are significantly more coethnics living outside of leaders home regions than within, which suggests that the impact of titular dominance is still significant.

## **Discussion and conclusion**

In this chapter, I have analyzed data from USAID's *Demographic and Health Surveys* to explore the relationship between ethnicity, regional identity, and favoritism in governmental distribution of goods and services. In combination with the path-dependent norm of ethnic titular domination of political institutions, ethnic titular politicians can be assumed to have strategic and affective rationales for targeting coethnics for public goods provision. Yet due to the purposive delimitation of Soviet Socialist Republics such that they contained more or less significant titular majorities, and the increasing ethnic homogenization of these former ethnofederal republics following

independence, national politicians are required to target subpopulations of coethnics as the foundation of their “minimum winning coalition”, undifferentiated distribution of benefits to this group would leave few of the material “spoils of office” for governing elites that motivate them to struggle for power in the first place. A narrower constituency that leaders, first, arguably have considerable arational affect towards and, second, about which they possess a high level of information regarding preferences and salient local power dynamics is the cohort of coethnics from their home region. This is likely where the leader initially developed political power and elite ties that are constitutive of the base of their vertical of power. Thus, while coethnics of the national leader should be advantaged in their access to public goods and services relative to non-coethnics throughout the country, coethnics from the leader’s home region might be additionally favored in the distribution of resources.

The results of my analysis are illustrative of variation in the extent of coethnic—and, generally, ethnic titular—advantage and, as previously illustrated in a different regional context (Kramon and Posner 2013), the conclusions arrived at are dependent on the public goods and services that are the focus of one’s inquiry. There is a large and additive effect of coethnicity and coregionality for education, with coethnics having a significant advantage over non-coethnics of the national leader generally, while the difference is significantly more pronounced among coethnics within the home regions of national leaders. This finding is consistent when analyzing only those post-Soviet countries that have had regional turnover of national leaders. From a normative standpoint, we can be thankful that there does not seem to be a relationship between coethnicity or coregionality with national leaders and first year infant survival.

The analysis of child immunization provides perplexing results, as discussed above, and deserves further investigation. Why is it the case that coethnics outside of the leaders’ home

regions—a much larger proportion of the population than home region coethnics, clearly—are favored in a manner that is the opposite of the pattern found in home regions of national leaders? Given that immunization drives are a service provided in significant measure by international NGOs and donor agencies, this relationship seems worthy of future investigation.

While these are interesting findings, it is necessary to consider the causal mechanisms that lead to them. Most research on ethnic favoritism tends to focus on the top-down, supply side of the equation, with national leaders and other decision-makers favoring coethnics for various politically strategic and affective reasons. However, given the role of informal networks that serve as a legacy of Soviet informal institutions like *blat*, it is also necessary to consider the role of ethnicity in bottom-up or horizontal demand for goods and services from the government. Because of titular domination of political administrations in the post-Soviet space, informal networks are much more effective in benefiting the distribution of government resources for ethnic titulars than for non-titulars. This might provide some insight into the different results for outcomes like education and immunization, with informal networks being much more important for outcomes like getting secondary school degrees and being admitted into university than they would be for receiving immunizations.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Conclusion**

How do ethnic and distributive politics relate to one another and how is this relationship mediated by various, seemingly unrelated, institutional factors? As I discuss in Chapters 1 and 2, each of these are significant research topics that have been the focus of much social science research in recent years. On the basis that informal sanctioning is more feasible within than across ethnic groups (Fearon and Laitin 1996), local public goods provision has been found to be more efficient in in relatively homogenous settings (Miguel and Gugerty 2005). Yet accumulated experience of cooperation with formal state institutions to demand public goods and services in settings of heterogeneity, as opposed to sustained informal provisioning in more homogeneous areas, has been shown to have long-run benefits as it relates to state provisioning and economic development (Charnysh 2019). A number of other recent works challenge what I have here termed the “diversity deficit” approach (Gerring et al. 2015a; Gisselquist, Leiderer, and Niño-Zarazúa 2016; Lee 2017), with the particularly valuable postulation that historical state capacity—defined, in part, by the ability to produce and distribute high qualities and quantities of goods and services—is a determinant of contemporary ethnic diversity. States with low capacity generally lacked the ability to invest in the public education and production of national symbolism requisite for the development of a unified nation-state identity (Wimmer 2016). Studies that analyze one-time snapshots of ethnic diversity’s relationship to public goods and service provision without accounting for historical context underlying both variables can thus be misleading and, at best, partial (Singh and vom Hau 2016). My dissertation examines the ethnic and distributive politics

of the Soviet successor states with an emphasis on the path dependent roles of various institutional legacies.

In Chapter 2, I propose a theoretical framework for post-Soviet ethnic politics and public goods. Rather than being established on a logic of ethnic diversity and its relation to governance, I assert that public goods and service provision in the region is determined by a logic of political domination by ethnic titulars. While approaches applying a logic of ethnic diversity implicitly assume that ethnic groups are politically equal and public goods are poorly produced and distributed due to an inability to effectively cooperate, I “bring politics back in” to examine the manner in which deeply institutionalized power disparities among groups are mediated by other institutional legacies to affect public goods provision. The construction from the first decade of Soviet rule of substate ethnofederal territories and promotion of ethnic titulars into positions of political and administrative leadership within the fourteen ethnically defined non-Russian Union Republics illustrates a historical pattern at great variance from many regions that have served as the setting for research on ethnic diversity and governance. Ethnic titulars have maintained and expanded upon their political dominance since independence. Given the affective and strategic impetus for titular politicians and bureaucrats to direct state resources to coethnics, this represents the *supply side* of my theory of post-Soviet ethnic and distributive politics.

I posit that this ethnic dominance of post-Soviet states interacts with another legacy of Soviet rule—the continued salience in state-society interactions of informal networks of access—to produce the *demand side* of my argument. Most examinations of the role of ethnicity in public goods provision tend to assume either community-produced local public goods as the result of the insufficient capacity of formal institutional structures or the favorable targeting of coethnics by national politicians. However, there has been little accounting for the integration of “the state” in

society, and *vice versa*. Informal networks of access are a fundamental element of this dual embeddedness in the post-Soviet space and elsewhere, as individuals utilize their direct or indirect connections with those who control the distribution of state resources to benefit themselves and/or their communities. Because of the largely monoethnic character of these informal networks and the domination of the formal state apparatus by ethnic titulars, integration into such networks enables elite and non-elite titulars greater access to nominally “public” goods and services than is available to non-titulars. This also explains intragroup differentiation among ethnic titulars, as it posits that highly “networked” individuals from these communities should be more effective in their appeals for state resources than others.

Given the important place in my approach of the historical institutionalization of ethnic identity and intergroup hierarchy and their relation to other historical legacies, in Chapter 3 I trace the process of Soviet nationalities policy formulation and enactment from the early 1920s and the concurrent development of informal networks of access as a means of coping with ubiquitous shortage. I additionally describe how each of these transitioned from the Soviet era to that of independent statehood. In particular, while informal networks of access continue to be a ubiquitous element structuring state-society interactions, increased monetization of informal exchanges and growing socioeconomic inequality are associated with an altering of both their form and function.

In Chapter 4, I analyze large-N individual level data from Kyrgyzstan to test my theory of ethnicized supply and demand in post-Soviet public goods provision. These data allow me to, first, evaluate the variation in perceptions of public goods provision among ethnic titulars and non-titulars. It additionally allows me to examine whether the demand side of my argument holds. That is, do ethnic titulars in fact inordinately benefit from integration into informal social networks as compared to non-titulars? I find that ethnic Kyrgyz systematically have higher evaluations of

public goods provision than non-titulars. Additionally, interacting ethnicity with three separate variables that proxy for informal social ties, I find suggestive evidence that ethnic Kyrgyz do indeed gain from such connections in a manner that is not matched by non-titulars.

The aim of Chapter 5 is to provide context and explicate causal mechanisms for the large-N results presented in the previous chapter. I endeavor to achieve this using qualitative evidence collected in Kyrgyzstan from 2016 to 2018 that presents local understandings of the state, its functions, and its faults. Through the voices of ethnic Kyrgyz focus group and interview respondents, I argue that members of the ethnic titular community overwhelmingly feel capable of making appeals to the state for goods and services. Two crucial factors, however, are repeatedly suggested to be determinative of the success of such appeals: economic standing and informal social ties to politicians and bureaucrats. As a result of the burgeoning monetization of informal ties and networks, less wealthy Kyrgyz often find themselves unable to shift the distribution of state resources or regulations in their favor.

As a contrast to the variant of state-society interactions experienced by ethnic titulars, I focus on that of ethnic Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan. In opposition to their ethnic Kyrgyz neighbors and co-workers, ethnic Uzbeks overwhelmingly perceived themselves as incapable of making direct appeals to officials. My respondents explained this in part as a result of a dearth of descriptive representation: often there are simply too few officials that “look like them” who they might approach. Also telling, however, was a kind of script relayed to me numerous times by Uzbek respondents who argued that the relatively poor distribution of public goods and services to their community was the result of low cultural valuation of education and a resultant incapacity to make appeals. As an alternative to state provisioning of goods and services, the Uzbek

community often depends on the organizational capacities and material outlay of local “big men” to complete projects.

In Chapter 6, I analyze the extent to and manner in which the *titular/non-titular* categorical boundary is related to distributive politics in the post-Soviet region more broadly. Following the practice of research on Sub-Saharan African states (Franck and Rainer 2012; Kramon and Posner 2013), I interrogate the effect of coethnicity with national leaders on distributive outcomes, namely in education and child health. However, whereas historical legacies of Sub-Saharan African states are such that a logic of ethnic diversity and intergroup rotation of power is at work, solid demographic titular majorities and deeply institutionalized norms of titular administration suggest a logic of ethnic dominance in post-Soviet states. Under the assumptions that leaders in the Soviet successor states possess arational affect towards coethnics and coregionalists, along with largely monoethnic informal networks of power, I hypothesize that there will be an additive effect of coethnicity and coregionality with executives. This is indeed the result found for both secondary and higher education. All coethnics are advantaged in education compared to non-coethnics, but this differentiation is both statistically and substantively larger in the home regions of national leaders. The results for child immunization were notably less straightforward, as they suggested a significant advantage for coethnics outside of leaders’ home regions and a relative disadvantage for those within these regions. No relationship was found between these explanatory variables and infant survival.

### **Theoretical implications**

There are three overarching implications from my research on post-Soviet ethnic and distributive politics. The most significant and far-reaching is the further emphasis that both contemporary ethnic diversity, intergroup power relations, and state capacities are endogenous to one another

and are often the result of contingent, yet path dependent, policy decisions (Darden and Mylonas 2016; Wimmer 2016). Ethnic diversity and intergroup hierarchies are not randomly assigned and, as a result, utilizing one-time snapshots of either variable in order to explain important outcomes can be highly misleading. The logic of *ethnic diversity*, which I argue to be characteristic of Sub-Saharan Africa and a result of both precolonial and colonial legacies, and that of post-Soviet *ethnic dominance*, require different conceptual approaches when it comes to studying the link between identity and governance. Yet it is also the case that, in the vein of Beissinger and Young (2002), there is much to be gained from cross-regional comparison, including the development of potential sub-categorizations, insights into critical junctures leading to transitions from one category to another, and mechanisms of rule and governance under different systems.

My approach also serves as a suggestion that analysis of state-society interactions and their consequences needs to more deeply account for the *state in society* and *society in the state*, rather than erecting an analytical boundary that is often illusory at ground level (Abrams 1988; Mitchell 1991). Particularly in explorations of the relationship between ethnic and distributive politics, approaches have tended either to assume local level production and distribution of goods and services in the absence of strong, formal institutions (e.g. Miguel and Gugerty 2005) or top-down supply of resources by politicians to favored subgroups, individual members of which are not seen to exert any agency in the process (Ejdemyr, Kramon, and Robinson 2017; Franck and Rainer 2012). By focusing on the manner in which ethnic titular domination of the state interacts with individuals' integration into informal social networks, my work brings needed attention to the bottom-up and horizontal *demand* elements of state-society relations. Regardless of level of development or regime type, non-elite individuals and communities possess agency in influencing the character and quality of interactions between themselves and representatives of the state. Yet

the strategies that are available and attractive to these communities will depend upon a variety of factors, among them ethnic power configurations and level of formalization of governance.

Finally, and more specific to the empirical, systematic study of politically targeted goods and services, my research affirms Kramon and Posner's (2013) assertion that different goods and services demonstrate different logics of strategic distribution. Moreover, these may be in significant part determined by longstanding institutional legacies: in the Union Republics of the USSR, positive promotion of ethnic titulars in education was a formal or informal policy priority from the mid-1920s. Thus, it should not come as a surprise that, in Chapter 6, I find ethnic titulars to be advantaged in this realm as compared to non-titulars.<sup>131</sup> Outcomes of interest and the theories applied to understand their distribution should also take cognizance of extant stocks of goods and services: while electrification is a relevant outcome in settings where it is still widely deficient (e.g. Min 2015), Lenin's 1920 declaration that "Communism is Soviet power plus electrification" provided a large part of the impetus to construct power infrastructure the fruits of which are still much in evidence today. Lastly, my puzzling finding that child vaccination is more likely for coethnics of national leaders—almost all ethnic titulars—outside of leaders' home region, while the opposite pattern holds within leaders home regions, suggests that outcomes which have hybrid, public/private routes of production and supply may exhibit complicated distributive logics. While I have found no evidence that the following is the case, it may be profitable to consider that suspicion on the part of bilateral and multilateral donors, including USAID and UNICEF, that leaders are particularly active in and capable of influencing distribution in their home regions leads to less autonomy provided to recipient countries in these regions.

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<sup>131</sup> The more striking element of my findings of educational favoritism is that coethnics in the home regions of national leaders are significantly *more* advantaged than coethnics outside of these regions, even when analyzing only that subset of countries that have experienced regional turnover in leadership.

## **Policy implications**

Aside from a general reluctance—whether out of modesty or meekness I cannot say—to suggest concrete policy proposals that follow from my research, the project’s emphasis on historical contingency and institutional path dependence also somewhat limit my latitude in this area. One core aspect of my approach offers some hope, however: my focus on the distribution of power, and thus ethnic dominance, rather than the distribution of people, or ethnic diversity. Policy “solutions” for the latter—assimilation, partition, ethnic cleansing, and genocide, to name some of the more historically popular—tend to be rather normatively complicated.

If the mechanism connecting ethnic diversity to poor public goods provision is its baleful effect on local level cooperation, it might be argued that incentivizing intergroup contacts might provide grounds for increased trust. One might imagine funding workshops in which, for instance, ethnic Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan are provided incentives to work together on an irrigation project on land they are given some share of ownership in. Beyond a generalized inability or unwillingness by many donor organizations to scale such projects such that they have widespread and lasting effects, however, such ventures ignore intergroup power dynamics in such a way that might make them, at best, useless, and, at worst, productive of increased intergroup tensions. Despite the best intentions of third parties providing materials and incentives, one can imagine how *de facto* ethnic domination of politics and administration might influence distributive outcomes even in these cases: a member of the titular community, long after the attentiveness of the ethnically neutral donors has faded, might use his informal or kin connections to local politicians, administrators, and law enforcement personnel to appropriate the benefits of any such project. The target of such a move would be rightfully aggrieved, sparking a cycle of intergroup hostility that would not have otherwise been initiated.

A focus on the distributive effects of ethnic domination and the mechanisms through which they operate provides levers for interventions that, while not unproblematic, are more feasible. For instance, as representation in politics and the bureaucracy in such settings is, by definition, dominated by members of a single ethnic group or ethnic coalition, making ethnic quotas for representation at both national and subnational levels of governance conditions for loans and aid would be a clear and serious signal that might—provided the “carrots” were sweet enough—have lasting impact. Particularly in areas where informality continues to reign, the ability of non-dominant group members to simply see and speak with an individual that they have descriptive affinity with would be a step in the right direction. Incentives for decentralization of governance and electoral accountability at subnational levels would also be valuable, as pyramidal structures of governance allow for ruling elites of the dominant group to either appoint coethnics to these positions or coopt non-coethnic elites.

Although it should be evident from context, I would like to clarify what I do *not* believe to be a policy implication of my research: that positive promotion of underrepresented ethnic minorities, as attempted and achieved in the Soviet Union, should not be repeated in any form. While at first glance the Soviet indigenization policy might appear to be a confirmative case of the “perversity thesis” Albert Hirschman attributes to conservative thinkers,<sup>132</sup> it should be recognized as a special case. First, it was a setting of relatively centralized authoritarian ethnofederalism in which much of the legitimacy that Union Republic elites possessed came as a result of their claim to represent the titular nation. This characteristic exacerbated the titular/non-titular categorical divide in an important but relatively unique manner. Second, the establishment of strict

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<sup>132</sup> Hirschman categorizes conservative arguments against progressive and activist policy into arguments from *perversity*, *futility*, and *jeopardy*. The perversity argument proposes that, “any purposive action to improve some feature of the political, social, or economic order only serves to exacerbate the condition one wishes to remedy” (11).

ethnofederalism with relatively little flexibility in which groups could attain ethnic recognition of territory, followed by the unexpected collapse of the central state and fragmentation into independent states with all of the administrative and symbolic accoutrements of modern nation-states, is an unlikely trajectory for any extant multiethnic state. Social and political promotion of the Union Republic's titular groups may not have eventuated in the national identity-free utopia that dialectical Marxists might have hoped, but it has allowed for a postcolonial present in which large proportions of the populations of successor states are highly educated and expectations about which groups will (and should) have a leading role are shared to a large enough extent that relative stability is the norm.

### **Paths for future research**

The research and approach that I present here suggests a multitude of possibilities for future research. There is much work to be done in tracing the process of institutionalized ethnic domination as opposed to ethnic diversity and its norm of ethnic rotation of power, as well as transitions between the two logics and how they are related to outcomes we care about. Even among the post-Soviet states, variation exists in terms of ethnic diversity, modes of titular domination, and how these interact with other aspects of state and society.

In recognition of this valuable intraregional diversity, I have initiated an expansion of this research project to conduct comparative analysis of Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, and Latvia. These three post-Soviet states vary along lines of diversity, formalization of governance, economic development, regime type, and subregion. This provides fertile comparative soil, as it will allow me to better understand how the post-Soviet variant of ethnic domination interacts with other factors to influence distributive politics. The first stage of this effort was a month of fieldwork in

Georgia in July 2018 during which I interviewed members of parliament and civil society activists in regions of minority concentration.

There is still much to be explored in the sphere of how the state is integrated within society, (and vice versa), how this overlaps with ethnic identity, and the impact this has on distributive politics. As a step towards contributing to this literature, I plan to extensively model the social networks of a small number of randomly selected residents in both urban and rural settings in each of the three comparison countries. Through a variant of a Milgram “small-world” experiment, this will contribute to a better understanding of ethnic composition of post-Soviet social networks, the relative density of state-connected nodes across ethnic groups, and the nature of interactions between elite and non-elite nodes as it pertains to distribution of state resources. I will accompany this with a survey list experiment that will explore how individuals of varying ethnic backgrounds understand the relationship between their social ties and ability to influence the distribution of state resources.

Finally, I would like to integrate the logics of state level ethnic domination and localized ethnic diversity to understand how they contribute to distributive outcomes. To this end, I plan to continue analysis of the post-Soviet *Demographic and Health Surveys* by utilizing geocoded data, from which I will be able to understand how local, contextual factors—including the level of local ethnic segregation—relates to public goods provision.

## Appendix A: Supplementary Materials for Chapter 3

### *Armenia*

The small ethnic minority community of Armenia at the collapse of the Soviet Union—6.7 percent according to the 1989 All-Union Census—has further diminished in the intervening years. Due to the region-wide phenomenon of ethnic Russian emigration from the former Union Republics in the 1990s and the near total desertion of Armenia by the Azerbaijani minority following the onset of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, ethnic Armenians constitute over 98 percent of the current population (2011 Armenian Census).

It is thus little surprise that ethnic minorities have held few positions in political administrative structures. Each of the six post-independence executives<sup>133</sup> of Armenia have been ethnically Armenian. Constitutional amendments taking effect in the 2017 parliamentary elections guaranteed minority representation, with the electoral commission determining that each of four ethnic groups—Assyrians, Kurds, Russians, and Yezidis—would be reserved a seat in the 105 member National Assembly. Prior to this, there had been only two non-Armenian members of parliament since independence (Edwards 2017).<sup>134</sup> At lower levels, minorities perceive discrimination barring their political participation and minority representation in educational institutions for careers in public administration is scarce. One analysis found that, although the enrolment process for such institutions was *de jure* uniform for all potential applicants, there was

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<sup>133</sup> Determination of executive type for all countries from Henry Hale, *Patronal Politics* (2014), pp. 459; coding procedures in Chapter 4. *Armenia transitioned from a presidential to a parliamentary executive system in a December 2015 constitutional referendum.*

<sup>134</sup> There is little to be gained from political organization by minorities at the national level, given that the electoral threshold under Armenia's proportional representation electoral system is 5 percent, significantly larger than the total non-Armenian population.

not a single non-Armenian representative enrolled (Selimyan 2004). Ethnic minorities are periodically elected as local councilors in areas of relatively compact non-Armenian settlement.

### *Azerbaijan*

Mirroring Armenia, Azerbaijan has become significantly more homogeneous since independence due to ethnic Russian and Armenian outflows.<sup>135</sup> Each of Azerbaijan's six presidents has been Azeri.<sup>136</sup> An extensively centralized governmental structure developed under Presidents Heydar and Ilham Aliiev has the consequence that Azeris from influential Baku networks are appointed to key posts in majority-minority localities (Vanwalleghem, Zandberg, and Swan 2013, 14). Additionally, members of the non-Russian ethnic minority intelligentsia were reportedly imprisoned *en masse* by central authorities in 2008 and replaced in their administrative positions by Azeris in a process of systematic "Turkicization" (Fuller 2008). Ethnic minorities are generally not represented in lists of political parties contesting seats for Azerbaijan's rubber-stamp parliament, and members of ethnic minority groups claim that they have been actively prevented from nominating themselves as independent candidates. Lezghins, the state's most politically vocal minority<sup>137</sup>, complain of a dearth of representation in municipal institutions where they are compactly settled (Vanwalleghem, Zandberg, and Swan 2013). Many Lezghins, due to this discrimination and a perception of unfair treatment in attaining education and employment more generally, have begun to identify themselves as Azeris (Fayos 2014, 10).

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<sup>135</sup> Azeris represented 82.7 percent of the population in the 1989 All-Union Census and 91.6 percent in the 2009 national census.

<sup>136</sup> This includes interim presidents.

<sup>137</sup> Azerbaijan's Lezghin community is tightly interwoven with its coethnics in the Russian ethnic republic of Dagestan. Azerbaijani elites commonly accuse Russia of attempting to influence its domestic politics through political support of the neighboring Lezghin minority (Dzutsati 2012).

## *Georgia*

Georgia has become less ethnically diverse since independence due to the emigration of much of its ethnic Russian population as well as its smaller minorities, including Ukrainians and Greeks.<sup>138</sup> Additionally, the 2008 conflict with and subsequent secession of the Abkhazian and South Ossetian regions meant the loss of locally concentrated Abkhaz and Osset minorities from the Georgian demos. Each of Georgia's nineteen executives has been an ethnic titular.<sup>139</sup> In the eight convocations of the 150 seat Georgian parliament, only 80 non-Georgian have been seated as MPs, or 6.7 percent of the total (Sordia 2014; Georgian Electoral Commission 2016). Likely due in part to a lack of informal institutional connections, however, these non-Georgian MPs are not distinguished by their substantive representation of coethnics and "have a reputation for being inactive and failing to promoting (*sic*) special community interests" (S. Aliyev and Badasyan 2016). The ethnic concentrations of power in Georgia's national-level representative bodies are particularly significant given the centralization of power in the country. Despite local governance reforms designed to provide greater powers to regional and local levels following a period of extensive centralization under Mikhail Saakashvili's United National Movement, the legislation eventually passed through parliament was much less sweeping than initially planned. In particular, lower level administrations lack fiscal autonomy (Freedom House 2016).<sup>140</sup>

The most numerous ethnic minorities are Azeris (6.3 percent) and Armenians (4.5 percent).

Though relatively small as a proportion of the overall population, Azeris and Armenians are

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<sup>138</sup> Ethnic Georgians represented 70 percent of the population at the time of the 1989 All-Union Census and 86.8 percent in 2014 (National Statistics Office of Georgia 2016).

<sup>139</sup> Georgia transitioned from a fully presidentialist to a mixed executive system in 2004. Zurab Zhvania, the first Prime Minister following this transition, is of mixed parentage.

<sup>140</sup> Extraintitutional nationalist groups and the Georgian Orthodox Church were particularly opposed to the stronger reforms, suggesting that they could lead to "disintegration" of the state. Many institutional actors, including MPs from both the ruling Georgian Dream and opposition parties, support greater decentralization as one of a number of crucial reforms (Personal interviews of Georgian MPs, July 2018).

concentrated in Kvemo-Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti region, respectively.<sup>141</sup> Despite persistent concentrated settlement in these regions, Azeris and Armenians are poorly represented in local state institutions. At the highest level, neither group has ever had a representative as governor (Fayos 2014). Additionally, in the first elections to local governing councils following a 2005 local self-governance reform, not a single municipality in either region exhibited proportional representation of minorities (Wheatley 2009, pp. 17-18). The elections employed a mixed system and, because of their extreme territorial concentration and the Georgian domination of leading political parties,<sup>142</sup> candidates from ethnic minority groups fared far better in single member contests than under party list proportional representation (Zollinger and Bochsler 2012, pp. 18-20). Ethnic Armenians control most leadership posts in the two Samtskhe-Javakheti municipalities—Akhalkalaki and Ninotsiminda—where they constitute more than ninety percent of the local population. However, these ethnic Armenian institutional representatives have consistently been coopted by dominant national parties and are thus perceived as ineffectual conduits of local concerns (Wheatley 2009, pp. 22-30). Even in Kvemo-Kartli municipalities where Azeris make up a significant majority of the populations, including Bolnisi, Dmanisi, and Marneuli, the local administration is overwhelmingly constituted by ethnic Georgians from Tbilisi or the regional capital, Rustavi (ibid, 32). The relevant concentrated ethnic group in both regions were additionally shown by an International Crisis Group (2006, pp. 10, 14) report to control a strikingly low proportion of positions in law enforcement, the judiciary, technical administrative posts, and the departments regulating wealth and property (i.e., tax, customs, land registration).<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Azeris make up 42 percent of the population in Kvemo-Kartli and Armenians 50.5 percent in Samtskhe-Javakheti (Geostat, “Total Populations by Region and Ethnicity”, 2017).

<sup>142</sup> Georgian legislation prohibits construction of political parties along ethnic or regional lines.

<sup>143</sup> In Marneuli, where 83 percent of the population was Azeri at the time of the report, Azeris represented about a quarter of the technical staff. In Dmanisi (66 percent Azeri), only 6 of 43 police were Azeri. Approximately 10 percent

## *Kazakhstan*

From representing less than 40 percent of the Kazakh SSR's population at the time of the 1989 All-Union Census, Kazakhs now compose greater than 63 percent of the state's population. This has largely been achieved through a combination of differential rates of fertility and mortality paired with the mass emigration of the once substantial ethnic German population and significant exit rates for ethnic Russian. The latter ethnic group currently make up a quarter of the population, concentrated largely in the northern regions and the former capital, Almaty, in the south (CIA World Factbook 2018).<sup>144</sup>

A notable impetus for exit among non-titulars has been the nationalizing policies implemented by Kazakhstan's sole post-Soviet president, Nursultan Nazarbaev, himself an ethnic Kazakh from the less Russified south of the country. Nazarbaev's Nur Otan party dominates the highly centralized state, with the president himself wielding nearly unchecked power. Preference in hiring and promotion for Kazakh language speakers,<sup>145</sup> in combination with nepotism along kinship lines, has had the cumulative effect of Kazakh dominance of central ministries and administrative structures (Zhanarstanova and Nechayeva 2015). One study conducted in the late 1990s found that, among hundreds of top political appointees and members of parliament, over 70 percent were Kazakh (Schatz 2004, 82). Another found that Kazakhs controlled greater than 80 percent of posts in state structures by 1995, and that this had increased to nearly 90 percent by the

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of traffic policemen, 25 percent of patrol policemen, and 20 percent of those working in the prosecutor's office in Samtskhe-Javakheti region were Armenian.

<sup>144</sup> The capital was moved from Almaty to Astana, in the far north of Kazakhstan, in 1997, in part to ward off Russian irredentism. An additional goal was the cooptation of northern ethnic Kazakhs, who had long been underrepresented in administration relative to southerners.

<sup>145</sup> Which in practice means all ethnic Kazakhs, despite the persistent fact that for a significant proportion the primary spoken language is Russian.

end of the decade (Dave 2007, 152). These disparities only deepened in subsequent years (Peyrouse 2007, pp. 13-14).

Ethnic Kazakhs have also consistently been overrepresented in both chambers of parliament (Dave 2007, 152; UNHRC 2010, 8). A 2007 constitutional amendment guaranteed the appointment of nine of the 107 seats in the lower house and eight of the 47 seats in the upper house to non-Kazakhs from the multinational Assembly of the Peoples, itself an unelected body argued to serve as an instrument of non-titular cooptation (Pannier 2007). Further, given the direct appointment of regional governors by the president, titular dominance at the center is easily transmitted to lower levels of administration. From 1995 to 2002, at least 70 percent of governors were ethnic Kazakhs (Dave 2007, 152; Peyrouse 2007, pp. 13-14). Non-titulars occupying central and regional posts, primarily Slavs, are perceived as having been co-opted through grants of career security and financial reward. They are criticized by coethnics as having been “Kazakhicized”, with some even calling this contingent “the fourth *zhuz* [clan]”, a reference to the tripartite Kazakh kinship/clan system (Dave 2004, pp. 20-21).

### *Tajikistan*

Two primary factors have led to the increasing demographic dominance of the titular group in Tajikistan.<sup>146</sup> First, the civil war lasting from 1992 to 1997 was a stimulus to emigration, particularly among ethnic Russians who had primarily resided in the capital, Dushanbe.<sup>147</sup> Another factor has been the oft cited phenomenon of ethnic Uzbeks, in particular, paying bribes to have their own and their children’s official ethnicities changed to Tajik in order to improve life chances

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<sup>146</sup> Tajiks comprised 62.3 percent of the population in 1989, a proportion which by the 2010 census had increased to 84.3 percent.

<sup>147</sup> Ethnic Russians made up 7.6 percent of the population in 1989 and 0.8 percent by 2010.

(Minorities at Risk 2006; Ergasheva and Shams 2014).<sup>148</sup> The formal and informal routes towards ethnic nationalization under longtime president Emomali Rahmon have provided the motivation for this identity shift. Ethnic minority exclusion—which in Tajikistan primarily means ethnic Uzbek exclusion—from political representation is seen at all levels. In each of the three parliamentary terms from 2005 to 2015, only 2 of 63 parliamentary seats were held by ethnic Uzbeks (Ergasheva and Shams 2014; Minority Rights International 2018). The same lack of representation is reported across the public sector, with recent data showing Uzbeks holding 7.6 percent of all positions (Ergasheva and Shams 2014). It is not surprising, then, that many Uzbeks feel the necessity of altering their official ethnic identity specifically in order to be appointed to such positions (Hierman 2015, pp. 128-129).

### *Turkmenistan*

Much of Turkmenistan's minority population has emigrated in the post-Soviet period. Whereas ethnic Russians and Uzbeks each made up greater than 9 percent of the total population in 1989, ethnic discrimination and poor job prospects had resulted by the 2003 census in the share of each group falling below 5 percent. Turkmen currently constitute at least 85 percent of the population (CIA World Factbook 2018). The country boasts a longstanding policy that only ethnic Turkmen can compete in presidential elections (Peyrouse 2007). As such, each of the country's two independence-era presidents have been Turkmen. Saparmurat Niyazov, the first of the two, constructed a highly centralized personalist regime and implemented a standard for public employment requiring proof of at least three generations of ethnic Turkmen heritage. This was a particularly significant innovation given the state's dominant role in the national economy. Ethnic

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<sup>148</sup> Ethnic Uzbeks made up 23.8 percent of the population in 1989 and 13.8 percent in 2010.

Uzbeks and Kazakhs have reportedly been coerced into “passing” as Turkmen in various ways under threat of the loss of an administrative position, while this route is much less readily available to Slavic minorities (Integrated Regional Information 2005). The few ethnic Uzbeks who held senior positions under Niyazov were dismissed after a 2002 assassination attempt in which he suspected Uzbekistan’s complicity (Institute for War and Peace Reporting 2010). Though information on governance in Turkmenistan is sparse due to the country’s extraordinary political isolation, a recent report suggests that the continued enforcement of the “three generations rule” and Turkmen language examinations for applicants to government employment has the consequence that vanishingly few non-Turkmen are represented in government and administrative posts (US State Department 2016).

### *Uzbekistan*

In addition to both post-Soviet presidents of Uzbekistan being ethnic Uzbeks, there is significant evidence that key governmental posts tend to be reserved for Uzbeks (US Department of State 2014; Freedom House 2005; Minority Rights Group International 2018; Fumagalli 2007, 113). Although Uzbeks have consistently been the numerically dominant group in the country,<sup>149</sup> the political salience of other ethnic groups is increased by relative territorial concentration. Ethnic Russians, while greatly diminished in number since the Soviet collapse, are primarily concentrated in the Tashkent region.<sup>150</sup> Russians have been little represented at any level of administration. They tend not to hold positions in the presidential administration and have consistently been proportionally underrepresented in both chambers of the legislature (Abaskanova 2016, pp. 26-27;

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<sup>149</sup> Uzbeks comprised 72.8 percent of the population in 199 and 83.8 percent in 2017 (Uzbek State Committee on Statistics 2017).

<sup>150</sup> The ethnic Russian proportion of the population has fallen from 7.7 percent in 1991 to 2.3 percent in 2017 (Uzbek State Committee on Statistics 2017).

Peyrouse 2007, 14). Ethnic Tajiks are concentrated in the Samarkand and Bukhara regions and, while they have officially comprised just less than 5 percent of the population since independence, some suggest that their numbers are significantly greater (see Rumer 1995). Due to hiring practices for public sector employment that favor ethnic titulars, many Tajiks officially register as Uzbeks (Minority Rights Group International 2018). Finally, Karakalpaks have generally resided in the autonomous republic of Karakalpakstan. However, the progressive desertification of the Aral Sea has drastically dimmed the prospects of a local economy once reliant on fisheries. Despite the *de jure* autonomous status of Karakalpakstan, leading posts in the regional administration are dominated by ethnic Uzbeks, many of them from Tashkent (ibid).

### *Belarus*

As opposed to the “nationalizing nationalism” (Brubaker 1996) found in many other post-Soviet states, Belarusian officials have nurtured what Ioffe (2003) terms a “Creole” variant of national identity that blends Belarusian ethnic and Soviet-style civic identity. Although both presidents of independent Belarus have been ethnic Belarusians, the Soviet-era phenomenon of Belarus as a relative laggard in administrative indigenization has persisted. Ethnic Russians, the largest minority group,<sup>151</sup> have been the beneficiaries of a 1995 treaty of confederation between Russia and Belarus and the establishment of Russian as a second state language. Ethnic Russians do not face discrimination or disadvantage, and ethnic diversity is evident across public institutions (Minority Rights Group International 2006; Osipov 2018).

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<sup>151</sup> Ethnic Russians comprised close to 8 percent of the population in the latest census, in comparison to 83.7 percent for ethnic Belarusians (National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus 2009).

## *Ukraine*

Since the inception of its independence, Ukraine's ethnic politics has been cross-cut with other salient identities. Ethnic Ukrainians constitute a significant majority of the population, with Russians the largest minority<sup>152</sup>, yet a significant number of Ukrainians (about 30 percent)—particularly in the more russified southern and eastern regions—use Russian as their native language. The south and east of Ukraine also differ from other regions in the extent to which they are industrialized. Regional and linguistic factors, taken separately from ethnic identity, have been shown repeatedly to have independent influence on political attitudes and preferences (Barrington 2002; Constant, Kahanec, and Zimmermann 2011; Kulyk 2011).

As the existence of such cross-cutting identities would suggest, there has been a tendency toward relatively inclusive political and administrative representation for non-titulars in the post-Soviet period. Prime Minister and President Viktor Yanukovich stands out as the only non-titular national executive in the former Soviet Union.<sup>153</sup> Despite the failure of a Russian ethnic party to form,<sup>154</sup> they have been adequately represented in parliament, comprising 20 percent of all deputies and often holding positions of significance from 1990-2009 (Semenova 2012, pp. 553-554). Within Ukraine's mixed electoral system, Russian candidates commonly win SMD districts in which Russians comprised fewer than 50 percent of the population (George, Moser, and Papic 2010).

The aggressive actions of the Russian Federation in Crimea and eastern Ukraine, along with the disintegration of Yanukovich's Party of Regions, have altered the political landscape in

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<sup>152</sup> In 2001, the time of the last census, Ukrainians and Russians made up 77 percent and 17.5 percent of the population, respectively. With the 2014 annexation of majority-Russian Crimea by the Russian Federation, the Russian share of Ukraine's populace has certainly declined.

<sup>153</sup> Orphaned as a child, Yanukovich's ethnic heritage is believed to be Belarusian, Russian, and Polish.

<sup>154</sup> Russians have been broadly supportive of the multiethnic Communist Party and Yanukovich's Party of Regions.

a profound manner. In the post-EuroMaidan parliamentary elections held in October 2014, a class of deputies markedly more nationalist than in previous convocations was seated, with many fewer hailing from the russified southeast. Not only was turnout low in that part of the country, but the Russian occupation of Crimea and their support of separatists in Luhansk and Donetsk regions led to the cancellation of elections in many “pro-Russian” areas. Unlike in prior elections, when there had been relative parity between the two main regional blocs, the southeast attained only 20 percent of the seats taken by Kievan and western Ukrainian candidates (Pogrebinsky 2015). Likely influenced in no small part by consumption of media emanating from the Russian Federation, many ethnic Russians fear that a specifically anti-Russian agenda is developing that will threaten their political and economic prospects in Ukraine. They particularly emphasize the emergence onto the institutional scene of far-right Ukrainian political movements such as Svoboda (Freedom) and Praviy Sektor (Right Sector).<sup>155</sup> At its most extreme, such trepidation has manifested itself in calls for autonomy or separatism of heavily russophone regions (Izsak 2014, pp. 8-11).

### *Moldova*

Since Moldova’s independence, there have been persistent divides on the question of national identity, all of which have had implications for Moldova’s existence as a sovereign state. Most significantly, conservative factions within the Moldovan political elite have supported union with Romania.<sup>156</sup> A shared language and history of unification from 1918 to 1940 have been critical ingredients in Romanian politicians’ signals of support for a move that is supported by over 70

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<sup>155</sup> The appointment of a number of Svoboda representatives to ministerial positions in the first post-Maidan government, compared to only 10 percent of posts going to those from southeast regions, only provided additional material for these apprehensions (Minority Rights Group International 2018).

<sup>156</sup> Moldovans and self-identified Romanians constitute 82 percent of the state’s population (2014 Moldovan National Census). Critics of the government contend that the 7 percent who self-identified as “Romanian” in the last national census are less than the authentic proportion. Self-identified Romanians were 0.1 percent of the population in the 1989 census and 2.4 percent in the 2004 census. The proportion of ethnic Russians and Ukrainians has decreased since 1989, primarily because of emigration, from 13 to 4 percent and 14 to 7 percent, respectively.

percent of Romanians. However, despite contemporary framings as having finally been freed to follow a collective desire to unify with Romania (see Rumer 2017), since independence the share of Moldovans who express such a preference has remained close to 15 percent (Bird 2015; Crowther 1998, 154). A substantially larger segment of the population expresses a desire to unify with the Russian Federation (Hill 2018).

Each of Moldova's executives has been ethnically Moldovan.<sup>157</sup> Particularly as a result of ignorance of the Moldovan language—aside from their native language, Russian is the most commonly known language among minorities—minorities account for a small number of those in state administration. There is a perception of informal discrimination that favors titulars in hiring (Kosienkowsky and Schreiber 2014, 13; Prina 2014, 14; Tomic 2003). Non-Moldovans have, however, achieved representation in elected institutions. Particularly as a result of openness among left and center-left parties to include non-titulars on their party lists, Russians, Ukrainians, and Gagauz minorities were proportionately represented in parliament from 1994 to 2009 (Protsyk and Osoian 2010, pp. 11, 17). Although there is some evidence that minorities are well represented on local councils where they constitute a local majority (Garaz 2012, 148), the centralization of the Moldovan state has the consequence that local representation is rather inconsequential (Prina 2014, 15).

Though there has been a gradual diminution in the political weight of conservative, unionist groups in Moldovan politics since the years surrounding independence, the nationalizing policies and rhetoric of these elites had long-lasting impacts on intergroup relations and governance.

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<sup>157</sup> Moldova had a presidential executive until 2000, followed by a parliamentary system until 2016. The Constitutional Court ruled in 2016 that the practice of parliamentary election of the president was unconstitutional, leading to the reemergence of popular presidential elections. Currently, Moldova has a mixed executive in which the president appoints the prime minister.

Among these was the separatism of the majority-Slavic Transdnistr region.<sup>158</sup> Local populations desired that the Russian language maintain an equal status with Moldovan and feared an eventual union of Moldova and Romania. Separatist clashes with Moldovan militias that began in late 1990 calmed with the signing of a ceasefire in 1992. The ceasefire agreement holds to this day.

Each of Transdnistr's three presidents have been Slavs and, despite the Russian Federation's consistent position that the region is constitutive part of Moldova, the Russian language dominates in institutional politics and nearly all political elites hold Russian citizenship (Tomic 2003). Transdnistr officials have pursued a Soviet model of ethnic governance, ensuring that the three largest groups maintain their own schools and local institutions. Some argue that Moldovan has become an "empty category" in the proto-state due to russification/Sovietization (Dembinska and Iglesias 2013). Moldovan media and civil society groups claim that ethnic Moldovans are underrepresented in Transdnistr administrative structures and experience societal discrimination (Protsyk 2005, 82).

Gagauzia is another autonomous territory within Moldova, though it is unlike Transdnistr in that it is both *de facto* and *de jure* subordinate to Chisinau. Nearly 85 percent of the territory's population is ethnically Gagauz (2014 Moldovan National Census). The region gained autonomous status in 1994 and possesses an independent legislature and governor, the latter of which is required to speak Gagauz fluently. It is the least economically developed region in underdeveloped Moldova. Moreover, an autonomy statute characterized by "conceptual and definitional vagueness" (Protsyk 2010, 2) has led to persistent accusations of overreach on both sides of the agreement. Gagauz elites have periodically refused to comply with national laws in

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<sup>158</sup> The population is close to 60 percent Slavic (33 percent Russian and 27 percent Ukrainian) and 33 percent Moldovan (2015 independent census).

response to widely perceived deviation by the national government from the initial agreement, but continued dependence on budget transfers and the threat—already enacted a number of times—of legal action against Gagauz governors often leads to deference (pp. 8-12).

### *Estonia*

Estonia's first postcommunist titular elites, in a scene that was playing out simultaneously in Baltic neighbor Latvia, framed the post-1940 period as a Soviet occupation contravening international law. As a result, a philosophy of "legal restorationism" led to a policy whereby only those resident in the country prior to 1940 and their descendants were automatically granted citizenship. This left nearly 75 percent of the russophone population, which itself accounted for almost a third of the country's residents at the time of the 1989 All-Union census, without any ability to vote or run in the first parliamentary elections of independence, held in 1992. While there have been a number of amendments to liberalize the citizenship law in the ensuing period<sup>159</sup>, nearly half of the Russian-speaking population remains without Estonian citizenship.

These challenging initial conditions—with exclusion of the russophone segment of the population from the inaugural national elections possibly most significant—set the stage for path dependent titular dominance of political and administrative institutions. Indeed, regional experts have characterized Estonia as a regime of ethnic control (Pettai 1998; Pettai and Hallik 2002).<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Conditionality pressures that went along with the European Union accession process were a critical impetus to many of these liberalizing reforms (Galbreath 2005; Kelley 2004).

<sup>160</sup> Pettai and Hallik (2002) suggest that, "Estonian hegemony has paradoxically been the key to stability and development" (524) as opposed to being a source of potential conflict. However, such a Panglossian view might be overstating the influence of a domestic power balance between ethnic factions relative to broader geopolitical forces. This is particularly relevant in the wake of the Russian Federation's annexation of Crimea and quasi-occupation of eastern Ukraine and northern Georgia. Commercio (2008) alternatively suggests that, in view of the extensive integration of the Russian-speaking community into the private sector in both Estonia and Latvia, these states are best described as "partial" ethnic control regimes. However, the author presents little hard evidence to support the notion that the russophone community's role in these economies is in any way notable, as comparisons of the proportion of titulars and Russian-speakers in private sector employment elides the fact that only titulars have the realistic option of seeking public sector employment.

This is well illustrated in parliament, where non-titulars have persistently been far less than proportionately represented. The first post-Soviet parliament had no Russian-speaking deputies, and in the 1996 and 2011 there were six and nine seats of a total of 101 held by representatives of ethnic russophone parties (Tolvaišis 2011). While for the first decade of independence Russian-speakers primarily supported ethnic parties, infighting among the leadership of these organizations meant that by the early 2000s much of the russophone vote had migrated to mainstream parties led by ethnic Estonians, in particular the Center Party (Hansen 2009, pp. 58-63; *ibid*, pp. 113-119).

Descriptive representation of minorities is wanting in other arenas, as well. Each of Estonia's twelve Prime Ministers have been ethnic Estonians, and there have been only two cabinet ministers from the Russian-speaking community since independence (Cianetti 2013, 57). This titular dominance extends to the bureaucracy and judiciary, where minority ethnic groups are poorly represented at both the national and local levels (*ibid*, pp. 57-58; Kasearu 2007; Steen 2000, 74). In variance from Latvia, however, non-citizen residents of Estonia have had the right to vote (but not run) in local elections since 1992. This has been impactful as regards minority representation at lower territorial rungs, particularly in areas of minority concentration, such as Tallinn (35 percent russophone) and northeast Estonia. In the 2005 Tallinn city council elections, more than one third of deputies elected were from minority ethnic groups, illustrating that, at least in the capital, non-titulars are capable of being politically mobilized to vote (Tolvaišis 2011, 120).

### *Latvia*

The politics of Latvia are ethnically polarized among a titular, Latvian majority and a Russian-speaking minority that comprises more than 35 percent of the population. Upon independence, the ethnic Latvian elite took measures identical to titulars in Estonia to bar from automatic citizenship those who were not themselves residents or descended from residents of Latvia before the 1940

Soviet occupation. Among ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians—of which nearly all are russophone and a substantial majority migrated to Latvia in the Soviet period—nearly half remain without Latvian citizenship.<sup>161</sup>

Ethnic Latvians dominate the country's formal representative and bureaucratic institutions. Each of Latvia's fifteen post-Soviet Prime Ministers have been ethnic titulars. Additionally, as of 2013, only three Russian-speakers had held cabinet positions (Cianetti 2013, 57). This is largely the result of the inability of the social democratic, russophone-dominated Harmony Party to be seriously considered as a coalition partner in parliament, despite its gaining a plurality of seats in each of the three parliamentary elections since 2011.<sup>162</sup> Thus, despite non-Latvians generally constituting only slightly less than a proportional segment of the parliament, effective minority influence on policy is lacking. Further, unlike in Estonia, mainstream parties have habitually excluded Russians from their party lists.<sup>163</sup>

The geographic concentration of Russian-speakers and Latvia's citizenship restrictions counteract one another as regards minority representation at the local level. Russophones are the majority in the capital, Riga, as well as making up nearly half the population in the southeastern region of Latgale. Yet, unlike in Estonia, non-citizens are unable to participate in any form in local

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<sup>161</sup> This despite important legislative amendments easing the naturalization process that were passed in reaction to formal European Union accession requirements. Sasse (2008), however, contends that these legal reforms were not accompanied by the socialization of multicultural norms that they were designed to nurture. On the contrary, she posits that the formal process may have resulted in a hardening of views against multicultural values among the Latvian majority and a related “locking in” of a norm of minority disengagement from the dominant society and political process.

<sup>162</sup> Latvia uses a proportional representation system for parliamentary elections with a single, national district. Cianetti (2013, 63) writes of the Latvian parliament, “The routine exclusion of [Harmony] from governmental coalitions has meant that the large [Latvian] moderate and nationalist parties have an almost mathematical guarantee to end up in government. It has been noted that this situation of guaranteed power might weaken these parties accountability towards the electorate.”

<sup>163</sup> Nakai (2014) attributes this exclusionary norm to the relative fragmentation and instability of the Latvian party system. Among moderate and center-right parties of the ethnic Latvian mainstream, there are persistent apprehensions of ethnic outbidding by ideologically similar rivals if maximalist positions are not taken. In response, the proportion of the russophone population supporting narrowly ethnic parties in elections has increased steadily with time.

elections. Owing to unified Russian-speaking support of the Harmony Party and its leader, Nils Ushakov, in Riga, the latter has maintained the mayoralty of that city and the party has fared well in contests for the city council there since 2009 (Cianetti 2014a, 985). There was even evidence of substantial Latvian cross-ethnic support for Harmony in the 2013 Riga local elections (Cianetti 2014b). Across Latvia's district councils and bureaucracies, however, Latvians tend to be overrepresented in comparison to local population proportions (Pabriks 2003).

Among government ministries, non-titulars are, first, quite unlikely to submit applications for administrative positions and, second, much less likely to be selected for the positions as compared with ethnic titulars. The primary reason for this is lack of Latvian language fluency among minorities (Pabriks 2002). Multiple analyses of core bureaucratic and administrative institutions show that more than 90 percent of employees are ethnic Latvians (Bangura 2006, 322; Pabriks 2003). Exceptions to this titular dominance were found in the national police force, prison administration, and the national railway, in all of which Russian-speakers have maintained a representative preponderance with roots in the Soviet era.

### *Lithuania*

The relatively smaller russophone population of Lithuania at the time of independence as compared to neighboring Baltic states<sup>164</sup> provided the political space for the introduction of a liberal citizenship regime. The primarily ethnic Lithuanian political elite at the time of transition implemented a “zero option,” whereby all residents at independence were provided the opportunity to accept citizenship. Despite the decision by most ethnic minorities to remain and become citizens

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<sup>164</sup> Ethnic Russians composed 9 percent of the Lithuanian SSR's population in 1989. The other significant minority, Poles, were 7 percent of the population and the “state-forming” nation was 79 percent.

of the postcommunist country, titulars remain numerically predominant and represented 84 percent of the population in 2011.

Ethnic titulars additionally dominate Lithuania's political and administrative institutions. Dambrauskas (2018) characterizes Lithuania as an ethnic democracy, while Kasatkina and Beresnevičiute (2004, 5) declare "the political field of the state" to be "dominated by a monoethnic minority of the majority rather than by an inclusive minority based on the interests and perspectives of different minority (including ethnic) groups." Each of Lithuania's five popularly elected presidents have been ethnic Lithuanians. Ethnic titulars have additionally been proportionally overrepresented in cabinet ministries (Yusuf Bangura 2006, 322); in twelve governments formed from independence to 2004, there were two non-Lithuanian cabinet ministers (Kasatkina and Beresnevičiute 2004, 47).

In the Lithuanian parliament, where half of the 141 seats are awarded in single member districts and half from a national district using proportional representation, salient minority groups are little represented. While prior to electoral reform in 1996 ethnic parties had a lower electoral threshold (2 percent) in the proportional representation contest than other parties (4 percent), all parties had a 5 percent threshold thereafter. This markedly reduced the ability of minority parties to have members of their party lists seated in parliament (Lublin and Wright 2013, 750).

The Polish minority, which is concentrated in the city of Vilnius and its surrounding districts, tends in national parliamentary elections to vote overwhelmingly for the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania (EAPL), a party promoting a slate of issues that includes preservation of Polish-language education and Catholic values (Janušauskienė 2016, 584). This party has held between two and eight parliamentary seats from 2000 to 2016 and has been periodically included in center-left governing coalitions (*ibid.*, 58). Ethnic Russians are less geographically concentrated

and tend more often to split their votes between largely ephemeral ethnic parties and parties of the left. The leadership of all mainstream parties in the country is dominated by ethnic Lithuanians (Kasatkina and Beresneviciute 2004, pp. 41-44).

Local elections are conducted on the basis of party lists and both the Polish and Russian minority communities tend to be adequately represented in districts and regions of relative concentration and, in the case of Poles in Vilnius, where they constitute a clear majority (ibid., pp. 48-55). In the inaugural local elections of independence, held in early 1995, EAPL gained substantial representation in nearly all districts in which it stood (Minority Rights Group 2018). In the 2015 Vilnius local elections, EAPL formed a coalition with Russian Alliance, eventually gaining nearly an identical proportions of votes—60 percent—as the two groups cumulatively comprise in the local population (Janušauskienė 2016, 584).

Lithuania's ethnic minorities appear to be underrepresented in civil service and administrative posts (Bangura 2006, 322). In part, this stems from requirements that holders of these positions have a command of the Lithuanian language. However, evidence that some ethnic Poles have been compelled to “Lithuanianize” their names to increase their chances of obtaining desired jobs points to the potential for more active discrimination in hiring (Dambrauskas 2018, 78).

## **Appendix B: Supplementary Materials for Chapter 5**

### **a. Informed consent form (focus group version)**

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**This Informed Consent Form is for residents of Kyrgyzstan, who we are inviting to be focus group participants as part of a research project on local social movements. The title of our research project is “Understanding Public Goods Provision in Southern Kyrgyzstan”**

**Principal Investigator:** Professor Carol Leff

email: leffc@illinois.edu

**Student Investigator:** Kyle Estes

email: kestes3@illinois.edu

**Institution:** University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (Department of Political Science)

### **PART I: Information**

#### **Introduction**

I am Kyle Estes, a graduate student from University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. We are conducting research on public goods supplies in southern Kyrgyzstan and relationships between local communities and local governments. We would like to give you information and invite you to participate in a focus group. You are welcome to all the time that you want to decide whether or not you will participate. You can talk to anyone you want about the research while you are deciding.

Please ask me to stop if there is something that you do not understand and I will take time to explain it to you. If you have questions later, please ask me.

#### **Purpose of the research**

Kyrgyzstan is a young democracy, and the institutions of local governance are still developing. One of the primary roles of local governmental institutions is to be responsive to the needs of local communities and to provide them with appropriate and desired public goods, such as quality roads and educational services. However, we would like to understand more deeply how the process of requesting and delivering these public goods looks in southern Kyrgyzstan. We would like to understand the ways that people interact with local government and hold politicians accountable. In this way, we can better understand how to increase effective governance in the region.

#### **Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You can leave the focus group discussion at any time you like. It is your choice whether or not to participate. If there are questions you do not want to answer, you do not have to. You may decide not to participate later even if you agree to participate now.

### **Procedures and Protocol**

During the focus group discussion, the group will be asked questions regarding your thoughts and opinions on the situation your city/village and Kyrgyzstan in general. Again, you are free to not answer any question that you are not comfortable answering. The discussion will last around two hours.

### **Confidentiality**

Your responses in this interview will not be linked in any way to your name. Additionally, if at any point you decide to retract something that you previously said, we will agree to not use that information.

Confidentiality will be assured by the use of generic titles (ie “Osh Male Citizen 1”) and by the lack of specific demographic information.

### **Benefits**

The information gained from this study will increase understanding of how local political institutions respond to community desires and make decisions on the distribution of government resources. This will provide insight into how the government can be more responsive to societal needs and allow for an environment that is conducive to economic growth and overall quality of life improvements.

### **Confidentiality**

Your name will not be used at any point. Your appearance will not be described beyond very general features, such as gender, profession, and age grouping.

Again, if at any point you decide to retract something that you previously said, we will agree to not use that information.

When this research is discussed or published, no one will know that you were in the study. However, laws and rules of the University of Illinois might require us to disclose information about you. For example, if required by laws or University of Illinois Policy, study information you supply may be seen or copied by the following people or groups: a) The University of Illinois committee and office that reviews and approves research studies, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Office for Protection of Research Subjects; and b) University of Illinois and state auditors, and Departments of the university of Illinois responsible for oversight of research.

***→Question from interviewer:** Do you understand the procedures that we will use to make sure that any information that we as researchers collect about you will remain confidential? Do you have any questions?*

### **Right to Refuse or Withdraw**

You do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to do so. You may also stop participating in the research at any time you choose. It is your choice, and all of your rights will be respected.

**This proposal has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Illinois, which is a committee whose task it is to facilitate safe and ethical research practices.**

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or if you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, including questions, concerns, complaints, or to offer input, you may call the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) at 217-333-2670 or e-mail OPRS at [irb@illinois.edu](mailto:irb@illinois.edu)

- ***Question from interviewer:*** *Do you understand that you do not have to take part in this study if you do not wish to? Do you understand that you can ask us questions at any time after the interview, if you wish to? Do you have any questions?*

## **PART II: Certificate of Consent**

**The preceding information has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to participate as a participant in this research.**

**If you agree to this statement, please say so**

**Statement by the researcher/person taking consent**

**I have read out the information sheet to the potential participant. I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and the questions asked by the participant have been answered to the best of my ability. I confirm that the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.**

**Print Name of Researcher/person taking the consent** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent** \_\_\_\_\_

**If you have any questions or concerns about this research in the future, please contact Kyle Estes ([kestes3@illinois.edu](mailto:kestes3@illinois.edu)), Prof. Carol Leff ([leffc@illinois.edu](mailto:leffc@illinois.edu)).**

**Southern Kyrgyzstan Public Goods Focus Group Protocol (English)**

**RPI:** Professor Carol Leff (email: leffc@illinois.edu)

**Graduate Researcher:** Kyle Estes (email: kestes3@illinois.edu)

Setting (location, time, place):

\_\_\_\_\_

Description of Participants: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

General Topic:

\_\_\_\_\_ A: Local Public Goods Provision

\_\_\_\_\_ B: Political Decision-Making Processes

\_\_\_\_\_ C: Analysis of Interethnic Relations

\_\_\_\_\_ D: Routes of Societal Demand for Public Goods Provision (Elections, Patronage,  
etc.)

Other Topics Discussed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Post Interview Comments or Leads:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Introductory Protocol

We would like to inform you of your right in regard to this discussion. (1) all information will remain confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary, and you may leave the discussion at any moment if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) we provide assurances that only the researchers involved in this project will have access to the information from the focus group. The entire discussion will be recorded on a microphone. This focus group discussion should take no longer than two hours.

## Introduction

We would like to conduct a focus group with you, as we consider you to have a valuable point of view regarding the relation between society and political issues. Our academic research project is directed towards understanding the basis of the provision of public goods and the relationship between citizens and institutions of local governance. We will not, under any circumstances, pass judgment on your opinions on these issues. We consider your experience and opinions valuable, and we respect the right of every individual to freely choose their actions and express their opinions. Moreover, this is a conversation among yourselves. The moderator and researcher are only here in order to listen and to lead the discussion. We ask participants to show respect to the opinions of others and allow others to express their opinion without unnecessary interruption. People hold differing opinions and experiences and we should respect these differences. We will ask everyone in the group discussion to respect the privacy of other participants and to treat anything said in the group as confidential. However, please remember there is no guarantee that other participants will cooperate.

## **Interviewee Background**

First, can you please say your first names?

1. How do you understand the term “public goods”?

*The following is one understanding of “public good”: “Some kind of product or service that is provided to all citizens in society without any profit to the government, other individuals or organizations”.*

Probe-

Can you provide examples of “public goods”?

**2. What role does the local government play here in the supply of public goods?**

Probe- Please describe your personal experience in relation to the provision of public goods by the local government.

**3. How would you evaluate the provision of public goods in your city/village?**

Probe- Do you consider the quantity of public goods provided to be satisfactory?

And what about the quality of the public goods?

**4. We would like to understand the value that people attach to various types of public goods in this location and how well the local government provides them.**

In the middle of the table, there are a list of public goods on pieces of paper. In the next 10-15 minutes, please work with the others to provide your thoughts as to which public goods you believe to be the most important for the government to provide your community. Place public goods that you believe to be the most important on the top, and those which are less important below them, in order of decreasing importance. Please discuss among yourselves during this process and explain your decision-making process.

[While the participants are making decisions, they should be talking and discussing with one another where on the list different items should go and why. If they are not talking but moving the pieces around, ask them kindly to explain their decision (“Aybek, could you explain why you think .... is more important than ....?”) If somebody is not participating, ask them nicely what they think of the decisions the others have made. As always, if somebody seems to be dominating the discussion, try to get other participants involved by asking them what they think.]

5. We discussed which public goods you would most like the government to provide. Now let us think about what the government actually provides in this locality. In the next 10-15 minutes, work with the others to provide an evaluation of the public goods that the government provides to your community. Please put the public goods which you believe that the local government provides best at the top, and those which it provides at a less satisfactory level below this, with the worst-provided at the bottom. Please discuss among yourselves during this process and explain your decision-making process.

[While the participants are making decisions, they should be talking and discussing with one another where on the list different items should go and why. If they are not talking but moving the pieces around, ask them kindly to explain their decision and give examples from their own experience or that they have heard about (“Nurgul, could you explain why you think ... is better provided than ...? Do you have any examples?”) If somebody is not participating, ask them nicely what they think of the decisions the others have made. As always, if somebody seems to be dominating the discussion, try to get other participants involved by asking them what they think.]

6. In your opinion, should the national government play a more active role in the process of providing public goods to your city/village?

Probe-

Why do you think this?

7. Have you noticed that the local government has better or worse relations with the population over the previous 10-15 years?

Probe-

In particular, describe your perceptions regarding how the quantity and quality of public goods has changed in your city/village over the last 10-15 years.

- 8.** In your opinion, what role does the ethnic composition of your city/village play in connection to the supply of public goods to your city or town?

Probe-

Do you think that the ethnic composition your town/village influences the quantity and quality of public goods provided?

*Moderator asks: The discussion is close to half complete. Are you ready to continue or would you like to take a break? Do you have any questions?*

- 9.** To what extent, in your opinion, does the level and quality of public goods provided depend on the political party of the mayor and/or members of the local council?

Probe-

Please describe, if you can, the relation between the political party of the mayoralty and the local council and the provision of public goods. If you can, provide some examples.

- 10.** When people in your locality want some type of public good—for instance, road improvements—who do they approach?

Probe-

How has this changed over time? Who did people approach in these cases in the past?

- 11.** Do you feel that it would be possible for you to approach a local political actor and request from them the provision of a simple public good?

Probe-

Was this always the case, or has it changed over time?

**12.** We will now read to you a few hypothetical situations related to the provision of public goods. For each of these, we would like you to think about and discuss to whom you would approach in order to solve the issue.

- a. The street on which you live is in need of a repair. The road was cemented less than 5 years ago, but the quality of the work was so low that a large part of the road is already destroyed. It is difficult to drive on the road without damaging a vehicle.

In order to fix the road, who would it make sense to approach?

- b. The local library is in very bad condition. First of all, most of the books in the library are old. They are in bad shape and are falling apart. Additionally, most of them are from the Soviet period and contain information that is no longer relevant. There is a need for new books so that members of the community have access to information that is useful to their lives. The building in which the library is located is also in need of repairs. In the winter, water leaks from the ceiling and further damages the books. There is also no air conditioner, which means that in the summer it is uncomfortable to be in the library.

In order to receive financing for new books and renovation of the library, who would it make sense to talk to?

- c. It is dangerous to be out late at night in your neighborhood, as there is a lack of street lighting. This makes it difficult for people to get around without inuring themselves, especially for elderly people and children. Also, this increases the likelihood of theft from people, cars, and homes. This problem could be solved by putting in place a few well-placed streetlights.

In order to get these street lights installed, who should you ask?

**13.** Do you find that the ethnicity of local politicians has any influence on the level and quality of public goods provided to your community?

Probe-

If so, in what way?

**14.** What role do local elections play in the provision of public goods in your community?

Probe-

And what about national elections?

**15.** Do you think it is important to maintain social relations with people—for instance, friends and relatives—in order to affect the distribution of public goods?

**16.** And what about participation in community organizations?

Post-Discussion Diagnostic

*How do you feel after the completion of this focus group discussion? Do you have any questions? If you would like to ask questions of the interviewer, please stay for a bit and he would be happy to respond.*

Post Focus Group Comments and/or Observations:

**Southern Kyrgyzstan Public Goods Interview Protocol (English)**

**RPI:** Professor Carol Leff (email: leffc@illinois.edu)

**Graduate Researcher:** Kyle Estes (email: kestes3@illinois.edu)

Institutions: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee (Generic Title—Gender, Age Group, Job/Position): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

General Topic:

\_\_\_\_\_ A: Local Public Goods Provision

\_\_\_\_\_ B: Political Decision-Making Processes

\_\_\_\_\_ C: Analysis of Interethnic Relations

\_\_\_\_\_ D: Routes of Societal Demand for Public Goods Provision (Elections, Patronage,  
etc.)

Other Topics Discussed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Post Interview Comments or Leads:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Introductory Protocol

First, we will read the informed consent agreement to you. In essence, this form guarantees that: (1) all information will remain confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary, and you can stop the interview at any moment if you do not feel comfortable continuing, and (3) we assure you that only the researchers will have access to the information from the interview.

This interview should not last for more than one hour.

### Introduction

We would like to conduct an interview with you, as we consider you to have a valuable point of view in regards to social trends and political issues. Our research project focuses on the determinants of the provision of public goods and the relationship between local residents and institutions of local governance. We will not, under any circumstances, judge your previous decisions or your opinions on these issues. We consider your experience and opinions valuable, and we respect the right of all individuals to freely choose their actions and express their opinions, even if these opinions are unpopular.

### Interviewee Background

How long have you lived in [location of respondent]?

What is [was] your profession?

1. How do you understand the term “public goods”?

Probe-

Can you provide examples of “public goods”?

2. Could you please shortly describe the role of the local government regarding the provision of public goods.

Probe-

Please describe your personal experience in relation to the provision of public goods by the local government.

3. In your opinion, should the national government play a more active role in the process of providing public goods to your city/village?

Probe-

Why do you think this?

4. How would you evaluate the provision of public goods in your city/village?

Probe-

Do you consider the quantity of public goods provided to be satisfactory?

And what about the quality of the public goods?

5. How has the ethnic composition of this city/village changed over the last 10-20 years?

6. In your opinion, what role does the ethnic composition of your city/village have in connection to the provisioning of public goods?

Probe-

Do you believe that the national composition of your city/village has an influence on the quantity and quality of public goods provided here?

7. To what extent, in your opinion, does the level and quality of public goods provided depend on the political party of the mayor and/or members of the local council?

Probe-

Please describe, if you can, the relation between the political party of the mayoralty and the local council and the provision of public goods. If you can, provide some examples.

*Interviewer asks: The interview is close to half complete. Are you ready to continue or would you like to take a break? Do you have any questions?*

- 8.** When people in your locality want some type of public good—for instance, road improvements—who do they approach?

Probe-

How has this changed over time? Who did people approach in these cases in the past?

- 9.** Do those politicians who receive these requests respond favorably?

Probe-

In your opinion, what determines the response to these requests?

Under what circumstances are political actors more or less likely to react to requests?

- 10.** Do you feel that it would be possible for you to approach a local political actor and request from them the provision of a simple public good?

Probe-

Was this always the case, or has it changed over time?

- 11.** Do you find that the ethnicity of local politicians has any influence on the level and quality of public goods provided to your community?

Probe-

If so, in what way?

12. What role do local elections play in the provision of public goods in your community?

Probe-

And what about national elections?

13. Do you think it is important to maintain social relations with people—for instance, friends and relatives—in order to affect the distribution of public goods?

14. And what about participation in community organizations?

**Questions for politicians and administrators**

1. Please describe, from an economic and social point of view, the city/village in which you are a political actor.

2. What was your career path? Have you worked in the political sphere for a long time?

3. How do you understand the term “public goods”?

Probe-

Can you provide examples of “public goods”?

4. How would you characterize the role of government in the provision of public goods?

Probe-

In general, is this the responsibility of the local or national government?

5. Could you please shortly describe the role of the local government regarding the provision of public goods?

Further-

Please describe your personal experience in relation to the provision of public goods by the local government.

6. How would you characterize the division of responsibilities among the national and local authorities in terms of the provision of public goods in Kyrgyzstan?
7. Please describe your perceptions of how the quantity and quality of public goods provision has changed in your city/village over the last 10 years.
8. In your opinion, what role does the ethnic composition of your city/village play in connection to the supply of public goods to your city or town?

Probe-

Do you think that the ethnic composition your town/village influences the quantity and quality of public goods provided?

9. Do you think that the level and quality of public goods provided depends on the political party of the mayor/members of the local council?

Probe-

If possible, please describe the relationship between the political party of the mayor and local council and the provision of public goods. Provide examples, if you can.

10. *If the respondent is a local politician:* What sort of requests do people approach you and other local politicians with? If possible, give examples.

11. *If the respondent is a local politician:* Imagine that somebody has come to you requesting to rebuild the roads in their locality. Please describe the process of political approval and distribution of resources for this kind of project.

12. What role do you feel that local elections play in the provision of public goods in your locality?

Probe-

And what about national elections?

Post-Interview Diagnostic

*How do you feel after the completion of this interview? Do you have questions?*

Post Interview Comments and/or Observations:

# Appendix C: Supplementary Materials for Chapter 6

## Results from Logit Estimations

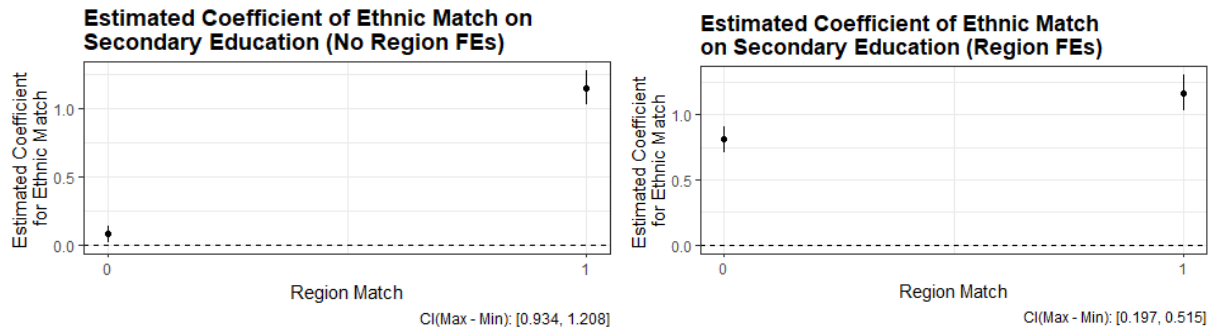
**Table C.1**

**Table 1. Regression Results**

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>							
					Completed Secondary Education			
	Ethnicity (1)	Region (2)	Both (3)	Interaction (4)	Ethnicity (Region FEs) (5)	Region (Region FEs) (6)	Both (Region FEs) (7)	Interaction (Region FEs) (8)
Ethnic Match	0.268*** (0.028)		0.255*** (0.028)	0.081*** (0.031)	0.916*** (0.041)		0.916*** (0.041)	0.812*** (0.048)
Regional Match		0.571*** (0.031)	0.564*** (0.032)	-0.253*** (0.061)		-0.171*** (0.042)	-0.180*** (0.043)	-0.412*** (0.069)
Ethnicity*Region				1.071*** (0.071)				0.355*** (0.082)
Observations	58,132	58,132	58,132	58,132	33,791	33,791	33,791	33,791
Log Likelihood	-30,534.080	-30,404.440	-30,364.950	-30,252.540	-15,533.400	-15,770.570	-15,524.420	-15,515.150
Akaike Inf. Crit.	61,130.150	60,870.880	60,793.890	60,571.080	31,142.790	31,617.140	31,126.830	31,110.290

*Note:* All models include country and birth year fixed effects. Gender and rural/urban habitation controlled for in all models. Ethnic and region match variables are lagged one year from executive coming into power. \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

**Figures C.1 and C.2**



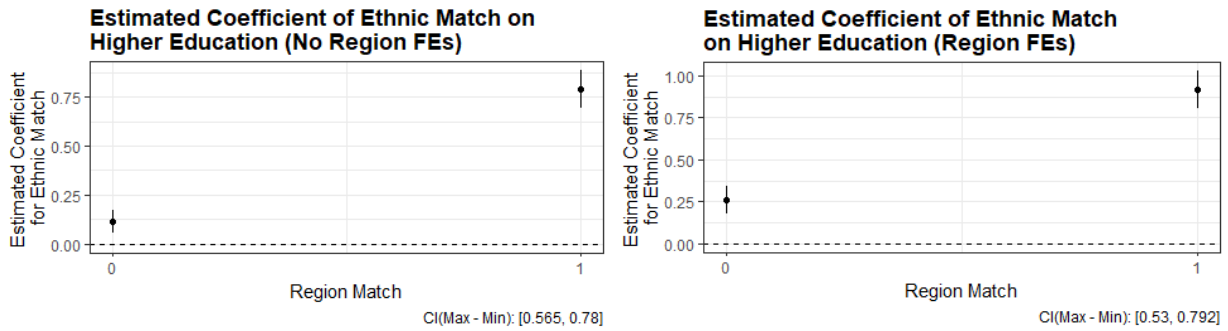
**Table C.2**

**Table 2. Regression Results**

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>							
	Some Higher Education							
	Ethnicity (1)	Region (2)	Both (3)	Interaction (4)	Ethnicity (Region FEs) (5)	Region (Region FEs) (6)	Both (Region FEs) (7)	Interaction (Region FEs) (8)
Ethnic Match	0.294*** (0.026)		0.284*** (0.026)	0.116*** (0.029)	0.488*** (0.036)		0.490*** (0.036)	0.259*** (0.043)
Regional Match		0.388*** (0.023)	0.383*** (0.023)	-0.166*** (0.051)		-0.148*** (0.030)	-0.151*** (0.030)	-0.657*** (0.061)
Ethnicity*Region				0.675*** (0.056)				0.662*** (0.068)
Observations	71,843	71,843	71,843	71,843	42,922	42,922	42,922	42,922
Log Likelihood	-42,550.320	-42,469.990	-42,409.110	-42,333.650	-24,904.860	-24,987.290	-24,892.160	-24,843.660
Akaike Inf. Crit.	85,170.640	85,009.980	84,890.230	84,741.300	49,893.730	50,058.590	49,870.330	49,775.320

*Note:* All models include country and birth year fixed effects. Gender and rural/urban habitation controlled for in all models. Ethnic and region match variables are lagged one year from executive coming into power. \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

**Figures C.3 and C.4**



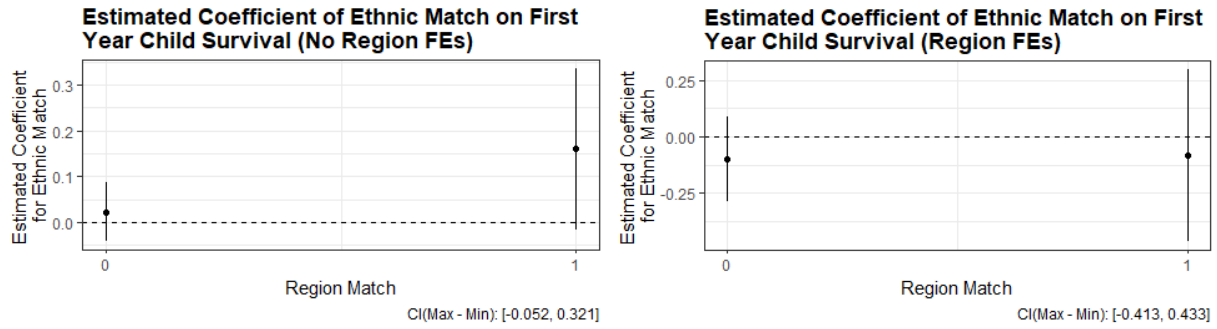
**Table C.3**

**Table 3. Logit Regression Results**

<i>Dependent variable:</i>								
First year child survival								
	Ethnicity (1)	Region (2)	Both (3)	Interaction (4)	Ethnicity (Region FEs) (5)	Region (Region FEs) (6)	Both (Region FEs) (7)	Interaction (Region FEs) (8)
Ethnic Match	0.039 (0.031)		0.039 (0.031)	0.023 (0.033)	-0.095 (0.086)		-0.095 (0.086)	-0.097 (0.096)
Regional Match		-0.005 (0.036)	-0.006 (0.036)	-0.125 (0.090)		-0.013 (0.088)	-0.013 (0.088)	-0.022 (0.204)
Ethnicity*Region				0.138 (0.096)				0.011 (0.212)
Observations	86,629	86,629	86,629	86,629	48,179	48,179	48,179	48,179
Log Likelihood	-29,934.980	-29,935.730	-29,934.970	-29,933.950	-7,732.169	-7,732.775	-7,732.158	-7,732.157
Akaike Inf. Crit.	59,949.960	59,951.470	59,951.940	59,951.890	15,556.340	15,557.550	15,558.320	15,560.310

*Note:* \* p<0.1; \*\* p<0.05; \*\*\* p<0.01  
 All models include country and birth year fixed effects. All models additionally control for birth order and its square, mother's age at birth and its square, and indicators for multiple birth and short birth interval. Country fixed effects for all models. Ethnic and region match variables are lagged one year from executive coming into power.

**Figures C.5 and C.6**



**Table C.4**

**Table 4. Logit Regression Results**

*Dependent variable:*

	Child Immunization				AllImmun			
	Ethnicity (1)	Region (2)	Both (3)	Interaction (4)	Ethnicity (Region FEs) (5)	Region (Region FEs) (6)	Both (Region FEs) (7)	Interaction (Region FEs) (8)
Ethnic Match	0.040 (0.152)		0.027 (0.153)	0.317* (0.179)	0.132 (0.230)		0.101 (0.230)	0.612** (0.283)
Regional Match		-0.127 (0.142)	-0.125 (0.142)	0.619** (0.314)		-0.465 (0.305)	-0.454 (0.307)	0.673 (0.525)
Ethnicity*Region				-0.920*** (0.338)				-1.288*** (0.482)
Observations	3,334	3,334	3,334	3,334	2,232	2,232	2,232	2,232
Log Likelihood	-1,327.041	-1,326.674	-1,326.658	-1,322.738	-852.974	-851.945	-851.851	-848.074
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,672.082	2,671.348	2,673.317	2,667.476	1,739.948	1,737.890	1,739.701	1,734.148

*Note:* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01  
 Controls for rural residence and child gender for all models. Country fixed effects for all models. Ethnic and region match variables are lagged one year from executive coming into power.

**Figures C.7 and C.8.**

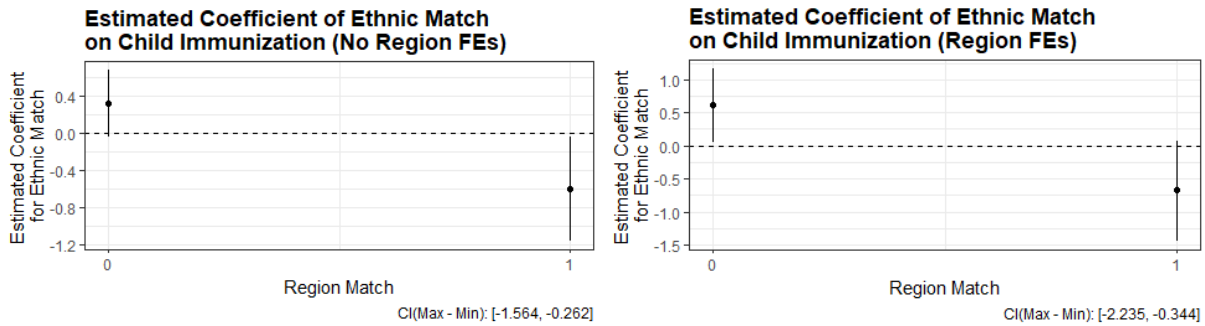


Table C.5

	Dependent variable:							
	Ethnicity (1)	Region (2)	Both (3)	Interaction (4)	Completed Secondary Education Ethnicity (Region FEs) (5)	Region (Region FEs) (6)	Both (Region FEs) (7)	Interaction (Region FEs) (8)
Ethnic Match	0.052*** (0.005)		0.050*** (0.005)	0.019*** (0.006)	0.151*** (0.006)		0.151*** (0.006)	0.132*** (0.008)
Regional Match		0.087*** (0.005)	0.086*** (0.005)	-0.040*** (0.011)		-0.021*** (0.006)	-0.020*** (0.006)	-0.067*** (0.011)
Rural		-0.083*** (0.004)	-0.082*** (0.004)	-0.082*** (0.004)	-0.078*** (0.005)	-0.073*** (0.005)	-0.077*** (0.005)	-0.077*** (0.005)
Female		-0.092*** (0.004)	-0.093*** (0.004)	-0.093*** (0.004)	0.034*** (0.005)	0.034*** (0.005)	0.034*** (0.005)	0.034*** (0.005)
Ethnicity*Region				0.154*** (0.012)				0.064*** (0.013)
Observations	58,132	58,132	58,132	58,132	33,791	33,791	33,791	33,791
R <sup>2</sup>	0.151	0.154	0.156	0.158	0.301	0.290	0.301	0.302
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.151	0.154	0.155	0.157	0.300	0.289	0.300	0.301

Note: \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01  
 All models include country and birth year fixed effects. Ethnic and region match variables are lagged one year from executive coming into power.

**Table C.6**

	<b>Table 2. OLS Regression Results</b>							
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>							
	Some Higher Education							
	Ethnicity (1)	Region (2)	Both (3)	Interaction (4)	Ethnicity (Region FEs) (5)	Region (Region FEs) (6)	Both (Region FEs) (7)	Interaction (Region FEs) (8)
Ethnic Match	0.056*** (0.005)		0.053*** (0.005)	0.021*** (0.006)	0.093*** (0.007)		0.093*** (0.007)	0.054*** (0.008)
Regional Match		0.080*** (0.005)	0.078*** (0.005)	-0.035*** (0.010)		-0.038*** (0.006)	-0.038*** (0.006)	-0.123*** (0.011)
Rural		-0.221*** (0.003)	-0.219*** (0.003)	-0.220*** (0.003)	-0.206*** (0.005)	-0.202*** (0.005)	-0.206*** (0.005)	-0.205*** (0.005)
Female		-0.041*** (0.004)	-0.042*** (0.004)	-0.041*** (0.004)	-0.042*** (0.004)	0.062*** (0.005)	0.062*** (0.005)	0.062*** (0.005)
Ethnicity*Region				0.141*** (0.011)				0.114*** (0.013)
Observations	71,843	71,843	71,843	71,843	42,922	42,922	42,922	42,922
R <sup>2</sup>	0.106	0.109	0.110	0.112	0.151	0.148	0.151	0.153
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.106	0.108	0.109	0.111	0.150	0.147	0.151	0.152

*Note:* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01  
 All models include country and birth year fixed effects. Ethnic and region match variables are lagged one year from executive coming into power.

Table C.7

	Table 3. OLS Regression Results							
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>							
	First year child survival							
	Ethnicity (1)	Region (2)	Both (3)	Interaction (4)	Ethnicity (Region FEs) (5)	Region (Region FEs) (6)	Both (Region FEs) (7)	Interaction (Region FEs) (8)
Ethnic Match	0.002 (0.003)			0.0004 (0.004)	-0.002 (0.003)			-0.003 (0.003)
Regional Match		0.001 (0.003)		-0.006 (0.008)		-0.001 (0.003)		-0.005 (0.006)
Rural	0.008*** (0.002)	0.008*** (0.002)	0.008*** (0.002)	0.008*** (0.002)	-0.012*** (0.002)	-0.012*** (0.002)	-0.012*** (0.002)	-0.012*** (0.002)
Birth Order	-0.012*** (0.003)	-0.012*** (0.003)	-0.012*** (0.003)	-0.012*** (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)
Birth Order (Sqrd.)	0.003*** (0.0004)	0.003*** (0.0004)	0.003*** (0.0004)	0.003*** (0.0004)	-0.0002 (0.0004)	-0.0002 (0.0004)	-0.0002 (0.0004)	-0.0002 (0.0004)
Female	0.006*** (0.002)	0.006*** (0.002)	0.006*** (0.002)	0.006*** (0.002)	0.007*** (0.002)	0.007*** (0.002)	0.007*** (0.002)	0.007*** (0.002)
Mother's Age at Birth	0.008*** (0.002)	0.008*** (0.002)	0.008*** (0.002)	0.008*** (0.002)	0.009*** (0.002)	0.009*** (0.002)	0.009*** (0.002)	0.009*** (0.002)
Mother's Age (Sqrd.)	-0.0001*** (0.00004)	-0.0001*** (0.00004)	-0.0001*** (0.00004)	-0.0001*** (0.00004)	-0.0002*** (0.00003)	-0.0002*** (0.00003)	-0.0002*** (0.00003)	-0.0002*** (0.00003)
Multiple Birth	-0.085*** (0.009)	-0.085*** (0.009)	-0.085*** (0.009)	-0.085*** (0.009)	-0.123*** (0.007)	-0.123*** (0.007)	-0.123*** (0.007)	-0.123*** (0.007)
Short Birth Interval	-0.008*** (0.003)	-0.008*** (0.003)	-0.008*** (0.003)	-0.008*** (0.003)	-0.014*** (0.002)	-0.014*** (0.002)	-0.014*** (0.002)	-0.014*** (0.002)
Ethnicity*Region				0.008 (0.009)				0.005 (0.007)
Observations	86,629	86,629	86,629	86,629	48,179	48,179	48,179	48,179
R <sup>2</sup>	0.404	0.404	0.404	0.404	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.404	0.404	0.404	0.404	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044

Note:

All models include country and birth year fixed effects. Ethnic and region match variables are lagged one year from executive coming into power.

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

**Table 4. OLS Regression Results**

	Child Immunization				AllImmun			
	Ethnicity Region (1)	Both (2)	Interaction (3)	Ethnicity (Region FEs) (4)	Region (Region FEs) (5)	Both (Region FEs) (6)	Interaction (Region FEs) (7)	Region FEs (8)
Ethnic Match	0.006 (0.020)	0.004 (0.020)	0.046* (0.025)	0.009 (0.028)	0.005 (0.029)	0.089** (0.041)	0.089** (0.041)	0.089** (0.041)
Regional Match	-0.016 (0.018)	-0.016 (0.018)	0.080** (0.037)	-0.034 (0.032)	-0.033 (0.033)	0.104* (0.059)	0.104* (0.059)	0.104* (0.059)
Rural	0.003 (0.013)	0.003 (0.013)	0.004 (0.013)	-0.008 (0.016)	-0.006 (0.016)	-0.005 (0.016)	-0.005 (0.016)	-0.005 (0.016)
Female	-0.009 (0.012)	-0.008 (0.012)	-0.009 (0.012)	0.0001 (0.015)	-0.0001 (0.015)	-0.0001 (0.015)	0.001 (0.015)	0.001 (0.015)
Ethnicity*Region			-0.119*** (0.041)				-0.160*** (0.057)	
Observations	3,334	3,334	3,334	3,334	2,232	2,232	2,232	2,232
R <sup>2</sup>	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.057	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.091
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.053	0.053	0.053	0.055	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.084

*Note:* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Country fixed effects for all models. Ethnic and region match variables are lagged one year from executive coming into power.

**Table C.8**

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