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**University College London
School of Slavonic and East European Studies**

**Competing Ethno-Historic Claims to North Kazakhstan:
The Potential for Future Conflict**

Thesis submitted for the degree of M.Phil. by

**Claire Jarvis
31 March 2006**

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COMPETING ETHNO-HISTORIC CLAIMS TO NORTH KAZAKHSTAN: THE POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE CONFLICT

North Kazakhstan is a region considered a part of Russian *historic territory* due to its annexation by the Russian empire. Imperial settlement patterns led to mass ethnic Russian migration at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century and at the time of the last Soviet population census taken in 1989, they formed the largest part of the population of the Kazakh SSR. This ethnic Russian population lived overwhelmingly in the north of the republic in regions contiguous with the Russian Federation, creating a more or less ethnically bi-polar society upon independence. Secessionism or territorial integration with the Russian Federation has not, however, occurred within Kazakhstan despite competing ethno-historic claims to this territory and the presence of variables predisposing ethnic violence in this region of the country.

This thesis shows that although Kazakh nationalizing processes are highly discriminatory and have angered the ethnic Russian community and caused massive out-migration, the community's political apathy coupled with a clampdown on opposition parties has marginalized them. Furthermore, as Kazakhstan is a willing participant in the CIS and strong supporter of inter-state cooperation with Russia, the Russian government has not intervened on the community's behalf to the extent that might have been expected, although security concerns over potential territorial instability along her southern border may explain this. This does not rule out future Russian intervention, however, as a number of variables, notably a rise in Islamic radicalism and Russian nationalism, mean that the political situation in Kazakhstan may not always remain calm and that a potential for conflict in the north of the republic remains ever present.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Thesis Introduction and Methodology</u>	7
<u>Literature Review</u>	16
<u>Chapter One: Theoretical Groundwork</u>	26
1:1 Introduction.....	26
1:2 The Causes of Internal Conflict Within a State.....	29
1:3 European Colonial Rule in Comparative Perspective.....	43
1:4 Brubaker's Triadic Nexus.....	52
1:5 Summary.....	54
<u>Chapter Two: The Development of the Kazakh and Russian Communities in the Territories of Contemporary Kazakhstan in Historical Perspective</u>	57
2:1 Introduction.....	57
2:2 The Origins of the Kazakhs.....	59
2:3 Russian Imperial Expansion.....	64
2:4 The Development of Kazakh National Identity.....	69
2:5 Soviet Rule in Kazakhstan.....	72
2:6 Ethnic Relations in the Kazakh SSR.....	79

2:7	Perestroika and the Collapse of the USSR.....	83
-----	---	----

2:8	Conclusion.....	87
-----	-----------------	----

Chapter Three: Creating an ‘Ethnic Kazakh’ State.....88

3:1	Introduction.....	88
-----	-------------------	----

3:2	Nazarbaev and an Independent Kazakhstan.....	91
-----	--	----

3:3	The Signs and Symbols of the Ethnic Kazakh State.....	93
-----	---	----

3:4	Post-Soviet Political Development in Kazakhstan.....	113
-----	--	-----

3:5	The Kazakh Nationalizing State in Comparative Perspective.....	123
-----	---	-----

3:6	Conclusion.....	130
-----	-----------------	-----

Chapter Four: Russian Foreign Policy.....131

4:1	Introduction.....	131
-----	-------------------	-----

4:2	The Collapse of the USSR and the Development of a New Russian National Identity.....	134
-----	---	-----

4:3	Russian Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Period.....	142
-----	---	-----

4:4	Conclusion.....	153
-----	-----------------	-----

Chapter Five: The Future for North Kazakhstan.....154

5:1	Introduction.....	154
-----	-------------------	-----

5:2	A Regional Alternative.....	156
5:3	Russian Nationalism and Islam.....	161
5:4	Conclusion.....	180
	<u>Chapter Six: Conclusion.....</u>	182
6:1	The Comparative Approach: Africa and Kazakhstan.....	182
6:2	The Effects of Soviet Policy on Russian-Kazakh Inter-Ethnic Relations.....	184
6:3	Concluding Remarks on Russian Foreign Policy.....	191
6:4	Radical Islam and Russian Nationalism.....	193
6:5	Summary.....	195
	<u>Bibliography.....</u>	197

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THESIS INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

This thesis will study inter-ethnic relations in post-Soviet Kazakhstan and analyse why inter-ethnic conflict has not occurred despite the presence of a number of variables that seem to predispose the country towards ethnic violence. The field of Central Asian studies is relatively unexplored, allowing much scope for new work to be undertaken. Of all the Central Asian states, Kazakhstan is perhaps the most fascinating with regard to demography. Upon independence in 1991 the republic had an almost equal number of ethnic Kazakhs to Slavic Russian-speakers (Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians) as well as small but significant numbers of other ethnic groups. This, along with Kazakhstan's delicate relations with the Russian Federation, has rendered state-and-nation-building processes perhaps the most challenging of any of the former Soviet republics. The large ethnic Russian community in north Kazakhstan has been the most pressing concern for the Kazakh administration with regard to potential secession or re-federation with Russia and it is this issue that will be the focus of this thesis.

Historically, north Kazakhstan has been an area of high ethnic Russian occupation. Upon Kazakhstan's independence from the USSR, ethnic Russians comprised a majority in three of Kazakhstan's oblasts (East Kazakhstan, Karaganda and North Kazakhstan) and formed a plurality in four oblasts (Akmola, Kokshetau, Kostanai and Pavlodar). Five of these oblasts- North Kazakhstan, Kostanai, Kokshetau, East Kazakhstan and Pavlodar- shared a border with Russia and the other two- Karaganda and Akmola- shared a border with oblasts contiguous with Russia.¹

¹ Chinn, J. and Kaiser, R., *Russians as the New Minority. Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Soviet Successor States*, Boulder, CO, 1996, p.185.

The territories of these oblasts became part of the Russian empire following the establishment of Russian settlements across north Kazakhstan following the signing of the treaty between the Kazakh Small Horde and Empress Anna Ivanova in 1734. Moving south, the steppe and Middle Horde territory fell under Russian jurisdiction although it was not until 1891 that the steppe was placed under a unified jurisdiction. Following the abolition of serfdom in 1861, there was mass ethnic Russian migration to these territories, meaning that ethnic Kazakhs were, in many cases, displaced from traditional grazing routes in order to make way for the land to be used for settled agriculture.

Kazakhstan became an autonomous republic within the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic (RSFSR) in 1924 and became a union republic in 1936. In 1926 the ethnic Russian population of Kazakhstan stood at 1,280,000. This figure grew during the 1930-1960 period as waves of ethnic Russian migrants arrived in Kazakhstan as Communist party officials, doctors and skilled and unskilled workers involved in projects such as the *Virgin Lands* program. By 1959 there were around four million ethnic Russians and by the last Soviet census taken in 1989 there were 6,062,000 ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan.² As Akiner notes, the majority settled in the northern and north-eastern oblasts although many also settled in Alma-Ata, the republican capital at the time.³

The collapse of the USSR was perhaps most traumatic period for ethnic Russians living outside of the RSFSR. Overnight they became *foreigners* in their own homes, a sense of dislocation made all the worse by the nationalizing processes undertaken by

² Akiner, S., 'Towards a typology of diasporas in Kazakhstan' in Atabaki, T., and Mehendale, S., *Central Asia and the Caucasus. Transnationalism and diaspora*, London, 2005, pp.21-65, (p.28).

³ *Ibid.*, p.28.

many of the new governments of the newly independent states. Although this occurred to a lesser degree in Kazakhstan than in the Baltic republics, ethnic Russians felt besieged by new language laws designating Kazakh as the sole state language plus a constitution that claimed Kazakhstan as the *homeland* of the ethnic Kazakhs.

The Kazakh administration was, undoubtedly, concerned by Kazakhstan's precarious ethnic balance as well as the high concentration of ethnic Russians in regions contiguous with the Russian Federation, as they posed a threat to the territorial integrity of Kazakhstan. During the Soviet period regional elites were well established in Kazakhstan's oblasts and those with a high concentration of ethnic Russians tended also to have strong ethnic Russian regional elites (although this had become less common under both former Kazakh President Kunaev and current President Nursultan Nazarbaev). As part of Kazakhstan's centralization process a number of decisions were made which have had far-reaching consequences for Kazakhstan's ethnic Russian community. In 1997 Kazakhstan's oblasts were reduced in number from 19 to 14. 4 of the 5 eliminated oblasts were in the north and of the remaining oblasts those with a high ethnic Kazakh population were merged with those with a high ethnic Russian population, meaning that the ethnic Russian population in northern oblasts was reduced (particularly when coupled with the high levels of ethnic Russian out-migration that have occurred post-independence). Following the *rationalization* process, ethnic Kazakhs now form a much higher percentage of the population than they once did in the 4 remaining northern oblasts. It is particularly noticeable in the oblast administrative cities, as ethnic Kazakhs in government service have moved to these areas, thus beginning to *Kazakhize* once Russian-dominated cities.

This has increased the Kazakh population in the oblasts of Akmola, Karaganda, East Kazakhstan, Kostanai, North Kazakhstan and Pavlodar, as the figures comparing the 1989 and 1999 censuses below show:⁴

Oblast	Ethnic Russian Population % 1989	Ethnic Russian Population %1999	+/- %	Ethnic Kazakh Population %1989	Ethnic Kazakh Population %1999	+/- %
North Kazakhstan	51.5	49.8	-1.7	22.6	29.6	+7
Pavlodar	45.4	41.9	-3.5	28.5	38.6	+10.1
East Kazakhstan	51.7	45.4	-6.3	38.9	48.5	+ 9.6
Akmola	43.2	39.4	- 3.8	25.1	37.5	+12.4
Karaganda	46.9	43.6	-3.3	25.8	37.5	+11.7
Kostanai	43.7	42.3	1.4	22.9	30.9	+8.0

In the immediate post-independence period, it was thought likely that the ethnic Russian community would have attempted secession and re-federation with Russia. For this reason it makes for an interesting area of study with regard to how the Kazakh state has managed to reduce the threat of ethnic violence and also why the ethnic Russian community has not mounted a more concerted challenge to Kazakhstan's nationalizing policies. It touches upon issues of centralization as opposed to federation, diaspora communities and transnationalism and the use of repression as a means of stifling political dissent. These issues have also arisen in Africa and African case studies can therefore provide a useful template with which to analyse post-Soviet political development in Kazakhstan.

It is perhaps surprising that inter-ethnic conflict has not occurred in Kazakhstan, given the presence of a number of variables that appear to predispose the country towards

⁴ All statistics from *Pervaiia perepis' naseleeniia Respubliki Kazakhstan*, in Laruelle, M. and Peyrouse, S., *Les Russes du Kazakhstan. Identités nationales et nouveaux états dans l'espace post-soviétique*, Paris, 2005, pp.339-347.

such a situation. The approach I have chosen to show why this has not occurred is to use a framework of post-colonial African case studies to highlight variables that can act as inhibitors to the development of inter-ethnic violence. Although inter-regional studies are rather unusual, as it is sometimes debatable as to how much can be gained from comparing disparate countries, I feel that post-colonial Africa can provide a useful reference point; as Beissinger and Young note: 'protracted state crisis is the defining political attribute of Africa and Eurasia'.⁵ Furthermore, state crises are increased by ethnic violence within a state caused by competing ethnic claims to territory, fears regarding cultural obliteration, nationalism at both an elite and mass level, uneven economic development and uneven resource distribution between ethnic groups. This explains much of the ethnic violence in post-colonial Africa and has a relevance to Kazakhstan because of the republic's ethnic composition and economic situation and was alluded to by Nazarbaev in 1995:

Time and tragic experience has led to the understanding that in conditions of ethnic diversity, the efforts to establish state borders in accordance with ethnic borders bring a threat to the existence of young states.⁶

African case studies show the variables that may be preventing conflict within Kazakhstan, despite the marked differences between state formation during colonial and Communist rule as well as the existence of an inter-state dynamic between Kazakhstan, the ethnic Russian population within Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation, that is not replicated in Africa.

⁵ Beissinger, M.R. and Young, C., 'Introduction: Comparing State Crises across Two Continents' in Beissinger, M.R. and Young, C. (eds.), *Postcolonial Africa and Post-Soviet Eurasia in Comparative Perspectives*, Baltimore, MD, 2002, pp.3-18, (p.5).

⁶ Nazarbaev, N., 'Tz doklada na pervoi sessii assamblei narodov Kazakhstana', *Welcome to the Official Kazakhstan!*, 24 March 1995 <<http://www.president.kz/mainframeframe.asp?lng=ru> [accessed 21 August 2005] (para 9 of 135).

METHODOLOGY

In order to research this topic I have read extensively all the available English and Russian-language literature that I have been able to access in the UK including university and government sources. I was able to explore more fully this topic by undertaking two research trips to Kazakhstan and Russia in May and September of 2005. In both countries I was able to conduct interviews and undertake archival research at various academic institutions, which has enabled me to draw the conclusions that I have reached. Extensive use of media, business trade and internet sources have also been undertaken to identify current activity and potential trends.

This thesis is composed of six chapters. The first chapter will provide the theoretical groundwork by studying how ethnic discrimination can compound other factors such as uneven resource distribution and can lead to conflict.⁷

Defining the terms 'ethnic mobilization', 'ethnic conflict' and 'ethnic violence' will help to create a framework within which it will be possible to highlight under which conditions these can emerge and also under what conditions they can be mitigated or controlled. Brubaker's 'triadic nexus' theory regarding the relationship between 'nationalising states',⁸ 'external national homelands'⁹ and a 'national minority'¹⁰ is particularly suitable for discussing the relationship between the elite of a nation (in this case the Russian Federation) who declare their interest in the rights and welfare of ethnic co-nationals outside their borders living in a nationalizing state (Kazakhstan) although, as Brubaker argues, those ethnic co-nationals may be abandoned if it is

⁷ Brown, M.E., 'The Causes of Internal Conflict: An Overview' in Brown, M.E., Cote, O.R., Lynn-Jones, S.M. and Miller, S.E., (eds.), *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*, Cambridge, MA, 1996, pp.3-25, (p.5).

⁸ Brubaker, R., *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, Cambridge, 1996 (hereafter, Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*), p.4.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.5.

expedient for the 'external national homeland'¹¹ to do so. This shows the dangers to the territorial integrity of a state whose claims to independence rest on an ethno-historical basis when another state is prepared to assume the mantle of an 'external national homeland'.¹²

Using African case studies as a comparative theoretical framework for the study of state-and-nation-building processes in developing countries has recently become more common. I feel that this comparison is particularly relevant because of the respective pre-colonial and colonial histories of both Africa and Kazakhstan. Educational policy, European border delineation, economic development and sub-nationalism will be covered as these factors have shaped post-colonial development in Africa and Kazakhstan. This will show where the factors that predispose a state to ethnic violence converge and diverge with regard to political development in these two regions. The second chapter will also discuss the political justification for a state dominated by ethnic Kazakhs. Analysis will be made of early modern Kazakh history, Russian territorial annexation, contemporary Kazakh political developments and the history of state-and-nation-building processes in Kazakhstan; this will show that although the foundation of the modern Kazakh state was created during Communist rule, sub-national loyalties survived the Soviet period.

The concept of Kazakhstan as an ethnic homeland and the creation of a coherent sense of Kazakh national identity to help provide an ethno-historic justification for the continued territorial integrity of Kazakhstan will be studied in chapter three. Although, on paper, Kazakhstan is fairly inclusive of its minority population, particularly in comparison to other post-Soviet states, chapter three will demonstrate

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.5.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.5.

that ethnic Russians are discriminated against and are being made to feel increasingly unwelcome by certain sections of society. A detailed study will be made of the ethnic Russian community and their relative political apathy towards the discrimination that they face. Their other strategies for coping with a nationalizing state, namely emigration, will also be shown, as will ethnic Russian attitudes towards the collapse of the USSR and Kazakh independence.

Chapter four will show how Russia's desire to maintain good security relations with Kazakhstan has reduced her willingness to intervene on the behalf of Kazakhstan's ethnic Russian community, although she has sought assurances about their well-being.

Despite the societal and political similarities between Kazakhstan and the African case studies, it is imperative to find the variables present in Kazakhstan that are not present in Africa and which may be inhibiting conflict in the former. Chapter four will analyse Russia-Kazakhstan diplomatic relations, with a particular focus on Russian policy towards Kazakhstan's ethnic Russian community and her status as an 'external national homeland'.¹³

The fifth chapter will study the potential for future conflict in north Kazakhstan, using the aforementioned African case studies as a reference point. Islam and Russian nationalism are the two ideologies that might grow stronger inside Kazakhstan and destabilize the country; Russian nationalism may also grow stronger within the Russian Federation and provide further external pressure by radicalizing the ethnic Russian community in Kazakhstan.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.5.

My concluding sixth chapter will discuss the arguments set out in the previous five chapters and show that although the convergence of the variables that usually predispose a state towards ethnic violence has not, so far, occurred in Kazakhstan, future conflict cannot be ruled out; this is because Kazakhstan has a number of economic, political and ethnic weaknesses that predispose towards ethnic violence and, until these are resolved, conflict remains possible.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will outline the set of research questions that this thesis will address by discussing the relevant existing literature. I feel that there is a paucity of academic research that has been undertaken with regard to Kazakhstan's ethnic Russian community and their reaction to the republic's independence. A scarcity of source material affects Central Asian studies in general as there has not until recently been any great interest in the region, particularly in the west. This position has now begun to change, particularly since 11 September 2001 and the renewed importance of the region as a potential hotbed of Islamic radicalism. However, much of the research on Kazakhstan has concerned either this issue or studies of her oil industry and has not focused on state-and-nation-building processes within Kazakhstan and how they have affected non-titular nationals. This is misguided as the political processes that have occurred in Kazakhstan in the post-Soviet period have the potential to act as an example of state-and-nation-building processes within an ethnically-mixed state that was, on independence an example of an ethnically-bipolar state. Kazakhstan also provides useful comparisons for state-and-nation-building processes that have occurred within other parts of the post-colonial world, most notably Africa. Comparing Kazakhstan and Africa shows the variables that can lead to ethnic conflict within ethnically mixed states.

*The Kazakhs*¹ and *Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise*,² written by the American academic Martha Brill Olcott, remain the primary English-language texts on Kazakh history and politics, although other scholars have also made significant contributions to this field of research, particularly Sally Cummings³ and Shirin Akiner.⁴

¹ Olcott, M.B., *The Kazakhs*, Stanford, CA, 1987 (hereafter, Olcott, *Kazakhs*).

² Olcott, M.B., *Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise*, Washington D.C., 2001.

³ Cummings, S.N., *Kazakhstan. Power and the Elite*, London and New York, 2005.

The Kazakhs is primarily a chronological survey of Kazakh political history that the author intended to serve as a general introduction to Kazakh history highlighting 'the critical economic and political problems that the Kazakhs have confronted and the means by which they were resolved either by the Kazakhs or by the various external forces they encountered'.⁵ This work is particularly strong regarding the Russian influence on the political and economic development of the Kazakhs; her analysis of how deeply Russian influence changed their social structures and cultural traditions is less good and it makes the Kazakhs appear a rather passive people. Because of this, the book comes across as curiously dry, devoid of any human element, and reducing the role of both Russian and Kazakh in their own history to simply that of Russian aggressor and conquered Kazakh when the reality is more complicated.

Olcott does highlight the difficulties she faced preparing this work; censorship and a scarcity of written sources, with those that do exist written from an almost exclusively Russo-centric bias, helps to explain the rather dry style. I would suggest that these obstacles are still hampering scholars working in the field of Central Asian studies. They are particularly pertinent with regard to pre-imperial Kazakhstan, where written sources are scanty at best. In many ways this work is of its time, reflecting the fact that during the imperial and Soviet period questions of national identity and national aspirations were not discussed, as an independent Kazakhstan was an unknown, indeed unconsidered, concept.

By contrast, *Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise* devotes a large amount of discussion to this very issue. This reflects the changes in Kazakhstan's status as an independent

⁴ Akiner, S., *The Formation of Kazakh Identity from Tribe to Nation-State*, London, 1995.

⁵ Olcott, *Kazakhs*, pg. xiii.

republic where questions pertaining to national identity and nation -building have bedevilled the administration since independence.

Instead of a chronological treatment of Kazakh history, in *Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise* Olcott postulates a theory and, through a thematic treatment of the sources, provides compelling evidence to support her argument. Olcott argues that the failure of democracy in Kazakhstan and the imposition of a ruling family dynasty (that of President Nazarbaev) were not inevitable consequences of the country's past. Unlike the earlier work, this has been written with the backdrop of the release of vast amounts of previously censored documents from the Soviet archives. Whilst these are not specifically cited in Olcott's later work, the influence of recently published studies of the ruinous effect of Soviet policy on the Kazakhs is evident, particularly with regard to her study of Kazakh nation-building.

Although the overall tone of *Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise* is one of pessimism with regard to Kazakhstan's future prospects, Olcott's does qualify this by highlighting the extreme difficulties faced by the nation's leader upon independence. Of all her works, this is the one with the most analysis on national identity in the post-Soviet period and why the creation of a viable national identity based on civic rather than ethnic concepts of citizenship is fundamental as the country has such a large Russian population. This book also highlights the intra-ethnic splits within the Kazakh population that now threaten further to destabilize society. These divisions go beyond the traditional clan loyalties placing urban, Russified Kazakhs in opposition to their rural, Kazakh-speaking brethren. However, ethnicity remains the major determinant in the polarisation of Kazakhstan's society. As Olcott notes, the country is becoming

‘less multicultural and less European over time’.⁶ This failure to create a viable multi-ethnic state is now evident and can be seen not only through Russian emigration, but also through the increasing percentage of Kazakhs being employed in most sectors and at the expense of other ethnic groups, particularly ethnic Russians. This book is also strong regarding the issue of north Kazakh secession, which was a particular issue in the first ten years of independence, although the threat has now dwindled.

Olcott’s latest work, *Central Asia’s Second Chance*,⁷ analyses Central Asia since the break-up of the USSR. This work shows that Kazakhstan has moved further along the path of political and economic reform than any other country within the region, although for the elite powerful disincentives (such as ending corruption) for political reform still exist, meaning that future instability in Kazakhstan cannot be ruled out.

As one of the key components of Kazakh state-and nation-building processes has been the emphasis placed upon ethno-historical interpretations of Kazakhstan’s past, Akiner’s *The Formation of Kazakh Identity from Tribe to Nation-State*, has been a useful account of the development of Kazakh national identity. However, its ethnographic approach makes it of less use than a work such as Cummings’s *Power and the Elite*, a work that shows how national identity and a national-cultural revival has formed an important part of the political process.

In Kazakhstan these processes have a greater impact upon inter-ethnic relations than in perhaps any other former Soviet republic, owing to its ethnic composition. The ethnic Russian diaspora has been a factor in state-and-nation-building processes as well as Russia-Kazakhstan inter-state relations. Analysis of these diaspora

⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 174.

⁷ Olcott, M.B., *Central Asia’s Second Chance*, Washington, D.C., 2005.

communities is provided by works such as Kolstoe's *Russians in the Former Soviet Republics*⁸ and his comparative study of state-and-nation-building processes in Latvia and Kazakhstan. David Laitin's *Identity in Formation. The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad*⁹ is probably the most important book available on the issue of the integration of ethnic Russian communities across the non-Russian republics of the ex-USSR. This book takes a different approach to other studies as the author postulates the theory that these ethnic Russian communities may establish a new identity other than a *Russian* one.¹⁰ If this is so then it could have profound implications for the integration of ethnic Russians into the social structure of the new republics. Basing his work around the theory of a *tipping game* process of identity shift, by which an individual makes a rational choice to assimilate, Laitin is able to assess the chances of assimilation and the creation of a conglomerate identity of ethnic Russian populations in four case study republics (Latvia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Estonia). Using the preliminary findings from his data, Laitin is able to assess the chances of violent conflict between ethnic Russians and titular nationalities as well as whether these *nationalizing states* will become nation-states or remain multi-national.¹¹ This is perhaps the most ambitious work on the ethnic Russian communities that has been undertaken as it manages to create an underlying theory for the discussion of the changing nature of ethnic Russian identity in the new republics.

Another often cited work is Neil Melvin's *Russians Beyond Russia: The Politics of National Identity*.¹² Again, this is a comparative study of the ethnic Russian communities of the Baltic republics, Moldova, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Although it

⁸ Kolstoe, P. (ed.), *Russians in the Former Soviet Republics*, London, 1995.

⁹ Laitin, D., *Identity in Formation. The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad*, Ithaca, 1998.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.10.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.33-34.

¹² Melvin, N., *Russians Beyond Russia: The Politics of Russian National Identity*, London, 1995.

is a well-written and useful book, particularly with regard to ethnic Russian political representation, it is now rather out of date.

The most recent work on the ethnic Russian community in Kazakhstan is Laruelle and Peyrouse's *Les Russes du Kazakhstan. Identités nationales et nouveaux Etats dans l'espace post-Soviétique*,¹³ which charts the development of the ethnic Russian community's identity and shows how it has been shaped by the nationalizing processes of the Kazakh state. This is, so far, the most authoritative western language study of Kazakhstan's ethnic Russians. It details every aspect of their history and political and cultural development as well as analysing a large number of the issues they face both with regard to state-and-nation-building processes and the difficulties in committing fully to a country undergoing a *nativization program*; the issue of both potential north Kazakhstan secession and/or re-federation with Russia provides the most up-to-date information that I have read regarding the formation of external Russian pressure groups founded by emigrants from Kazakhstan and their influence on both Russian and Kazakh politics.

Although there is a relative lack of sources on Kazakhstan, there is a reasonable number of Russian-language works published in Kazakhstan, which have been useful source material for this thesis. The works of Nazarbaev have been useful guides to this subject as they detail the importance placed by the Kazakh authorities on ethno-history with regard to state-and-nation-building processes within the republic.¹⁴ This is in marked contrast to the ambiguous speeches that he has given over the years regarding Kazakhstan's status as either an ethnic homeland or a multi-cultural state.

¹³ Laruelle, M. and Peyrouse, S., *Les Russes du Kazakhstan. Identités nationales et nouveaux états dans l'espace post-soviétique*, Paris, 2005.

¹⁴ Nazarbaev, N., *V potoke istorii*, Almaty, 1999 and Nazarbaev, N., *Without Right and Left*, London, 1992.

The number of Kazakh general histories published post-1991 is notable and they appear to form part of a general post-Soviet trend towards wholesale re-writes of national histories that portray the titular nationality in the most positive light. These works are noticeably critical of Russian imperialism and this is true of works produced in Kazakhstan despite the size of its ethnic Russian community; such works are surprisingly reluctant to devote much analysis to the ethnic Russian community and their concerns. The majority of works that analyse ethnic Russian issues are community newspapers such as *Lad*. *Genotsid: Russkie v Kazakhstane: tragicheskaja sud'ba*, a work produced by ethnic Russian emigrants from Kazakhstan to the Russian Federation highlights their concerns as well as relations between Kazakhstan's ethnic Russians and the Russian government¹⁵ but provides, not unexpectedly, a rather partial account of ethnic relations in Kazakhstan.

An important part of this thesis concerns Russian foreign policy and its impact upon Kazakhstan's ethnic Russian community. Although there have been a large number of English-language works published on Central Asia's position within world politics as well as Russia-Central Asia relations, Kazakhstan is often overlooked in these works, with most analysis devoted to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan owing to their greater involvement in the Islamic sphere of influence. Lena Jonson's work, *Vladimir Putin and Central Asia*¹⁶ did not even include Russia-Kazakhstan relations within the scope of her analysis, although an earlier work, which she edited with Roy Allison, did place Kazakhstan within the scope of the book's research. In this field their works have been among the most valuable, although they do not deal closely with how

¹⁵ Khliupin, V. (ed.), *Genotsid. Russkie v Kazakhstane: tragicheskaja sud'ba*, Moscow, 2001.

¹⁶ Jonson, L., *Vladimir Putin and Central Asia. The Shaping of Russian Foreign Policy*, London and New York, 2004.

Kazakhstan's ethnic Russians affect inter-state relations between Russia and Kazakhstan.¹⁷

Very few works, with the exception of Alexandrov's *Uneasy Alliance. Relations Between Russia and Kazakhstan in the Post-Soviet Era, 1992-7*¹⁸ actually cover this topic in much detail, perhaps because there are far larger issues, most notably the rise of Central Asian Islamic radicalism, that are the focus of most international attention, which are covered in works such as Boris Rumer's *Central Asia. A Gathering Storm?*¹⁹ However, as this thesis concerns the ethnic Russian community within Kazakhstan, Russian foreign policy is an important factor that must be analysed. This has meant using works such as Alexandrov's, which discuss in detail the impact of Russia-Kazakhstan bilateral agreements on the ethnic Russian community, including, most importantly, the failed negotiations over dual citizenship. When this is presented in tandem with research conducted on general Russian foreign policy trends during the post-Soviet period, it does show that Russian foreign policy has helped to hamper the growth of ethnic Russian unrest within Kazakhstan. Kazakh-produced works on Kazakh foreign policy concepts show the importance of Russian inter-state relations for Kazakhstan. The publication edited by the former Foreign Minister, Erlan Idrisov,²⁰ shows this as does *Natsional'naia bezopasnost' Kazakhstana. Problemy i Perspektivy*,²¹ which shows the importance of Russia to Kazakhstan's overall security.

¹⁷ Allison, R. and Jonson, L. (eds.), *Central Asian Security. The New International Context*, London, 2001.

¹⁸ Alexandrov, M., *Uneasy Alliance. Relations Between Russia and Kazakhstan in the Post-Soviet Era, 1992-7*, Westport, CT, 1999.

¹⁹ Rumer, B. (ed.), *Central Asia. A Gathering Storm?*, Armonk, NY, 2002.

²⁰ Idrisov, E. (ed.), *Prioritety Kazakhstanskoi diplomatii na rubezhe vekov*, Moscow, 2000.

²¹ Zatulin, K.F., Grozin, A.V. and Khliopin, V.N., *Natsional'naia bezopasnost' Kazakhstana. Problemy i Perspektivy*, Moscow, 1998.

With regard to my inter-regional approach, although the choice of an African comparative framework to study Kazakhstan may, at first, appear illogical, it has been attempted by several academics, most notably Beissinger and Young. Their cross-regional approach in *Beyond State Control?: Postcolonial Africa and Post-Soviet Eurasia*, as opposed to an area-specific study, does not seek to deny the very real differences that exist between Eurasia and Africa, and I feel that this is one of the reasons why this collection of academic essays is so successful.²² It is argued that in both regions these state crises are provoked by the legacies of colonial rule that have exacerbated ethnic tensions across both regions; this factor is also examined by many contemporary African sociologists i.e. in the post-colonial societies of both geopolitical entities, racial discrimination often maintains the pre-eminence of the ruling class. Yongo-Bure feels that ethnic and religious diversity is no bar to harmonious intra-state relations providing that 'this diversity is not manipulated for the advantage of some and against the interests of others'.²³

However, discrimination has raised tensions across Africa because of the culturally plural or bipolar nature of many African societies. Crawford Young comments that ethnically fragmented societies are particularly prone to ethnic violence or secessionist movements when a group fears a real or imagined cultural obliteration by another ethnic group, most usually one that is politically dominant.²⁴ This work, although not the most modern piece of writing on the subject of ethnically diverse societies, is still one of the most pertinent examples of scholarly work available on this subject. It was

²² Beissinger, M.B. and Young, C. 'Introduction: Comparing State Crises across Two Continents' in Beissinger, M.B. and Young, C., (eds.), *Postcolonial Africa and Post-Soviet Eurasia in Comparative Perspectives*, Washington, D.C., 2002.

²³ Yongo-Bure, B., 'Towards National Integration in a Multi-Ethnic Country: The Sudanese Experience' in Ongong'a, J.J. and Gray, K.R., (eds.), *Bottlenecks to National Identity: Ethnic Cooperation Towards Nation-Building*, Nairobi, 1989, pp.79-95, (p.83).

²⁴ Young, C., *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism*, Madison, WI, 1976.

this work in particular that first made me aware of the number of societal, political and structural similarities between parts of post-colonial Africa and Kazakhstan, although the inter-state relationship between Russia and Kazakhstan does not of itself have a direct parallel with any African inter-state relationship; thus, despite these many similarities this inter-state relationship is something that I do not feel has been adequately explored in any of the existing inter-regional literature.

CHAPTER ONE: THEORETICAL GROUNDWORK

1:1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will prepare the theoretical groundwork for the study of state-and-nation-building processes in Kazakhstan and the factors that have created the relatively harmonious state of ethnic relations in Kazakhstan compared with those that have created ethnic violence in Africa, will be analysed.

The first section of this work will define and discuss issues of ethnic mobilization and ethnic conflict and violence within a state. This will make it easier to understand under what conditions such conflicts and violence are likely to emerge and also how they can be controlled. The factors that lead to ethnic conflict will be discussed using the following list:¹

- **Structural Factors**

Weak states

Intra-state security issues

Ethnic geography

- **Political Factors**

Discriminatory political institutions

Exclusionary national ideologies

Inter-group politics

Elite politics

¹ Brown, M.E., 'The Causes of Internal Conflict: An Overview' (hereafter, Brown, 'Causes') in Brown, M.E., Cote, O.R., Lynn-ones, S.M. and Miller, S.E. (eds.), *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*, Cambridge, MA, 1996, pp.3-25, (p.5).

- **Economic/ Social Factors**

Economic problems

Discriminatory economic systems

Economic development and modernization

- **Cultural/ Perceptual Factors**

Patterns of cultural discrimination

Problematic group histories

To elaborate further on the cultural/perceptual factors, Kaufman also adds the following preconditions for mass hostility:

a set of ethnically defined grievances, negative ethnic stereotypes, and disputes over emotional symbols. Hostility serious enough to motivate ethnic war also requires a fear (usually exaggerated) of ethnic extinction, based on threatening demographic trends and a history of discrimination by one group over the other.²

Kaufman highlights the importance of the ethnic discrimination component of nationalism, which, as Alekseeva notes, ‘proved to be the basis and consolidation and legitimisation of the state’ used by most of the former Soviet republics.³

Despite the many similarities that exist with regard to ethnic composition, population demography and political demography between Kazakhstan and a number of African

² Kaufman, S.J., ‘Spiralling to Ethnic War: Elite, Masses, and Moscow in Moldova’s Civil War’ (hereafter, Kaufman, ‘Ethnic War’) in Brown, M.E., Cote, O.R., Lynn-Jones, S.M. and Miller, S.E. (eds.), *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*, Cambridge, MA, 1996, (hereafter, Kaufman, ‘Ethnic War’), pp.3-25, (p.170).

³ Alekseeva, T., ‘Natsionalizm v mirovoi politike’ (hereafter, Alekseeva ‘Natsionalizm’) in Torkunov, A. (ed.), *Sovremennye mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia i mirovaia politika*, Moscow, 2004, pp.334-65, (p.357).

states, means highlighting where these similarities diverge. In the second section of this chapter, the following areas will be analysed: the differing approaches of the European colonial powers in Africa and the Russian/Soviet state toward ethnic diversity within the new states created by colonial border policy, how ethnic identities were created, transformed and institutionalised within these new political entities and the attempts made to impose both a centralized administration and a homogeneous cultural or national identity.

Knowledge of these factors will enable us to study the different ‘outcomes’ of colonial policy in Africa and Kazakhstan with regard to inter-ethnic relations especially that of the dominant group towards the state, the ability of the state to control ethnic conflict and secessionist demands as well as the means by which ethnic groups are able to mobilize (if at all) ethnic grievances or demands against the state.

The third theory that will be discussed is that of Brubaker’s ‘triadic nexus’,⁴ which studies the relationship between states and national minorities. It is particularly relevant to this thesis as it explains the inter-state dynamic between the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan, a dynamic that appears to be inhibiting ethnic violence in Kazakhstan.

⁴Brubaker, R., *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, Cambridge, 1996 (hereafter, Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*), pp.4-5.

1:2 THE CAUSES OF INTERNAL CONFLICT WITHIN A STATE

What do we mean by the terms ‘ethnic conflict’ and ‘ethnic mobilization’? A clear definition will make it easier to analyse under what conditions they occur and how they can be controlled through conflict management and conflict resolution.

Ethnic conflict occurs world wide, for the simple reason that ‘few states are homogeneous and many are deeply divided’.⁵ Horowitz argues that ethnic conflict is the most noticeable manifestation of ethnic hostility but societies can also be ethnically factionalized in other ways such as ethnically based political parties and trade unions. Ethnic conflict and ethnic mobilization are both struggles for power and control within a state. Within ethnically divided societies this will usually mean that ethnicity will permeate every area of life, with ethnic consequences for every political event.⁶

Wolff states that conflict is ‘a situation in which two or more actors pursue incompatible, yet from their individual perspectives entirely just goals’ and ethnic conflicts are those in which ‘the goals of at least one party are defined in (exclusively) ethnic terms, and in which the primary fault line of confrontation is one of ethnic distinctions’.⁷ Ethnic tensions best describe the dynamic between different groups where the manifestations are less violent. The third scenario described by Wolff is where groups have different and often competing interests but these ‘are handled within fairly stable and legitimate political institutions’.⁸ This begs the question why

⁵ Horowitz, D.L., *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 2nd edn, Berkely, CA, 2000, (hereafter, Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups*), p.3.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.12.

⁷ Wolff, S., *Ethnic Conflict. A Global Perspective*, Oxford, 2006, (hereafter, Wolff, *Ethnic Conflict*) pp.1-2.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.3.

are some ethnically divided states stable, when others are beset by ethnic conflict or tension? This is particularly important since ethnicity and nationalism alone are not responsible for conflicts, of which some are the result of legitimate grievances, whether social, political or cultural, although many are rooted in elite manipulation of a population for its own ends.

Wolff argues that ethnic conflict is most likely to occur in societies in which it not only becomes an individual's predominant identity but also becomes 'politically relevant and determines the life prospects of people belonging to distinct ethnic groups'.⁹ Although ethnicity can become this powerful identifier, Wolff also argues that ethnicity is often no more than a way to 'organize and mobilize people into homogeneous conflict groups willing to fight each other for resources that are at best indirectly linked to their ethnic identity'.¹⁰

How do ethnic groups mobilize? John Coakley argues that ethnic mobilization is often caused by 'a sense of social and economic grievance and by allegations of discriminatory treatment by the state authorities'.¹¹ This phase could therefore be categorized as an attempt to secure 'equality' for all citizens. Gains may often be made with regard to economic and social equality and, thus, ethnic mobilization may not move beyond this stage. Coakley states that the next set of demands may be incompatible with the notion of equality within a particular society and argues that 'members of the ethnic minority are *different*, and that this difference should receive institutional recognition. The demand for individual rights has been replaced with a

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.31

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.64-65.

¹¹ Coakley, J., 'Introduction. The Challenge' in Coakley, J. (ed), *The Territorial Management of Ethnic Conflict*, 2nd edn, London, 2003, pp.1-22, (p.5).

demand for group rights'.¹² As a transitional phase this may lead to the demand for cultural rights such as the use of a minority language within state institutions or the education system. Following this 'institutional recognition' in the form of autonomy/confederation is, in the final phase, the right to secede.¹³

In the following section I will highlight the factors most conducive to ethnic mobilization and/or ethnic violence. By way of criticism of Brown's list,¹⁴ it should first be stated that by placing the concept of *weak states* on a par with other variables, Brown is suggesting that it is only one variable among many. Weak states are, in fact, least able to prevent ethnic conflict as they cannot prevent the other stated variables from exacerbating ethnic grievances. For this reason most post-colonial African states should be considered as *weak states* in which ethnic conflict is likely to occur, as the variables stated by Brown are present in the political, economic and social structures of these countries. Crawford Young argues that states have territoriality within defined borders, have sovereignty, are possessed of nationality, participate in international systems, have institutions of rule and legal systems. Finally, the state is an abstraction of these ideas, implanted in the minds of its citizens.¹⁵ The failure of many African states to fulfil these criteria means that they are *weak states*, unable to prevent crisis and secession. Kazakhstan, by contrast, appears to have much more successfully (if not totally) measured up, meaning that state-building and preventing secession have been easier.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.6.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.7-8.

¹⁴ Brown, 'Causes', p.5.

¹⁵ Young, C., 'The African Colonial State and Its Political Legacy' in Rothchild, D. and Chazan, N. (eds.), *The Precarious Balance. State and Society in Africa*, Boulder, CO, 1988, (hereafter, Young, 'African Colonial State'), pp.25-66, (pp.29-31).

With regard to territory, power consolidation over large, under-populated territories, has been a perennial problem for Africa's rulers.¹⁶ Although high population density is no guarantor of political stability, as the conflict in Rwanda demonstrated, it is clear that lower population density creates difficulties in the extension of power from the capital to the periphery of a nation. In Africa the retention of arbitrary colonial borders (following the 1964 declaration on the inviolability of African borders by the Organisation of African Unity),¹⁷ and the synthetic agglomeration of ethnic groups within them, has exacerbated this problem as a lack of central state power has permitted the continuation of regional rivalries within new economic and social structures.¹⁸

The problem is not helped by the location of many African capitals, which were built to serve European interests and are, in many instances, near seaports¹⁹ rather than in 'interior centres of power [...] that had managed to exert control over parts of their surrounding territories'.²⁰ The relocation of capitals in both Kazakhstan (from Almaty to Astana in December 1997) and Nigeria (from Lagos to Abuja in December 1991, although the decision was taken in 1976) shows the importance of a capital city for power consolidation. Nazarbaev appeared to claim that the decision to move the Kazakh capital from Almaty to Astana would place the capital in the centre of the Eurasian landmass.²¹ Although Almaty was located in the south-eastern corner of the

¹⁶ Herbst, J., *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*, Princeton, NJ, 2000, (hereafter, Herbst, *States and Power*), p.11.

¹⁷ Sakwa, R., *Russian Politics and Society*, 2nd edn., London, 1996.

¹⁸ Iliffe, J., *Africans: The History of a Continent*, Cambridge, 1995 (hereafter, Iliffe, *Africans*), pp.256-57.

¹⁹ Herbst, *States and Power*, p.11.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.16.

²¹ See Nazarbaev, N., 'Vystuplenie prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbaev na prezidentatsii knigi 'V serdtse Evrazii'', *Ofitsial'nii Sait Prezidenta RK*, 9 June 2005 <http://www.akorda.kz/page.php?page_id=33&lang=1&article_id_82>. [accessed 06 December 2005] (para 18 of 48).

republic, it had good links with Moscow, the rest of Kazakhstan and Central Asia's major cities. Thus, it would appear that the move to Astana was most likely motivated to prevent secession or territorial annexation. This relates to the fact that Kazakhstan is both large and sparsely populated, with an uneven population distribution that could be described as partially bipolar- with ethnic Russians tending to live in the north (although following out-migration and oblast mergers that will be discussed in chapter three so do large numbers of Kazakhs) and with ethnic Kazakhs tending to live in the south.²²

Coakley showed that ethnic mobilization is caused by social grievances and allegations of discriminatory treatment. Brown shows that this can include: discriminatory political institutions, exclusionary national ideologies, inter-group politics and elite politics. In Kazakhstan the emphasis is very much on the republic's status as the 'historic ethnic homeland of the Kazakh people'²³ even though placing competing territorial claims within an ethno-symbolic framework that makes land an emotional symbol, may also be enough to trigger inter-ethnic violence. Political and economic grievances were being linked to ethnicity prior to the collapse of Communism, particularly with regard to Kazakhs in positions of high authority (as chapter two will demonstrate). That there was little concrete evidence to support the assertions made by ethnic Russians (who still formed the backbone of Kazakhstan's middle class and white collar workers), merely demonstrates what Kaufman notes with regard to fears over demographic obliteration being often exaggerated and rarely based on fact, yet remaining potent.²⁴

²² *Pervaiia perepis' naseleniia Respubliki Kazakhstan*, in Olcott, M.B., *Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise*, Washington D.C., 2001 (hereafter, Olcott, *Kazakhstan*), p.250.

²³ Nazarbaev, N., *V potoke istorii*, Almaty, 1999 (hereafter, Nazarbaev, *V potoke istorii*), p.195.

²⁴ Kaufman, 'Ethnic War', p.170.

The economic and social factors identified as exacerbating ethnic tensions are economic problems, discriminatory economic systems and economic development and modernization. Although all countries, even those with planned economies, have a certain level of uneven economic development, that which is found in many post-colonial states is often linked to specific ethnic groups. This often relates to certain ethnic groups, favoured by colonial rulers, who formed an indigenous elite and rose to economic and political power at the expense of less favoured ethnic groups. This may also occur when certain ethnic groups inhabit a region rich in natural resources. As the following case study of Nigeria demonstrates, this may lead to secessionist attempts by those who view a more prosperous future outside of existing state structures.

In Nigeria, the three main ethnic groups- Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo- inhabit geographically compact regions. Following independence in 1960, the federal parliament became controlled by the Hausa-dominated northern region although the other two regions- the eastern Ibo-dominated region and western Yoruba- dominated region, still retained much regional autonomy.²⁵ However, Iliffe notes that when this system was combined with 'the localism of voters and the materialism of cultural traditions, this bred a blatantly ethnic, clientelist and corrupt politics'.²⁶ Interestingly, the 1966 coup d'état, although led by Ibo officers, was an attempt to reduce corruption and restore Nigerian national unity.

Many non-Ibo viewed this as an attempt to restore Ibo dominance, not least because of Ironsi's (the Ibo who subsequently became President) decision to make Nigeria a

²⁵ Oyovbaire, S.E., *Federalism in Nigeria. A Study in the Development of the Nigerian State*, London, 1985, (hereafter, Oyovbaire, *Federalism in Nigeria*), p.39.

²⁶ Iliffe, J., *Africans*, p.258.

unitary state.²⁷ This led to a counter-coup and the deaths of 50,000 Ibo in a wave of Hausa backed reprisals.²⁸ This act and fears over northern domination led to Ibo secessionism and shows that the decision to secede was taken owing to the real risk of demographic and cultural obliteration. Secession appeared viable owing to eastern oil reserves (which had begun to be developed to produce commercial quantities of oil in 1958)²⁹ and the united Ibo population. However, ultimately the non-Ibos who formed 30% of the population of the eastern region became increasingly unwilling to live in an Ibo-dominated state. As they lived close to the oil-producing region, they proved vital to the ultimate victory of the Nigerian state. Furthermore, that Biafran independence was resisted so fiercely by other ethnicities relates to their fears over their future security following the potential collapse of the Nigerian state.

The re-division of Nigeria into twelve states immediately prior to conflict had led to increased support for the retention of the Nigerian state from smaller ethnic minorities and, by 1976, the military government (that governed from 1970-79) had created a 19 unit federation that preceded the 30-state federation.³⁰ Despite this apparent structural decentralization, the republic could not be considered a federation in the democratic sense primarily because of military rule. Indeed, the military's belief in a program of centralization is apparent in the number of commissions set up by President Ironsi (prior to his death in 1966) to increase political centralization. His supporters argued that regional governments weakened central governmental control and encouraged regionalism, which, it was claimed, was inhibiting national unity. In Africa, and Nigeria in particular, the terms *Federation* and *federalism* have been used to describe,

²⁷ Oyovbaire, *Federalism in Nigeria*, p.41.

²⁸ Forrest, J., *Subnationalism in Africa. Ethnicity, Alliances and Politics*, Boulder, CO, 2004 (hereafter, Forrest, *Subnationalism*, p.161.

²⁹ King, M., *Localism and Nation Building*, Ibadan, 1988 (hereafter, King, *Localism*), p.19.

³⁰ Oyovbaire, *Federalism in Nigeria*, pp.106-13.

or even as the impetus, to create more political territories within a nation, with the system open to abuse by the ruling elite who create new regions as rewards,³¹ meaning that Nigerian political corruption has been endemic from independence, complicating state-and-nation-building processes.

Unlike Nigeria, Kazakhstan has not become a federal state because of fears that greater decentralization could lead to demands from the Russian community to either secede or reunite with Russia.³² By stressing the integrity of the Kazakh state and a reluctance to grant much power to regional administrations Nazarbaev has reduced the challenge posed by the periphery to his own centralized power. It should, of course, be noted that Kazakhstan's ethnic Russian community has neither faced conditions similar to those of the Ibo, nor have they attempted secession (although reincorporating Kazakhstan's northern regions with Russia would have been relatively straightforward economically), an event most likely to occur in the period immediately following independence.

So far, this community has not reacted to independence in anything like the manner of the French community in Algeria. In this section analysis will be made of the similarities and differences between the French community in Algeria and Kazakhstan's ethnic Russian community in their reactions to independence.

The disparate backgrounds of the European community (Spanish, Jewish, Maltese and French) in Algeria did not prevent a strong identification with France and French citizenship as well as sharing a staunchly held belief in Algeria's status as, both

³¹ Soyinka, W., 'The Federal Quest' (hereafter, Soyinka, 'The Federal Quest') in Gana, A.T. and Egwu, S.G. (ed.), *Federalism in Africa. Framing the National Question*. Asmara, 2003, pp. 3-16, p.6.

³² Laruelle, M. and Peyrouse, S., *Les Russes du Kazakhstan. Identités nationales et nouveaux états dans l'espace post-soviétique*, Paris, 2005, pp.221-37.

politically and territorially, Metropolitan France.³³ This may be in part because, as the Russian ethnographer and sociologist V. Tishkov argues, a diaspora community is 'mere lifestyle behaviour and not strict demographic and especially not ethnic reality'.³⁴ By contrast, ethnic Russians within Kazakhstan held disparate views regarding their relationship to both the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan.

Albert Camus, himself a French-Algerian, stated in 1957 that 'the size and seniority of the French settlement, in particular, are enough to create a problem that cannot be compared to anything in history. The Algerian French are likewise, and in the strongest meaning of the word, natives'.³⁵ If long-term settlement in a region is a sufficient basis for citizenship, then the ethnic Russian community in Kazakhstan (established in the 1640s with the building of the first Cossack stanitsas in the Uralsk region of contemporary Kazakhstan) must be considered native. Furthermore, the Russian community argue, with some justification, that their greater interaction with the land, the building of settlements, roads and farms helped create an infrastructure which the nomadic Kazakhs did not achieve through using the land solely as migratory paths.

Like the French community in Algeria, the Russian community is also ethnically fragmented, as it is comprised of ethnic Russians, ethnic Ukrainians as well as Belarusians and Poles, although most have adopted the mind-set of the descendants of the early settlers who regarded north Kazakhstan as an integral part of the Russian

³³ Montagnon, P., *La guerre d'Algérie. Genèse et engrenage d'une tragédie*, Paris, 1984 (hereafter, Montagnon, *La guerre d'Algérie*), p.58.

³⁴ Alekseeva, 'Natsionalizm', p.355.

³⁵ Camus quoted in Prochaska, D., *Making Algeria French: Colonialism in Bone, 1870-1920*, Cambridge, 1990, p.xvii.

frontier.³⁶ More importantly, there are also the various ‘discourses’ of Russian identity to take into account. Cossacks argue that the land was unoccupied upon their arrival in the mid-sixteenth century. Their farming of the land paved the way for mass Slavic migration following the emancipation of the serfs (as chapter two will show in more detail). The final wave of ethnic Russian migration occurred during the Soviet period with the arrival of volunteers to farm the *Virgin Lands* territories as well as highly skilled technical and party workers to other projects. These different origins have partly shaped how ethnic Russians view their status in an independent Kazakhstan. One of the main themes of Laitin’s work is to show whether ethnic Russians in the near abroad ‘decide whether to assimilate, organize politically as Russians or return to their native homeland’.³⁷ Fieldwork shows that ‘Russian’ or ‘Russian-speaking’ are inclusive terms that can expand to include non-Russian Europeans within its definition.³⁸ This would seem to suggest a grouping together of non-Kazakhs, perhaps as a reaction to Kazakh nationalism and as a positive term used by those who feel their role in shaping Kazakhstan has been undervalued by the nationalizing state.³⁹ This appears to be part of the way in which a section of the ethnic Russian community in Kazakhstan began to create a new identity for itself following the collapse of the USSR.

Although there was massive out-migration back to the Russian Federation upon independence, groups such as Lad made concerted appeals for ethnic Russians to remain (although by 2000 they were publishing the lists of documentation required to gain Russian citizenship). It remains clear that along with the emergence of a

³⁶ Olcott, *Kazakhstan*, p.14.

³⁷ Laitin, D., *Identity in Formation: The Russian-speaking populations in the Near Abroad*, Ithaca, NY, 1998, (hereafter, Laitin, *Identity*), p.190.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.191.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.195.

‘Russian-speaking’ identity, and, as Melvin argues, in the years immediately following independence ‘notions of the Russian nation, Russian ethnicity and Russianness have merged, fusing a diversity of settler groups bound together by the Russian language, Soviet/Russian urban culture and non-Kazakh ethnicity, to create a politically Russian (*Rossiiskii*) identity’⁴⁰ that although implying a strong affinity with Russia, acknowledges that Russians in Kazakhstan are starting to develop a separate identity, even if this is fragmentary. (This is also shown by the fact that following the collapse of the USSR most of Kazakhstan’s ethnic Russians continued to view the Soviet Union as opposed to Russia as their homeland.)

Because of this attachment, although Russian out-migration following independence has been high, it does not approach the level of the European community in Algeria; following the declaration of Algerian independence (forced upon de Gaulle by the FLN in 1962) ‘85% of European settlers left immediately, often destroying what they could not carry’.⁴¹ These differing reactions show that inter-group attitudes must be analysed. The inter-group relationship in Kazakhstan differed from that in colonial Algeria where the indigenous people lacked political representation and were forced into wage-slavery for European farmers. Algeria was defined as politically and territorially part of Metropolitan France until independence unlike the Kazakh SSR, which was established as an ethnic homeland. It could be argued that this fundamentally altered the nature of the relationship between the Kazakh republic and the ethnic Russian community.

⁴⁰ Melvin, N., *Russians Beyond Russia: The Politics of Russian National Identity*, London, 1995, p.123.

⁴¹ Iliffe, J., *Africans*, p.247.

Soviet rule also meant that the economic prosperity of Kazakhstan's ethnic Russians was not inextricably intertwined to either the continuation of the USSR or territorial reintegration with Russia, whereas the appropriation of Algeria's natural resources was the guarantee of prosperity for most Europeans in Algeria.⁴² This is illustrated by the fierceness of the European protests in Algeria prior to independence as the last-ditch attempt by a people to protect their material prosperity. By the outbreak of rebellion in 1954, the European community in Algeria, enjoying far greater prosperity than people of similar social status in France, saw their material well being inextricably intertwined with the continued existence of French Algeria. Jackson remarks: 'the well-entrenched Europeans had come to regard Algeria's wealth and promise as their own',⁴³ with particular interest in the recently discovered oil in the Algerian Sahara, something that both the Europeans and the French government hoped to exploit for their personal benefit.

As violence has not occurred in Kazakhstan, the final section of variables listed above must be analysed. These relate to patterns of cultural discrimination and problematic group histories. These two variables could be viewed as fundamental since if no cultural or historical tensions exist between ethnic groups, the likelihood for increased ethnic tension is less pronounced than in states comprised of ethnically diverse groups with problematic group histories. But what is meant by these terms? Cultural discrimination appears to link in ethnic nationalism as it bases discrimination on the basis of a different ethnicity's culture. This has the potential to create deep divisions within an ethnically diverse society as it discriminates against a way of life. It most clearly manifests itself in discriminatory language laws, such as those found in

⁴² Montagnon, *La guerre d'Algérie*, p.68.

⁴³ Jackson, H.F., *The FLN in Algeria: Party Development in a Revolutionary Society*, Westport, CT, 1977 ,p.xiv.

Kazakhstan. Horowitz argues that the politics of symbols, such as state languages, are an excellent way of gauging integration and that its power derives from the fact that it demands 'a public affirmation of legitimacy where legitimacy is contested'.⁴⁴

Defining *problematic group histories* is harder, but it should be understood to mean both a history of conflict between two or more ethnic groups that may be culturally incompatible as well as possessed of competing and opposing group histories. This is problematic in Kazakhstan, where the authorities have placed a particularly ethnic Kazakh emphasis on the history of the republic as opposed to a more inclusive account, which would include an explanation of the ethnic Russian presence within the republic.⁴⁵ However, although ethnic Russian and Kazakh group histories are problematic with regard to annexation of the steppe and imperial rule, they find more common ground on shared experiences under Soviet rule, in particular World War Two. Cummings argues that many ethnic Russians in north Kazakhstan did not attempt to secede as Russian culture was not clearly differentiated from Kazakh culture, in part because of Soviet rule, but also because it, too, was diffuse and therefore unable to dominate.⁴⁶ Many ethnic Kazakhs were also able to accept that most ethnic Russians suffered the same privations as they did, and thus do not hold the majority of them directly responsible for the disastrous policies of sedentarization, collectivization and the *Virgin Lands* program that decimated the population and left part of the land barren. Furthermore, evidence suggests that there is insufficient crystallization of either an ethnic Russian or an ethnic Kazakh concept of national identity, an important factor, which may explain the relatively low-level of inter-ethnic tension within the republic.

⁴⁴ Horowitz, *Ethnic Conflict*, p.217.

⁴⁵ See Nazarbaev, N., *V potoke istorii*, Almaty, 1999.

⁴⁶ Cummings, S., *Kazakhstan. Centre-Periphery Relations*, London, 2000, p.53.

A lack of commitment to both state-and-nation-building can, however, lead to the hardening of ethnic divisions and exacerbate inter-ethnic tensions, which are further increased when resource distribution and political power has an ethnic power-base. Because of this, post-colonial power consolidation has often relied upon creating heavily centralized unitary states, ostensibly to ensure fair resource distribution and political representation. In reality, as Africa demonstrates, this can lead to the political and economic disenfranchisement of entire sections of the population. As federalism, when combined with political and economic corruption, may force disenfranchised groups to attempt secession, it is unclear as to which course remains the best option. Why this has not occurred in Kazakhstan will form the main body of analysis of this thesis.

1.3 EUROPEAN COLONIAL RULE IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

African post-colonial state-and-nation-building processes are further advanced than those of Central Asia, yet are relevant to Kazakhstan because of their respective similar colonial experiences, ethnic composition, economic weakness and the existence of a political elite dependent upon the support of an ethnic power-base. Although there are no point-by-point comparisons to be made, case studies will provide examples of the consolidation of post-colonial rule in countries, which, like contemporary Kazakhstan, are ethnically plural, synthetic nations that exist within borders drawn up by a colonial power.⁴⁷

In this section the similarities and differences between the approaches of the European colonial powers and Russia/USSR with regard to the issues of ethnic diversity, will be analysed. This will enable us to see how border delineation and centralized administrations either facilitated or inhibited the creation and institutionalization of ethnic identities. Knowing this will help to understand the differing results of these policies in Africa and Central Asia. The outcomes most pertinent to this thesis are the relationship between the dominant ethnic group and the state, the ability of the state to control group conflicts and secessionist demands and the means by which ethnic groups can mobilize against the state.

European colonial expansion into Africa was undertaken for a number of different reasons, which explains why certain policies were implemented in some countries but not in others. French colonialism began in 1870 with military expansion into the territory of contemporary Senegal undertaken to bolster French pride following the

⁴⁷ Wesseling, H.L., *Divide and Rule: The Partition of Africa 1880-1914*, Westport, CT, 1996 (hereafter Wesseling, *Divide and Rule*), p.9.

loss of Alsace to Germany in 1870 at the end of the Franco-Prussian war. Territorial aggrandizement was a method of augmenting French pride and conquered land was viewed as French territory. Great Britain, by contrast, was already in possession of long-established colonies and companies such as The Royal African Company, formed in 1672, exporting goods to West Africa.⁴⁸ This highlights the greater economic rationale behind initial British colonial expansion as a guarantee of British economic prosperity and political stability. Ultimately, these two systems evolved into French-style centralized rule and British indirect rule. The former was based on the notion of a *mission civilisatrice*, whereas the latter sought colonisation through commercial and economic means as well as through political agreements.⁴⁹ Russian territorial aggrandizement is the most complex to explain as it was motivated by more than territorial expansion or protection of economic interests⁵⁰ but also by a desire to cement her status as a European power by ‘civilising’ Asian territories and by a desire to ‘forestall possible danger by expanding to fill the space it is able to dominate’.⁵¹

This means that the most obvious difference between the British and French empires in Africa and the Russian empire in Asia is that the latter expanded contiguous with the Russian heartland whereas those of the first two were overseas. British and French territories were thus clearly demarcated and separate from their respective empires’ *cores*. Thus, although the eastern and western boundaries of the Russian empire were marked, there was no formal distinction between Russia and its ‘imperial

⁴⁸ King, *Localism*, p.27

⁴⁹ Wesseling, *Divide and Rule*, p.31.

⁵⁰ Khodarkovsky, M., ‘“Ignoble Savages and Unfaithful Subjects”: Constructing Non-Christian Identities in Early Modern Russia’ in Brower, D.R. and Lazzerini, E.J. (eds.), *Russia's Orient. Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917*, Bloomington, IN, 1997, pp.9-27, (p.10).

⁵¹ Hosking, G., *Russia: People and Empire 1552-1917*, London, 1997 (hereafter, Hosking, *Russia*), pp.13-14.

territories'.⁵² This rendered state-building all the more difficult and centralism was imposed to solve the problem, with mixed results. The USSR inherited a multi-ethnic population from the Russian empire, but also 'a state and bureaucracy with its own traditions for dealing with, or ignoring, that problem'.⁵³ In common with other land-based empires, ethnic mixing between 'imperial and colonial peoples'⁵⁴ led to a blurring between imperial and national identities and it was hard for the state to delineate 'who was a citizen and who was a subject'.⁵⁵ The lack of Russian advancement led to a low level of linguistic and cultural homogenisation, which Suny argues, inhibited the creation of 'a strong, coherent, widely accepted national identity autonomous from religious, dynastic or state identifications'.⁵⁶

Although Lenin initially argued that the right to self-determination was politically divisive, following Stalin's conception of nationality and nationhood, as laid down in *Marxism and the National and Colonial Questions*, which postulated that nations 'were the result of a common culture, a common language, a common economic life, and a common territory',⁵⁷ Lenin came to view nationhood as a potential problem toward the securing of national power. The minority nations of the Russian empire were therefore to be granted the right to statehood in order to avoid the emergence of a *combative nationalism* that would run counter to the establishment of Socialism in

⁵² Laitin, *Identity*, p.37.

⁵³ Suny, R.G. and Martin, T., 'Introduction' in Suny, R.G. and Martin, T. (eds.), *A State of Nations. Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, Oxford, 2001, pp.3-20, (p.8).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.8.

⁵⁵ Beissinger, M.B., and Young, C., 'Convergence to Crisis: Pre-Independence State Legacies and Post-Independence State Breakdown in Africa and Eurasia' in Beissinger, M.B. and Young, C. (eds.), *Postcolonial Africa and Post-Soviet Eurasia in Comparative Perspectives*, Baltimore, MD, 2002 (hereafter, Beissinger, 'Convergence'), pp.19-50, (p.23).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.8.

⁵⁷ Laitin, *Identity*, p.10.

Russia.⁵⁸ Stalin's theory meant that nations could be fashioned from ethnic groups and that ethnic identity was fixed; a factor that continues to shape post-Soviet conceptions of nationality and citizenship, as there was never an attempt to create an all-union *Soviet* civic-based national identity. Ultimately, this meant that the largest non-ethnic Russian minorities were granted the right to union republic status (equal to that enjoyed by Russia) as well as the right to secede and significant cultural and administrative autonomy in exchange for becoming part of a federal union of Soviet states.⁵⁹ Terry Martin argues that the USSR was 'an affirmative action empire'⁶⁰ as in their attempts to *decolonize* Russia whilst maintaining its territorial integrity, the creation of non-Russian republics and the development of national cultures and elites occurred in tandem with a downgrading of Russian culture and institutions. This policy also saw land requisition from Russians to compensate non-Russian minorities for imperial oppression. This is shown in north Kazakhstan, which was heavily Russified, yet because it was ancestral Kazakh grazing land it became part of the Kazakh SSR (established in 1936).

As nineteenth century African territorial delineation was not predicated upon the inevitability of future African independence, territory was divided into trading zones or zones of interest for each European nation. Although this sometimes divided ethnic groups, its lasting legacy was the creation of administrative regions (that later became independent nations) that were far larger than traditional zones of governance by

⁵⁸ Smith, G., 'The Soviet State and Nationalities Policy', in Smith G. (ed.), *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States*, 2nd edn, London, 1996, pp.2-22, (p.4).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.6-7.

⁶⁰ Martin, T., 'An Affirmative Action Empire. The Soviet Union as the Highest Form of Imperialism' in Suny, R.G. and Martin, T. (eds.), *A State of Nations. Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, Oxford, 2001, pp.67-90, (p.78).

African rulers and tribes as well as being comprised of an agglomeration of different ethnic groups.

The USSR was markedly different from the tsarist state in that 'where the former was largely content to rule over traditional social structures and leave them largely intact, Soviet power consciously sought to transform society'.⁶¹ Notions of racial hierarchies were eradicated, unlike in Africa where overseas European empires allowed for greater demarcation between European *cores* and African *holdings*.⁶² With regard to ethnic identity in Africa, France applied assimilationist policies (sporadically), whereas Britain did not.

Contemporary African ethnic identity is very much a legacy of the colonial period since 'although ethnonyms were not simply "invented", they were subject to significant reinterpretation, extension of some categories, amalgamation of others, and obliteration of still others.'⁶³ (A good example of this is the term *Yoruba*, which changed from its nineteenth century meaning of someone from Oyo to being the basis of 'a timeless and clearly-defined cultural oneness'⁶⁴ as designated by colonial officials. This led both to standardization of languages, but also to the creation of 'more codified patterns of identity awaiting mobilization by the political entrepreneur'.⁶⁵ The same could be said of Soviet policy, particularly in Central Asia, where (as chapter two will show) the *Kazakh* ethnonym was applied by the state, which created a division between *Kazakhs* and *Kirghiz*, despite the lack of evidence

⁶¹ Beissinger, 'Convergence', p.23.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.24

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.33.

⁶⁴ Freund, B., *The Making of Contemporary Africa. The Development of African Society Since 1800*, Basingstoke, 1998, p.134.

⁶⁵ Beissinger, 'Convergence', p.34.

showing that they are ethnically distinct peoples. As Martin and Suny show, nations were created out of ethnic groups as *homelands* in which they were able, in the case of the Kazakhs, to codify their language and culture for the first time. In both Africa and Kazakhstan colonial rule defined peoples by their ethnicity. This is one of the most salient similarities between the two entities as even the Soviet Union was unable to create a civic-based identifier for use in the union republics. The major difference lies in the fact that the Kazakh SSR was created as an *ethnic homeland* for the Kazakhs, whereas African border delineation did not mark out national homelands but instead demarcated economic zones. Hence, territories were not named for specific ethnic groups and upon independence were not viewed as the *homeland* of any specific group, not least because of the greater ethnic diversity within African states. Again, this is a direct result of colonial policy as ‘until relatively late in the colonial game, the proposition that there was a Nigerian, Algerian or Congolese “nation” would have been viewed as utterly ludicrous’.⁶⁶ Although independence was achieved within European-delineated borders, colonial policy created a legacy of sub-nationalism linked to control of resources and power that remains prevalent in Africa to this day.

One of the largest differences between colonial Africa and Soviet Kazakhstan is in the relationship between different ethnic groups and the state and this will be analysed in relation to the creation of centralized administration systems across the two. Firstly, the European empires in Africa as well as the Russian Empire and the USSR were all authoritarian and that their legacy in these independent states has been hard to overcome. Often, particularly in British West Africa, but also in certain French

⁶⁶ Young, C., ‘The African Colonial State and Its Political Legacy’ in Rothchild, D. and Chazan, N. (eds.), *The Precarious Balance. State and Society in Africa*, Boulder, CO, 1988, pp.25-66, (p.34).

colonies (Mauritania, Niger) local rulers were co-opted into power-sharing agreements, creating a pattern of states that were hierarchical and centralized at the centre and run by African middlemen at the periphery.⁶⁷ In Nigeria, this arrangement predated the formal colonial conquest of the country.⁶⁸ It allowed sub-nationalism to flourish and, as Forrest argues, actively encouraged political and economic competition among ethnoregions,⁶⁹ which demonstrates how regionalism is, in part, connected with developmental differences. In Nigeria, the Ibo proved particularly able to adapt to the British model and thus formed the backbone of the state bureaucracy. This culminated in 1956 with the granting of *internal self-government* for the Eastern region, in other words regional autonomy.⁷⁰ The problems of contemporary Africa are a direct result of this policy as colonial authorities permitted 'rulers and certain ethnic groups to preserve and even enhance their hegemony over other peoples'.⁷¹ In Kazakhstan (as chapter two will show), there was a far lower incidence of competition between ethnoregions as much of the economy of north Kazakhstan was part of south Siberian economic regions and much of Kazakhstan's heavy industry was under Moscow's direct jurisdiction. Furthermore, within Kazakhstan, both ethnic Russians and ethnic Kazakhs worked in government and within most job sectors, meaning that unlike in parts of Africa, there was no one ethnicity solely responsible for administration. Furthermore, although the USSR was a resource-scarce society, resources were not linked to ethnicity in quite the same way as they were in Africa, where it was usual to have an ethnic group favoured by

⁶⁷ Beissinger, 'Convergence', p.29.

⁶⁸ King, *Localism*, p.30.

⁶⁹ Forrest, *Subnationalism*, p.158.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* p.159.

⁷¹ Gellar, S., 'The Colonial Era', in Martin, P.M. and O'Meara, P. (eds.), *Africa*, third edition, Bloomington, IN, 1995, pp.135-155, (p.146).

Europeans, who were entrusted to work within a level of government and thus enjoyed greater privilege.

In much of both Africa and Kazakhstan a brief political flowering following independence was followed by increased authoritarianism. Power was concentrated in either individual political parties or within autocratic presidential rule. As Deng argues African independence movements required a great deal of negotiations between various ethnic groups and there were few regrets that European constitutions had been removed, but many African dictators have matched the worst cruelties of the colonial regime.⁷²

Most African administrations deny an ethnic content to statehood, but there have been few attempts to 'construct a national culture and social cohesion'.⁷³ Because of structural weaknesses in government systems as well as a lack of resources in many parts of Africa, members of non-dominant political groups are often dispossessed by their government, meaning that for them the state does not embody national identity. Frequently, these groups look outside of state frameworks for protection, leading to calls for secession and challenging the legitimacy of the state itself. This is further exacerbated by a lack of a strong state identification of its territory, owing to the reactive meaninglessness of borders in Africa. It may be hard for certain ethnic groups to place themselves in a position to take a fair share of political power as larger

⁷² Deng, F.M., 'Beyond Cultural Domination: Institutionalizing Equity in the African State', in Beissinger, M.B. and Young, C. (eds.), *Postcolonial Africa and Post-Soviet Eurasia in Comparative Perspectives*, Baltimore, MD, 2002, (hereafter, Deng, 'Cultural Domination'), pp.359-384, (p.376).

⁷³ Chazan, N., 'Patterns of State-Society Incorporation and Disengagement in Africa' in Rothchild, D. and Chazan, N. (eds.), *The Precarious Balance. State and Society in Africa*, Boulder, CO, 1988, pp. 121-148, (p.131).

groups are more likely to be able to control the centralized administrations, and thus power and wealth, left behind after independence.⁷⁴

As Deng argues, this means that ethnicity is something that most African states manage poorly, with only Ethiopia granting autonomy to territorially-based ethnic groups and the right to self-determination (if not secession).⁷⁵ Increased centralization with its attendant bureaucracies as well as the end of competitive elections and a crackdown on political dissent has been used to try and resolve these crises of statehood.⁷⁶ Although chapter three will discuss these processes with regard to Kazakhstan in greater detail, it is clear that these trends have an impact upon a state's ability to control group conflict and secession as well as prevent ethnic mobilization.

In Kazakhstan, the dominant group- the ethnic Kazakhs- is used by the administration to define Kazakhstan's role as an *ethnic homeland*. As it is forbidden to form ethnically-based political parties as well as challenge the territorial integrity of the Kazakh state, there are few official channels through which ethnic Russians could hope to mobilize. Centralization, as well as the resettlement of ethnic Kazakhs within heavily Russian-populated northern regions, has reduced the potential for secession. This is the opposite of Nigeria, which opted for greater decentralization as a means of quelling separatism, and the success or otherwise of this policy will be studied in the following section. As Kazakhstan shares a number of similarities with post-colonial Africa, the following section will also begin to explore the nature of ethnic conflict/ mobilization and why this has not emerged in the former.

⁷⁴ Deng, F.M., 'Cultural Domination', p. 376.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p.374.

⁷⁶ Gordon, D.L., 'African Politics in Gordon, A.A. and Gordon, D.L. (eds.), *Understanding Contemporary Africa*, Boulder, CO, 2001, pp.55-99, (p.57).

1:4 BRUBAKER'S TRIADIC NEXUS

In this section Brubaker's theory regarding the 'triadic' relationship between 'nationalising states', 'external national homelands' and a 'national minority' will be briefly commented upon.⁷⁷ This theory will primarily be used in chapter four to discuss the relationship of the Russian state to the ethnic Russian diaspora across the non-Russian parts of the former USSR. In this thesis, the triadic nexus under discussion will be as follows: the 'nationalising state' (Kazakhstan), the 'external national homeland' (Russia) and the 'national minority' (ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan).⁷⁸ The creation of an external national homeland occurs when the elite of a nation (in this case the Russian Federation) declare their interest in the rights and welfare of ethnic co-nationals outside their borders, although as Brubaker argues they may be abandoned if it is expedient for the 'external national homeland',⁷⁹ to do so. This analysis should enable one to see the dangers to the territorial integrity of a state whose claims to independence rest on an ethno-historical basis, when another state is prepared to assume the mantle of an 'external national homeland'.⁸⁰

Brubaker's work uses the dynamic between Russia and Kazakhstan and he shows why Russia has not acted as a nationalizing state, not least because of the lack of consensus in Russian political circles following the collapse of the Soviet Union as to what position to adopt towards the ethnic Russian diaspora;⁸¹ he also argues that there is an absence of will to act on their behalf despite the seeming arbitrariness of the Russian Federation's new borders.⁸² Brubaker also attempts to reach long-term conclusions as to the development of the relationship dynamic between the Russian Federation and

⁷⁷ All quotes from Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, pp.4-5.

⁷⁸ All quotes from *Ibid.*, pp.4-5.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.5.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.5.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.142-45.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p.139.

the fourteen other successor states of the USSR. As part of this he argues that the territory of north Kazakhstan is the great unknown owing to high levels of ethnic segregation and a deep-rooted settler population.⁸³ If inter-group hostility was to occur, caused by nationalizing policies within Kazakhstan producing massive Russian out-migration that severely strained the infrastructure of the Russian Federation, Russia could be impelled to act either through diplomatic or, in the worst case scenario, military channels on behalf of this community.⁸⁴ Brubaker links this phenomenon to the ‘tensions and contradictions’⁸⁵ within Soviet nationhood which institutionalised ‘*nationhood and nationality exclusively on a sub-state rather than a state-wide level*’ (italics author’s own).⁸⁶ This created a distinction between a supra-national civic-based Soviet identity, which differed markedly from ethnically-based national identity.⁸⁷ The result has been a tension between territorial space, for example the borders of the Russian Federation, and Russian national identity, particularly for ethnic Russians (and other groups living outside of national borders). This shows both the suitability of Brubaker’s theory for discussing ethnic Russians within Kazakhstan and the nature of inter-state relations between the two entities.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.174.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.174-75.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.36.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.27.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.28.

1:5 SUMMARY

It should be noted that there is some overlap in subsequent chapters with matters discussed here. This is because it is difficult to discuss theory without reference back to relevant examples of what is being discussed. In the following five chapters analysis will focus on the theory discussed here in order to pinpoint the reason behind the lack of ethnic violence in Kazakhstan.

Although using African political developments to understand similar processes in Kazakhstan may strike some as odd, placing them within this framework provides a fresh perspective as these issues have traditionally been studied within either an area-specific framework or within the context of developments within Western Europe or North America.⁸⁸ Although this comparative analysis can only be taken so far, one of its benefits is that it shows that the issues under discussion are global as well as being caused and affected by global forces and should thus be studied as a world-wide problem rather than being viewed as region or even country-specific.⁸⁹

Comparisons between these two seemingly disparate regions furthers our knowledge as they are able to demonstrate both global patterns of the cause and effect of state crises and the variations in patterns across Africa and Kazakhstan; they also help to understand why ethnic conflict has not occurred in Kazakhstan, despite the many similarities with Africa. Although many African countries have suffered a 'crisis of stateness itself',⁹⁰ Kazakhstan has not. This would seem to suggest that Kazakhstan

⁸⁸ Beissinger, M.B. and Young, C. 'Introduction: Comparing State Crises across Two Continents' in Beissinger, M.B. and Young, C. (eds.), *Postcolonial Africa and Post-Soviet Eurasia in Comparative Perspectives*, Baltimore, MD: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2002, pp.3-18, (p.3).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.8.

⁹⁰ Beissinger M.B. and Young, C., 'The Effective State in Postcolonial Africa and Post-Soviet Eurasia: Hopeless Chimera or Possible Dream?' in Beissinger, M.B. and Young, C. (eds.), *Postcolonial Africa*

could perhaps be more accurately described as a strong state. Indeed, it is the strongest and most stable state in Central Asia. This may be because the notion of Kazakhstan as a nation-state has more *credibility* than that of many post-colonial African states, which, despite denying an ethnic content, often lack legitimacy with many ethnic groups, meaning that sub-nationalism is able to undermine the workings of the state by creating regional rivalries to central power. Although Kazakhstan is ethnically diverse, its status as an ethnic homeland gave it legitimacy for ethnic Kazakhs, thus creating a strong base for political legitimacy. When coupled with Nazarbaev's program of centralization, which has reduced the power of regional elites and the oblast *rationalization*, which reduced the ethnic Russian population's share of the population across the northern oblasts, this made a secessionist attempt by the ethnic Russian community less likely. Placating the ethnic Russian community has helped to reduce the threat of inter-ethnic violence as although Russia has been unwilling to act as an 'external national homeland',⁹¹ she remains interested in their welfare; a factor that Nazarbaev has had to factor in to his political planning. As subsequent chapters will show, this factor, coupled with continued ethnic Russian discontent, means that ethnic tensions could be exacerbated in the future.

In the future I expect that inter-regional studies as a way of studying post-Soviet political development may well become the norm. Within the next ten to twenty years, scholarly research will be able to analyse better the long-term effects of Communism in Central Asia. With regard to state-and-nation-building processes in countries with strong sub-national identities and large minority groups, I feel that the

and Post-Soviet Eurasia in Comparative Perspectives, Baltimore, MD: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2002, pp.465-485, (p.465).

⁹¹ Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, p.5.

use of African case studies with which to compare Kazakhstan is particularly valuable as they place the effects of both Soviet and European colonial rule in a comparative framework as well, allowing for regional development to be placed within an international framework as well as one which highlights potential pitfalls for newly independent nations. One of the enduring legacies of both European colonialism and the USSR has been the multi-ethnic states that became independent. In the twenty-first century more and more states have become multi-ethnic, so more research is thus needed into why some states have been successful in preventing inter-ethnic conflict whereas others have failed. In this thesis I have attempted to compare two disparate regions, hopefully justifiable on an academic level, and this is what I think makes my work original.

CHAPTER TWO: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KAZAKH AND RUSSIAN COMMUNITIES IN THE TERRITORIES OF CONTEMPORARY KAZAKHSTAN IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.

2:1 INTRODUCTION

In this second chapter the development of Russo-Kazakh inter-ethnic relations will be analysed and demonstrate the long history in the region of both ethnic Kazakhs as well as ethnic Russians; this is important to note as Kazakhstan's status as an ethnic homeland has depended upon demonstrating that they were the first inhabitants of the region. This account of early Kazakh history will be presented in some detail as a knowledge of it is required to understand the contemporary processes of state-and-nation-building that will discussed in chapter three.

This chapter will also focus on Russian imperial expansion, its justification and the Cossack presence on the Kazakh territories. Comment will also be made on the peasant migration that occurred following the abolition of serfdom with particular attention being paid to the effects of settled agricultural practices upon the Kazakh nomadic way of life.

Finally, the emergence of a nascent Kazakh national identity will be studied. In insisting upon sedentarization as a means of ensuring Kazakh survival, the native intelligentsia were unable to create a popular support base for their aims. This shows the strength of support for nomadism and demonstrates the negative effects of Soviet policy upon the Kazakh community.

Sedentarization and agricultural collectivization fundamentally altered Kazakh national identity and left them more vulnerable to Sovietization than any other ethnic

group in the USSR. The Soviet period also marked the third wave of ethnic Russian migration to the then Kazakh SSR in the form of skilled technologists and Communist Party workers.

These separate waves of ethnic Russian migration indicate the fragmentary nature of ethnic Russian identity in post-Communist Kazakhstan. Divisions within the ethnic Russian community are an important factor inhibiting the rise of ethnic tensions, particularly as the Soviet period also reinforced the divisions within ethnic Kazakh society. The shared experiences of both ethnic groups during the Soviet period will demonstrate that all ethnicities suffered under Communism; ethnic Kazakhs recognize that ordinary ethnic Russians cannot be confused with politicians in the upper echelons of the Politburo.

The concluding remarks of this chapter will briefly return to the comparison with Algeria made in chapter one. Despite the divisions within the European community, Algerian independence culminated in mass migration to France and a well-orchestrated campaign of violence. The attitudes of the European community in Algeria, which viewed the territory as an integral part of France to be exploited and its indigenous people as little better than slave labour, contrasts with inter-ethnic relations in the Kazakh SSR, where ethnic Kazakhs dominated the internal political structures of the union republic. This has created a greater sense of parity between ethnic Kazakhs and Russians, which when coupled with the internal divisions in both communities has helped to prevent ethnic violence.

2:2 THE ORIGINS OF THE KAZAKHS

The origins of the Kazakhs are rather obscure, exacerbated by a nomadic culture that placed little importance on written history, although oral epics passed down through the generations related past heroic exploits and a great importance was placed upon the remembrance of ancestors. However, the fragmentary record of early Kazakh history has been pieced together from sources (not always favourable) supplied by sedentary cultures. As Akiner points out:

until the nineteenth century, the chief sources of information were the treaties, chronicles, travellers' accounts and other such documents compiled by their sedentary neighbours.¹

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Ethnically, the Kazakhs are 'South Siberian Mongoloid'² and 'the Kazakh language belongs to the central Turkic family'.³ Furthermore, the authors of a Kazakh history of the republic state that: 'it can be assumed that the formation of the Kazakh ethnos involved more than one tribe'.⁴ With regard to the presence of Neolithic settlements across modern-day Kazakhstan, Akiner argues that this demonstrates the earlier existence of sophisticated sedentary cultures during the second millennium BC: 'The inhabitants of the region at this period seem to have been sedentary agriculturalists and livestock breeders'.⁵

Beginning with the Sakas, nomadic tribes are believed to have made their first appearance in Kazakh territory during the first millennium BC. These groups later merged with other tribal confederations that moved into the region seven hundred

¹ Akiner, S., *The Formation of Kazakh Identity from Tribe to Nation-State*, London, 1995 (hereafter, Akiner, *Formation of Kazakh Identity*), p.8.

² *Ibid.*, p.2.

³ *Ibid.*, p.2.

⁴ Masanov, N., Abylkhozhin, Z., Erofeeva, I., Aleeksenko, A. and Baratova, G., *Istoriia Kazakhstana: narody i kul'tury*, Almaty, 2001 (hereafter, Masanov, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*), p.474.

⁵ Akiner, *Formation of Kazakh Identity*, p.9.

years later. Several of these groups, namely the Usuns, Kangyu and Alans, are alleged by some historians (principally in Kazakhstan) to be the Turkic forebears of contemporary Kazakhs (for example Kuzembaily who argues that the presence of such groups should be viewed as the beginning of the Kazakh ethnos and that the 'Kazakh ethnos first appeared in the VIIIth century').⁶ Nazarbaev claimed at the World Kazakh Kurultai in 1992 that Kazakh history:

Did not begin in the fifteenth century as some people assert. Nation and Khanate are different notions and the time of their appearance does not coincide. Modern Kazakhs are the descendants of the ancient Sakas.⁷

Following the establishment of the Gok Turk Empire in the sixth century, the next most significant event was the arrival of the Mongols under Genghiz Khan. On his death the lands of which modern day Kazakhstan, Siberia and Central Russia are composed, were awarded to Dzhuchi (Genghiz's eldest son), and became known as those of the Golden Horde.⁸ Their existence was short-lived, however, as by the fourteenth century they had begun to disintegrate into semi-independent groupings.

It was in the independent Khanate of Mogolistan that a number of these independent tribal groupings began to form into the Kazakh Khanate around the mid-fifteenth century. It was a powerful force in Central Asia moving into lands vacated by the Uzbek Khanate and gaining control of important Uzbek cities such as Otrar and

⁶ Kuzembaily, A. and Abil', E., *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, Saint Petersburg, 2004 (hereafter, Kuzembaily, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*), p.375.

⁷ Nazarbaev, N., 'Iz rechi na torzhestvennom zasedanii vsemirnogo kurultaia kazakhov', *Welcome to the Official Kazakhstan!*, 1 October 1992, (hereafter, Nazarbaev, 'Iz rechi'), <<http://www.president.kz/mainframeframe.asp?lng=ru>> [accessed 21 August 2005] (paras 3-4 of 36).

⁸ Akiner, *Formation of Kazakh Identity*, p.9.

Turkestan as well as fertile grazing lands in the vicinity of the Syr Darya river.⁹ As a 1993 Kazakh-prepared history states:

Written sources provide information about the importance of the defunct state-the Kazakh khanate played a visible role in the Central Asian region.¹⁰

One aspect of Kazakh history not commented upon by Akiner, however, is the claim that the Kazakhs formed a breakaway faction from the Uzbek Khanate. This claim is often disputed, but Melvin suggests:

Around the beginning of the sixteenth century the Kazakhs seem to have emerged as a distinct people separate from the Uzbeks and to have divided into three khanates or *Horda* organized on patrilineal lineages: the Great Horde (*Ulu zhuz*) in the Semirechie area in the south; the Middle Horde (*Orta zhuz*) in the Central Steppe region; and the Little Horde (*Leishi zhuz*) east of the river Ural.¹¹

This is backed up by contemporary Kazakh histories that date the start of the Khanate from around the same time period.¹² Research into the distinctiveness of Kazakh and Uzbek society at this time is, once again, very often contradictory. Akiner argues that the constant fluctuations of tribal groupings resulted in there being:

no clear-cut ethnic/racial division between any of these formations. In the fifteenth century, designations such as 'Uzbek' and 'Kazakh' were used very loosely, often overlapping in terms of reference.¹³

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.10.

¹⁰ Akishev, A., Asylbekov, M., Baipakov, M., Kasymbaev, Z., Kozybaev, M., Manesurov, T., Nurpiesov, K., Pushchulina, K. and Romanov, Y., *Istoriia Kazakhstana s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei*, Almaty, 1993 (hereafter, Akishev, *Istoriia Kazakhstana s drevneishikh vremen*), p.144.

¹¹ Melvin, N., *Russians Beyond Russia: The Politics of Russian National Identity*, London, 1995 (Melvin, *Russians beyond Russia*), p.101.

¹² Kuzembaily, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p.112.

¹³ Akiner, *Formation of Kazakh Identity*, p.11.

What is certain is that the terms *Kazakh* and *Uzbek* often overlapped and were inconsistently applied prior to the twentieth century. Furthermore, Russian annexation led to people being designated as either nomads or *Sarts* (the settled peoples of the oasis cities), further blurring ethnic demarcations by denying ethnic differences between the peoples of Central Asia. *Istoriia Kazakhstana* notes:

From the middle of the eighteenth century, the Russian administration classified Kazakhs 'Kirghiz' to differentiate them from Russian Cossacks. Right up until the middle of the nineteenth century, it was assumed that 'Kirghiz' meant Kazakhs of the Great Horde.¹⁴

(Although this fact is generally well-known and corroborated by non-Kazakh academics, it is important to treat these post-Soviet histories with a certain amount of caution, since they may be part of an attempt at national myth-making.)

Kazakh society was divided into three hordes. The Great Horde often had close contact with sedentary cultures, whereas the Middle and Small Hordes did not.¹⁵ The structure of the Kazakh Khanate was based on patrilineal descent, with all members claiming descent from the almost certainly mythical figure of Alash. Local clans (*ru*) served as the most immediate identity reference point in which elders administered customary law (*adat*). At an elite level the *whitebone* aristocratic class claimed separate descent with the sultan class (*tore*) either claiming descent from Genghis Khan or from the Prophet Mohammed. The sultan class elected horde leaders as well as the head of the Kazakh Khanate itself, thus conforming to the Mongol precedent of

¹⁴ Masanov, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p.474.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.156.

electing a leader outside of the segmentary descent pattern and acting as a single political organism.¹⁶

The Khanate had dissolved by the mid-sixteenth century as 'the existence of three natural climatic zones that gradually forged stable migration routes for identifiable clusters of mobile encampments'¹⁷ took effect. Does this demonstrate an inherent weakness within Kazakh national identity during this period? Kazakh identity would, almost certainly, have been weakly defined during this period outside of the ruling elite. Although a number of creation myths are culture-specific, in particular that of Alash, the defining characteristic of *Kazakhness* during this period was nomadic horse pastoralism, which is where inherent Kazakhness is rooted, although this way of life was not unique to them.

To conclude this section, it appears that if the Kazakhs were once unified, this was only really an overriding factor for the elite. It is arguable as to whether the great distances between tribal territories weakened their cohesiveness, but it did leave them vulnerable to external powers, as the following section will demonstrate.

¹⁶ Akishev, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p.144.

¹⁷ Schatz, E., *Modern Clan Politics. The Power of "Blood" in Kazakhstan and Beyond*. Seattle, WA, 2004 (hereafter, Schatz, *Modern Clan Politics*), p.30.

2:3 RUSSIAN IMPERIAL EXPANSION

The Russian imperial conquest can be divided into two distinct periods. The first, under Peter I and Empress Anna Ioannovna, captured north Kazakhstan in order to secure Siberia through a process of colonial settlement; the second established colonial rule through the military conquest of Turkestan.¹⁸ The leaders of the Small Horde, under Khan Abu'l Khayr, opened political negotiation with St Petersburg in 1775 in an attempt to stem Kalmyk encroachment onto tribal grazing lands in the early eighteenth century.¹⁹ The growth of the Dzhungarian Empire also destabilized the region, forcing the Small Horde Kazakhs into an alliance with the Russians.²⁰ Engaging in mutual acts of territorial protection (Russian interests in territories east of the Ural River and Small Horde grazing rights) means Russians can claim the voluntary nature of their conquest. This so-called *expedient alliance* is one of the most contentious aspects of Russo-Kazakh history, with both parties using the same historical episodes to illustrate the conflicting claim that the Kazakhs voluntarily ceded to Russian rule, or that the treaties were nothing more than politically convenient, temporary agreements signed to further Kazakh interests, a political approach common to many nomadic societies.

Interestingly, a post-Soviet Kazakh history of the republic calls the Russian occupation of Kazakh territory an inclusion: 'The inclusion of the Great Horde Kazakhs into the structure of the Russian Empire took place in the middle of the nineteenth century'.²¹ This is interesting, as the term inclusion would seem to suggest voluntary agreement on the part of the Kazakhs. However, Nazarbaev, in a speech

¹⁸ Olcott, M.B., *The Kazakhs*, Stanford, CA, 1987 (hereafter, Olcott, *Kazakhs*), p.28.

¹⁹ Levshin, A., *Opisanie Kirgiz-Kazach'kh, ili Kirgiz-Kaisatskikh ord i stepei*, Almaty, 1996, p.253.

²⁰ Akishev, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p.176.

²¹ Masanov, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p.73.

made in 1992, implied that although the Kazakh leadership undertook the decision to cede to the Russian Empire, this was taken under duress.

The history of Kazakhs' joining to Russia cannot be explained briefly. To be fair, it is necessary to understand the historical conditions of that time, to remember the difficult cultural position between two fires leading to this forced step with its risk of our disappearance as a nation.²²

The establishment of the first Cossack settlements east of the Ural River means that there was a Russian presence on Kazakh territory prior to annexation. The date of their arrival is disputed by Cossacks and Kazakhs, with the latter eager to claim prior antecedence and the former arguing that the Urals Cossacks, based in the west of Kazakhstan, arrived around the end of the sixteenth century as shown by their four hundred year celebrations in 1991.²³ Cossack *stanitsas* (fortified villages) formed the defensive line along Russia's southern border, although the use of men from the Urals Cossacks was not sufficient to shore up this defensive line and new Cossack hosts, called *Service Cossacks*, were created to man it. Newly created Siberian and Orenburg Cossacks operated along the Kazakh steppe and the Semirechie Cossacks were created out of divisions of the Seven Rivers host and were used to subdue the nomadic population of Turkestan. The infrastructure they built makes it clear that they were manning a frontier:

In the course of thirty to forty years, the Orenburg, Usk and Yaitsk lines stretching from Orenburg (founded in 1743) to the Yaik estuary were built. They stretched for 2500 versts and counted 114 redoubts, as well as outposts and fortifications.²⁴

²² Nazarbaev, 'Iz rechi', (para 11 of 36).

²³ Kuzembaily, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p.360.

²⁴ Masanov, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p.194.

This would appear to refute the claim that this land was part of Russia's self-colonization and that she moved into unoccupied lands as part of the natural growth of the Russian state, as the defences appear to be protective, implying a barrier between Russia and the conquered territories, although this could have been an attempt to prevent the lawlessness on the steppe from spreading further.

Kazakh resentment towards the Cossacks manifested itself in low-level skirmishes, but the two groups joined together when their respective interests were threatened. The Pugachev revolt of 1771-72 is an example of this, and Kazakh-orchestrated raids on Russian targets proved successful (on a low level). However, following the pattern of previous Kazakh diplomacy, horde leaders played Pugachev and the imperial authorities off against each other and, in the end, the Russian authorities quelled the revolt.

After the restructuring of the Cossack regiments by Alexander II, they assumed responsibility for much of the day-to-day imperial administration. Furthermore, many Cossacks settled and began to farm the land, despite the traditional Cossack aversion to settled farming practices:

In the second quarter of the nineteenth century there was a noticeable expansion of Slavic settlements on Kazakh territory, with the first Russian peasant villages of Urals and Siberian Cossacks appearing on Kazakh grazing-land.²⁵

The number of Cossacks on Kazakh soil grew to 278,295 by 1905, rising as high as 365,000 by 1916. Demko notes that: 'Cossacks held nearly 90% of the cultivated land

²⁵ Masanov, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p.207.

in 1880'.²⁶ The Cossack presence on Kazakh territory also paved the way for increased Russian migration to the steppe since they had not only created a precedent but also rented out land for hire. This was a direct result of the land reform laws that granted Cossacks fifty-sixty dessyatines (one was roughly equal to forty acres) of land compared to fifteen for Kazakhs and ten to eleven for Russians. The Cossacks were poor and wasteful farmers (statistics show that only 5% of their land was efficiently farmed²⁷) but their lasting legacy to Kazakhstan was the increase in Russian settlement in the north of the country. With regard to Russian Cossack-Kazakh relations during this period, aside from the Pugachev revolt, which was, in any case, an uprising against the Russian Empire, it appears that they can best be characterized as mutually suspicious and resentful but not volatile.

The second wave of Russian colonization occurred during the period following the abolition of serfdom in 1864 and the Stolypin reforms of 1906, which freed up the Russian peasantry to migrate to agriculturally fertile areas across the Russian Empire. Migration to the Kazakh steppe was desirable since there was an abundance of land and a weak political infrastructure, meaning freedom from state controls, although this colonial settlement was the main way through which the Kazakh steppe was incorporated into the Russian Empire.²⁸ The Russian settlement in the Kazakh territories was much more intrusive than that which occurred in Siberia. The Siberian tribes were small and scattered, whereas there were over three million Kazakhs in 1897.²⁹ By the same year there were already 539,000 Russians in Kazakhstan, with 333,500 of them living in the northern Akhmolinskaia and Uralskaia Oblasts.³⁰ There

²⁶ Demko, G., *The Russian Colonization of Kazakhstan 1896-1916*, Bloomington, IN, 1969 (hereafter, Demko, *The Russian Colonization*), p.46.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.48.

²⁸ Demko, *The Russian Colonization*, pp.52-57.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.2.

³⁰ Masanov, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, Table 73, p.521.

were settlement restrictions in place, particularly in areas such as Semirechie, where open hostility towards Russian settlers existed.³¹ This was caused by land seizures justified under the dubious legality that since all steppe lands belong to the Kazakh khans as opposed to private owners, they were forfeit to the Tsar following the Russian conquest.³² This displacement led to the sedentarization of 30% of Kazakhs by 1926.³³ Between 1896 and 1916, the Russian population grew by 214% (1, 257, 672), considerably more in northern and eastern areas, while the native population increased by only 14% (351, 051).³⁴

The 1916 uprising demonstrated that most Kazakhs resented Russian habitation of the Kazakh steppe although it was, in part, motivated by Kazakh anger over army conscription as much as by land appropriation. This shows that inter-ethnic relations remained tense with Kazakh anger over changes to their way of life being expressed. Russian expansion also created a network of profit-making farms and thriving towns and cities that, for better or worse, would help to form the basis of a modern Kazakh state, although this later migration was denounced by the economist Galuzo as 'colonialist wanderings'.³⁵

To conclude, drawing a distinction between the waves of Russian migration to Kazakhstan is important as this affected relations with the indigenous population, how they were perceived and also the strength of their ties to the republic.³⁶

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.205

³² Rywkin, M., *Moscow's Muslim Challenge. Soviet Central Asia*, London, 1982 (hereafter, Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge*), pp.16-17.

³³ Demko, *The Russian Colonization*, p.189.

³⁴ Melvin, *Russians Beyond Russia*, p.104.

³⁵ Galuzo, P., *Turkestan-Koloniia. Ocherk istorii Turkestana ot zavoevaniia russkimi do revoliutsii 1917 goda*, Oxford, 1986, p.7.

³⁶ Karklins, R., *Ethnic Relations in the USSR. The Perspective from Below*, Winchester, MA, 1986 (hereafter, Karklins, *Ethnic Relations*), p.157.

2:4 THE DEVELOPMENT OF KAZAKH NATIONAL IDENTITY

Russian influence was exerted most strongly over the Middle Horde, many of whom began to settle and adopt European agricultural and educational practices. From the 1870s schools had been opened in the Kazakh territories as part of a drive to Russify the Kazakhs through the use of Tatar intermediaries in the north Kazakh steppe. This encouraged the creation of a literate intelligentsia drawn from the Middle and Small Hordes, members of whom, by the nineteenth century, began to argue that the survival of the Kazakhs was dependent upon the creation of a sense of Kazakh national identity that could only be achieved through the settlement of the nomadic Kazakhs.

This was not an attempt at state-building as the Kazakh intelligentsia desired greater political autonomy within the Russian Empire rather than independence. Their attempt to create a unified people should, however, be considered the first attempt at Kazakh nation-building. The complex and contested nature of Kazakh history no doubt hindered this attempt along with the power of sub-national tribal structures that best suited a nomadic people for whom national boundaries were an unknown concept.

Principal among the leaders of this national revival movement were Ali Khan Bukeikhanov and Ahmed Baitursunov. The latter, together with Mir Yacub Dulatov, edited the journal *Qazaq*³⁷ that they published from 1913-18 (this name itself an attempt to assert their identity under a Russian administration that designated them as 'Kirghiz' to distinguish them from Russian Cossacks living in the region). (Indeed, in

³⁷ Olcott, *Kazakhs*, p.112.

'1925, the historical name *Kazak* was reinstated (and from 1935 with the spelling *Kazakh*)).³⁸

Sabol states:

The self-proclaimed national leaders, above all, sought to unify a disparate population that they believed was threatened with extinction unless it could be 'awakened' and invigorated with a new sense of self and purpose.³⁹

The newspaper became the official mouthpiece of Alash, the political party created to articulate Kazakh demands that was supported by a 'sizeable part of the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia'.⁴⁰ Attempting to unite the Kazakhs would prove to be an arduous task not least because of their lack of a national consciousness and the fact that inter-horde rivalry had rendered the Kazakh politically weak and vulnerable to conquest through exacerbating the lack of political authority across the steppe. These events now form the basis of post-Communist interpretations of Kazakh history. In a speech given by Nazarbaev in December 1996 on the fifth anniversary of Kazakhstan's independence, he stated:

Everything of what Ablai dreamed about in the stormy steppe of the eighteenth century, for what Kenesary died in the dramatic nineteenth century, what Bukeikhanov projected before the totalitarian genocide-was not made null and void and did not sink into oblivion.⁴¹

³⁸ Masanov, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p.474.

³⁹ Sabol, S., *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazakh National Consciousness*, New York, 2003 (hereafter, Sabol, *Russian Colonization*), p.6.

⁴⁰ Akishev, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p.244.

⁴¹ Nazarbaev, N., 'Iz doklada na torzhestvennom sobranii, posviashchennom 5-letiiu nezavisimosti Respubliki Kazakhstan', *Welcome to the Official Kazakhstan!*, 12 December 1996, <<http://www.president.kz/mainframeframe.asp?lng=ru>. [accessed 21 August 2005] (para 2 of 68).

The Kazakh leadership based their nationalism around language and culture, which, it was felt, would unite the fragmented Kazakh people. It was hoped that the 'cultural symbols (real and imagined) of a nomadic past'⁴² would help lay the foundations of a shared Kazakh identity and give the Kazakh language a greater sense of legitimacy.

At the Second All-Kirghiz Conference, held in Orenburg during July 1917, it was argued that supplanting nomadism with a settled existence would create a unified sense of Kazakh national identity by destroying the power of horde structures that had rendered the Kazakhs so vulnerable to conquest in the past. Although nomadism had created a sense of Kazakhness, it was argued it was no longer integral to it and was inherently unstable owing to its far greater reliance upon favourable environmental conditions than settled agriculturalists. With the Bolshevik commitment to democracy uncertain, Alash Orda declared themselves a semi-autonomous government with control over the Kazakhs and the Kirghiz in an autonomous province called Alash. As an administrative body it hoped to resolve the precarious economic conditions across the steppe but its political weakness reduced its support amongst ordinary Kazakhs and, by spring 1920, it had been taken over by the Bolsheviks.

The failure of the Kazakh intelligentsia to achieve their aims shows that few Kazakhs wanted to settle and nomadic practices were incompatible with the creation of a national identity in a modern sense. This is because the majority of Kazakhs did not conceive of themselves as being a united people and because of the power of sub-national structures.

⁴² Sabol, *Russian Colonization*, p.4.

2:5 SOVIET RULE IN KAZAKHSTAN

Kazakh society underwent rapid modernization in the years immediately preceding the Second World War and the destruction of their nomadic way of life may explain their thorough Sovietization; a detailed study of this period is crucial to understanding inter-ethnic relations in the post-Soviet period as Communist policy has had a direct bearing on their development.

The effects of Soviet policy have until recently been difficult to analyse or quantify, although it is clear that the collectivisation and sedentarization of the Kazakh nomad during the later 1920s and early 1930s altered Kazakh national development, not least because the process occurred so quickly: 'If in 1928 2% of all agriculture had been collectivized, then by October 1931, nearly 65% had undergone the same process'.⁴³

Despite the opposition of the Kazakh leadership to agricultural collectivization, their position was disregarded with cataclysmic consequences. Olcott remarks that:

The Kazakh community that survived confiscation was a broken one, its traditional leadership weakened and stripped of many age-old functions: the survivors were malleable and hence of greater value as Soviet citizens.⁴⁴

Akiner goes as far as to suggest that enforced sedentarization and collectivization delivered an almost fatal blow to a nascent Kazakh national identity as the ensuing mass population loss and sense of dislocation from their tribal, ancestral past based on the sub-national structure of the horde, left a huge void that Communism filled.⁴⁵ Indeed, part of the rationale behind these twin Soviet policies was the attempted

⁴³ Masanov, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p.295.

⁴⁴ Olcott, *Kazakhs*, p.248.

⁴⁵ Akiner, *Formation of Kazakh Identity*, p.34.

destruction of the traditional clan-tribal hierarchical structure; the regime decided that abolishing clan-tribal lands, transforming nomadic districts into settlements as well as isolating the ruling tribal elite, was the best way to achieve this.⁴⁶

Following this process, in many, though not in all aspects, the Kazakhs became a *tabula rasa*: the potential birthplace of *Homo Sovieticus*. From a purely statistical viewpoint, Kuzembaily and Abil' state that around 2 million Kazakhs died during the 1930s.⁴⁷ Furthermore, nearly 80 per cent of their herds were destroyed between 1928 and 1932.⁴⁸ The population decreased further through emigration as 300,000 Kazakhs moved to the Uzbek SSR and many also fled to Xinjiang in China. The huge Kazakh population decrease further undermined Kazakh culture since for many Kazakhs a breach had been created between the survivors and their dead relatives and ancestors. As Khazanov notes: 'the social organisation of nomads is complex and multi-levelled and is conceptualized in notions of kinship and descent'⁴⁹ and the ability to recite one's ancestors back seven generations was an important part of Kazakh culture. With so many Kazakhs now dead, this was difficult, although not impossible, to maintain.

All of the above was accompanied by the ensuing redundancy of nomadic agricultural knowledge. Kazakh nomadic practices were well suited to the steppe, rooted as they were in seasonal migration patterns. Akiner comments that the ensuing irrelevance of Kazakh agricultural knowledge meant that the land lost all meaning for them and this

⁴⁶ Kadyrzhanov, R., 'Evolution of the Ruling Elite of Kazakhstan', *Central Asia Quarterly*, 4.2, London: SOAS, 1997 (hereafter, Kadyrzhanov, 'Evolution'), pp.30-37, (p.30).

⁴⁷ Kuzembaily, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p.308.

⁴⁸ Jasny, N., quoted in Olcott, *Kazakhs*, p.115.

⁴⁹ Khazanov, A.M., *Nomads and the Outside World* Cambridge, 1984, (hereafter, Khazanov, *Nomads*), p.121.

left a hole that Communism found easy to fill. Indeed, the following quote demonstrates how fundamental the Kazakh steppe had been in shaping Kazakh identity:

The environmental conditions of Kazakhstan determined the character and basic direction of the development of the system of material production, the agricultural structure and the economic potential of nomadic Kazakh society.⁵⁰

Although Akiner notes that the collectivization does not figure in Kazakh history the way that the Holocaust does to the Jews, it would be wrong to claim that its effects were limited. That the Kazakhs were unable to express their sense of loss both for their relatives and their lost culture was due to the repressive nature of the Soviet regime rather than a lack interest in the past.⁵¹ Post-perestroika has seen an acknowledgement of the harmful effects of collectivization and sedentarization with Kazakh author Murat Auezov noting that: 'The Kazakhs have suffered the greatest tragedy in the twentieth century. We have a transformed consciousness'.⁵²

The Kazakhs thus became more thoroughly Sovietized than their Central Asian neighbours and this had both positive and negative consequences for the Kazakhs. It created a modern, industrialized economy, established the borders of their national republic,⁵³ and created the infrastructure for the codification of the Kazakh language and, hence, the creation of a Kazakh literature. The Russian language was, however, imposed upon all Soviet citizens. Although this could be viewed as a rather benign

⁵⁰ Masanov, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p.84.

⁵¹ Akiner *Formation of Kazakh Identity*, p.63.

⁵² Interview with the author, 5 August 1999 in George, A., *Journey to Kazakhstan: The True Face of the Nazarbaev Regime*, Lanham, MD, 2001, p.8.

⁵³ Akiner *Formation of Kazakh Identity*, p.34.

attempt to create a common Soviet spoken language, it was also part of a Russification process that was disguised as Sovietization; this was exacerbated in the 1930s by the replacement of national culture and languages by a Soviet culture. This is the view taken by Ya'acov Roi who states: 'The Soviet period left two major bequests: ubiquitous education and Russification with all that both implied'.⁵⁴ . A consequence of this policy was the increased irrelevance, in public life at least, of the Kazakh language. Furthermore, a constant rewriting of national histories saw those once viewed as *proto-Communists* derided as bourgeois nationalists.⁵⁵

The policy, begun in the mid-1920's, of *Korenizatsiia* (rooting Communism in the local culture through a program of affirmative action) led to the promotion of Kazakhs into the upper levels of society through the creation of a highly educated stratum of society competing for the best jobs in the Soviet apparatus. In Kazakhstan, this policy was also used to combat illiteracy and resistance to Soviet rule as well as changing traditional patterns of elite authority. With regard to education, levels of secondary and tertiary education increased with the percentage of Kazakhstan's population having a secondary or higher education conforming to the all-union average. By 1935, 91% of all children were attending school, as the table at the top of the next page will show.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Roi, Y., 'Introduction' in Roi, Y., (ed.), *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, London, 1995, pp.1-4, p.3.

⁵⁵ Prokhorov, A.M. (ed.), *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia*, T.11, Moscow, 1973, p.151.

⁵⁶ Kuzembaili, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p.38.

Percentage Population (over age 10) with Higher or Secondary Education⁵⁷

	1959	1970	1979
Kazakhstan	34.7	46.8	63.3
USSR (Total)	35.4	45.8	63.9

Concerning ethnic advancement during the Soviet period, the most useful indicator is provided by statistics regarding Communist Party membership. Until the 1960s, the Kazakh SSR differed from other republics owing to the high prevalence of ethnic Russians in leading positions. Kadyrzhanov, a lecturer at the Kazakh Academy of Sciences, notes that the *parity principle* operated in the Kazakh SSR; this meant Russian deputies for Kazakh heads of departments as well as *Kazakh* and *Russian* jobs.⁵⁸ (The former held posts connected with the republic's status as a union republic such as the Chairman of Government and Parliament and President of the Academy of Sciences.) Ethnic Russians headed the KGB as well as serving as heads of Russian-dominated oblasts.⁵⁹ Although this was designed to create an inter-ethnic balance within the republic, it is clear that before the 1960s there was a clear dominance of ethnic Russians in top posts. Statistics on membership of the Central Committee of the Kazakh Communist Party show Kazakhs formed 56% of the Committee at the Fifth Congress in 1951, but only 41% in 1961. Furthermore, Kazakh membership of the party fell from 40.6% in 1954 to 32.8% in 1966, whereas that of the ethnic Russians rose 3% to 44%.⁶⁰ This does, however, accurately reflect the fact that ethnic

⁵⁷ Makarova, O.K., Zhdanova, M.P. and Timofeeva, E.A., *Chislennost' i sostav naseleniia SSSR po dannym vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1979 goda*, Moscow, 1984, pp.30-31.

⁵⁸ Kadyrzhanov, 'Evolution', pp.31-32.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.31.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.32.

Russians comprised the largest part of the Kazakh population- 42.7% in 1959 as opposed to 30% ethnic Kazakhs.⁶¹

This ethnic imbalance was, in part, caused by the third wave of ethnic Russian migration that occurred during the Soviet period. Skilled technical workers as well as semi-skilled Russians were brought in to run all-union projects such as the space base at Baikonur, the nuclear testing ground near Semipalatinsk and also to run the *Virgin Lands* program. (These Russians and other Slavs thus had weak ties to the republic and would be among the first to leave following Kazakhstan's independence.) The Kazakh leadership had opposed this plan since, as Karklins notes:

The First Secretary of the CP of Kazakhstan took an 'obstructionist' attitude towards Khrushchev's Virgin Lands program developed in 1954 since 'he was afraid the expansion of cultivation would necessarily mean the influx of [non-Kazakh farmers] into his republic.'⁶²

This led to their demotion on the grounds of nationalism and Ponomarenko and Brezhnev were appointed respectively First and Second Secretary in 1954. Hodnett argues that this shows 'a vote of no confidence in the ethnic reliability of the Kazakh leadership'.⁶³ Khrushchev even created the *Virgin Lands Territory* as a specific administrative unit within the Kazakh SSR, with the possibility of its inclusion into the RSFSR although this was abandoned in 1965 and the land returned to direct Kazakh control.⁶⁴

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.32.

⁶² Karklins, *Ethnic Relations*, p.52.

⁶³ Hodnett, G., *Leadership in the Soviet National Republics. A Quantitative Study of Recruitment Policy*, Oakville, 1978 (hereafter, Hodnett, *Leadership*), p.94.

⁶⁴ Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge*, pp.133-34.

Despite this perceived advancement of the Kazakhs, the language and cultural policies of the Stalinist period coincided with a period of enormous vulnerability in the Kazakh community. The vast loss of life and culture that followed collectivization made them all the more receptive to a policy of cultural and linguistic Russification.

Although the development of the Kazakh language was hindered, the Kazakhs were becoming a nation. Nazarbaev noted in 1992:

Can we deny the fact that during the first years of Soviet power we received the opportunity to establish our native land as a republic when there had been the threat of tripartite division during the previous century, to restore its integrity, to define and secure its borders?⁶⁵

Thus the *nation* created by Soviet policy was one in which the Kazakh SSR was created as an ethnic homeland (see chapter one), despite the Kazakhs forming a minority of the population. It should be noted that the emphasis on ethnicity was further reinforced by the *entry number five* section of the Soviet internal passport; this made ethnic descent the determinant of one's nationality and continues to colour nation-building processes across the former Soviet Union. As has begun to be shown and will be shown in greater detail in the following sections, ethnic Russians had little reason to view themselves as Kazakh citizens because *entry number five* classifies them as ethnic Russians.

⁶⁵ Nazarbaev, 'Iz rechi', (para 16 of 36).

2:6 ETHNIC RELATIONS IN THE KAZAKH SSR

Although collectivization and sedentarization almost totally obliterated the traditional Kazakh culture and way of life, aspects did survive. As this section will demonstrate, principal among these was the horde structure, which although disrupted by a rapid decrease in population was able to reform. Indeed, the study of horde structures is particularly important for analysis of Kazakhstan's post-Soviet political development, as horde politics and clan loyalty remain influential in its determination. This is because, as Olcott notes:

although the new, more decentralized structure of traditional authority impeded the formation of a unified Kazakh people, it was well suited to traditional Kazakh social patterns. Clan, village and aul authorities simply reconstituted themselves as Soviets and governed their population much as before.⁶⁶

The Kazakhs thus adapted the new legal framework in which they now had to operate to uphold their own cultural identity. However, these structures were more loosely based on traditional horde structures than those that had existed prior to collectivization primarily because of the huge loss of life that occurred during this period. This proved the flexibility of kinship ties which 'could be consciously or unconsciously manipulated, they are capable of broadening and narrowing, and of splitting up and merging in accordance with practical necessities and a specific historical situation'.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Olcott, *Kazakhs*, p.162.

⁶⁷ Khazanov, *Nomads*, p.142.

Post-Soviet studies have demonstrated that the political structures of the USSR were used to promote the individual horde interests. Gerhard Simon suggests that: 'the terror of collectivisation broke the Kazakhs' resistance and increased their willingness to live under the existing conditions and use them to their advantage',⁶⁸ with the 1930s, in particular, marking a particularly virulent period of settling of scores between the Middle and Great Hordes.⁶⁹

Recent studies have demonstrated that despite concerted efforts by the Soviet authorities to stigmatize clan loyalties, Soviet policy drove clan loyalties underground but did not destroy their effectiveness. Furthermore, as Schatz states, 'Early Soviet rule acutely politicized sub-ethnic identities'.⁷⁰ This would ultimately lead to the creation of informal supply and demand networks that were able to thrive in a resource-scarce society like the USSR. Although the most obvious manifestation of horde networking is provided by studying the composition of the political elite, a more accurate marker of the enduring strength of sub-national loyalties is provided by day-to-day accounts of *patron-clientelism*. This will be studied in some detail as these patterns are replicated in post-Soviet society.

Despite the power of horde politics, the Kazakh territories were united into a single administrative territory with clearly demarcated borders that encouraged thought of a united Kazakh population as well as providing a framework within which the Kazakh language and culture could be preserved. The Kazakh national revival began in the 1960s with the appointment of Kunaev to the position of First Secretary of the Kazakh Communist Party during 1960-62 and 1964-86. This coincided with the partial

⁶⁸ Simon, G., quoted in Kolstoe, P., *Russians in the Former Soviet Republics*, London, 1995, p. 257.

⁶⁹ Akiner, S., *Central Asia: New Arc of Crisis*, London, 1993, p.14.

⁷⁰ Schatz, *Modern Clan Politics*, p.37.

demographic recovery brought on by the high ethnic Kazakh birth rate, although they remained a minority in their own union republic. The Soviet population censuses of 1979 and 1989 show this clearly:⁷¹

	1979	1989
Kazakhs	44.4%	48.3%
Non-Kazakhs	55.6%	51.7%

Under Kunaev, the Kazakh nomenclatura was strengthened. This was achieved through a gradual reversal of the *parity principle* with the number of Kazakh members of the Central Committee of the Kazakh Communist Party rising from 47% in 1971 to 51.9% in 1981 and overall party membership up from 32.8% in 1966 to 38.6% in 1981 whereas that of the ethnic Russians fell 4% to 40.7%.⁷² Furthermore, Kunaev increasingly selected ethnic Kazakhs for top posts during his tenure. This meant that the Kazakh SSR conformed to the all-union average by having 100% native representation in the Chairman of Council of Ministers, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet and Head of the Writers' Union, owing to their visibility as highly publicized jobs. Hodnett states that this shows a deliberate policy of jobs reserved for natives and that Kazakhstan conformed to this trend.⁷³ This even extended to traditionally *Russian* jobs such as Obkom head of Russian-dominated provinces. Kadyrzhanov notes:

In the mid-1960s Kazakhs held the post of First Secretary of the Oblast Party Committee (Obkom) in five oblasts in the south and west of the republic where Kazakhs were in the majority. By 1986 Kazakhs held this job in ten oblasts

⁷¹ Melvin, *Russians Beyond Russia*, p.135.

⁷² Kadyrzhanov, 'Evolution', p.33.

⁷³ Hodnett, *Leadership*, p.94.

out of the nineteen including some of the northern, Russian-dominated provinces.⁷⁴

Following the death of Brezhnev, however, Kunaev was unable to pursue this policy to the same extent and was forced to reduce the number of ethnic Kazakhs in the higher party structures from 51.9% in 1981 to 46.6% in 1986. Despite this, the following statistics show that under Kunaev ethnic Kazakhs enjoyed an opportunity for political advancement.

National composition of Kunaev's cohort (%) during his tenure⁷⁵

	Kazakhs	Russians	Others
Party structure	44.4	48.1	7.5
Government	70.9	20.0	9.1
Regional elite	62.5	30.0	7.5
Overall	59.3	32.7	8.0

Ethnic Kazakh advancement was coupled with a renewed interest in Kazakh culture. This manifested itself in a renewed interest in the traditional, pre-Soviet culture that had been almost eradicated. There was renewed interest in the yurt⁷⁶ and large numbers of books published on subjects as diverse as the origin of Kazakh names and how to hunt with hawks.⁷⁷ This perhaps demonstrates a new confidence in their titular nationality status.

⁷⁴ Kadyrzhanov, 'Evolution', p.33.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.36.

⁷⁶ Akiner, *Formation of Kazakh Identity*, p.53.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.54.

2:7 PERESTROIKA AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE USSR

Despite the resurgent interest in their past and cultural heritage, the Kazakhs were still hampered by a certain lack of ethnic awareness. Both a civic and an ethnic concept of *Kazakhness* were difficult notions to instil in people, although Kunaev had some success in the 1970s with the creation of a *Kazakhstaner* identity, which was a non-ethnic identity applicable to all citizens of the Kazakh SSR.⁷⁸ The vast majority of Slavs, however, when not identifying with the Soviet Union, identified with Russia.

No doubt the failure of this civic-based identifier failed because the state determined that people thought of nationality along ethnic lines. Few ethnic Russians would have been likely to consider themselves a Kazakhstaner as demonstrated by the high levels of ethnic discomfort felt by ethnic Russians living in the Kazakh SSR in the 1980s. Karklins's surveys of their unease noted that 34% of Russians in the Kazakh SSR, as opposed to 21% of Russians in Central Asia and the Baltic republics, did not feel at home in the region, with one respondent stating: 'No, they don't feel at home there because the Kazakhs are a black people and they don't fit together, the characters don't fit'.⁷⁹

This is surprising in many respects since the Russian and Kazakh populations lived fairly separate existences with the former living in northern enclaves and cities, whilst the latter tended to inhabit the south and live in more rural areas. A low rate of intermarriage (10% in the Kazakh SSR for all inter-ethnic marriages regardless of the nationalities involved, although only the Slavic republics and Latvia actually registered rates of ethnic intermarriage at over 20%) further exacerbated this

⁷⁸ Olcott, M.B., *Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise*, Washington D.C., 2001, p.55.

⁷⁹ Karklins, *Ethnic Relations*, p.157.

division.⁸⁰ What the whole of Karklins's work most clearly demonstrates is the deep reserves of ethnic mistrust that existed in the Kazakh SSR. The reasons for this included different cultural norms, not least clan loyalty and the Kazakh habit of producing large families. Although this view was not universal among ethnic Russians, it does show the fear felt by some over the demographic explosion that occurred in Central Asia. Karklins's work showed that most Russians believed they were losing power and influence in Kazakhstan and only 6% felt that Russo-Kazakh relations ran 'well'.⁸¹

It is clear that Russo-Kazakh relations within Kazakhstan deteriorated because of increased power and influence of the ethnic Kazakhs. Prior to the demographic revival, ethnic Russians were the largest ethnic group in the republic, but now faced increased competition for jobs and university places. Tension between the two communities were, no doubt, exacerbated by a Russian sense of cultural superiority, which resented Kazakh advancement and viewed them as an inferior race. Like Kunaev, Nazarbaev also took the opportunity to strengthen the position of the titular nationality, but although they dominated the regional and governmental elites, Russians continued to outnumber Kazakhs in the party structure, even if the gap between the two groups had decreased.⁸² As Schatz argues, from 1985 the most marked changes in ethnic composition of government posts occurred. He states that between 1985-94 'the percentage of non-Kazakhs in high level state posts dropped from fifty to twenty-five'.⁸³

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.156.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.70.

⁸² Kadyrzhanov, 'Evolution', p.36.

⁸³ Schatz, *Modern Clan Politics*, p.81.

The Alma-Ata riots of 1986, sparked by Kolbin's appointment as an ethnic Russian to the position of First Secretary of the Kazakh Communist Party exposed the tensions within Kazakh society. They are often used to illustrate an upsurge in Kazakh nationalism, although the protests were sparked more because of Kolbin's lack of ties to the Kazakh SSR rather than his ethnic Russian status. Kolbin's successor, Nazarbaev, was quick to damp down nationalist sentiment and there was little support for separatist nationalism amongst the Kazakh intelligentsia, partly because it appeared to them that their interests were best served by remaining within the Soviet supra-structure. By the 1980s nationalist groups such as Alash and Zheltokshan existed, as did more social democratic movements such as Azat.⁸⁴ They should be considered as examples of proto-nationalist parties despite the fact that they did not flourish and were not supported by the vast majority of the Kazakh population. The lack of nationalist agitation for independence demonstrates the underlying concerns over the viability of an independent Kazakh republic owing to the republic's ethnic composition. Remaining in the Soviet Union appeared a way of diffusing potential ethnic strife. Olcott comments that:

By the end of the 1980s few believed that Kazakhstan could be independent.

There was talk of Russian separatism and Kazakhs called for the restoration of grazing lands.⁸⁵

Kazakhstan became independent by default following the collapse of the USSR. It was the last republic to claim independence, although Nazarbaev stated: 'Kazakhstan will never consent to be the appendage of another region, and will never be anyone's "little brother"'.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Kuzembaily, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p.355.

⁸⁵ Olcott, *Kazakhstan*, p. 15.

How, then, should the impact of Soviet rule in Kazakhstan be assessed? Firstly, like all other union republics, Kazakhstan was created as an ethnic homeland. Although Kunaev tried to create a non-ethnic *Kazakhstaner* identifier for all Kazakh residents- *Kazakhstanets* (Kazakh citizen)- this did not garner widespread popular support. For the Kazakhs, horde divisions were strengthened by Soviet rule although they all benefited from the fact that a shared history, culture and language were, to a certain extent, codified and even created under Soviet rule. Because of these factors, post-independence the ethnic Kazakhs have been more easily able to begin to create a state beneficial to ethnic Kazakhs.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.160.

2:8 CONCLUSION

Following the collapse of the USSR, Kazakhstan did not descend into an ethnic conflict. The reaction of the ethnic Russian community is in stark contrast to that of the European community in Algeria, the vast majority of whom fled the newly independent republic, with those that remained mounting a bloody, if ultimately unsuccessful, campaign of violence. Inter-group relations clearly played an important role in preventing similar acts in Kazakhstan. In Algeria the relationship dynamic between the European community and the indigenous population was more clearly that of master-slave, with the territory viewed as an integral part of France and thus ripe for exploitation. It is arguable that prior to the 1917 revolution, Russian settlers viewed the Kazakh territories in a similar light, but that Soviet policy, although often stressing the ethnic Russian role as that of the elder brother, was based on the notion of equality between all Soviet citizens. Although this did not have as positive an impact on inter-group relations as might be expected, it did create greater inter-ethnic equality. Furthermore, Nazarbaev's conciliatory stance suggests that despite inter-ethnic tensions, most Kazakhs accepted that ordinary ethnic Russians were not responsible for their suffering: 'we realized full well that the rights and dignity of all the peoples in our republic were also stifled'.⁸⁷ This may have gone some way towards improving inter-ethnic relations in Kazakhstan.

⁸⁷ Nazarbaev, N., *Without Right and Left*, London, 1992, p.159.

CHAPTER THREE: CREATING AN 'ETHNIC KAZAKH' STATE

3:1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the policies that form part of Kazakhstan's *nativization program* will be shown to be being used as a means of consolidating political power for ethnic Kazakhs and, perhaps more importantly, for the Nazarbaev family. The link between the signs and symbols of the new Kazakh state and the notion of Kazakhstan as an ethno-historic homeland will be analysed as will the effects of these policies on inter-ethnic relations within the republic. Analysis of these developments will enable key conclusions to be made regarding the evolution of inter-ethnic relations in post-independence Kazakhstan.

Firstly, the rationale behind Nazarbaev's use of Kazakh nationalism and ethno-historic claims to the republic's territory show that these two factors enabled the consolidation of Kazakhstan's position as an independent republic and, in the immediate post-independence period, ensured territorial integrity. This section will also briefly consider the elite's reliance upon the support of particular ethnic groups, which as Rothchild comments:

The dominant state elite, conscious of its own or its identity group's self-interests limits effective representation in the decision making process, thus blocking the access of outgroups to a large extent.¹

Comment will be made of Nazarbaev's role as an ethnic intermediary, something that was particularly important in the immediate post-independence period. Although this position has somewhat altered over the years as Nazarbaev has sought to bolster his own political position, initially it helped to prevent the growth of ethnic tensions.

¹ Rothchild, D., *Managing State Conflict in Africa: Pressures and Incentives for Cooperation*, Washington, D.C., 1997, p.65.

This chapter will also analyse the process of *Kazakhification* or *nativization*² and how this has affected the ethnic Russian community, particularly in the north of the country. The choice of state symbols, the prominence given to Kazakh myths and traditions and new historical interpretations that promote Kazakhstan as the historic ethno-territory of the Kazakh people,³ will be highlighted. The role of the Kazakh state as an ethnic homeland, the *oralman* phenomenon, language laws⁴ and the promotion of ethnic Kazakhs within certain employment sectors will also be considered.

Similar processes in Africa are much less overt than the Kazakh model, particularly since most African nations deny an ethnic basis for state or nationhood.⁵ Interestingly, Africa has been far more prone to ethnic violence than Kazakhstan, perhaps because denying the ethnic content of statehood has not made the elites any less reliant upon the support of ethnic groupings, which in turn leads to conflict when coupled with other variables.

The following section will discuss the development of post-Soviet Kazakh politics and the influence of the horde in contemporary Kazakh politics. Nazarbaev has looked beyond the support of Great Horde Kazakhs (of which he is a member) and drawn in prominent non-Great Horde Kazakhs and other non-Kazakh minorities into his coterie, which has enabled him to extend his political control over all of Kazakhstan.

²Melvin, N., *Russians Beyond Russia: The Politics of Russian National Identity*, London, 1995, p.109.

³ This is a subject discussed by Shnirelman, V.A., in *Who Gets the Past?: Competition for Ancestors Among Non-Russian Intellectuals in Russia*, Baltimore, MD, 1996 (hereafter, Shnirelman, *Who Gets the Past?*).

⁴Landau, J.M. and Kellner-Heinkele, B., *Politics of Language in the ex-Soviet Muslim States: Azerbaijan (sic), Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan*, London, 2001 (hereafter, Landau and Kellner-Heinkele, *Politics of Language*).

⁵ Beissinger, M.B. and Young, C. 'Introduction: Comparing State Crises across Two Continents' in Beissinger, M.B. and Young, C. (eds.), *Postcolonial Africa and Post-Soviet Eurasia in Comparative Perspectives*, Baltimore, MD, 2002, pp.3-18, (p.11).

Using statistical data it should be possible to view how Nazarbaev has increased the number of ethnic Kazakhs at all government levels, a sector in which jobs are now, effectively, the preserve of ethnic Kazakhs, demonstrating the discrimination against non-Kazakh minorities. Furthermore, Nazarbaev's increasing autocracy has led to a clampdown on opposition parties and political organizations. This has hit hard ethnic Russian community centres and political activists and is one of the main reasons why ethnic Russians are politically marginalized. The *rationalization process* of Kazakhstan's regional government will also be studied since it has weakened Russian control in the north of Kazakhstan. Also, intra-ethnic tensions within the Kazakh community must also be considered since Kazakhstan's huge reserves of natural resources have not resulted in the wealth derived primarily from oil revenue being evenly distributed across different regions of the republic or all levels of society. As countering societal discontent is crucial, these internal divisions within ethnic Kazakh society may therefore be as likely to destroy Nazarbaev's power-base as inter-ethnic tensions in Kazakh society as a whole.

The final section of this chapter will attempt to place Kazakh state-and-nation-building processes within a comparative theoretical framework of post-Soviet Central Asian political trends using Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan as case studies. This will show why the elite has used historical revision to justify statehood, their own power and growing authoritarianism.

3:2 NAZARBAEV AND AN INDEPENDENT KAZAKHSTAN

Chapter two noted that Soviet rule was the definitive shaper of Kazakh national identity. Akiner argues that the fundamental task of the independent Kazakh administration was to demonstrate that Kazakh national identity had survived, if only in a distorted form, in order to justify national sovereignty. Ethno-historic justification of Kazakhstan's borders was crucial for two reasons; firstly, state legitimisation and, secondly, the legitimisation of the rule of Kazakhstan's elite. Thus in *V potoke istorii*, Nazarbaev states that 'all of Kazakhstan is the historic-genetic territory of the Kazakh nation'.⁶ Although Russian territorial annexation was unlikely, such action might have attracted less international criticism if the Kazakhs were shown to be a thoroughly culturally and linguistically Russified people, who had only been awarded union republic status (and thus independence) owing to political good-fortune during the 1930s, (even though Kazakhstan was entitled to union republic status as she fulfilled the criteria in terms of population size and an external border). Establishing specifically ethno-historic credentials was therefore of paramount importance to the Kazakh administration.

The Kazakh constitution makes the same claim as Nazarbaev although it is ambiguous as to whom sovereignty should be extended: 'We, the people of Kazakhstan, united by a common historic fate, creating a state on the indigenous Kazakh land...'.⁷ This highlights the difficulty of state legitimization as it had to be aimed at the Russian Federation, the Kazakh regional elite and non-titular nationals as well as ethnic Kazakhs.⁸ The high percentage of non-titular citizens weakened state-and-nation-

⁶ Nazarbaev, N., *V potoke istorii*, Almaty, 1999, (hereafter, Nazarbaev, *V potoke istorii*), p.195.

⁷ *Konstitutsiia Respubliki Kazakhstan (s ofitsial'nyimi tolkovaniiami)*, Almaty, 2004 (hereafter, *Konstitutsiia Respubliki Kazakhstan*), p.5.

⁸ Cummings, S.N., *Kazakhstan. Power and the Elite*, London and New York, 2005 (hereafter, Cummings, *Kazakhstan*), p.78.

building processes owing to the unsuitability of using overt ethnic Kazakh nationalism as a means of power consolidation. Instead, an 'ethnic Kazakh national-cultural revival'⁹ was promoted as was internationalism and Eurasianism, although, ultimately, this angered both Kazakh and ethnic Russian nationalists.

In *V potoke istorii*, Nazarbaev states that the 'ethnic centre for Kazakhs is Kazakhstan'¹⁰ as no other nation affords them the rights of self-determination, language and cultural protection and development. Furthermore, he argues that this is only just since Kazakhs now form 'the greater part of the population'.¹¹ This has been a common theme in Nazarbaev's pronouncements in the years following independence. In 2002 he discussed the common cultural heritage of Russia and Kazakhstan and praised the lack of inter-ethnic discord. This, he stated, is down to 'our tolerant people'.¹² Whether this refers to the entire population of Kazakhstan or merely the ethnic Kazakhs is unclear. Again, this demonstrates Nazarbaev's hedging, even twelve years after independence.

Although ethnic exclusivism is not enshrined in the constitution, the following sections will demonstrate that there has been a continual move away from multiculturalism via the use of a *nativization program* that has tended to promote the rights of ethnic Kazakhs, particularly within the government administration. How this correlates with his calls for a multi-ethnic state as well as its effect upon both the ethnic Russian community and the future political landscape of the republic, must be analysed in order to study the political landscape in Kazakhstan.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.78.

¹⁰ Nazarbaev, *V potoke istorii*, p.195.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.194.

¹² Burke, J., 'Kazakh President Praises 2002 Economic Results, Relations with Russia, China', *Kazakhstan Daily Digest*, 2 January 2003

<<http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/kazakhstan/hypermail/200301/0001.shtml>. [accessed 25 March 2005] (para 6 of 10).

3:3 THE SIGNS AND SYMBOLS OF THE ETHNIC KAZAKH STATE

With the collapse of the European Empires between 1950 and the late 1970s and the end of Communist rule across Eastern Europe in the late 1980s, ethnic nationalism based on pre-modern cultures and ethnicities has emerged as the principal guiding power behind the creation of new nations.¹³

If nationalism can be defined as a movement for ‘attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a human population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential ‘nation’’¹⁴ then the Kazakh *nativization program* is part of this trend as it tries to cultivate a sense of collective national identity partly through a manipulation of history, which has lead to a privileged status for certain groups within society.¹⁵

Flags and state symbols are one of the most powerful ways of demonstrating how a state wishes to promote itself to the rest of the world. The design of the Kazakh flag is ethnically Kazakh. The blue background harks back to the ancient Turkic Kaganate from whom some historians claim Kazakh descent. Indeed, the word Gok, from the Gok Turk Empire means blue, which symbolizes the east.¹⁶ In addition to this, the blue is also associated with the old Mongol Sky-God Tengri. In claiming lineage from both the Turkic Kaganate and the Mongol Empire, the Kazakh authorities demonstrate their people’s historical roots in the region, something that helps to

¹³ Smith, A.D., *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, Oxford, 1999, p.255.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.257.

¹⁵ Shnirelman, *Who Gets the Past?*, p.2.

¹⁶ Shaimerden, E., *Gosudarstvennye simvoly Respubliki Kazakhstan*, Almaty, 2002 (hereafter, Shaimerden, *Gosudarstvennye simvoly*), p.92.

legitimize their claims to the territorial integrity of the republic. Indeed, the colour is called 'the national colour of the Kazakhs'.¹⁷

The choice of the steppe eagle and the traditional design that runs vertically down the left side of the flag are both overtly ethnic Kazakh symbols. Although George describes these aspects of the regime's state-building activities as 'historical plagiarism'¹⁸ as the coat-of-arms 'shanirak',¹⁹ shows the dome of a yurt flanked by two winged horses, which are Scythian symbols. Akiner cites a specifically Kazakh heritage for these two symbols describing them as 'the winged horses of Kazakh myth and the sacred smoke-hole wheel of the yurt'.²⁰

Ethnic *Kazakhness* is important as Nazarbaev emphasizes:

It is shameful if a Kazakh does not know seven generations of ancestors. If it were not for this tradition, and other powerful sources of memory linking the Kazakhs to their past, the people could not have withstood the tremendous forces of assimilation in this century.²¹

This quote demonstrates how Kazakh traditions and national identity form the basis of a new republic, thus justifying its status as Kazakh ethno-historic territory. In the autobiographical *My Life, My Times and the Future*, Nazarbaev employs similar techniques to show Kazakhstan as the historic ethnic lands of the Kazakh people that have been in their possession prior to Russian occupation (similarly, the national

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.91.

¹⁸ George, A., *Journey to Kazakhstan: The True Face of the Nazarbaev Regime*, Lanham, MD, 2001, p.1.

¹⁹ Shaimerden, *Gosudarstvennye simvoly*, p.99.

²⁰ Akiner, *Formation of Kazakh Identity*, p. 61.

²¹ Nazarbaev, N., *Without Right and Left*, London, 1992, p.1.

anthem even alludes to a largely fictitious 'struggle for independence'²² to free these historic lands). Furthermore, in common with other new nations attempting to bestow cultural legitimacy upon themselves, Nazarbaev highlights illustrious and well-known forebears in the shape of the Mongols:

By the thirteenth century, the region was incorporated into the Mongol empire of Genghis Khan, the Kazakhs, who were initially a mixture of Mongol and Turkic peoples, emerged in the 1400s. Then, in the following century, the first Russian incursions began, with the Cossacks leading the advance. The Cossacks first settled in the Western part of the country.²³

As chapter two shows, the origins of the Kazakhs are certainly not this clear cut and Nazarbaev's use of the word *incursion* also implies the presence of Kazakhs in the region at the time of the founding of the first Russian Cossack settlements across the steppe, which is not certain. This reading of history is to the detriment of non-Kazakh ethnic groups who have inhabited the region for a similar length of time. As Shnirelman remarks:

In order to obtain a 'glorious past', an ethnic group may encroach upon or even appropriate the past and cultural legacy of another group, leading to misunderstandings, arguments and tensions.²⁴

Kazakhification has also been achieved through changing place names, which has altered both the cityscape and national maps by fundamentally altering physical markers used for orientation. In Kazakhstan names have either been completely altered, for example, Fort Shevchenko to Aqtau and Ust' Kamenogorsk to Oskemen,

²² Shaimerden, *Gosudarstvennye simvoly*, p.115.

²³ Nazarbaev, N., *My Life, My Times and the Future*, Northampton, 1999, p.12.

²⁴ Shnirelman, *Who Gets the Past?*, p.2.

or *Kazakhified* such as Alma-Ata, which is now Almaty. This has been carried out in tandem with a wholesale renaming of streets and city locations country-wide, something particularly resented by ethnic Russians in the north of the republic who complain of being unable to give directions in their home towns. Post-independence, the cityscape has also become more noticeably Kazakh and less Soviet in appearance. In Almaty for example, the proliferation of statues of ancient Kazakh warriors can be viewed as part of this process as can the removal of Lenin statues and other Soviet-approved figures. A survey undertaken during a research trip to Almaty in May 2005, revealed only one non-specifically Kazakh statue, that of the Ukrainian poet Shevchenko. The most common statue was a representation of the Kazakh poets Dzhambul and Abai.

Although these policies demonstrate the *Kazakhification* of the republic in the years following independence, they are rather superficial and even cosmetic changes. By contrast, the repatriation of ethnic Kazakhs from the Xinjiang region of China and Mongolia is a clear indication of the republic fulfilling its remit as the ethno-historic territory of the Kazakh people (as stated by Chapter 2 Article 7 of the law *On the State Independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan* passed on 16th December 1991), which states that:

All Kazakhs who have forcibly left the territory of the Republic and living in another state have the right to citizenship of the republic of Kazakhstan.²⁵

This policy is particularly controversial as these returnees *oralman* are usually resettled in the north of the republic leading to claims that this is an unsubtle method of changing the ethnic mix of north Kazakhstan. By 1997, 215,000 ethnic Kazakhs

²⁵O gosudarstvennoi nezavisimosti Respubliki Kazakhstan', *Welcome to the Official Kazakhstan!*, <<http://www.president.kz/mainframeframe.asp?lng=ru>> [accessed 21/08/05] (para 10 of 31).

had returned to Kazakhstan, with half receiving citizenship,²⁶ and Nazarbaev announced, during his March 2004 state of nation address to the Kazakh parliament, that the annual immigration quota for Kazakh returnees was to be raised to 15,000 families (up from 11,000 families) with 9.8bn tenge (US\$70.5m) allocated for their resettlement and house purchases.²⁷ This clearly demonstrates the continuing commitment towards resettlement, which means that although the number of returnees remains small both in absolute terms and as a percentage of the Kazakh population, their importance is symbolic demonstrating as it does the belief in the republic's role as an ethnic homeland. This particular policy is criticized by the authors of *Genotsid*, who note that of those settled in Pavlodar oblast 80% were unemployed.²⁸

The promotion of the Kazakh language has been the most controversial element of this national-cultural revival. Beginning in 1989 with the *Zakon o iazykakh* proclaiming Kazakh as the state language and Russian as the language of inter-ethnic relations, it has soured inter-ethnic relations within the republic. Curiously, a Kazakh history describes this as 'one of the first steps taken towards normalizing political relations within the republic [...] This step stabilized the social and political situation within the republic'.²⁹ This is untrue and ethnic Russians greeted the language reforms with dismay. This issue continues to bedevil inter-ethnic relations as a 2001 survey conducted by Kurganskaia noted that 90% of ethnic Russians feel that language politics are the principal cause of inter-ethnic tensions; more than half the

²⁶Country Reports: Kazakhstan 1997', (hereafter, Country Reports: Kazakhstan), <<http://www.refugees.org/world/countryrpt/scasia/kazakhstan.htm>. [accessed 25 November 2004] (para 5 of 7).

²⁷ Burke, J., 'Kazakh President's State of Nation Address to Parliament', *Kazakhstan Daily Digest*, 22 March 2004 <<http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/kazakhstan/hypermail/200403/0035.shtml>. [accessed 25 March 2005] (para 52 of 111).

²⁸Khliupin, V.N. and Puzanov, V.I. 'Popytki 'Miagkoi' assimiliatsii' in Khliupin, V.N. (ed.), *Genotsid. Russkie v Kazakhstane: tragicheskaya sud'ba*, Moscow, 2001 (hereafter Khliupin, 'Popytki'), pp. 54-81, (p.72).

²⁹ Kuzembaily, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, p.360.

ethnic Russians that had left Kazakhstan by 2001 cited language politics as the primary reason behind their decision to leave.³⁰

Although Kazakhstan's language laws have not been as far-reaching as those of virtually every other former Soviet republic, they form an important part of post-Soviet political development. As Nazarbaev stated in 1996 in 'O kontseptsii iazykovoi politiki Respubliki Kazakhstan': The harmonious, steady development of separate ethnicities makes necessary the construction of language politics and promoting the preservation of the founding national culture- the language of the indigenous people.³¹

The titular elite's decision to promote the Kazakh language is despite the cultural and linguistic Russification of many Kazakhs (particularly urban dwellers). Indeed, a study undertaken in 1996 by the Kazakh Institute of Strategic Studies noted that only 29% of rural Kazakhs and 2% of urban Kazakhs thought it necessary to make Kazakh the sole state language.³²

Article 7.3 of the Kazakh constitution states that: 'The state shall promote conditions for the study and development of the languages of the people of Kazakhstan'.³³ The reason for the promotion of Kazakh is thus largely symbolic, a way for nation-builders to define the post-Soviet republic as the Kazakh homeland.³⁴ As Landau and Kellner-Heinkele state: 'language is seen not only as a medium, but as the message; not

³⁰ Kurganskaia, V.D. and Dunaev, V.I., *Kazakhstanskaia model' mezhetnicheskoi integratsii*, in, Laruelle, M. and Peyrouse, S., *Les Russes du Kazakhstan. Identités nationales et nouveaux états dans l'espace post-soviétique*, Paris, 2005 (hereafter Laruelle and Peyrouse, *Les Russes*), p.115.

³¹ Nazarbaev, N., 'O kontseptsii iazykovoi politiki Respubliki Kazakhstan', in *Osnovnye zakonodatel'nye akty o iazykakh v Respublike Kazakhstan*, Almaty, 2005, pp. 12-17, (p.12).

³² Khliupin, V.N. and Puzanov, V.I., 'Russkii iazyk v Kazakhstane. Molchanie iagniat ili razgovor nachistotu?' in Khliupin, V.N., (ed.), *Genotsid. Russkie v Kazakhstane: tragicheskaiia sud'ba*, Moscow, 2001 (hereafter Khliupin, 'Russkii iazyk'), pp.31-53, (p.32).

³³ *Konstitutsiia Respubliki Kazakhstan*, p.12.

³⁴ See Nazarbaev quoted in Khliupin (ed.), 'Popytki', p.54.

merely as the means for communication, but as a symbol as well'.³⁵ The high levels of spoken Russian amongst ethnic Kazakhs also creates a new dynamic with regard to this topic and in 1996 Dave calculated that 95% of Kazakhstan's inhabitants claimed to speak Russian, while only about 20% were proficient in Kazakh.³⁶ The opposition to the downgrading of the status of Russian (declared the language of inter-ethnic communication rather than an official state language) by many prominent Kazakhs highlights the important role of Russian as a connection to the wider world, most notably in the fields of culture and science. This is echoed by Galagan who remarks 'The Kazakh language is insufficiently developed and has a poor stock of words'.³⁷

The ethnic Russian and Russophone (Belarusans, Ukrainians, Poles) communities are most affected by the promotion of Kazakh owing to their pitifully low rates of Kazakh language comprehension during the Soviet period. In the years immediately following the collapse of Communism, a July 1994 survey commissioned by the Kazakh authorities found that 51% of Russians had no knowledge of Kazakh at all and only 2.1% were fluent.³⁸ Dave's research in *Identity in Formation* showed that ethnic Russians do not view Kazakh as a language (they view it as a dialect) and do not think that studying it will increase their job prospects as Kazakh is both an unsuitable language in which to perform a number of jobs (particularly science-based jobs) and there is no guarantee that speaking Kazakh will enable you to break into Kazakh-dominated networks.³⁹ With regard to Laitin's *tipping theory* these factors demonstrate that in the immediate post-independence period, there was little incentive

³⁵Landau and Kellner-Heinkele, *Politics of Language*, p.2.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.84.

³⁷ Galagan, A, quoted in Ertysbaev, E., *Kazakhstan i Nazarbaev: logika peremen*, Astana,, 2001, (hereafter, Ertysbaev, *Kazakhstan*), p.248.

³⁸Landau and Kellner-Heinkele, *Politics of Language*, p. 84.

³⁹Dave, B., in Laitin, D., *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad*, Ithaca, NY, 1998, pp.109-121.

for ethnic Russians to learn Kazakh and begin the process of cultural assimilation. Furthermore, as Dave notes, ethnic Kazakh attitudes have also not encouraged ethnic Russians to take Kazakh-language instruction seriously as even among those most in favour of *Kazakhization*, very few appeared willing, at the time of her research (which she considered the period when fervour for language reform was at its height), to let their children grow up as monolingual in Kazakh.⁴⁰

It is easy to understand ethnic Russian anger over language reforms when large numbers of prominent Russified Kazakhs such as Auezov and Masanov⁴¹ criticized government policy and many ethnic Kazakhs themselves have not gained fluency in Kazakh. Language policy thus appears primarily political rather than practical and in the broader picture of post-Soviet language policy, the Kazakh decrees were amongst the most generous with regard to the status of the Russian language. Unlike in the Baltic republics, for example, Russian was granted the status of the language of inter-ethnic communication in the 1993 Constitution, although Nazarbaev's request that both Russian and Kazakh be made state languages was refused by the Kazakh parliament, but this does demonstrate the President's awareness of the potential ethnic tensions caused by language policy and he has repeatedly demonstrated his support for the Russian language. On November 15 1995 in Nezavisimaia Gazeta he stated:

I have always openly stated [...] it is through the medium of the Russian language that Kazakhs have discovered the heights of world science, literature and culture. The loss of the Russian language would be a catastrophe for Kazakhs.⁴²

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.134.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp.136-37.

⁴² Ertysbaev, *Kazakhstan*, p.251.

This appears to hark back to the words of the poet Abai who said 'It is necessary to master the Russian language. The Russian people have reason and wealth, developed science and high culture'.⁴³

The 1995 Constitution went further in elevating the Russian language. Although Kazakh is the one state language, (Article 7.1: '1. The state language of the Republic of Kazakhstan shall be the Kazakh language.'⁴⁴), Article 7.2 notes: 'In state institutions and local self-administrative bodies the Russian language shall be officially employed on equal grounds along with the Kazakh language'.⁴⁵ However, the November 1996 language law, which was passed by the lower house of the Kazakh parliament, stipulated which posts would require a good knowledge of Kazakh, one of which is that of President, who must 'be able to speak the state language', according to article 41.2 of the Kazakh Constitution.⁴⁶

Non-Kazakhs had until the end of 2005 to achieve the required proficiency whereas ethnic Kazakhs seeking government and other public sector jobs had to conform by the end of 2000, although these targets were scrapped in 1997.⁴⁷ Russian remains an equal status language in all national and local governmental offices, which appears to demonstrate that the goal of language reform is ensuring that the Kazakh language does not become an anachronism rather than gradually removing Russian from Kazakh life. This position is given more credence by the fact that the final law passed

⁴³ Sanbaeva, S., *Abai (lova nazidaniia)*, Almaty, 1995, p.82.

⁴⁴ *Konstitutsiia Respubliki Kazakhstan*, p.11.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴⁶ *Konstitutsiia Respubliki Kazakhstan*, p.27.

⁴⁷ Dave, B., 'The Transformation of Central Asia' (hereafter, Dave, 'The Transformation' in Jones Luong, P. (ed.), *The Transformation of Central Asia. States and Societies from Soviet Rule to Independence*, Ithaca, NY, 2004, pp.120-155, (p.132).

in 1997 set no deadline for the full switch to Kazakh in public administration and that no provision was made for formal testing of language aptitude.⁴⁸

This last point is demonstrative of the challenges posed by language reforms. Despite the series of laws that have been passed to ensure that those working in local and regional government as well as the judicial system have a good level of spoken and written Kazakh, it is clear that these levels are not being attained.⁴⁹ This led to the 2001 'Law on the function and development of languages for the decade 2001-2010', which aimed to anchor the Kazakh language within everyday life (as well as preserving the cultural aspect of Russian) with its ultimate goal of making Kazakh truly the official language in which all organs of the state work.⁵⁰ This has had some success as between 2000 and 2002 four regions- South Kazakhstan, Kyzyl Orda, Atyrau and Aktiubinsk had made the switch to Kazakh-speaking administrations (although these are regions in which ethnic Kazakhs predominate).⁵¹

Kazakhstan's language laws have affected the use of the Russian language in broadcasting as well as the print media and Russian-language education at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. In a 1997 television broadcast Nazarbaev stated:

All schools in Kazakhstan should teach Kazakh properly and there should be a state Kazakh language examination to obtain the secondary education certificate. At higher educational establishments, Kazakh must be a compulsory graduation examination.⁵²

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.132.

⁴⁹ Laruelle and Peyroues, *Les Russes*, pp.112-13.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.113.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.114.

⁵² Cummings, *Kazakhstan*, p.87.

As Cummings notes, this formed part of the 1997 revised language law,⁵³ so it is unsurprising that education has formed a key policy plank in this goal. Although many educationalists are aware of the limitations of the Kazakh language, particularly with regard to science and commerce, there has been a shift towards Kazakh-language education. In 1988-89 30.2% of pupils undertook their education in Kazakh and 67.4% in Russian,⁵⁴ showing a clear preference for education in Russian, although clearly a small majority of Kazakhs preferred their children to be educated in Kazakh. That there has been a year-on-year decrease in the number of both Russian schools and the percentage of pupils within them may therefore not necessarily be detrimental to the Russian community.

It could also be argued that the first few years following independence opened a large but shallow pool of nationalist fervour on the part of ethnic Kazakhs, which may account for the shift to Kazakh schools. This may be true because the vast majority of Russians and other non-titulars are still educated in Russian. In 1991, 44.7% of schools offered education in Russian as opposed to 34.0%, which offered it in Kazakh and 20.2% mixed. This equated to 32.4% of students receiving Kazakh education and 65.0% receiving it in Russian. By 1994 38.3% of schools were Kazakh and 33.9% Russian with a rise in mixed schools of 6.6%. Therefore 40.1% of students were in Kazakh schools and 57.2% in Russian schools.⁵⁵ (This reflects the 1992 Law on Education, which offers educational instruction in the language of the ethnies.) However, what is detrimental to the ethnic Russian community is the emphasis on Kazakh language learning with regard to obtaining diplomas and degrees.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.87.

⁵⁴ Landau and Kellner-Heinkele, *Politics of Language*, p.179.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.182 Statistics provided by the Kazakhstan Ministry of Education. The missing percentage points relate to schools with other languages of instruction.

Post-Soviet Kazakh histories also do not necessarily paint the Russian role within Kazakhstan in the most flattering light, something that has angered community activists. Ethnic Russians have voiced concern over the change in content, both with regard to language classes but also in new history textbooks, which they feel do not accurately reflect the nature of Russian habitation of the north. The Kazakh state has effectively banned the use of history textbooks from Russia, thus forcing the use of Kazakh-produced Russian-language textbooks on Kazakh history as well as reducing Russian literature to a component of 'world literature'.⁵⁶ It is felt that this shows Russians in an unnecessarily negative light, highlighting their role as *colonizers and oppressors* and the historic enemy of the Kazakh people.⁵⁷ As one letter to the Russian language monthly *Lad* noted:

They are trying to transform into chauvinists and colonialists those who built up the Republic's industry, founded towns, worked on virgin soil, cared for and educated the Kazakh population.⁵⁸

However, Russian organizations within Russia have provided textbooks and, as a way of countering official policy, a number of Russian associations have tried to create a network of Russian schools that follow the Russian curriculum. This has had only limited success owing to a lack of funds and, by 1999, only five such schools had been created,⁵⁹ although linking Russian and Kazakh establishments has been replicated at the tertiary level. This situation is particularly unhelpful to students as there is no recognition of Kazakh qualifications in Russia, meaning that it is hard for young people to move there after their studies. Although a number of Russian associations

⁵⁶ Zaiavlenie 'O sozdanii narodno-patrioticheskogo bloka russkikh, slavianskikh i kazachikh obshchestvennykh organizatsii Respubliki Kazakhstan' in Khliupin (ed.), *Genotsid, Russkie v Kazakhstane: tragicheskaya sud'ba*, Moscow, 2001, pp.391-92, (p.391).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.391.

⁵⁸ *Lad*, no.9, 1997 quoted in Laruelle and Peyrouse, *Les Russes*, p.166.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

have called for the creation of a curriculum recognized by both states, the Kazakh Minister of Education has refused to allow either this or the creation of a Russian-Kazakh university of the type found in Bishkek or Dushanbe.⁶⁰ However, there are links between a number of technical departments with Russian universities as well as a link between MGU and the Lev Gumilev University.

Ethnic Russians also face discrimination at tertiary level because of a dual policy of Kazakh language requirements and an apparent program of *affirmative action* aimed at increasing the number of Kazakhs gaining entry to higher education. Although ethnic Kazakhs had the highest representation at tertiary level of any other titular nationalities of the five Central Asian republics (in 1989 54% of students were Kazakh as opposed to 31% Russian), by 1996-97 65% of students came from Kazakh families as opposed to 24% of Russians⁶¹ reflecting demographic trends with Kazakhs forming 58.1% of the population aged between 20-29 and Russians 26.7%.⁶² Therefore, there is a slight trend towards ethnic Kazakhs that seems certain to continue as part of the drive to augment ethnic Kazakh participation in tertiary education has been to favour selection of rural Kazakhs.

This has resulted in Kazakh language entry examinations, which naturally favour those raised in Kazakh-speaking families. For popular courses, such as law, Laruelle and Peyrouse note that there were only 20 ethnic Russian students at the law faculty in Almaty for every 200-300 ethnic Kazakhs (depending on the year). Furthermore, the faculty of international law had only 307 Russian students out of a total student body

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.131.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.128-29.

⁶² Alekseenko, A., *Pervaia perepis' naseleniia v Kazakhstane: nekotorye itogi i osenki* (hereafter, Alekseenko, *Pervaia*'), in Laruelle and Peyrouse, *Les Russes*, p.338.

of 2,666 (11%).⁶³ This decline in the number of Russians in tertiary education is reflected in the ethnic composition of the teaching staff of most universities as well. At the national university in Almaty (al-Farabi) 92% of deans were ethnic Kazakhs.⁶⁴ This situation is liable to continue as in 1999 there were 757 Kazakh doctoral candidates against 96 Russians. Currently, this means that the country's entire academic body is 80% comprised of Kazakhs with Russians comprising only 11%.⁶⁵

Similarly, the job sector has become increasingly determined by ethnicity. Ethnic Russians are, to all intents and purposes, excluded from local and national government positions, nominally on language grounds. Industries in which ethnic Russians once dominated, particularly heavy industry and petroleum, are now controlled by Nazarbaev and his coterie and small businesses are prone to mafia intimidation. Laruelle and Peyrouse cite a 2001 survey in which one one-third of ethnic Russian respondents cite a lack of job opportunities for future generations as a major factor in any potential decision to return to the Russian Federation.⁶⁶

The revised language laws have also eroded Russian language broadcasts and newspapers. There is a clear language divide between state and private broadcasters, with state programmers appear to be operating as part of the government scheme to promote the use of Kazakh language⁶⁷ by forcing broadcasters to transmit not less than 50% of radio and television programmes in Kazakh. This became even more

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.129.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.129.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.129.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.145.

⁶⁷ Landau and Kellner-Heinkele, *Politics of Language*, p. 91.

stringent in 2001 with foreign media companies reduced to 50% of all Kazakh transmissions, reducing to only 20% in 2003.⁶⁸

With regard to newspapers, the ease of subscribing to Russian newspapers during the Soviet period has been reversed following the collapse of Communism, making it both difficult and expensive for ethnic Russians to obtain them. High demand is shown by the fact that by 1997, Kazakh based Russian-language newspapers still achieved a total circulation of 276,000 as opposed to 241,00 for Kazakh-language newspapers.⁶⁹

With regard to books, although the number of Russian-language books produced in Kazakhstan has fallen, (indeed, it has declined on a year-by-year basis) book imports from Russia keep the number of Russian language books available higher than those in Kazakh.⁷⁰

Unsurprisingly, it is within the state sector where the most advancement has been made with language reform. Diener argues that the pace of change has been slower within the private sectors of the economy such as trade, service, science, health care and public transport.⁷¹ This is interesting as it shows that in areas that enjoy more leeway with regard to language quotas and targets, there has been less success weaning people away from Russian as it still appears more beneficial to speak Russian. Furthermore, while this remains the case, there will be little incentive for ethnic Russians to learn Kazakh and it will probably mean that jobs will remain divided along ethno-linguistic lines, with ethnic Kazakhs working in spheres with stricter language quotas than ethnic Russians.

⁶⁸ Laruelle and Peyrouse, *Les Russes*, p.113.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.89.

⁷⁰ Landau and Kellner-Heinkele, *Politics of Language*, p.91.

⁷¹ Deiner, A., *Homeland Conceptions and Ethnic Integration Among Kazakhstan's Germans and Koreans*, Lewiston, NY, 2004, p.29.

How successful has the revised language law of 1997 been? The 1999 census showed that while 99.4% of ethnic Kazakhs claimed a basic familiarity in the state language, only 15% of Russians made the same claim. Although this is markedly up on the 1989 census, where 0.2% claimed proficiency, it demonstrates how far ethnic Russians are from adopting the Kazakh language.⁷² Abandoning a timeframe for proficiency reduced pressure on ethnic Russians (as well as on Russophone Kazakhs), but, as Dave notes, it remains in law ‘the duty of each Kazakhstani’ to learn Kazakh, but state under investment has not facilitated Kazakh language learning.⁷³

Although the symbolic value of Kazakh remains a key component in Kazakhstan’s role as an ethnic homeland (with language playing a key role in ethnicity), it remains unviable for people to be Kazakh monoglots outside of the public sector (and may even be disadvantageous within it with regard to communicating with people with poor spoken Kazakh). This may appear to benefit ethnic Russians, but the fact remains that the Kazakh language is viewed as an important component in conceptions of Kazakh national identity as well as in the role of the Kazakh state. This means that language retains a political dimension that unsettles ethnic Russians as it shows that Kazakhstan remains a nationalizing state.

That the vast majority of Russians have no knowledge of Kazakh is usually attributed to a perceived cultural superiority that leads them to view the Kazakh language as inferior to Russian. Coupled with their sudden loss of status following the collapse of the USSR, it is perhaps unsurprising that many seem unwilling to learn Kazakh and feel that the state should legislate against perceived discrimination in the workplace. This would also be viewed more positively by the ethnic Russian community who

⁷² Dave, ‘The Transformation’, pp.134-35.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.132.

would view such steps as a gesture of good will and proof that many ethnic Russians should see their future in Kazakhstan. It would, however, create a disincentive for ethnic Russians to learn Kazakh. It thus appears that despite Nazarbaev's protestations that the debate on language has been resolved, that state policy has, in fact, made few inroads into people's language choices.⁷⁴

In the years immediately following the collapse of the USSR there was a body of scholarly thought that predicted Russian mobilization in the Russian borderlands. With regard to Kazakhstan, following the high point of ethnic Russian out-migration in the mid-1990s, this threat began to recede. In the following section of this chapter, the factors behind this lack of mobilization will be analysed.

Ethnic Russian population decrease should not be underestimated as a factor. The first Kazakh census taken in 1999 showed a 22% increase in the ethnic Kazakh population from 6.49 million to 7.98 million and a 26% decrease in the ethnic Russian population from 6.06 million to 4.47 million, in part due to out-migration prompted by nationalizing policies. Their respective population shares in 1999 were 53.4% ethnic Kazakh and 30.0% ethnic Russian, whereas the last Soviet population census in 1989 registered 40.1% of the population of the Kazakh SSR as ethnic Kazakh and 37.4% ethnic Russian, therefore near parity. If one adds the ethnic Ukrainian population to that of the ethnic Russians (5.4% in 1989) as many do, owing to their socio-cultural status as Russian-speakers, together they comprised a small majority of the Kazakh population.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.135.

⁷⁵ Olcott, M.B., *Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise*, Washington D.C., 2001 (hereafter, Olcott, *Kazakhstan*), p.249.

Chapter two showed how, historically, the ethnic Russian community has been concentrated in north Kazakhstan as well as Almaty city. However, the 1999 census showed they are not quite as dominant in these regions as perhaps they once were and that Russian out-migration has reduced the Russian population in regions in which they once enjoyed a comfortable majority.⁷⁶ In Akmolinsk the 1989 population of 1,064,406 had fallen to 836,271. The ethnic Russian population, which had formed 43% of the total in 1989, had been reduced to 39.2% whereas that of the Kazakh population increased from 25.1% to 37.5%. In all sixteen Kazakh oblasts the ethnic Russian population was reduced. Although in many instances, such as areas of high Russian habitation (Karaganda, Kostanai, East Kazakhstan, North Kazakhstan and Pavlodar), the decrease is relatively small, the following table will show that the ethnic Kazakh population has risen by more than the ethnic Russian community has decreased. This means that ethnic Kazakhs now form a greater percentage of the total population in regions in which ethnic Russians were the largest population.

	Ethnic Russian Population % 1989	Ethnic Russian Population %1999	+/- %	Ethnic Kazakh Population %1989	Ethnic Kazakh Population %1999	+/- %
North Kazakhstan	51.5	49.8	- 1.7	22.6	29.6	+7
Pavlodar	45.4	41.9	- 3.5	28.5	38.6	+10.1
East Kazakhstan	51.7	45.4	- 6.3	38.9	48.5	+ 9.6
Akmola	43.2	39.4	- 3.8	25.1	37.5	+12.4
Karaganda	46.9	43.6	- 3.3	25.8	37.5	+11.7
Kostanai	43.7	42.3	1.4	22.9	30.9	+8.0

⁷⁶ All statistics including those in the table from *Pervaya perepis' naseleeniia Respubliki Kazakhstan*, in Laruelle, M. and Peyrouse, S., *Les Russes du Kazakhstan. Identités nationales et nouveaux états dans l'espace post-soviétique*, Paris, 2005, pp.339-347.

This shows that Russian out-migration and the high Kazakh birth rate have begun significantly to alter the ethnic composition in areas of traditional Russian habitation. Although this has led to greater Kazakh habitation in the north of the republic, the incidence of inter-ethnic marriages remains low. Traditionally, ethnic Kazakhs had one of the lowest rates of inter-ethnic marriages at 10% (as shown in chapter two) and the majority of these were between Kazakhs and other Central Asian nationalities, a trend that has continued in the post-Soviet period. Nazpary remarks that ‘ethnically endogamous marriage is the main pattern of marriage, especially among Kazakhs’⁷⁷ highlighting the lack of contact between ethnic Kazakhs and ethnic Russians in the home.

Another issue that must be considered is the aging nature of the ethnic Russian population. The 1999 population census shows that 66.1% of the population aged between 0-9 years are Kazakh as opposed to 19.5% that are ethnic Russian. Ethnic Kazakhs form a majority of the population at all other age markers (10-19; 20-29; 30-39; 40-49) until the age of fifty when ethnic Russians have a slight majority over ethnic Kazakhs (40.5% as opposed to 36.7%). Ethnic Russians form a clear majority of the population aged between 60-69 (46.5% against 30.2%). The figure becomes even more extreme in the seventy-plus category where 48.9% are ethnic Russian as opposed to 29.8% ethnic Kazakh.⁷⁸ Briefly analysing these statistics shows that the large Russian out-migration has occurred mainly within the young, meaning those best able to begin their lives over again. The aging nature of the ethnic Russian population shows that the oldest sectors of the community appear to have been least willing to leave. The low ethnic Russian birth rate also means that this community is unlikely to

⁷⁷ Nazpary, J., *Post-Soviet Chaos. Violence and Dispossession in Kazakhstan*, London and Stirling, VA, 2002 (hereafter, Nazpary, *Post-Soviet Chaos*), p.83.

⁷⁸ Alekseenko, *Pervaia*, in Laruelle and Peyrouse, p.338.

be able to replenish itself. It could be argued that this bodes ill for ethnic Russian political participation as a weakened community is least able to fight for political concessions. As the authors of *Genotsid* note, a reduction in the number of ethnic Russians means that they are unable to impose their culture and language as they did before.⁷⁹

Although there has been this reduction in the ethnic Russian community, they remain important to the Kazakh leadership. In December 1999 he gave an ambiguous speech stating:

Today Kazakhs prevail in their country and have begun returning to their roots.[...] being in the majority, Kazakhs must not repeat the injustices that they have experienced themselves regarding other nations.⁸⁰

In an apparent sop to the ethnic Russian community, on 31 August 2004 Nazarbaev voiced his approval of the creation of a *Kazakhstaner* national identity that would permit all of Kazakhstan's citizens a patriotic belief regardless of their ethnicity.⁸¹

Although this appears to show the tension between the nationalizing regime and the need to placate other ethnic minorities living within Kazakhstan, the laws passed since independence with regard to language and Kazakhstan's status as an ethnic homeland show the true nature of Kazakhstan's discriminatory regime.

⁷⁹ Khliupin (ed.), 'Popytki', p.46.

⁸⁰ Nazarbaev, N., 'Iz vystupleniia na shestoi sessii assamblei narodov Kazakhstana', (hereafter, Nazarbaev, 'Iz vystupleniia na shestoi'), *Welcome to the Official Kazakhstan!*, 10 December 1999 <<http://www.president.kz/mainframeframe.asp?lng=ru> [accessed 21 August 2005] (para 11 of 19).

⁸¹ Kimbrell, D., 'Kazakh President Addresses Foreign Policy', *Kazakhstan Daily Digest*, 1 September 2004 <<http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/kazakhstan/hypermail/200409/0000.shtml>. [accessed 25 March 2005] (para 1 of 1).

3:4 POST-SOVIET POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN KAZAKHSTAN

The post-Soviet period has been marked by the rise of horde politics as a factor shaping political development, although it should be noted that this is still a lesser determinant than ethnicity. As a member of the Great Horde, Nazarbaev belongs to the dominant Kazakh horde. As Masanov notes using *Elder* and *Junior* instead of the more usual *Great* and *Small* identifiers:

There are widespread perceptions about the role that the *zhuz* plays in Kazakh political life. These are rather simple and are understood by every Kazakh. Their characteristics depend on both genealogical seniority and size. 'The Elder *zhuz*, like the older brother, has the legal right to govern'; 'the Middle *zhuz*, as the largest in number and the most highly educated, is also within its rights to demand power'; 'the Younger *zhuz*, like the youngest brother, is the smallest in number and has no right to demand power.'⁸²

In authoritarian regimes dominated by a charismatic leader, the use of a close network to prevent challenges to the leader's rule is not uncommon. With regard to hereditary relations, Akishev remarks that 'Although they are regarded as harmful, they are in fact legal in all Central Asian countries without exception, insofar as they maintain a comfortable environment for the regime'.⁸³ The former First Secretary of the Kazakh Communist Party, Kunaev, was an astute user of this style of rule and Nazarbaev has adopted similar tactics.

⁸² Masanov, N., 'Perceptions of Ethnic and All-National Identity in Kazakhstan' (hereafter, Masanov, 'Perceptions'), *The Middle East Series No. 51. The Nationalities Question in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan*, 2002 <http://icas.org/English/51_cap1_4.pdf, [accessed 8 May 2005] pp.1-70, (pp.15-16).

⁸³ Akishev, A., quoted in *Ibid.*, p.16.

In contemporary Kazakhstan, according to Masanov:

At the present time, the ten or fifteen most influential persons in Kazakhstan who actually affect the making of important decisions on the state level, besides the president himself, are mainly his closest relatives and fellow-tribesmen from the Elder *zhuz*.⁸⁴

Cummings's detailed study of the Kazakh elite during the period 1995-2000, found that 54% were drawn from the Great Horde, with 37% from the Middle Horde and 9% from the Small Horde respectively. This shows a disproportionate number of Great Horde elite, with an accurate representation for the Middle Horde, with the Small Horde under-represented.⁸⁵ Ethnic Russians appear highly critical of the horde influence on Kazakh politics with many feeling that Kazakhs run political affairs like a huge family.⁸⁶ Corroborating the position of ethnic Russians in the workplace as detailed by Laruelle and Peyrouse, the use of horde contacts has also led to the purging of non-Kazakhs from jobs even if, as Nazpary argues, ethnic Russians are still able to work in the middle and lower sectors of industry.⁸⁷

Olcott notes that this clannism 'is exaggerated by the country's economic problems and the current level of corruption'.⁸⁸ This shows that both political and economic development in the republic are inextricably intertwined and is particularly frustrating since Kazakhstan emerged from the collapse of the USSR with real optimism for the future. The country was second only to Russia with regard to her amount of natural resources and the population was well educated. This meant that the 'UNDP-devised

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.17.

⁸⁵ Cummings, *Kazakhstan*, p.67.

⁸⁶ Khliupin, V.N. and Puzanov, V.I., ' "Buntuio" Islam' in Khliupin, V.N., (ed.), *Genotsid. Russkie v Kazakhstane: tragicheskaiia sud'ba*, Moscow, 2001, pp. 135-81, (p.169).

⁸⁷ Nazpary, *Post-Soviet Chaos*, p.84.

⁸⁸ Olcott, M.B., *Kazakhstan*, p.183.

measure based on a combination of life expectancy, basic living conditions, education level, and gross domestic product (GDP)- put Kazakhstan in a similar position to Mexico and Poland'.⁸⁹

The main hope for Kazakhstan's future was the further development of its oil industry, which had remained relatively under-developed during the Soviet period. Kazakhstan has estimated reserves of between 5.4 billion and 17.6 billion barrels of oil reserves in three large oil fields- Tengiz, Karachaganak and Kashagan – as well as hydrocarbon holdings equal to those of Saudi Arabia, Russia and Iraq.⁹⁰ Although these are the largest oil fields discovered in the last thirty years, they are certainly smaller than was previously thought. So far oil revenue has not benefited the general population and it currently represents only a small percentage of the national budget.

With regard to internal politics, oil revenues have led to persistent and massive corruption reaching to the highest level of government. In 1996 alone it was estimated that US\$500m was lost in oil sector transactions and Olcott notes that by 1997 things were so bad that 'Nazarbaev ordered high-ranking officials to declare all personal income and he reportedly told them to return a third of what they had stolen'.⁹¹ Without providing too many examples of economic corruption it is clear that the establishment of a close-knit, political coterie has facilitated corrupt practices in Kazakhstan. Mass-privatisation that began immediately post-independence and continued in three waves until the 1996-98 privatization of individual projects, led to further corruption, particularly on the part of the Nazarbaev family and the company

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.128.

⁹⁰ Olcott, M.B., *Central Asia's Second Chance*, Washington, D.C., 2005, p.32.

⁹¹ Olcott, *Kazakhstan*, p.160.

Asia-Invest, a group they are reportedly involved in.⁹² The charges sustained against high ranking Kazakh officials in New York in 2004 showed that corruption reached as high as Nazarbaev himself.⁹³ This appears to be part of a trend where:

President Nazarbaev and his various relatives have been working hard to ensure that the family group will be by far the most powerful of all families, holding controlling interests in every major sector of the country's economy.⁹⁴

Needless to say, Kazakhstan's oil wealth has not resulted in wealth redistribution. There are marked regional differences in per capita GDP with south Kazakhstan particularly poor. In 1997 the per capita GDP in south Kazakhstan was US\$711, compared with US\$1,711 in Karaganda and US\$4,654 in Almaty (national average US\$1,451).⁹⁵ However, in February 2005 Nazarbaev claimed that in 1994:

per capita GDP was barely over US\$700, by the end of 2004 it was US\$2,700 and the economic forecast for this year will put our per capita GDP beyond the US\$3,000 threshold.⁹⁶

This situation is further exacerbated by the fact that oblast expenditure is in the hands of central government as opposed to oblast heads. Again, this is demonstrative of Nazarbaev's desire to retain tight control over Kazakhstan, not least because greater autonomy could potentially lead to territorial fragmentation. This has proved frustrating to a number of the northern oblasts such as Kostanai and North Kazakhstan that would like greater regional fiscal autonomy in order to deal with wage and pension arrears as well as economic restructuring of Soviet-era projects.

⁹² *Ibid.* p.143.

⁹³ Olcott, *Central Asia*, p.34.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.188.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.191.

⁹⁶ Nazarbaev, N., 'Kazakhstana na puti uskorennoi ekonomicheskoi, sotsial'noi i politicheskoi modernizatsii', *Welcome to the Official Kazakhstan!*, 18 February 2005
<<http://www.president.kz/mainframeframe.asp?lng=ru>. [accessed 21 August 2005] (para 13 of 213).

1997 saw the merger of five of the least-populated oblasts with their neighbours, although, as Masanov argues, this ‘affected only those oblasts in which the Russian population predominated’.⁹⁷ Although four of the five regions- Semipalitinsk, Zhezkazgan, Torgai and Kokshetau were in the north (incorporated into East Kazakhstan, Karaganda, Kostanai/Akmola and North Kazakhstan respectively) - one Taldykorgan, which was incorporated into Alma-Ata, was in the south.⁹⁸ This process, which abolished the 19+1 formula of the Soviet administration was justified on economic grounds but in actual fact led to Russian-dominated oblasts being merged with Kazakh-dominated ones. This further reduced the influence of ethnic Russians in a unitary Kazakh state, as there was a significant rise in the number of ethnic Kazakhs in the northern oblasts which, when coupled with high Russian out-migration, has led to the dilution of the ethnic Russian community within regions they once dominated.

With regard to ethnic Russians, the large number of ethnic Kazakhs within governmental structures has further hastened the formers political weakening. Ethnic Kazakhs have moved into Russian-dominated cities and further reduced the political influence of ethnic Russians. As Masanov notes: ‘in order to attract Kazakhs to the predominantly Russian oblasts of northern Kazakhstan, oblast centres were transferred to Russian cities only: Ust’ Kamenogorsk, Karaganda[...] and Almaty’.⁹⁹ Interestingly, following this *rationalization process*, Nazarbaev has warmed to political decentralization. In 2000 Nazarbaev wrote in Kazakhstanskaia Pravda in

⁹⁷ Masanov, ‘Perceptions’, p.58.

⁹⁸ Cummings, *Kazakhstan*, p.34.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.26.

favour of strong central government that would prevent 'any social or economic crisis or disagreement between different branches of power'.¹⁰⁰

This move has reduced the influence of the ethnic Russian community over Kazakh politics, although, from their earliest inception, they have been marked by an inability to unite to press for greater ethnic Russian political representation. Furthermore, there has been a clear split between radical unofficial groups and those (more often than not, solely concerned with promoting Russian culture) that have received state backing. Although the large number of groups highlights the existence of a community attempting to defend its culture and political rights, the diversity of organizations as well as a state clampdown have hampered the growth of an ethnic Russian political bloc. This is not solely because of the threat posed by ethnic Russian nationalism, but also because of Nazarbaev's seeming desire to stamp out all opposition. In the following section, a study of ethnic Russian political action in Kazakhstan will show how the Kazakh state has facilitated as well as inhibited collective action.

The first ethnic Slav society- Slaviia- was formed in Pavlodar in 1990 with the aim of defending Slavic cultural interests. However, in 1992, relations with the authorities deteriorated following the delivery of a petition raised by the group questioning the removal from the city of a statue of Yermak.¹⁰¹ By September of the same year the inaugural conference of a number of associations and Russian cultural centres was held and an umbrellas movement Lad- ROSD, [*Respublikanskoe obshetvennoe slavianskoe dvizhenie*] which also produced a monthly magazine, was created under

¹⁰⁰ Nazarbaev, N., 'Konstitutsiia- osnova stabil'nosti i protsvetaniia Kazakhstana' in *Kazakhstanskaia Pravda*, Astana and Almaty, 30 August 2000.

¹⁰¹ Laruelle and Peyrouse, *Les Russes*, p.74.

the direction of A.V. Dokuchaeva.¹⁰² Owing to its cultural program it received official registration, unlike Edinstvo, which was founded two years earlier in 1990. This was another umbrella organization that united non-titular national groups, but it was not allowed to register with the state following its demands that Russian be made a state language.¹⁰³ However, Edinstvo spawned two other movements- the Party of Democratic Progress of Kazakhstan (also not allowed to register) and Russkaia Obshchina (a movement for the protection of the rights of Russians). This latter movement proved most controversial, particularly the northern section run by the journalist B.F. Supruniuk, which was overtly nationalist.

It is particularly interesting to chart the early history of this group as it shows the government clampdown (that began around 1994 following a period of relative tolerance between 1990-94) on overt nationalist groups; Russkaia Obshchina was officially registered in 1992 and deregistered in 1994.¹⁰⁴ The reasons behind this relate to the success of Lad in local elections in 1994 amongst the ethnic Russian community in the north owing to ethnic Russian dissatisfaction. A detailed survey undertaken by the Monitoring Centre for Interethnic Relations in Kazakhstan during autumn 1995 to spring 1996, found that Russians were five times less likely to describe Kazakhstan as their homeland than were ethnic Kazakhs, with fifteen times as many Kazakhs as Russians having an unambiguously positive response to the collapse of the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.74

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.75.

¹⁰⁴ Kurganskaia, V. and Sabit, M., 'Natsional'nyi vopros v programmykh dokumentakh politicheskikh partii i dvizhenii Kazakhstana', *Tsentral'naia Aziia i Kavkaz*, 4.10, 2000, pp.30-41, (p.38).

¹⁰⁵ Masanov, 'Russians', p. 15.

Also, the northern section's agitation against an independent Kazakhstan, and in particular Supruniuk's comments relating to such at a Cossack rally in Omsk, also angered the authorities. Deregistration prevented their election participation and Supruniuk was arrested in 1994 on the grounds of inciting racial hatred. Sentenced to prison, on his release in 1996 he took advantage of his Russian citizenship and went into self-imposed exile in Russia. This is symptomatic of the fate of a large number of Russian organisations that involved themselves with politics (although it should be noted that Nazarbaev has also been quick to clamp down on ethnic Kazakh extremism) as they have faced state harassment.

This has been a general trend from the first half of the 1990s as shown by the arrest in 1995 of Ataman Gunkin of the Semirechie Cossacks whilst attempting to register as a candidate for elections to the lower house. Accused under Article 183-1 of the criminal code for organising unsanctioned meetings (he claimed they were peaceful religious protests), he was found guilty and his wife and defence lawyer were assaulted.¹⁰⁶ In 1996 the director of the Russian Centre in Almaty, N. Sidorova, was arrested for having voiced support for Ataman Gunkin. She was found guilty in 1997 under Article 60 of the new penal code for having incited inter-ethnic dissent.¹⁰⁷ However, Russian pressure secured her release.¹⁰⁸ The Ministry of Justice also refused Lad registration in 1997 and a large number of prominent ethnic Russian politicians were charged with inciting inter-ethnic hatred after they criticized the President. Intimidation was also carried out with the most prominent victim being the head of Lad and the editor of its monthly journal V. Mikhailov (the Lad leader from

¹⁰⁶ 'Kazakhstan. Human Rights Development', <<http://www.hrw.org/reports/1997/WR97/HELSINKI-09.htm>, [accessed 05/12/05] (para 5 of 9).

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, (para 6 of 9).

¹⁰⁸ Laruelle and Peyrouse, *Les Russes*, p.76.

1998) who was attacked after having published ten policy recommendations that he felt should be undertaken in spring 1998.¹⁰⁹

Cossack groups have also felt the brunt of restrictions, possibly because of the support they command. As was stated in chapter two, Cossack groups were able to tap into the discontent of well-organized Cossack communities, who were the most critical of Kazakh rule. Siberian Cossacks have maintained links with host brethren in Russia; although they are the most radical of all the Cossack groups, they have the weakest support. Similar to other Russian political groups, the Semirechie Cossacks remain unregistered.

In 1998, ARSKO, (the Association of Russian, Slav and Cossack Groups) was created and was granted official status one year later. However, the 2002 creation of the Russian Party of Kazakhstan demonstrates the continued difficulties of ethnic Russian political involvement. Despite having a non-Russian membership of 30% as well as stating a refusal to challenge the territorial integrity of Kazakhstan, they were refused registration as ethnically-based parties are banned by the constitution.¹¹⁰

Operating with restrictions has reduced both the effectiveness of the Russian associations and their political unity, as many cultural associations are unwilling to work with more politically oriented groups. Because of operational difficulties, Russian groups have been discredited by the large amount of infighting that has limited their ability to act as an effective community voice (as shown by the post-1995 attempts by Lad and Cossack groups to work together). Furthermore, it has been in the interests of the authorities to play cultural groups (Russians, Ukrainians and

¹⁰⁹ Country Reports: Kazakhstan, (para 32 of 37).

¹¹⁰ Laruelle and Peyrouse, *Les Russes*, p.79.

Germans) off against one another to prevent the creation of a larger bloc of potential anti-government groups.¹¹¹ Their reduced effectiveness may well explain their small memberships- Lad has only 20,000 members and 400 activists.¹¹² This does not mean that ethnic Russians are not politically active, but it does show that they are politically fragmented and thus unable to mount a real challenge to the Kazakh state's nationalizing policies. However, it should be noted that state restrictions have effectively neutralized this possibility as the attempt in 2002 to create the Russian Party of Kazakhstan demonstrates; this was refused registration on the grounds that the constitution forbids the creation of ethnically-based political parties.¹¹³ It is clear that this clamp-down mirrors general political trends within Kazakhstan: a period of relative openness from 1990-93 followed by a gradual restriction of the democratic process from the first elections held in 1993.

¹¹¹ Khliupin, V.N. and Puzanov, V.I., 'Gosudarstvennaia religiiia- okkul'tizm' in Khliupin, V.N., (ed.), *Genotsid. Russkie v Kazakhstane: tragicheskaiia sud'ba*, Moscow, 2001, pp.109-34, (p.111).

¹¹² Laruelle and Peyrouse, *Les Russes*, p.78.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p.80.

3:5 THE KAZAKH NATIONALIZING STATE IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Upon independence, the leaders of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, respectively Presidents Akaev, Karimov and Nazarbaev, were each confronted with initiating state-and-nation-building processes in their countries with divisions in the elite power-base, ethnic and regional tensions and the threat of a rise in radical Islamism.

Similar to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan appeared to have a high potential for ethnic conflict on independence. Ethnic tensions in the Ferghana valley caused violence during the Soviet period and the conflict in neighbouring Tajikistan had made renewed violence all the more likely to occur.¹¹⁴ Although the ethnic situation in Kyrgyzstan was markedly different to that of Uzbekistan, it was perhaps more similar to that of Kazakhstan since the republic's status as the Kyrgyz homeland had resulted in Kyrgyz dominance of state bodies as well as of the intelligentsia.¹¹⁵

Personality politics have been a dominant feature of their three regimes, with all three Presidents attempting to co-opt the role of *Father of the Nation* to a greater or lesser extent. In all three republics this involved tapping into the resurgent ethnic consciousness of their titular nationalities in order to prevent ceding power to indigenous nationalist parties. Avoiding isolating non-titular ethnic minorities was also of particular importance for these three rulers.

¹¹⁴ Olcott, M.B., *Central Asia's New States. Independence, Foreign Policy, and Regional Security*, Washington D.C., 1996, p.113.

¹¹⁵ Huskey, E., 'An Economy of Authoritarianism? Askar Akaev and Presidential Leadership in Kyrgyzstan' (hereafter, Huskey, 'An economy of authoritarianism') in Cummings, S. (ed.), *Power and Change in Central Asia*, London and New York, 2002, pp.74-96, (pp.76-77).

Writing on Akaev and Nazarbaev, Huskey remarks:

In her analysis of Nursultan Nazarbaev, the Kazakh president, Martha Olcott argues that Nazarbaev possessed in effect two nationalities, Kazakh and Soviet, which enabled him to move confidently among his ethnic kin as well as among Russian and other Soviets. This dual patriotism, or dual identity, is an even more pronounced feature of Akaev's biography. [...] With a foot in both cultural worlds, the Kyrgyzstani president could promote himself convincingly as a protector of the country's two largest ethnic communities-Kyrgyz and Russian.¹¹⁶

Akaev went furthest in promoting a consociational democracy designed to 'forge a grand coalition of the country's ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups under the slogan "Peace and Concord Between Peoples"'.¹¹⁷ Thus, all ethnic groups were co-opted by Akaev, who was faced by greater divisions within the titular nationality than in Kazakhstan. Kyrgyzstan's division along north-south lines (with the latter being far poorer) created great reluctance amongst southern Kyrgyz to support Akaev. Their inclusion was crucial to post-Soviet Kyrgyz political development, as a failure to incorporate them into political structures would have left them open to overtures from more radical Kyrgyz nationalists.

As in Kazakhstan, Akaev sought to blur distinctions between civic and ethnic concepts of nationalism. Similar to the Kazakh constitution, that of Kyrgyzstan 'calls for the revival of the Kyrgyz as a people'¹¹⁸ whilst at the same time seeking to assert a

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.77.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.78.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.79.

civic concept of nationality 'a nationalism of the Kyrgyzstani'.¹¹⁹ This is, of course similar to what Nazarbaev initially sought to achieve in Kazakhstan; a fudge that would keep all ethnic groups content. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are the two Central Asian republics that have the least overtly nationalistic state symbols and flags. Although both are representative of the history of the titular nationality and cannot be considered truly multi-cultural, they are more inclusive than those of the other three Central Asian republics as they do not feature Islamic symbols. Kyrgyzstan's flag features the smoke-hole wheel of a yurt and a sun with forty rays, which represent the forty Kyrgyz tribes.¹²⁰ The choice of such an unambiguously Kyrgyz symbol may appear surprising, but Huskey argues that this was a deliberate policy by Akaev designed to 'coopt and defang traditional Kyrgyz symbols and rituals which, in the hands of ethnic entrepreneurs, could have been used to mobilize Kyrgyz behind an aggressive ethnic nationalism'.¹²¹

As the two most democratic and reform-minded Presidents in the region, Akaev and Nazarbaev sought to co-opt all ethnic groups into their state-and-nation-building projects. This was also designed to prevent massive out-migration by ethnic Russians and other minorities who formed much of the middle class of these republics and were instrumental to future economic development.

In Uzbekistan authoritarian rule (in part so strong because of an inability to control the existing elite clan network)¹²² is justified on the grounds that reform must be introduced slowly in order to prevent state collapse as well as to lessen the threat from

¹¹⁹ Akaev, in Asankanov, A., *Kyrgyz: rost natsional'nogo samosoznaniia*, Bishkek, 1997, p.108.

¹²⁰ Kangas, R.D., 'The Karimov Presidency-Amir Timur Revisited' (hereafter, Kangas, 'The Karimov Presidency') in Cummings, S. (ed.), *Power and Change in Central Asia*, London and New York, 2002, pp.130-49, (p.145).

¹²¹ Huskey, E., 'An Economy of Authoritarianism?', p.79.

¹²² Kangas, R.D., 'The Karimov Presidency', p.134.

Islamic terrorism, which is a genuine problem in the republic (although one perhaps exacerbated rather than eased by Karimov's dictatorial rule). Despite the lack of political freedom in Uzbekistan, Karimov has been a popular ruler. As Kangas states: his so-called benevolent authoritarianism means that 'despite what some outside observers suggest, he is truly a popular leader in the country and would, in most instances, win free and fair elections were they to be held'.¹²³

How Karimov has succeeded in retaining his political power despite never having fully gained control of regional elites, has been to appeal directly to the Uzbek population 'thus bypassing the traditional networks'.¹²⁴ This has been achieved by co-opting great figures from the region's past as well as elements of Islam.

Uzbekistan is the best example of a state in which historical re-appropriation, particularly of Timur, has played an important role in the establishment of state power.¹²⁵

This process is perhaps more subtle than a raid on the past to bolster Karimov's dictatorial style of rule. As in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan has sought to demonstrate that the country was more than just a Soviet construct. This has been attempted by creating a link between the modern nation-state and the old nomadic tribes and Khanates that pre-dated Russian occupation. This has the perhaps intended effect of providing the titular nationality and equally its elite with a privileged position within society.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p.134.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.139.

¹²⁵ Bohr, A., 'The Central Asian States as Nationalising Regimes' (hereafter, Bohr, 'The Central Asian States') in Smith, E., Law, V., Wilson, A., Bohr, A. and Allworth, E. (ed.), *Nation-building in the Post-Soviet Borderlands. The Politics of National Identity*, Cambridge, 1998, pp.139-64, (p.146).

The creation of a two-tier society in which non-titular nationalities feel disenfranchised has been the result of this approach, particularly with regard to laws, which appear to discriminate against these ethnic groups, of which the largest is the ethnic Russian community. The laws passed in Kazakhstan have already been discussed, but it is important to study them in relation to those passed across the rest of Central Asia in order better to analyse how discriminatory they are.

With regard to the Russian language, it was initially granted special status across Central Asia, although it now has no official protection in the Uzbek constitution.¹²⁶ Kyrgyzstan's language policy has closely followed that of Kazakhstan, reflecting its ethnically diversity. Although by the end of the 1990s Akaev had failed to get parliamentary ratification of a law to grant Russian the status of an official language¹²⁷ owing to the influence exerted by Kyrgyz nationalists on the drafting of the 1993 constitution, the law making Russian one of Kyrgyzstan's two official languages (along with Kyrgyz) was passed in October 2000.¹²⁸

It therefore appears that Kazakhstan's rulers, in part impelled by the ethnic make-up of the republic, have made greater concessions with regard to the Russian language than in Uzbekistan. There is still a government-sponsored move towards the greater use of Kazakh within the business and political spheres, but that has proved contentious, although it means that Kazakhstan is more in line with trends in both Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan with regard to indigenisation in the public sector.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.150.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.151.

¹²⁸ Dave, 'The Transformation', p.122.

Following the collapse of Communism, the political sphere has seen a trend towards overwhelming representations of the titular elites at the expense of non-titulars. In the February 1995 elections, 81% of Kyrgyzstan's seats went to ethnic Kyrgyz, despite their forming only 60.8% of the population.¹²⁹ An overwhelming majority of the members of Uzbekistan's parliament are Uzbek, including the Aliy Majlis' chairman, two of its four deputy chairmen, and all the chairmen of its twelve committees.¹³⁰

Again, although Kazakhstan does conform to this general trend, the situation is less extreme than those found in the other two states, although Kazakhs are still over-represented as a percentage of the total population. The authors of *Genotsid* note that in 1996 thirty-two of the forty-seven Senat members were Kazakh with Russians comprising fifteen.¹³¹ Bohr notes that Russians hold only 28% of seats in the lower-house, the Majlis, while Kazakhs hold 65 percent (although they made up only 46 percent of the population in 1995).¹³² By 1999 the Senat had no ethnic Russians, whereas ethnic Kazakhs comprised 87.5% or fourteen of sixteen. The lower house (Majlis) had fifty-eight Kazakhs (75.3%) and nineteen Russians (24.6%), showing a further reduction in the percentage of ethnic Russians participating in government.¹³³ This continued in the 2004 parliamentary elections, with ethnic Kazakhs comprising 80% of elected members.¹³⁴

This would seem to suggest a general trend towards even greater *Kazakhification* of the political sphere. This over-representation of titular ethnics in government has

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.152-53.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.152.

¹³¹ Khliupin, 'Russkii Iazyk', p.44.

¹³² Bohr, 'The Central Asian States', p.152.

¹³³ Khliupin, 'Russkii Iazyk', p.45.

¹³⁴ Yermukhanov, M., 'Ethnic Policy in Kazakhstan Feeds Nationalism', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 1.113, 2004, <http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?search=1&volume_id=401&issue_id=3014&article_id=2368746.

most likely been caused by the legitimisation of the indigenisation processes that were begun under Soviet rule. However, even taking into account that decline of the ethnic Russian population (-26.1% in the years 1989-99 as compared to the +22.9% for ethnic Kazakhs during the same period¹³⁵) ethnic Kazakh over-representation is still severe. Studying the figures for parliamentary elections, ethnic Russian representation in 1994 was twenty-two seats (comprised of Socialist Party, Peasants' Party and LAD) as opposed to SNEK's (pro-Presidential and forerunner of OTAN) thirty- nine seats.¹³⁶ This would seem to imply that ethnic Kazakh dominance of the political scene has reached a comparable level to that found in both Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, despite having a lower percentage of the titular nationality than in the other two republics. This is recognized by some officials such as the Taldykorgan official who noted in 1996 that in order to make up for the long Russo-Soviet domination, now the country is independent it is necessary to have a cadres policy that discriminates in favour of the titular nationality.¹³⁷ This trend needs to be understood within its proper context. The number of ethnic Russians (or other ethnic minorities) does not necessarily accurately reflect the status of the ethnic Russian community within Kazakhstan as their interests may be well represented by ethnic Kazakh MPs. However, it appears that ethnic Russian concerns are not addressed as well as they could be and the disproportionately high level of ethnic Kazakhs in government does not suggest that the situation is likely to change.

¹³⁵ *Pervaya perepis' naseleniia Respubliki Kazakhstan 1999*, quoted in Olcott, *Kazakhstan*, p.249.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.251.

¹³⁷ Khliupin (ed.), 'Russkii Iazyk', p.45.

3:6 CONCLUSION

At this stage of the thesis it is appropriate to make a few key conclusions regarding the evolution of inter-ethnic relations in Kazakhstan. Multi-culturalism is a politically expedient doctrine not borne out by the political reality as Kazakhstan has become more ethnically exclusive. In part this is because of Nazarbaev's adeptness at stamping out political dissent, which has reduced the influence of ethnic Russian political organizations. Language reforms and the increased *Kazakhification* of traditionally Russian-dominated oblasts remain obstacles to better inter-ethnic relations, but ethnic Russian discontent has no forum within which to express itself.

Although most ethnic Kazakhs do not desire an ethnically homogenous Kazakhstan, it is apparent that it is viewed as their *ethnic homeland*, and that this colours inter-ethnic relations. Rather than addressing ethnic Russian concerns, many ethnic Kazakhs feel that the former have their own *ethnic homeland* that they can return to if the political conditions in Kazakhstan are unsuitable for them. Although mass emigration has dropped, following the peak of the mid-1990s, it is evident that many ethnic Russians were unable to view their future in an independent Kazakhstan. Of the ethnic Russians that remain, statistics suggest long-term marginalization as they become an ageing section of society, potentially making it harder for their concerns to be addressed.

CHAPTER FOUR: RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY

4:1 INTRODUCTION

Previous chapters have demonstrated how inter-group divisions and a nationalizing state have affected inter-ethnic relations in Kazakhstan. This chapter will focus on Russia-Kazakhstan inter-state relations and will attempt to show if, and how, Russian foreign policy has inhibited ethnic violence within the republic in the period prior to September 11 2001. (The post September 11 period will be dealt with in chapter five as it is linked to fears over Islamic radicalism within Central Asia and the increased influence of external actors within the region).

Russia-Kazakhstan security cooperation post September 11 will also be commented upon and this will be compared to Brubaker's 'triadic nexus'¹ discussed in chapter one, which highlights the relationship between nationalizing states, national minorities and their 'external national homeland'.² This analysis should demonstrate any uniqueness in Russia-Kazakhstan relations during the post-Soviet period.

Inter-state relations with Russia are most important for Kazakhstan as Nazarbaev acknowledged in *Kazakhstan 2030*:

To ensure our independence and territorial integrity, we must be a strong state and maintain friendly relations with our neighbours, which is why we shall develop and consolidate relations of confidence and equality with our closest and historically equal neighbour-Russia.³

¹ Brubaker, R., *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, Cambridge, 1996 (hereafter, Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*), pp.4-5.

² *Ibid.*, p.5.

³ Nazarbaev, N., *Kazakhstan 2030*, Almaty, 2004, p.12.

Studying the first ten years of Russian foreign policy will show that Russia's ability and willingness to act as a nationalizing state⁴ were tempered by the need to establish good security relations with periphery states. This, rather than the protection of the ethnic Russian diaspora, ultimately underpinned Russian foreign policy during this period. Furthermore, any manifestation of Russian nationalist thought carried relatively little weight except during the immediate post-independence period.

Analysis in the first section will show that the creation of political and social infrastructures as well as a coherent sense of national identity were of paramount importance in all newly independent states and, in particular, the Russian Federation. The post-1991 borders created, for many Russians, a shrunken version of a historical *Greater Russian state*. Large tracts of land traditionally considered Russian territory were now part of non-Russian states (most notably parts of Ukraine and Kazakhstan) despite often being overwhelmingly inhabited by ethnic Russians. As Dov Lynch states:

The Russian leadership is confronted by a complex imperial legacy in the region, in the form of an economic interdependence, a large Russian diaspora and an extensive military infrastructure.⁵

Understanding Russian national identity and Russian perceptions of Russia's role in the world are of particular importance, since they have shaped both attitudes and policy towards the newly independent post-Soviet republics. Brubaker remarks that:

the basic parameters of Russian statehood are unsettled and lack legitimacy.

Second, Russian elites see Russia as an external national 'homeland' for the

⁴ Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, p.5.

⁵ Lynch, D., *Russian Peace Keeping Strategies in the CIS: The Cases of Moldova, Georgia and Tajikistan*, Basingstoke, 2000, p.1.

new Russian diasporas, as permitted, indeed obliged, to protect the interests of successor state Russians.⁶

Defining Russian national identity and establishing good inter-state relations were imperative since, as the largest state, both territorially speaking and in terms of her political and economic influence, Russia is the cornerstone of a stable and peaceful Eurasia. In the post-independence period, however, Russian policy towards the CIS has been marked by inconsistencies and policy fluctuations and too open to manipulation by competing interest groups:

far from any consensus emerging, the political class was deeply divided over underlying concepts and values, policy priorities and the means with which to realize them. In the absence of any clear sense of the national good, the conduct of external relations reflected the dominant reality of the times: the volatile interplay between generally opposing, but occasionally allied influences and interests.⁷

Analysis of Russian territorial expansion will show how Russian foreign policy is still influenced by imperial concepts regarding her status as a *Great power* through regional influence and protection of her own security interests, and will show why Russian policy towards Kazakhstan has been less interventionist than her policy towards Moldova and Tajikistan where their descent into civil war contrasts with Kazakhstan's development of close ties to the Russian Federation.

⁶ Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, p.51.

⁷ Lo, B., *Russian Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Reality, Illusion and Myth-Making*, Basingstoke, 2002 (hereafter, Lo, *Russian Foreign Policy*), p.5.

4:2 THE COLLAPSE OF THE USSR AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW RUSSIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY

The collapse of the USSR challenged concepts of Russian national identity since Russia, viewed as a territorially-defined state inhabited by many non-Russian minorities, more than most other countries, is a geographical concept rather than one based on a shared culture or history. As Trenin states:

such diverse countries as Armenia, Estonia and Tajikistan did not only belong to Russia, as India and Ireland once belonged to the British empire; for centuries or many decades they were an integral part of it.⁸

Prior to perestroika, Russian ethnic consciousness remained fairly static. As Drobizheva remarks: 'The mass consciousness of the majority of Russians was relatively tranquil during the 1970s, and inter-ethnic attitudes towards the other nations of the Soviet Union were neutral or favourable'.⁹ However, by the early 1980s, a movement towards a mass national consciousness occurred as an apparent reaction to the emergence of national sentiment by non-Russian peoples.

Korenizatsiia and educational policies had created educated national intelligentsias who were able to promote national interests and ethnic Russians were confronted with non-Russians demanding that they be treated on equal terms as opposed to the unequal relationship that had viewed Russians as the *elder brother* of the Soviet nations.

Non-Russian dissatisfaction at the failure to deliver tangible economic and political reform was directed towards a centre that was overwhelmingly associated with ethnic

⁸ Trenin, D., *The End of Eurasia: Russia on the Border Between Geopolitics and Globalization*, Washington D.C., 2001 (hereafter, Trenin, *The End of Eurasia*), p.23.

⁹ Drobizheva, L.M, 'Perestroika and the Ethnic Consciousness of Russians', in Lapidus, G.W., Zaslavsky, V. and Goldman, P. (eds.), *From Union to Commonwealth. Nationalism and Separatism in the Soviet Republics*, Cambridge, 1992, pp.98-113, (p.98).

Russians who reacted, in turn, by creating similar Russian-based organizations.

Although these movements had no unified agenda, the majority concerned themselves with reawakening Russian *historical memory* and culture, which would appear to suggest the creation of an ethnically-based Russian national consciousness. Indeed, if we look at one of the factors by which Russians across the USSR identified themselves, it appears that Russians viewed the whole of the USSR as their homeland

What this would seem to suggest was that Russians viewed Russian national identity as bound up in that of the Soviet Union as a whole, suggesting no distinction between the two. With regard to Kazakhstan, Masanov states that Russians felt no loyalty towards the Kazakh SSR and viewed either the RSFSR or the Soviet Union as their homeland. For 'the absolute majority of Russians, their homeland is the entire Soviet Union or their place of birth-and to a far less degree Kazakhstan'.¹⁰ The authorities, similar to those of the majority of the non-Russian union republics (although not, significantly, Estonia and Latvia) introduced the *zero-option* citizenship criterion, which granted automatic citizenship to all permanent residents of the Russian Federation provided they did not hold another citizenship. Thus, official civic and popular ethnic concepts of nationality remained blurred, creating an interest in the fate of the ethnic Russian diaspora (although this was something that would not have a bearing on Russian foreign policy in the immediate post-Soviet period). Alekseeva, notes this contradiction by stating that:

If someone speaks of themselves as Russian (*russkii*) [...] they are indicating ethnicity, whereas if someone calls themselves American or Russian citizen

¹⁰Masanov, N., 'Perceptions of Ethnic and All-National Identity in Kazakhstan', *The Middle East Series No. 51. The Nationalities Question in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan*, 2002 <http://iicas.org/English/51-cap1_2.pdf, pp.1-70, (p.18).

(*Rossiianin*) they are including the political component of citizenship within the definition.¹¹

In the immediate post-independence period, Russian foreign policy continued with Gorbachev's goals of economic stabilization and membership of the IMF and World Bank, which were dependent upon good relations with the West. This period, dubbed the 'romantic'¹² phase by Sakwa, was also marked by a lack of clear policy towards the non-Russian successor states, which, as Sakwa notes, were in a different category from genuinely foreign countries (the *near abroad*).¹³ Despite this rather blurred policy, the ethnic Russian diaspora communities were viewed as an internal issue to be resolved by the leaders of the new republics themselves. In the immediate post-Soviet period, the First Military Doctrine highlighted the need to act to quell conflicts along Russia's borders, particularly those caused by nationalism and religion. Alexandrov notes that the 'doctrine, which appeared in May 1992, regarded violation of the rights of Russian citizens in former Soviet republics as a *casus belli*,'¹⁴ showing how the major power players in post-Soviet Russia- the President, the government and the army, differed in their approach to the diaspora question.

The pro-Western, *Atlanticist* position of Kozyrev was soon challenged by national-patriots who argued that Russia retained important national interests in the *near abroad*, showing that foreign policy had fallen victim to vested interests and power play. Reasserting Russia's *Great power* status became a key goal that was supported

¹¹ Alekseeva, T., 'Natsionalizm v mirovoi politike', (hereafter, Alekseeva, 'Natsionalizm') in Torkunov, A. (ed.), *Sovremennye mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia i mirovaia politika*, Moscow, 2004, pp. 334-365, (p.335).

¹² Sakwa, R., *Russian Politics and Society*, 2nd edn, London, 1996 (hereafter Sakwa, *Russian Politics*), p.278.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.278.

¹⁴ Alexandrov, M., *Uneasy Alliance. Relations Between Russia and Kazakhstan in the Post-Soviet Era, 1992-7*, Westport, CT, 1999 (hereafter, Alexandrov, *Uneasy Alliance*), p.85.

by a broad church of supporters from both left- wing forces, the Russian parliament and the military, whose soldiers were still stationed across much of the former USSR. This can be seen most clearly in the support given to ethnic Russians in Trans-Nistria and the Crimea by Vice President Rutskoi. By claiming that the Russian diaspora communities were linked to Russia both historically and culturally, his actions challenged the prevailing orthodoxy that their welfare was outside of Russia's remit. Melvin states that it:

was crucial to the development of Russian policy towards the communities and indeed, by publicly establishing a link between the two regions and Russia, to the creation of a firm notion of a Russian diaspora.¹⁵

The success of his approach can be seen in a renewed interest in the Russian diaspora community and in Russian inter-state relations with the *near abroad*. There was also a gradual realignment of Russian interests from a purely western-oriented position to a more eastward alignment, although there had always been strong links between all the states of the former USSR on both a political and, perhaps more importantly, on an economic level. Once pro-Westerners such as Kozyrev also adopted a program based on maintaining Russia's strategic interests to prevent Russia 'losing geopolitical positions that took centuries to achieve', ¹⁶ this eastward shift became more entrenched. It should also be considered as part of the trend towards a reassertion of Russian influence in Central Asia that followed Russian regional disengagement in the early 1990s.

¹⁵ Melvin, N., *Russians Beyond Russia: The Politics of Russian National Identity*, London, 1995 (hereafter, Melvin, *Russians Beyond Russia*), p.13.

¹⁶ Kozyrev, A., quoted in Sakwa, *Russian Politics*, p.279.

The formalization of Russian policy towards the diaspora community is interesting because it is couched in the language of ethnic concepts of nationhood. Alekseeva highlights this troubling aspect of diaspora politics by stating ‘ it presupposes a ‘historic people’ comprised even of those that have, for many generations, lived in other countries’.¹⁷ In acknowledging an interest in their well being, Russian administrative policy appeared to contradict both its own criterion for citizenship as well as undermining similar criteria adopted by other republics including Kazakhstan. However, the following sections will show that the ethnic Russian diaspora is a useful tool of political influence across the post-Soviet space rather than *Russian citizens* whose rights must be defended. This became of greater importance owing to ‘opposition to CIS integration processes (and) the creation of a circle of states within the CIS operating against Russian interests’.¹⁸

This stance also appears to have been politically opportunistic, as by championing their cause Yeltsin ensured his own political survival by partially neutralizing the threat posed by Communists and Russian nationalists. The end of 1993 and 1994 therefore saw the crystallization of Russian policy towards the diaspora with proposed dual citizenship for ethnic Russians, which appeared to be primarily aimed at protecting ethnic Russians across Central Asia and Kazakhstan, not least because Russia was unwilling to cope with the high level of ethnic Russian out-migration from Kazakhstan to the Russian Federation.

¹⁷ Alekseeva, ‘Natsionalizm’, p.354.

¹⁸ Voskresenskii, A., *Vostok/ zapad. Regional’nye podsystemy i regional’nye problemy mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenii*, Moscow, 2002 (hereafter, Voskresenskii, *Vostok/ zapad*), p.88.

Kazakh concerns regarding a potential threat to their sovereignty by these proposals were highlighted by Nazarbaev in 1994: 'I will note that nobody who stands for the true integration of our states thinks to reanimate the former empire, the union we have had'.¹⁹

1994-96 marked a further change in Russian policy prompted by Zhirinovskii's success in 1993 and a further decline in influence of Western-oriented politicians following the NATO bombing of Bosnian Serbs, which seemed to demonstrate American dominance and a loss of Russian influence in its own periphery states. That Yeltsin's desire to create an economic, political and defence union within the CIS was rejected by most CIS leaders, is an example of this waning influence. With Kozyrev's position weakened because of his continued support for a constructive relationship with the west, Primakov's ascension to the position of Foreign Minister in 1996 marked a new period of pragmatism for Russia's foreign policy.

Opting to highlight military relations and bilateral agreements as well as acting as the region's policeman with regard to conflict across the post-Soviet space, it is clear that these policies were designed to encourage closer Russian involvement in the *near abroad*; when coupled with a renewed interest in the Russian diaspora communities, it was a means of maintaining regional influence that would shape Russian policy.

Jonson argues that this shows the two-fold approach of Russian policy in Central Asia during this period, which was to integrate Central Asia into the CIS and deny external powers any regional influence.²⁰

¹⁹ Nazarbaev, N., 'Iz vystupleniia na konferentsii "Evraziiskoe prostranstvo: integratsionnyi potentsial i ego realizatsiia"', 20 September 1994, *Welcome to the Official Kazakhstan!*

<<http://www.president.kz/mainframeframe.asp?lng=ru>. [accessed 21 August 2005] (para 2 of 16).

²⁰ Jonson, L., 'Russia and Central Asia' in Allison, R. and Jonson, L. (eds.), *Central Asian Security. The New International Context*, London, 2001 (hereafter, Allison and Jonson, *Central Asian Security*), pp.95-126, (p.98).

Putin's succession as Russian president has marked a new period in Russian foreign policy with Selezneva arguing that 1999-2000 marked the return of a Russian nationalist ideology that sought to create a *Greater Russia* as a Eurasian superpower (although the concept of re-confederation was viewed as undesirable by most former Soviet states²¹). The Russian Military Doctrine of April 2000 and the National Security Concept of February 2000 make this explicit by speaking of the need to prevent the growing influence of external actors within Central Asia. Tiulin argues that this belief system places Russia as the 'balance between east and west'²² and that she must ensure 'the stability of the whole of Eurasia'.²³ Lo claims that the most important feature of Putin's foreign policy has been its emphasis on security. This has manifested itself in three trends: the role of the security forces in the formulation of foreign policy, the primacy of political-military concerns over economic affairs and the inter-play between the two.²⁴ The ultimate aim of this policy is geopolitical 'whereby the pursuit of nominally economic objectives becomes the engine for projecting strategic influence, and more ambitiously, Russia's revival as a "Great power"'.²⁵

Putin's foreign policy has been shaped by the events of September 11 and the arrival of competing foreign influences in countries viewed as part of Russia's traditional zone of influence. As an example of this trend, Baltic membership of NATO and the EU has continued the trend of the erosion of Russian influence across the post-Soviet space. Putin has placed a greater emphasis upon the rights of Russians in the non-

²¹ Selezneva, L., 'Post-Soviet Russian Foreign Policy: Between Doctrine and Pragmatism', in Fawn, R. (ed.), *Realignments in Russian Foreign Policy*, London, pp.10-27, (p.16).

²² Tiulin, I., 'Novye tendentsii v rossiiskikh issledovaniakh mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenii' (hereafter, Tiulin, 'Novye tendentsii') in Torkunov, A. (ed.), *Sovremennye mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia i mirovaia politika*, Moscow, 2004, pp.48-65 (p.58).

²³ *Ibid.*, p.58.

²⁴ Lo, *Russian Foreign Policy*, p.158.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.159.

Russian republics as well as viewing these ethnic Russians as compatriots, (although this policy was later dropped). This is because the strategies listed above involved the close involvement in 'countries where there had been mass Russian migration'.²⁶ This is despite the inclination of many states, even those who support close links with Russia and the CIS such as Kazakhstan, to become more economically and politically independent of Moscow's influence.

²⁶ Tiulin, 'Novye tendetsii', pp.58-59.

4:3 RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE POST-SOVIET PERIOD

Russian foreign policy towards Kazakhstan conforms to the general trends of ensuring Russian territorial security concerns and maintaining Russian influence across the post-Soviet space, although initial policy as promoted by Gaidar, the then acting Prime Minister, was to regard the Central Asian states as *ballast* owing to their economic burden to Russia. During 1991-92 establishing good relations with the west saw a gradual reduction in Russian involvement with Central Asia although multilateral agreements were still signed under the auspices of the CIS. Central Asian defence was the most significant deal brokered under the 1992 Tashkent Treaty on Collective Security of the CIS states, although, ultimately, this blueprint for a collective defence has not been effective in the long-term and has been replaced by bilateral deals, mainly between Russia and other CIS states.

The changing political landscape within Russia, particularly the rise of Russian nationalism, led to increasing vocalisation of Russian national interests, the goals of Russian *Great power* status and the increased role in the CIS being the most prominent. This turned Russian foreign policy away from a western-orientation to one that also encompassed the above goals. This should not imply the formation of a coherent policy towards the CIS states as it retained its rather ad hoc nature; despite the desire for greater CIS integration, bi-lateral as opposed to multi-lateral negotiations were the main conduit for Russian foreign policy and, indeed, have remained so.

Both the Russian and Kazakh administrations acknowledged the importance of establishing good inter-state relations owing to the plethora of issues that required close inter-state cooperation, most notably border security, economic reform and the

closely linked issues of border delineation and minority issues. Owing to the shift in Russian foreign policy during the 1993-95 period, Nazarbaev was eager to assert Kazakh sovereignty. He reiterated that although close cooperation with Moscow was desirable, interference within Kazakh politics or attempts to rally Kazakhstan's ethnic Russian community would not be tolerated and would be viewed as a challenge to national sovereignty. He stated in a December 1995 speech to mark Kazakhstan's independence that Russia-Kazakhstan relations must be developed in the full recognition of Kazakhstan's status as an independent state.²⁷

Kazakhstan's ethnic Russian population has, however, proved to be a major factor in inter-state negotiations. Although the Russian administration closely monitored Nazarbaev's policy towards ethnic Russians, their protection has always been of lesser importance to the Russian administration than Russian security concerns. Fear over the porosity of the more than 6,500 km Russia-Kazakhstan border is a continuation of a centuries-old fear regarding Russia's *soft southern underbelly* that has been exacerbated by the conflict in Chechnya. Preventing conflict overspill by focusing on security cooperation with Central Asian states to combat terrorism and attendant criminality, is of particular importance to the Russian administration.²⁸ As Alekseeva notes:

The most unhealthy characteristic of the new political reality in the Caucasus and Central Asia are the ethno-territorial conflicts that destroy Russia's security along her southern frontier.²⁹

²⁷ Nazarbaev, N., 'Iz vystupleniia na torzhestvennom, posviashchennom dniu nezavisimosti Kazakhstana', 12 December 1996, (hereafter, Nazarbaev, 'Iz vystupleniia na torzhestvennom') *Welcome to the Official Kazakhstan!*, <<http://www.president.kz/mainframeframe.asp?lng=ru>>. [accessed 21 August 2005].

²⁸ MacFarlane, S. N., 'Russian Policy in the CIS under Putin', in Gorodetsky, *Russia Between East and West*, pp.125-31.

²⁹ Alekseeva, 'Natsionalizm', p.358.

Security concerns regarding Russia-Kazakhstan relations loom large owing to the aforementioned fears over territorial instability, radical Islam in Central Asia and trans-national crimes. They were complicated by the status of north Kazakhstan as an ethnic Russian-dominated enclave and the shift towards accepting responsibility for the protection of ethnic Russians in the *near abroad* supported by powerful individuals such as Solzhenitsyn (with his calls for a *Russian Union*), extreme nationalists such as Zhirinovskii and the desires of many within the Russian military. This was a high-risk strategy as acting as a nationalizing state seeking to create a *Greater Russian state* would have potentially provided impetus to movements in non-ethnic Russian autonomous republics that sought either secession or reunification with Russia. Furthermore, any destabilization of north Kazakhstan would, undoubtedly, have been detrimental to Russian security along its southern border.

Russia's *Great power* status has, it could be argued, determined Russia's shift towards an integrationist policy vis-à-vis Kazakhstan. Indeed, in the first ten years of the CIS it was Nazarbaev 'who consistently pursued the cause of deeper integration of the countries that participate in the CIS'.³⁰ Prior to this shift, supporters of Eurasianism (the theory of Lev Gumilev, of which Nazarbaev is a supporter, owing to Kazakhstan's potential role as a Eurasian land-bridge) argued that 'the most important among Russia's foreign policy priorities was 'preserving a potential field of integration' and warned that while appeasing Kiev Moscow could lose the trust of its Asian neighbours and alienate Kazakhstan, 'the main stabilising force of the entire CIS'.³¹

³⁰ Alesin, V., 'Realii i perspektivy sotrudnichestva v ramkakh SNG' in Idrisov, E. (ed.), *Prioritety Kazakhstanskoi diplomatii na rubezhe vekov*, Moscow, 2000, pp.55-62, (p.61-62).

³¹ Alexandrov, *Uneasy Alliance*, p.61

In 1998, Bovin highlighted the importance of Kazakhstan to Russia's integrationist role:

Without developing collaboration with the post-Soviet Central Asian states and, above all, Kazakhstan, Russia is hardly likely to be able to exploit her advantage as a Eurasian land bridge.³²

This is unsurprising as Nazarbaev has played an important integrating role in the CIS and in 1994 proposed the creation of a Eurasian Union that would conceptualize 'the fundamental integration processes of the CIS'.³³ Although this has remained nothing more than a blueprint, in 2000 Putin stated that Kazakhstan 'plays a highly influential role in the Central Asian region and in the CIS...in all fields- but above all with regard to the regional security and stability as well as economic and humanitarian spheres'.³⁴ The Kazakh administration has, however, looked beyond the CIS, championing CICA (Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia) to serve as an Asian version of the OSCE and showing that although it is a champion of the CIS,³⁵ that this will not be to the detriment of other relations.

It would appear that the potential for much of the former Soviet south to ally itself with non-Russian Islamic nations, such as Iran or Turkey, even though the latter is a secular state, as well as the fact that this is neither truly politically or economically viable, encouraged this integrationist model of Russia-Kazakhstan relations, although, initially, Russian policy was rather hands off. Lo argues that this was because of Kazakhstan's relative stability and also because Kazakh policy towards the ethnic

³²Bovin quoted in Mansurov, T., 'Vechnaia družba i soiuзnichestvo-nezyblemyi printsip' in Idrisov, E. (ed.), *Prioritety kazakhstanskoi diplomatii na rubezhe vekov*, Moscow, 2000, pp.191-200, (p.193).

³³*Ibid.*, p.194.

³⁴Putin, V., 'Introduction' *Kazakhstansko-rossiskie otnosheniia 1991-2000. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, Astana-Moscow, 2001, pp1-15, (p.10).

³⁵Jonson, L. and Allison, R., 'Central Asian Security: Internal and External Dynamics' in Allison and Jonson, *Central Asian Security*, pp.1-23, (p.21).

Russian community was relatively non-provocative when compared to a number of the other successor states. Because of this, Lo argues that Kazakhstan was viewed as 'a generally positive player in Moscow's eyes'.³⁶ As Nazarbaev stated in a speech made in 2000, Kazakhstan has no desire to leave Russia's sphere of political influence 'Russia has always been considered and will continue to be considered as a strategic partner. This policy on the part of Kazakhstan will never be called into question'.³⁷

Kazakhstan's ethnic Russian community is a variable in this relationship and it is clear that they have influenced the direction of Russia-Kazakhstan relations because Nazarbaev is aware that the existence of a large ethnic Russian minority in Kazakhstan requires good relations with Russia.³⁸ Russian concerns over Kazakh nativization was tempered by the need to prevent whole scale Russian immigration, although Putin has since reversed this policy and views the repatriation of disaffected Russians in the *near abroad* as an answer to Russia's demographic crisis. Acting to curb massive out-migration in the immediate post-independence period was vitally important to the Russian state, not least because the over-stretched social infrastructure would have been unable to cope with such an influx. Thus, Russian policy towards Kazakhstan has had a two-fold goal of encouraging ethnic Russians to remain in Kazakhstan coupled with fostering close ties between Russia and Kazakhstan both politically and economically even if these have sometimes been achieved through an exertion of Russian pressure for transgressing ethnic Russian rights, although discriminatory policies remain in place.

³⁶ Lo, *Russian Foreign Policy*, p.85.

³⁷ Nazarbaev, N., 'Iz vystupleniia prezidenta RK, N. Nazarbaev, v Rossiiskoi akademii gosudarstvennoi sluzhby pri prezidente RF' in Idrisov, E., *Prioritety kazakhstanskoi diplomatii na rubezhe vekov*, Moscow, 2000, pp.24-29, (p.25).

³⁸ Alexandrov, *Uneasy Alliance*, p.99.

As both parties recognize the need for political, military and economic cooperation Russia has been able to exert pressure on Kazakhstan with regard to nationalizing policies. Nazarbaev's awareness of the threat posed to the territorial integrity of the Kazakhs state by a nationalizing Russian state was made plain by Russia's reaction to threats of violence towards ethnic Russians in November 1993. Deputy Prime Minister Shohkin wrote in *Izvestia* that 'Russia has sufficient means of responding to bullying methods of 'people's diplomacy' to make the 'architects' of this policy regret it. [...] Russia can and will defend its current interests',³⁹ although there is little evidence of Russia acting in such a way.

Despite permitting non-native born Kazakhs to hold dual citizenship, the Kazakh administration was unprepared to accept dual citizenship for Russians, proposed in 1993, which would have entitled six million ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan to Russian citizenship creating a difficult to ignore potential fifth column inhabiting a geographically compact area contiguous with Russia. Dual citizenship was also problematic since it would have blurred the demarcation lines between civic and ethnic criteria both for citizenship and, more significantly, national sovereignty and its extension. Dual citizenship would have provided Russia with a legal basis for intervention in Kazakhstan to protect Russian citizens as stated in the Treaty On Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, Article Twelve, signed in May 1992 which did not provide any clear commitment from the Kazakh authorities for the protection of ethnic Russians within Kazakhstan.⁴⁰

On a basic level, this policy demonstrates Russia acting as an external national homeland, but it also shows how both ordinary people as well as government

³⁹ Shohkin, quoted in Alexandrov, *Uneasy Alliance*, pp.122-23.

⁴⁰ Alexandrov, *Uneasy Alliance*, p.89.

institutions within Russia and across the former USSR perceive nationality as an ethnic construct and distinct from citizenship. Proposing dual citizenship has further blurred the distinctions between Russia's civic citizenship laws and more exclusive ethnic constructs. This is, however, the apogee of Russia's role as a nationalizing state and, in the second half of the 1990s, both states have increasingly worked together over mutual security concerns and to create closer political and economic relations. Pragmatism towards the national cultural revival in Kazakhstan has enabled good inter-state relations based on 'the indissoluble character of ties between the two countries'⁴¹ to develop. This has, in turn, led to a more muted Russian response to the unfair treatment of ethnic Russians. The Russian administration declined to criticize the 1994 election, where underhand tactics saw ethnic Russian parties do worse than expected. Furthermore, as Olcott noted, Russia also reduced its criticism of Kazakh treatment of Cossacks.⁴²

Despite undertaking the *Kazakhification* of Kazakh society, Nazarbaev has been one of the major supporters of the CIS. He was a signatory to the CIS Collective Security Treaty signed in May 1992 (the same month as Russia and Kazakhstan signed the Treaty On Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, which obliges military assistance if an aggressive act is launched against one of the signatories) and he joined the Customs Union in 1995 (ultimately a failure and replaced by the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC) in 2000). In 2000, Tajikistan, Russia and Kazakhstan agreed to the 'creation of an anti-terrorist centre to operate on the basis of the special units of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB)'.⁴³ Joint security agreements

⁴¹ Naumkin, V., 'Russian Policy Towards Kazakhstan' in Legvold, R. (ed.), *Thinking Strategically. The Major Powers, Kazakhstan and the Central Asian Nexus*, Cambridge, MA, 2003, pp.39-66, (p.41).

⁴² Olcott, M.B., *Central Asia's New States. Independence, Foreign Policy, and Regional Security*, Washington D.C., 1996.

⁴³ Jonson, L., 'The Security Dimensions of Russia's Policy in South Central Asia', in. Gorodetsky, *Russia Between East and West*, pp. 132-48, (p.135).

between both countries have also been easily agreed, particularly with regard to policing the Russo-Kazakh border, and the creation of an integrated military structure with Russia (agreed in 1996 although Kazakhstan also acts in cooperation with the Partnership for Peace). Furthermore, in 1993, oblast heads in Russia and Kazakhstan signed an agreement that created cross-border co-operation in economic, scientific, technology and cultural affairs.⁴⁴ Although there have been disputes, particularly over the status of Baikonur, which required the USA to act as a third party to draw up favourable terms, Nazarbaev's awareness of Kazakhstan's need for good inter-state relations has led to the republic's participation in both CIS and other supra-national structures that allow Russia and Kazakhstan to work towards common security and economic goals.

This is not to imply that Kazakhstan has focused solely on inter-state relations with Russia. Even prior to September 11, the USA and China had both sought cooperation with Kazakhstan on political, economic and regional security grounds, in line with general regional trends that saw all the Central Asian states (with the exception of Tajikistan) seek new security relations with states outside of the CIS.⁴⁵ Zero sum beliefs make it hard, however, for the Russian administration to view the growing regional influence of the USA and China positively. With regard to America, oil interests play 'an important but not overriding role in the formation of America's Central Asia policy'.⁴⁶ American regional influence also underwent rapid growth during this period as shown by Kazakhstan's signature of the Partnership for Peace

⁴⁴ 'Soglashenie o printsipakh ekonomicheskogo, nauchno-tekhnicheskogo i kulturnogo sotrudnichestva sopolredel'nykh oblastei (kraia, respublik) RK RF' in *Kazakhstansko-Rossiiskie otnosheniia 1991-2000. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, Astana-Moscow, 2001 pp.133-36, (p.133).

⁴⁵ Jonson and Allison, 'Central Asian Security', p.3.

⁴⁶ Voskresenskii, *Vostok/zapad*, p.188.

deal with NATO in 1994.⁴⁷ This is a clear indicator of US regional strategy, which aims to create the conditions for stability and democracy throughout the region. For the Kazakhs, Western involvement and investment in politics and economics saw a reduction in Russian influence that was desirable during the mid-1990s. Foreign investment, primarily in Kazakh oil (for it is in the energy sector that most western long-term interest in Kazakhstan is focused) has ensured that western businesses and governments have a stake in Kazakh political development, reducing Russia's overwhelming influence on the republic although Russia will always have an influence and an interest in internal Kazakh politics.⁴⁸

The relationship with China is more complicated because of the expansionist threat posed to Kazakhstan, although China provides the opportunity for economic growth outside of Russia's sphere of influence. Furthermore, joint Russia-Kazakhstan-China security arrangements are a way for all parties to ensure state-security for all three parties. In courting China, however, Kazakhstan has been careful to avoid angering Russia. As Tokaev stated: 'We are developing relations with China, but this will not be to the detriment of Russia'.⁴⁹ All three have been members of the Shanghai Five, the precursor to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), since 1996 which suggests that all three understand the importance of regional cooperation, particularly with regard to trans-border security as this body was created to facilitate cooperation on border issues.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.188.

⁴⁸ Olcott, M.B., 'Central Asia, Russia and the West', in Chufirin, G. (ed.), *Russia and Asia: the Emerging Security Agenda*, Oxford, 1999, pp. 137-54, (p.151).

⁴⁹ Tokaev, K., 'My razvivaet otnosheniia s Kitaem ne v ushcherb Rossii' in *Kazakhstan i sovremennyi mir*, Astana, 2004, pp.234-37, (p.234).

Non-Russian influence in Central Asia may affect Russia-Central Asia relations in two ways as it may fundamentally reduce Russian involvement in Central Asia, although this is highly debatable, not least because the SCO is now opposed to all US involvement in the region. Although Kazakhstan has sought greater political and economic independence from Russia she has never actively sought to break definitively with Russia's sphere of influence. As this chapter has shown, the two states recognize the need to work together to resolve security issues and although Russia has pressured Kazakhstan politically and economically, ultimately, the two countries are compelled to work together.

To conclude, Nazarbaev understands the importance of good Russia-Kazakhstan relations for the future political stability of Kazakhstan. This is beneficial to Russia, since the driving force behind Russian foreign policy is not the fate of the ethnic Russian diaspora, but rather the maintenance of internal security coupled with retaining her zones of interest across the former Soviet territory as a means of assuring her stability.

The presence of the large Russian diaspora community provides Russia with influence over Kazakhstan, which is particularly important for a more eastward-oriented Russian state; their discontent is not something that Russia could have easily exploited since it could have triggered territorial instability and the authorities were reluctant to encourage even greater ethnic Russian out-migration. This could have weakened Russia by spreading territorial instability across southern Russia. As Alexandrov notes:

Interethnic war [...] would have put Russia in a very difficult situation. [...]

Annexation of northern Kazakhstan would have left southern Kazakhstan

under the control of anti-Russian forces, gravitating towards Islamic fundamentalism and creating a permanent threat to Russia's southern borders.⁵⁰

Russian security concerns mean that there has been little overt support offered to the ethnic Russian community in Kazakhstan. As Kazakhstan has not been as provocative as other states with regard to nationalist policies, this has also helped to facilitate good inter-state relations despite a period during the 1990s when Moscow became concerned over the effects of Kazakhstan's nationalization policies on the ethnic Russian community.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Alexandrov, *Uneasy Alliance*, p.124.

⁵¹ Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, p.109.

4:4 CONCLUSION

It has been shown that good Russia-Kazakhstan relations are important to Russia owing to the greater security concerns along Russia's southern border with Kazakhstan than with her European border. Furthermore, inter-ethnic relations within Kazakhstan, as chapter three showed, are driven by ethnic and religious differences in a way in which those in European post-Soviet states are not. This has driven Russian nationalist responses towards Kazakh independence as concerns were voiced over ethnic Russians living in a state with a Muslim titular population. Although Russia has never moved militarily to oppose Nazarbaev's nationalizing state, Kazakhstan's status as an ethnically bipolar state dictates that policies cannot be too alienating to the ethnic Russian community since this could provide an impetus for secession or Russian intervention. Since Nazarbaev has proved to be an enthusiastic supporter of both CIS integration and close ties with Russia, however, military intervention has not occurred.

Although Russian foreign policy has been influenced by nationalism (seeking to ensure the protection of ethnic Russians outside of its borders), security and economic concerns are still of greater concern than the protection of the rights of ethnic Russians. Furthermore, Lo argues that evidence 'as to the existence of a significant nationalist impulse in post-Soviet foreign policy is mixed'⁵² owing to a lack of political agitation on the part of the ethnic Russian diaspora and few attempts at secession and a low-level of extreme nationalism in Russia itself.⁵³ For all these reasons, north Kazakhstan has remained stable.

⁵² Lo, *Russian Foreign Policy*, p.55.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.55.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE FUTURE FOR NORTH KAZAKHSTAN

5:1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the factors influencing the Russia-Kazakhstan inter-state relationship will be analysed. If the reluctance of the Russian administration to intervene on behalf of the ethnic Russian community in Kazakhstan has been a major variable preventing inter-ethnic violence and secessionism or attempts at reunification with Russia, then it is important to study the factors that could destabilize the present situation; these include Kazakh state-collapse and the issue of federalism, the growth of Islam and Islamic radicalism and Russian nationalism. The Russia-Kazakhstan inter-state relationship is one comprised of unequal partners, meaning that Russia has the influence to shape Kazakh political development whereas the same cannot be said of Kazakhstan's ability to shape that of Russia. As Olcott remarks: 'Kazakhstan's independence was born in Moscow and is likely to last precisely as long as Russia wishes it'.¹

The potential for state collapse remains, despite Kazakhstan achieving independence in 1991. As Brown states: 'In many parts of the world, Africa perhaps most notably, states have become weaker over time'.² In short, although neither civil conflict nor territorial fragmentation has occurred, the length of time a state remains independent has no bearing on its stability and, indeed, the risk of conflict may actually increase. With regard to Kazakhstan, this may be hastened by any growth in radical Islam, which is an important variable in inter-ethnic relations. Although Kazakhstan is the least Islamic republic in Central Asia, its ethnic balance requires the presence of a

¹ Olcott, M.B., *The Kazakhs*, 2nd edn., Stanford, CA, 1995 (hereafter, Olcott, *Kazakhs*, 2nd ed.) p.292.

² Brown, M.E., 'The Causes of Internal Conflict: An Overview' in Brown, M.E., Cote, O.R., Lynn-Jones, S.M. and Miller, S.E. (eds.), *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*, Cambridge, MA, 1996, pp.3-25, (p.5).

lesser number of extremists to heighten tensions than are found across the rest of the region because issues such as cultural obliteration are placed into sharper focus. (This highlights the importance of cultural and historical factors and grievances in shaping contemporary relations.) Growth in radical Islam will also affect the inter-state relationship between Russia and Kazakhstan if Russia considers it a threat to her own security.

Of the third variable, Russian nationalism, Olcott, in 2002, remarked that: 'Nationalism is a powerful mobilizing tool in Russia, and it seems certain to stay so for a while'.³ This also influences Russian territorial integrity, as preventing territorial fragmentation is vital for both the Russian and Kazakh authorities. Olcott further notes:

Kazakhstani leaders believe that it would be disastrous for their republic if the Russia central authority was to collapse and dissolve into separate and presumably rival states. [...] many political observers in Kazakhstan feel that Russia's dissolution would lead to the creation of a Siberian republic, which inevitably would draw in Kazakhstan's northern oblasts.⁴

A convergence of these factors has the potential to destabilize north Kazakhstan as they would exacerbate inter-group tensions within the republic and worsen inter-state relations between the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan. In a worst-case scenario, Russia could intervene on behalf of Kazakhstan's ethnic Russians if their lives were threatened, as there would almost certainly be widespread support for Russia to do so.

³ Olcott, M.B., *Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise*, Washington D.C., 2001 (hereafter, Olcott, *Kazakhstan*), p. 215.

⁴ Olcott, *Kazakhs*, 2nd ed., p.298.

5:2 A REGIONAL ALTERNATIVE

What alternative forms could the Kazakh state take? It is self-evident that Nazarbaev's reluctance to devolve power to the oblasts has been shaped by fears over territorial fragmentation, not least because of the calls emanating from some sections of the Russian community for self-rule. Olcott herself lists the options in order of the likelihood of their being adopted, starting with elections for local akims, which is something that Nazarbaev began to introduce in 2005. However, the Central Electoral Committee is able to exert a great deal of influence over this process meaning that the development of genuine local government is extremely unlikely to occur. This development has been in line with general government policy that shows a marked unwillingness to relinquish centralized power. The President had the right as enshrined in the constitution both to appoint oblast akims (that act as regional governors) and release them from office at his own discretion (Article 87.4).⁵ These regional heads have the right to appoint municipal akims, but, as chapter three showed, boundary re-alignments to several of the Russian-dominated northern oblasts as well as a gradual dilution of the ethnic Russian population (particularly in the cities) across the region, means that the likelihood of ethnic Russians being elected to high office is reduced.

Even if greater powers were to be devolved to the oblast assemblies, it is highly unlikely that such a move would be allowed to challenge that of the central government. This lack of real regional representation for the ethnic Russian community is a pity because had the regions been trusted to elect their own heads, then the ethnic Russian community would have been as, if not more, important than the ethnic Kazakh community with regard to determining governance of the northern

⁵*Konstitutsiia Respubliki Kazakhstan (s ofitsial'nyimi tolkovaniiami)*, Almaty, 2004, p.76.

oblasts. Olcott argues that this would have alleviated many of the immediate concerns of the ethnic Russian community⁶ who, as chapter three shows, have little or no representation at national governmental level. Returning to the comparisons with Africa, this means that the situation in eastern Nigeria prior to 1967 was markedly different as Nigeria was a federal state of four relatively autonomous provinces who had a great deal of power devolved from central government, in contrast to contemporary Kazakhstan. The secession was brought about by the Ibo population, the group who had most strongly supported a united Nigeria; something that could not be said of the ethnic Russian community with regard to the contemporary Kazakh state.

In Kazakhstan, the issues of centralization and security are inter-related and, post-September 11, separatism has come to be viewed as indistinguishable from terrorism, meaning that the political climate is more favourable to greater governmental centralization. Although the akims have been created they do not really represent greater political decentralization as they have merely created another level of governmental control. With regard to the other two state structures highlighted by Olcott, it can be said with some certainty that the Kazakh government would never accept them. If they were to be adopted, it would most probably be because of pressure emanating from Moscow. These plans would involve far-reaching changes to state structures and the republic's constitution as they would involve changing a unitary state (which has, at present, a great deal of central control) into a federal state comprised of a northern, Russian state and a southern, Kazakh one grouped together as a confederation. The most extreme proposal concerns territorial fragmentation and even this has a number of different options regarding the future of north Kazakhstan

⁶ Olcott, *Kazakhs*, 2nd edn., p.297.

as most ethnic Russians would undoubtedly prefer to join with the Russian Federation.⁷

How, then, are the ethnic Russian community liable to influence Kazakh state-building? Returning to Nigeria, it had an ethnically-based secessionist movement that nearly succeeded in gaining independence, primarily because, as Smoch in his work *Ibo Politics* argues, the Ibos attempted to secede, as they were the most politically developed ethnic group within Nigeria living within an economically viable region. This is because of the proliferation of ethnic unions that:

preceded the attempts of political parties to organize in the countryside and the efforts of the colonial administration to introduce a modern system of local government. In addition, ethnic associations contributed greatly to the rapid economic and educational development of the Ibo people.⁸

As chapter three has shown, although the ethnic Russian community and political pressure groups do exist, they have been notorious for being unable to mount a concerted political challenge to the *Kazakhification* of the Kazakh state. The weakening of the ethnic Russian population by both a low birth rate and massive out-migration will most probably cause a further reduction in their effectiveness. It is very clear that these demographic factors, coupled with policies designed to increase the role of ethnic Kazakhs within the political sphere, means that the ethnic Russian community will no longer be a major political determinant in Kazakhstan, even though the widespread use of the Russian language means that they are not completely excluded from political discourse.

⁷ These different concepts of Kazakh statehood are all discussed by Olcott, *Kazakhs*, 2nd edn., p.292.

⁸ Smoch, A.C., *Ibo Politics: The Rise of Ethnic Unions in Eastern Nigeria*, Cambridge, MA, 1971, p.3.

If the ethnic Russian community and political pressure groups were more influential, the political landscape in the republic would very likely be rather different as they would help to further ethnic Russian political development in a region that is economically and educationally developed (probably the most advanced in Kazakhstan), replicating the situation in Nigeria where the eastern province (Biafra) was the also the most developed. However, discussing the issue of Nigerian federalism and the Biafra conflict means noting that the catalyst for secession was Hausa-Fulani orchestrated ethnic violence against Ibos living in the northern region, triggering mass migration back to people's ethnic enclaves; this shows that although the Ibos felt they had the resources to create a viable state, the catalyst was ethnic violence that sparked fears of demographic and cultural obliteration and makes the political climate markedly different to that of contemporary Kazakhstan. Although ethnic Kazakhs are considered very much *first amongst equals*, as chapter four shows, Kazakhstan has been more inclusive of its minorities than any other Central Asian republic. The reasons for this are three-fold: the size of Kazakhstan's ethnic minority communities could not be ignored; the potential for territorial fragmentation softened policy towards the community; and, finally, the Russian Federation.

While the issue of territorial fragmentation vis-à-vis the ethnic Russian community has undoubtedly shaped Kazakh political development, the Russian separatist threat is now much reduced. Territorial fragmentation is, however, a worry for the authorities, which also cites the issue of Uighur separatism as a small, but significant, threat to Kazakh security. Vladimir Bozhko, the first deputy director of the National Security Committee of Kazakhstan, stated in November 2004 that China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region and the North Caucasus were the breeding grounds of potential insurgents into Kazakhstan. These two regions were mentioned in the same list as

known terrorist and other banned organizations such as al-Qaeda, the Islamic Party of East Turkestan and the People's Congress of Kurdistan.⁹

To conclude, despite the current relatively peaceful inter-ethnic relations in Kazakhstan, the potential for secession, reintegration with Russia or an increase in ethnic tension, will always exist, although they appear to be reduced. Devolving power has not appeared fundamentally to weaken the Kazakh state because of the reduced influence of the ethnic Russian community and the fact that power devolvement has not really reduced the power of central government, but instead created a new layer of bureaucracy.

⁹ Yermukhanov, M., 'Kazakhstan Faces Potent Mix of Extremism, Nationalism and Terrorism', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol.1 Issue 130, 18 November 2004
<http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?search=1&volume_id=401&issue_id=3146&article_id=2368880. [accessed 17 August 2005] (para 5 of 8).

5:3 RUSSIAN NATIONALISM AND ISLAM

Although the territorial integrity of Kazakhstan is more assured, there are still important variables that have the potential to affect regional stability. Russian nationalism and Islam are potential destabilizing factors that are inter-connected as they have the potential to affect inter-state relations owing to their effect on regional security. The rise of radical Islam in Central Asia would affect both inter-ethnic relations within Kazakhstan as well as alter the political climate within the Russian Federation if such a development could be perceived as posing a security threat to Russia; the growth of Islam itself within Central Asia could well trigger a growth in Russian nationalism, although this is not a given.

These two variables both depend on a number of subsidiary factors if they are to increase in risk and are difficult to quantify, although poverty, dissatisfaction with mainstream political thought and external factors, such as the political situation in neighbouring countries, all affect the influence of these variables. As a potential growth in radical Islam would be the more destabilizing factor, this will be discussed first. This will involve a two-fold approach of studying the role of Islam generally in Central Asian political life and, secondly, analysing Russian concerns over southern stability.

Malashenko notes that Islam per se is not the variable under discussion but rather the *Islamic factor* such as its impact on social and political life, its use in politics, foreign policy and how it shapes relations with both Islamic and non-Islamic states.¹⁰ Currently, Kazakhstan is the republic in which there is the least amount of Islamic

¹⁰Malashenko, A., 'Islam and Politics in Central Asian States' (hereafter, Malashenko, 'Islam and Politics') in Jonson, L. and Esenov, M. (eds.), *Political Islam and Conflicts in Russia and Central Asia*, Stockholm, 1999, pp.9-18, (p.9).

influence in Central Asia. Historically, this may be because the Small and Middle Horde Kazakhs were converted to Islam by moderate Tatar proselytizers rather than by the more extremist Muslim clerics found in the oasis cities of the south. This implies that southern Kazakhs are more inclined towards Islamic belief and it appears that this division has endured through to the contemporary period with a clear distinction being drawn between northern and southern Kazakhs. Sulemeinov states that the northerners are more Europeanized whereas those of the south tend more towards Islamic extremism.¹¹ This appears borne out by the problems in Chimkent region, which is close to the Uzbek border and has a large ethnic Uzbek population. Naumkin argues that worsening conditions in the south as well as an influx of ethnic Uzbeks have increased radicalisation in the south.¹²

The proximity of the southern region to radicals in both Uzbekistan and the Fergana valley concerns the authorities as although radical Islam is not as prevalent in Kazakhstan as it is in Uzbekistan or Kyrgyzstan (which, despite having a similar Islamic history to Kazakhstan, is destabilized by the presence of Islamic militants in the Ferghana Valley) it has the potential to spread to southern Kazakhstan).¹³ This touches on the issue of regional security, hence Tokaev's statement in 2003 that an important part of Kazakh foreign policy involves 'ensuring the security and stability of the southern border of our country'.¹⁴

¹¹ Trofimov, I., 'Gosudarstvo, obshchestvo i religii v sovremennom Kazakhstane' (hereafter, Trofimov, 'Gosudarstvo'), *Tsentral'naia Aziia i Kavkaz*, 2.14, 2001, pp.148-56, (p.155).

¹² Naumkin, V., *Radical Islam in Central Asia. Between Pen and Rifle*, Lanham, MD., 2005 (hereafter, Naumkin, *Radical Islam*) p.193.

¹³ Zatulin, K.F., Grozin, A.V. and Khliupin, V.N., *Natsional'naia bezopasnost' Kazakhstana. Problemy i perspektivy*, Moscow, 1998, p.40.

¹⁴ Tokaev, K., 'Novoe stoletie: novye nadezhdy, novye zadachi, vneshniaia politika R.K. v 2002-3 godakh' in *Kazakhstan i sovremennyi mir*, Astana, 2004, pp.3-15.

With regard to Kazakh internal politics, Malashenko states that Islam cannot serve as a consolidating factor in inter-ethnic relations and is, instead, more likely to destabilize them.¹⁵ So far, the role of Islam within a political framework has been almost non-existent; Kazakhstan is the only republic in the former Soviet Central Asia that does not officially celebrate any Islamic festivals. Instead, the pre-Islamic festival of Narwiz (a celebration of the Spring equinox) has been introduced as a sort of multi-ethnic festival. However, this is not to say that Islam has no role within the republic. Nazarbaev has stated that it has played an important role in shaping Kazakh national identity, although such statements may be politically expedient ways of ensuring donations from the Middle East (primarily Saudi Arabia). As this money is usually granted for mosque construction, such comments may be genuinely pro-Islamic and an indicator that Nazarbaev is courting internal Muslim support.¹⁶ (State aid was granted to build the central mosque in Almaty, which seems to suggest governmental support for an Islamic revival.¹⁷)

So far, Islam has not played an important role within Kazakh political development. As chapter three showed, a greater emphasis has been placed upon ethno-historic justifications for statehood. Islam, by contrast, has played a small but significant role in people's self-identification as Kazakhs, with the majority of Kazakhs considering themselves Muslim, even if they have only a sketchy knowledge of the Koran or Islamic ritual. Furthermore, as Ismagambetov states, the 1990s should be considered as comprising the third wave of Islamization to have occurred in Kazakhstan if it is taken that the first occurred in the tenth century, prior to the Mongols, and the second in the eighteenth and nineteenth century:

¹⁵ Malashenko, 'Islam and politics', p.17.

¹⁶ Nazarbaev, N., *V potoke istorii*, Almaty, 1999, p.182.

¹⁷ Trofimov, 'Gosudarstvo', p.150.

Kazakhstan's *third wave of Islamization* began in the 1990s. The number of religious communities grew rapidly between 1990 and 1995. In 1989, there were 671 religious communities, belonging to twenty confessions and denominations, in Kazakhstan. By 1995, there were 1,180 registered religious communities belonging to almost thirty confessions and denominations.¹⁸

However, as Ismagambetov points out, since 1995 the growth of Islam has tailed off, which would seem to suggest that the initial fervour, if it can be so described, was more to do with the relaxation of restrictions that had existed during the Communist period than a flowering of genuine religious belief. Yet, like other scholars, he notes the contrast between northern and southern Kazakhstan with regard to attitudes towards Islam. Citing a poll conducted there in 1997 by Aidosov regarding attitudes of university students towards Islam, he states that the data shows that:

students tended to be particularly religious: almost 80 percent described themselves as believers while only 11 percent did not. But this religiosity is still in the formative stage: only four percent of respondents said they went to a mosque once or twice a week; 18 percent attended mosques on religious holidays; 32 percent -- once or twice a year; and 44 percent -- no more than once a year. [...] Almost half of the students polled did not rule out the possibility that Kazakhstan might develop in an Islamic direction, and 11 percent said they considered religious fundamentalism an inevitable consequence of Kazakhstan's geopolitical closeness to Muslim countries.¹⁹

¹⁸ Ismagambetov, T., 'Is Islamic Fundamentalism a Threat in Kazakhstan?' (hereafter, Ismagambetov, 'Islamic Fundamentalism') in *Prism*, 4.7, 3 April 1998
<http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?search=1&volume_id=5&issue_id=265&article_id=3016. [accessed 17 August 2005] (para 9 of 22).

¹⁹ Aidosov, S.B. quoted in Ismagambetov, 'Islamic Fundamentalism', (para 16 of 22).

Even if this can be attributed to the presence of a large ethnic Uzbek community, it shows that the key for the authorities is to harness the symbolic power of Islam without alienating the ethnic Russian community and preventing the spread of Islamic radicalism, something that Nazarbaev has increasingly commented on post-1996, the year of the victory of the Taliban in Afghanistan.²⁰ Their success demonstrated Central Asia's vulnerability to Islamic radicalism owing to porous borders.

Harnessing the symbolic power of Islam will continue to be a crucial goal for the administration as Islam is a major stumbling block in the quest for stable inter-ethnic relations. Islam reinforces notions of *otherness* and it could potentially place the largely Orthodox ethnic Russian community in opposition to the majority Islamic Kazakhs. An upsurge in Islamic worship would further the impression of Kazakhstan as a more specifically *Asian* country with many ethnic Russians feeling that Kazakhstan was being removed from its Eurasian orbit into that of purely Islamic states such as Uzbekistan, although it is not within the Kazakh government's interests to orient the country southward.

To emphasise this, Nazarbaev has continually stressed Kazakhstan's status as Eurasia's pivot, particularly the location of Astana,²¹ citing the country as a meeting-point between eastern and western cultures as well as Islam and Christianity. The fundamental importance of placing Kazakhstan in this position relates to the presence of the ethnic Russian community, who have reacted with alarm to any increase in

²⁰ Malashenko A., 'Islam in Central Asia' in Allison, R., and Jonson, L. (eds.), *Central Asian Security. The New International Context*, London, 2001 (hereafter, Malashenko, 'Islam in Central Asia'), pp.49-68, p.54.

²¹ Nazarbaev, N., 'Vystuplenie prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbaev na prezidentatsii knigi 'V serdtse Evrazii', 9 June 2005, *Ofitsial'nii Sait Prezidenta RK*, <http://www.akorda.kz/page.php?page_id=33&lang=1&article_id_82, [accessed 06 December 2005] (para 18 of 48).

either *Asianizing* processes or the promotion of Islam, particularly since Orthodox Christianity is considered a crucial component in Russian national identity.²²

With regard to how Islam is perceived by the ethnic Russian community, it is apparent that all sections of Russian society accept that there is a tolerant Islam as well as Islamic extremism that is encouraged and financed from abroad.²³ Because of this, the Orthodox Church within Kazakhstan has accepted the need to work with official Islamic structures rather than oppose all of Islam as an inferior religion. This has been achieved through official structures and has been supported by the Orthodox Church as a way of maintaining their official status as one of the historic religions of Kazakhstan. It increases its power and influence, which is beneficial for the Orthodox Church, whose support base had been threatened by the arrival of evangelical churches actively seeking converts following the collapse of Communism.

This shows the *entente cordiale* that exists between Orthodoxy and Islam at official levels as shown by the quote from Botasheva and Lebedev:

In Central Asia as in Russia, there is a natural division of the sphere of influence between the two principal religions, Orthodoxy and Islam, and no-one will be able to destroy this agreement.²⁴

Indeed, there are numerous examples of these two religions working together at an official level, not least their decision to pressurize the authorities to tighten laws on religion that they judge too tolerant with regard to new, mainly Protestant religions that openly proselytize in Kazakhstan. Laruelle and Peyrouse feel that this

²² Malashenko, 'Islam in Central Asia', p.58.

²³ Laruelle, M., Peyrouse, S., *Les Russes du Kazakhstan. Identités nationales et nouveaux états dans l'espace post-soviétique*, Paris, 2005 (hereafter, Laruelle and Peyrouse, *Les Russes*), p.185-6.

²⁴ Botasheva, I. and Lebedev, V., 1996 in Laruelle and Peyrouse, *Les Russes*, p.186.

demonstrates the long history of Islamic-Christian tolerance. Highlighting this, Patriarch Alexei stated in the sixth People's Assembly of Kazakhstan that:

We are the witnesses but also those who continue the brotherhood and the reciprocal understanding transmitted by our ancestors between the two principal ethnies that today inhabit Kazakhstan and who belong to two universal religions- Islam and Orthodoxy.²⁵

Although it is easy to read too much into quotes such as this, particularly when the speech was made at the People's Assembly, a body often felt to gloss over ethnic reality on the ground. It does, however, demonstrate that at an official level at least dialogue is open between Orthodoxy and Islam within official structures and also that there is a recognition on the part of Christians of historically relatively good inter-religious relations as well as an understanding that the majority of Kazakh Muslims are relatively tolerant and far less prone to extremism than some other Muslim communities within Central Asia.

Ethnic Russian perceptions of Islam are not, on the whole, as positive as those held by the Orthodox establishment. What appears most to concern the ethnic Russian community is foreign Islamic involvement within Kazakhstan, whether in the religious, economic or cultural spheres, possibly because it creates the impression that Kazakhstan is moving into a more Asian sphere of influence at the expense of its Eurasian status. This may appear doubly worrying as to them it appears much harder for Russian groups from the Russian Federation itself to be involved in cross-border initiatives (although this is not true as there are many examples even at government-level of such initiatives, such as the joint Year of Kazakhstan in Russia and Year of Russia in Kazakhstan held in 2003 and 2004 respectively); these are not viewed as

²⁵*Ibid.*, p.187.

threatening whereas foreign money to build mosques and provide Korans makes Kazakhstan a more foreign country in the eyes of ethnic Russians. The decision of Nazarbaev to allow Islamic-based education centres such as the Kazakh-Kuwaiti university in Chimkent and the Kazakh-Turkish university in Almaty to be built using foreign money also proved controversial.²⁶

Although these examples are relatively uncommon, many Russians feel that they are part of a general trend of Islamification. As the authors of *Genotsid* noted, 'we can control the Taliban in Afghanistan, but what about those of the interior'.²⁷ I would argue that Islam is the main variable that creates a sense of *otherness* for ethnic Russians (although chapter three showed that language policies and a *Kazakhification* of the national landscape have all produced a sense of cultural dislocation for ethnic Russians) as religion affects people on a more fundamental and emotional level than almost any other variable.

Although most ethnic Russians, especially those in the north, accept that the majority of Kazakhs are Muslims, this is a relatively non-extreme form of Islam and Islamic extremism is more often associated with foreign groups who seek to infiltrate both Central Asia and Russia. Such foreign groups now include Caucasian groups such as those from Chechnya and many ethnic Russians feel that these groups will attempt to create a Russophobic climate that creates Islamic solidarity with the Kazakhs at the expense of the ethnic Russian community.²⁸

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.189.

²⁷ 'Ust'-Kamenogorskaia tragediia' in Khliupin, V.N. (ed.), *Genotsid. Russkie v Kazakhstane: tragicheskaiia sud'ba*, Moscow, 2001, pp.186-219, (p.189).

²⁸ Laruelle and Peyrouse, *Les Russes*, p.190.

Another aspect of tension is caused by the fact that many feel that Islam is not subject to the same strictures as Orthodoxy, despite the official policy of secularism. The proliferation of non-official mosques is criticized, although as the administration is also keen to clamp down on these places of worship, it seems a little churlish of Russian organizations to criticize the authorities for their failure to close these establishments.²⁹

Religious policy in Kazakhstan has proved less contentious than the language laws discussed in chapter three. Both Islam and Orthodoxy have been listed as one of the *historic religions* of Kazakhstan. Again, political control has shaped religious policy within Kazakhstan with a clampdown affecting both Christian groups that have actively sought membership post-1991 as well as non-state registered Islamic congregations. Indeed, it could be argued that it is easier for the authorities to form good relations with the Orthodox Church than with Islam. Although Orthodoxy is bound up with the ethnic Russian community and notions of *Russianness*, it does not pose the same threat as radical Islam could potentially do to Kazakhstan.

The Kazakh authorities have also recorded large numbers of *Wahabbis*. This is notable because the term is not used in its strict historical sense, but instead is increasingly being applied to anyone who worships in non-state-registered mosques or encourages the development of an Islamic way of life as opposed to those who believe in the ideology of Muhammed ibn' Abd al-Wahhat, who conceived of the idea of recreating the Caliphate of the Prophet in the eighteenth and nineteenth century Arabian peninsula.³⁰ Such worshippers are overwhelmingly located in the south of

²⁹ *Ibid*, p.189.

³⁰ Malashenko, 'Islam and Politics', p.14.

Kazakhstan, particularly Shymkent region, suggesting an attempt to blame a non-titular minority with a tradition of strict adherence to Islam (the Uzbeks), for the rise of Islamic extremism.

It is difficult to ascertain the threat posed by Islamic radicalism across Central Asia because knowledge of the internal structures of radical groups is sketchy. The principal groups causing concern are Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HT) with their stated aim of creating an Islamic caliphate³¹ (although this group advocates peaceful struggle, it is believed that disaffected members may have become increasingly radicalized) and the IMU, which aims to depose the Karimov regime. Although these groups have different aims, there has been cooperation between the two (most notably during the 2000 skirmishes in southern Uzbekistan³²), although the likelihood of either group achieving their aims is remote. The clampdown on these groups has been less severe in Kazakhstan as opposed to Uzbekistan, primarily because Islamic radicalisation is less of a problem in the former than the latter. It is clear, however, that HT is operational in Kazakhstan as shown by the literature seized by the authorities as well as the 2003 protest rallies staged by the organization in mosques in Shymkent and Arys (both in southern Kazakhstan) against the imprisonment of group members in Uzbekistan. As Yermukhanov notes, HT has infiltrated into southern Kazakhstan, despite attempts to clamp down on its activities, as shown by the discovery of over 12,000 leaflets in Kazakh, Russian and Uzbek produced by the group in Kentai, south Kazakhstan.³³

³¹ Naumkin, *Radical Islam*, p.129.

³² Malashenko, 'Islam in Central Asia', p.56.

³³ Yermukhanov, M. 'Terrorism and Nationalism: Twin threats to Kazakhstan', 14 February 2005, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 2.31, 2005

On this evidence alone it is difficult to ascertain the level of threat although incursions by Islamic militants into Kyrgyzstan's Batken region in 1999 and the bombings in Tashkent in 1999-2000 by the IMU, provide more extreme examples and show the potential of militant groups to pose a sustained if relatively low-level threat to Central Asian security. They also show the importance of developing an intra-regional approach to the issue of international Islamic terrorism as well as the threat posed to Kazakhstan by regional militancy, hence the bolstering of security along the Uzbek-Kazakh border following the attacks in Tashkent in late March 2004.³⁴

The threat of Islamic militancy has always been a factor shaping the dynamics of the Russia-Kazakhstan relationship even prior to the attack on the World Trade Centre owing to ongoing concerns regarding a potential Islamic insurgency affecting the Russian south. Both Russia and Kazakhstan share concerns over the potential for an Islamic revival to challenge regional security, which, as chapter four showed, has led to a number of bilateral security agreements concerning both terrorism and border controls. Malashenko argues that the second half of the 1990s created a new relationship between Russia and Central Asia with the latter looking to participate more actively in regional security measures.³⁵ McDermott, writing in the *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, notes the inter-regional strategy with the KNB (the Kazakh Security Service) receiving data from the Russian intelligence service (FSB) as well as working

<http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?search=1&volume_id=407&issue_id=3230&article_id=2369254. [accessed 17 August 2005] (para 1 of 8).

³⁴ McDermott, R, 'Kazakhstan's Emerging Role in the War on Terror', *Terrorism Monitor*, 2.10, 2004, (hereafter, McDermott, 'Kazakhstan's Emerging Role')

<http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?search=1&volume_id=400&issue_id=2960&article_id=236741. [accessed 17 August 2005] (para 4 of 12) (hereafter, McDermott, 'Kazakhstan's Emerging Role').

³⁵ Malshenko, 'Islam in Central Asia', p.60.

with the anti-terrorist cell of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Tashkent and the CIS antiterrorist centre in Bishkek.³⁶

Although it is unlikely that Russia views Kazakhstan as a potential breeding-ground for large numbers of terrorists (although concerns were expressed that one of the terrorists involved in the Beslan school siege was alleged to have been a Kazakh national, possibly of Chechen origin), Russia would not welcome any rise in Islamic radicalism in Kazakhstan, although how this would affect policy towards Kazakhstan's ethnic Russian community is unclear. An Islamic revival, however unlikely, might well prompt greater ethnic Russian emigration from Kazakhstan. This would be rather ironic given that Kazakhstan has become something of a haven for Central Asia's ethnic Russian community as Islam and nationalist policies begin to exert a more powerful influence in other Central Asian states. Yermukhanov notes in the *Eurasia Daily Monitor* that: In 2003, 28,668 Russians from CIS countries migrated to Kazakhstan for permanent residence. In 2004 the figure rose to 32,228. Russians are flowing in mainly from Uzbekistan, where they feel increasingly discriminated against on ethnic grounds.³⁷

Russian policy towards Kazakhstan is, however, unlikely to change markedly provided that the threat from radical Islam remains low. As chapter four showed, Russia has discovered it is more fruitful to work with Kazakhstan with regard to regional security than attempt to pressurize Kazakhstan over her ethnic Russian community.

³⁶ McDermott, 'Kazakhstan's Emerging Role' (para 7 of 12).

³⁷ Yermukhanov, M., 'Astana Ponders Kremlin's "Lost Opportunities" in Kazakhstan', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 2.2, 2005
<http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?search=1&volume_id=407&issue_id=3182&article_id=2369036. [accessed 17 August 2005] (para 7 of 8).

The second variable that may affect inter-state relations (with a greater impact upon Kazakhstan than on Russia) is a growth in Russian nationalism within the Russian Federation leading to a corresponding growth in radicalism among Kazakhstan's ethnic Russian community. Any potential manifestation of this would be damaging for Kazakhstan because of the massive inequality in resources, the respective sizes of their armies and their respective abilities to harness world public opinion. Although Russia has never made a serious attempt to undermine Kazakh territorial integrity, Russian nationalism remains a powerful mobilising tool that could be harnessed in the future. This variable, coupled with a Russian desire to maintain a strong presence in Central Asia (at a time when the United States is becoming an influential regional power, if not yet as strong as Russia itself), could encourage the Russian administration to attempt to harness discontent within the ethnic Russian community in north Kazakhstan, although this is increasingly unlikely.

Russian nationalism is an important variable that may determine Kazakhstan's future territorial integrity because, as Olcott makes clear, Russia will, most probably, be the final decision-maker with regard to the future of the republic. Again, this highlights an important difference between post-Soviet political development and that that occurred in Africa following the departure of the European colonial powers. Between no African state is there such a huge imbalance of power and, with the exception of Nigeria and South Africa, very few states have a population of more than five million. Thus, few states are possessed of either the power, both political and economic, that Russia can wield, or an army as large and powerful. In Africa, as there are few ethnically-based states to which disaffected ethnic groups can seek refuge, often conflict and secessionist attempts are the only option open to politically disenfranchised ethnic groups. Furthermore, what this huge size disparity as well as

large numbers of ethnic co-nationals living outside of the *home state* demonstrates is that unlike African inter-state relations a rise in nationalism in Russia may have profound consequences for Kazakhstan.

In order to analyse the likelihood of Russian nationalism serving as a catalyst for inter-state tensions, a brief history of its post-Soviet development will be provided here. This can be linked to the overlapping concepts of nationality that have blurred the distinction between civic and ethnic concepts of nationality. Although Russia adopted *zero-option* citizenship, the former Soviet *entry number five* continued to influence how citizenship was conceived. Within Russia itself in the immediate post-Soviet period, there was nostalgia for former Soviet territories lost post-1991. Shamil Sultanov went as far as to call post-Soviet Russia both 'defective' and 'not the historic Russia'.³⁸ In *Rebuilding Russia*, with regard to Kazakhstan, Solzhenitsyn argued that the country should split along ethnic lines with north Kazakhstan becoming a part of the Russian Federation and the 'large arc of land in the South, sweeping from the extreme East Westwards almost to the Caspian Sea; the population here is indeed predominantly Kazakh'³⁹ forming a separate Kazakh republic.

This is an often-quoted remark made by the author, which finds him arguing for the inclusion of north Kazakhstan (which he believes to be historic Russian land) within an enlarged Slavic-based *Greater Russia*. This is an idea, which owing to the confusion of national identity concepts in Russia, found some favour with the population at large, even though Solzhenitsyn is perhaps not as revered as he once was. This was the more respectable face of Russian nationalism, yet there were other more extreme forms that found support following the collapse of the USSR.

³⁸ Sultanov, S., quoted by Tolz, V., in *Inventing the Nation: Russia*, London, 2000, p.235.

³⁹ Solzhenitsyn, A., *Rebuilding Russia*, London, 1990, p.12.

Vladimir Zhirinovskii, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, is perhaps the best example of the more extreme form of Russian nationalism that proved seductive in the immediate post-1991 period. Taking advantage of the taboo nature of discussing the Russian state's potential obligations towards ethnic Russians in the *near abroad* under Kozyrev, he was able to tap into the confused nature of Russian national identity during this period. He is an interesting figure as he is an ethnic Russian born in Alma-Ata and his speeches have often showed how a percentage of Central Asia's ethnic Russians viewed their status within this society. With regard to Central Asia, Zhirinovskii stated, 'I was born in Central Asia myself, you see. We regard it as Russia, not Central Asia'.⁴⁰

However, even when support for Zhirinovskii was at a high during the 1993-94 period, and forcing the Yeltsin administration to incorporate a number of his ideas into government policy, there was no serious attempt made to undermine Kazakh territorial integrity. Zhirinovskii remains active and his comments regarding the January 17 2005 border delineation agreement between Russia and Kazakhstan, prompted demonstrations at the Russian embassy in Kazakhstan. Speaking on the agreement, which had already led to small-scale protests both in Russia and Kazakhstan, Zhirinovskii stated 'as a nation, Kazakhs had never achieved the high degree of social maturity needed for statehood'.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Zhirinovskii, V., quoted in Frazer, G., and Lancelle, G., *Zhirinovskii: The Little Black Book. Making Sense of the Senseless*, London, 1994, p.24.

⁴¹ Yermukhanov, M., 'Russian-Kazakh Border Agreement Sparks Nationalist Reaction', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 2.19, 2005
<http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?search=1&volume_id=407&issue_id=3212&article_id=2369163 The Jamestown Foundation. [accessed 17 August 2005] (para 2 of 7).

With regard to how this affects ethnic Russian nationalism within Kazakhstan, writing on the conviction of Evgeny Efimenko an ethnic Russian living in Kazakhstan in July 2004 for dissemination of extremist Russian literature, which 'called on like-minded people to fight for the 'Russian cause',⁴² Yermukhanov notes that:

Mounting Russian nationalism is seen as a direct threat to Kazakhstan's independence, but the government has largely ignored the phenomenon.⁴³

Although this shows that ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan have the potential to be radicalized by a growth of nationalism within the Russian Federation, a brief history of the pressure groups acting on behalf of Russians in the *near abroad* that are operational within the Russian Federation, show that the initial influence that they once had has tailed off. They have, for the most part, been careful to avoid inciting nationalist tensions within the ethnic Russian communities of the *near abroad* and now concern themselves with material aid to those communities that require assistance.

Laruelle and Peyrouse argue that these lobbying groups commanded the greatest support during the critical period of 1993-95 and in particular the Congress of Russian Communities (*Kongress russkikh obshchin*) led by Dmitrii Rogozin (who also founded Rodina, a Russian nationalist party that did well in the 2003 Duma elections). In 1995 the Council of Compatriots was formed (*Soviet sootchestvennikov*) and counted among its members Ziuganov, Zhirinovskii and Lebed as well as Bounakov and Mikhailov the leaders of RO and Lad. These organizations had limited power and

⁴² Yermukhanov, M., 'The Spectre of Russian Extreme Nationalism Haunts Kazakhstan', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 1.50, 2005
<http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?search=1&volume_id=401&issue_id=3014&article_id=2368237. [accessed 17 August 2005] (para 1 of 5).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, (para 5 of 5).

only really had the ability to attempt to preserve cultural rights and language issues, which suggests that there is only a low level of support for Kazakhstan's ethnic Russians.

The issue of ethnic Russian returnees to the Russian Federation is a fascinating one and has a number of parallels with the *pieds noirs* Europeans who left Algeria for France following Algerian independence. The reaction of the ethnic Russian returnees and the *pied noirs* Europeans was markedly different and why this should be so may highlight why inter-ethnic relations in Kazakhstan have remained relatively stable. Laruelle and Peyrouse also refer to this by stating that a number of comparisons between the two communities can be made, most notably the fact that both groups were not particularly well received upon their arrival in the *motherland*, rather than being thought of as heroes who had represented national interests in a place that was culturally different; the difficulty of economic integration, at least initially, and, finally, the creation of solidarity networks.⁴⁴

It appears that the remaining ethnic Russian community has little organizational capacity as shown by the lack of pressure groups that have been created. Perhaps understandably, in the early years of Russian independence, ethnic Russian returnees did place an undeniable strain upon overstretched local resources, not least because they overwhelmingly settled in oblasts contiguous with Kazakhstan rather than relocating within western Russia. However, Putin has also instituted a program, in consultation with Russian community leaders in Kazakhstan, that proposed the resettlement of ethnic Russians from Kazakhstan in depopulated parts of Siberia as a way of reversing Russia's population decline (predicted to reduce by twelve million

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p.268.

by 2050 according to UN surveys).⁴⁵ This was promoted as a second *Virgin Lands* program where pioneering Russians, who had once tilled the soils of north Kazakhstan, (firstly as part of the Stolypin reforms and secondly as part of the *Virgin Lands* program) would return home in the same spirit to colonize and make fertile new lands.⁴⁶

What does this scheme say about inter-state relations as well as those of Kazakhstan's ethnic Russians to both Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation itself? Schemes like this show the continued desire of ethnic Russians to leave Kazakhstan and return to what they consider to be their ancestral homeland, suggesting that discontent remains towards the Kazakh authorities for making their position increasingly untenable. The people targeted for this scheme are men of working age and their families, meaning a further reduction of ethnic Russians in the younger age sectors of Kazakh society, again further reducing the political effectiveness of the ethnic Russian community. For the Russian government, this scheme provides the beginning of a way of combating Russia's demographic decline as well as appearing to be operating a policy that assists ethnic Russians in the *near abroad*. Although Russia no longer makes any clear commitment to these groups, such a policy is a roundabout way of doing so that also benefits Russia and does not disturb relations with Kazakhstan.

Such schemes are characterized by a lack of coordination that hampers the application of any real pressure upon the Kazakh authorities. The Russian government has also become less willing to permit open criticism of the Kazakh authorities by opposition groups when they are on Russian soil and the new Russian citizenship laws passed in 2002 made no reference to *compatriots*. Although this is not specific to Kazakhstan,

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.251.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.251-52.

its ethnic Russian community is one of the main sufferers of this new development.⁴⁷ It suggests that although Russian nationalism may remain a powerful potential variable, it currently operates on a more unofficial as opposed to state-approved level and demonstrates the Russian administration's unwillingness to disturb relatively good inter-state relations with Kazakhstan for the sake of providing a voice for the ethnic Russian community. The lack of diplomatic support for the ethnic Russian community in Kazakhstan is another example of Russian governmental refusal to act as an 'external national homeland'.⁴⁸ It should be noted that the key years for this policy were 1991-95 when much of the CIS was in a state of flux and Zhirinovskii was at the height of his powers and in a position partly to influence policy towards the ethnic Russian diaspora. Precedent therefore suggests that although these variables have strained inter-state relations with regard to the status of the ethnic Russian community, they did not significantly affect the inter-state dynamic. The presence of a number of other variables means that this triadic dynamic may yet be altered, of which Islam is the most likely to disturb the relationship.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.275.

⁴⁸ Brubaker, R., *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, Cambridge, 1996, p.5.

5:4 CONCLUSION

How, then should this chapter be concluded? As these processes are ongoing, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions regarding the future for ethnic relations in Kazakhstan. A few general points can be made. Firstly, although Kazakhstan has been independent for almost fourteen years, the potential for inter-ethnic strife to fracture the republic remains present within an ethnically divided population. Official state structures and the republic's geography may make this more likely to occur since although there is very little regional difference in Kazakh language or culture, those living in the south face different concerns to those in the north of the republic and it appears that centralization has not taken this factor into account. As chapter three showed, the immediate threat from this is reduced by internal divisions within the ethnic Russian community, as is the lack of desire within the Russian administration to act more proactively on their part.

Secondly, inter-state relations would undoubtedly be affected by the growth of radical Islam across Central Asia and it is concerns over this variable that has prompted the creation of inter-regional structures involving both Kazakhstan and Russia in an attempt to prevent its spread. The CIS has been instrumental in shaping Russia-Kazakhstan relations with Kazakhstan singled out as the cornerstone of a stable Eurasia, which demonstrates its importance to Russia. Both the Russian and Kazakh authorities have an interest in preventing the spread of radical Islam and must work together within the framework of regional security to achieve this aim.

Although territorial fragmentation would require the convergence of the factors discussed in this chapter, they appear increasingly unlikely to affect Russia-Kazakhstan relations or the future territorial integrity of Kazakhstan. The great

unknown variable, however, with the potential seriously to destabilize this relationship, is the potential growth of radical Islam. As the future development of this is hard to predict, it should be concluded that although there has been no marked growth in either ethnic Russian nationalism or Islamic radicalism within Kazakhstan, this chapter has demonstrated that the latter has the greater potential to become a powerful influence on Russia-Kazakhstan relations.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6:1 THE COMPARATIVE APPROACH: AFRICA AND KAZAKHSTAN

As many differences as similarities exist between state-and nation-building processes in Africa and Kazakhstan. Despite this, using an inter-regional approach to study Kazakh political development has been useful and has provided an interesting framework within which to study inter-ethnic relations.

Africa shows that a state's political geography, and specifically ethnic geography, may aggravate intra-state security issues¹ such as the extension of state power over large, sparsely populated territories,² a fact borne out by civil conflict in nine of the ten largest states in Africa; that this has not occurred in Kazakhstan demonstrates that large territorial size is not a sufficient factor alone behind the weakening of a state, although it can exacerbate other structural weaknesses, creating a climate in which tension can develop.

With regard to ethnic geography, Kazakhstan shares more similarities with many post-colonial African states and, in particular, that of the case study, Nigeria. Although Kazakhstan is more classically bipolar with regard to ethnic geography than Nigeria, (which has three main ethnic groupings located in geographically compact regions as well as other, smaller groupings) both states have been faced with the dilemma of whether to federalize or centralize power in the form of a unitary state. Nigeria, with the Biafra crisis that began in 1967, demonstrated that fears over cultural destruction can lead to secessionist tendencies and this has led to repeated attempts at

¹ Brown, M.E., 'The Causes of Internal Conflict: An Overview' in Brown, M.E., Cote, O.R., Lynn-Jones, S.M. and Miller, S.E., (eds.), *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*, Cambridge, MA, 1996, pp.3-25, (p.5).

² Herbst, J., *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*, Princeton, NJ, 2000, p.11.

federalization as a means of combating this problem. Nigeria shows that size and ethnic geography alone do not guarantee inter-ethnic discord and that inter-group mistrust and competition for natural resources are important factors in inter-ethnic strife. The Ibo community feared cultural and perhaps actual physical obliteration³ (not necessarily death is implied here) and were possessed of valuable natural resources on which to base the economy of their new state following secession.

Although inter-ethnic mistrust was certainly present in Kazakhstan even prior to independence, inter-ethnic relations have remained relatively good, at least compared with the situation across much of Africa. This implies the presence of a number of different variables not found in post-colonial Africa that have acted as an inhibitor on inter-ethnic tensions in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. It was shown in chapter one that different colonial governance has had an impact on both inter-ethnic relations and shaped social and political development in the case studies under discussion. In particular, the benefits of Soviet rule would appear to have not only created the infrastructure of Kazakhstan as a modern independent republic, but also to have affected the development of inter-ethnic relations within the republic.

³ Forrest, J., *Subnationalism in Africa. Ethnicity, Alliances and Politics*, Boulder, CO, 2004, p.161.

6:2 THE EFFECTS OF SOVIET POLICY ON RUSSIAN-KAZAKH INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS

Soviet rule in Kazakhstan had a greater positive effect on inter- ethnic (in this instance Russia-Kazakhstan) relations than anything that occurred in a British or French-held African territory; it fundamentally altered the relationship between two groups from one of a fairly standard colonizer/colonized dynamic to a more equal relationship as fellow Soviet citizens. The Kazakh SSR's (until 1936, the Kazakh ASSR) status as an ethnic homeland has also fundamentally shaped post-Soviet Kazakh state-and-nation-building processes. Helped by policies such as *Korenizatsiia* (rooting), a favourable climate for ethnic Kazakh advancement was created, even if this only really occurred with the accession of Kunaev (1960-62 and 1964-86) to the position of First Party Secretary of the CPK. In reality it was not so much a changing of the ethnic guard but, instead, a way of more accurately reflecting Kazakhstan's ethnic mix. By the end of Kunaev's rule ethnic Kazakhs were in a majority in both government and the regional elite (70.9% Kazakh as opposed to 20.0% ethnic Russian in the former and 62.5% ethnic Kazakh as opposed to 30.0% ethnic Russian in the latter).⁴

However, the economic, social and political advancement of the titular elite did provoke a certain amount of inter-ethnic tension. Karklins's study,⁵ undertaken during the Soviet period, and Masanov's work,⁶ which was conducted almost 20 years later, over ten years after independence, show that inter-ethnic resentment, rather than tension, appears to be the best description of the situation in Kazakhstan. This thesis has shown that despite the apparent fertile conditions for ethnic violence within

⁴*Ibid.*, p.33.

⁵ Karklins, R., *Ethnic Relations in the USSR. The Perspective from Below*, Winchester, MA, 1986.

⁶ Masanov, N., 'Perceptions of Ethnic and All-National Identity in Kazakhstan', *The Middle East Series No. 51. The Nationalities Question in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan*, 2002 <http://icas.org/English/51-_cap1_4.pdf [accessed 8 May 2005] pp.1-70.

Kazakhstan, its non-emergence is, in part, due to a lack of crystallisation of both ethnic Kazakh and ethnic Russian identity, although Kazakh sub-national clan loyalties were able to survive Soviet rule. The reconstituted form that they took, although weaker than during the imperial period owing to the large loss of life as a result of collectivization and sedentarization, was able to shape political life within the Kazakh SSR and after independence.

Soviet policy hardened the ethnic criterion, as *entry number five* was not an incentive towards loyalty of a republic that did not serve as an ethnic homeland. In the post-Soviet period this has meant that it is difficult for ethnic Russians to adapt to Kazakh society due to the nationalizing processes being undertaken by the state. Why this has not led to conflict is, in part, due to the fact that ethnic Russian identity is not sufficiently well crystallized because of fragmentation within the ethnic Russian community, due largely to three different waves of Russian migration to north Kazakhstan. Those who arrived during the Soviet period were often among those who felt little loyalty towards Kazakhstan and thus returned to Russia following the collapse of Communism. It has also been shown that not everyone who opposed Kazakh independence chose to leave. Among these were a number of radical elements within the Russian community, including Cossacks and their dependants that believed that north Kazakhstan was historic Russian territory. Ethnic Russian cultural and political groups have struggled, both because of ethnic Russian political apathy, which Lad tried to counter during the 1996 presidential election by entering into an alliance with Olzhas Suleimenov's People's Congress Party⁷ in a bid to persuade more ethnic Russians to vote, as well as the governmental clamp-down on all political parties that has severely reduced the ability of ethnic Russian groups to campaign

⁷ 'Kazakh countdown raises temperature in Kazakh politics' in *Central Asia Quarterly*, 2.4, London, 1995, p.6.

effectively. Ethnic Russians have found it hard to register as presidential candidates, particularly Cossack heads, for example Gunkin in 1995,⁸ suggesting that there has been official interference against ethnic Russian participation. (As it is a criminal offence openly to advocate the territorial fragmentation of Kazakhstan, a number of Russian Cossack candidates have fallen foul of this law.)

Even more serious than political apathy is the demographic decline of the ethnic Russian community. Out-migration, coupled with a low birth rate (66.1% of the population aged between 0-9 years is Kazakh as opposed to 19.5% that are ethnic Russian) has reduced the ethnic Russian share of the population as shown by the first Kazakh census taken in 1999. This showed a 22% increase in the ethnic Kazakh population from 6.49 million to 7.98 million and a 26% decrease in the ethnic Russian population from 6.06 million to 4.47 million, in part due to out-migration prompted by nationalizing policies. Their respective population shares in 1999 were 53.4% ethnic Kazakh and 30.0% ethnic Russian.⁹ Furthermore, when coupled with oblast *rationalization* and increased ethnic Kazakh settlement in the north, patterns of traditional Russian habitation have been significantly altered as the statistics in chapter three showed. This dilution of the ethnic Russian community has reduced any effectiveness they may have had to act as a coherent political block, particularly when the governmental clampdown on the activities of Russian organizations is factored in.

Returning to the issue of why there has been little ethnic Russian opposition to Kazakh independence, despite the nationalizing policies undertaken by the state to

⁸ 'Kazakhstan. Human Rights Development' < <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1997/WR97/HELSINKI-09.htm> [accessed 05/12/05] (para 5 of 9).

⁹ Alekseenko, A. 'Pervaia perepis' naseleniia v Kazakhstane: nekotorye itogi i osenki', in Laruelle, M. and Peyrouse, S., *Les Russes du Kazakhstan. Identités nationales et nouveaux états dans l'espace post-soviétique*, Paris, 2005 (hereafter, Laruelle and Peyrouse, *Les Russes*), p.338.

create a coherent and viable sense of Kazakh national identity,¹⁰ is probably because Kazakhstan is amongst the most tolerant of any of the post-Soviet states. This is not to say that there has been no adverse effect on inter-ethnic relations as many of the new laws, particularly those that relate to language, are a permanent reminder to the ethnic Russian population of their second-class status within the republic. To many the new laws appear petty and unnecessary, for example where Russian place names and street-signs have been changed in predominantly Russian areas. Furthermore, the repatriation of two hundred and fifteen thousand *oralman*¹¹ Kazakhs from outside of the republic by 1996 proved controversial owing to the resettlement program housing them overwhelmingly in the northern Russian-dominated oblasts, where their impact has been less than positive, with 80% of those settled in Pavlodar oblast being long-term unemployed.¹² Although the number of *returnees* is relatively small, (although Nazarbaev remains relatively committed to the scheme)¹³ the policy demonstrates Kazakhstan's status as an ethnic homeland.

In the immediate post-independence period Nazarbaev stressed Kazakhstan's credentials as a multi-cultural republic. His remarks and policies, although appearing conciliatory, are often full of contradictions, which appear designed to fudge important issues. I would argue that this demonstrates the complex process of state-and-nation-building within Kazakhstan, with the administration having to placate Kazakh nationalists as well as ethnic Russians and other minority ethnicities. A good

¹⁰ Akiner, S., *The Formation of Kazakh Identity from Tribe to Nation-State*, London, 1995 (hereafter, Akiner, *Formation of Kazakh Identity*).

¹¹ 'Country Reports: Kazakhstan 1997'

<<http://www.refugees.org/world/countryrpt/scasia/kazakhstan.htm> (para 5 of 7).

¹² Khliupin, V.N. and Puzanov, V.I. 'Popytki 'Miagkoi' assimiliatsii' in Khliupin, V.N. (ed.), *Genotsid. Russkie v Kazakhstane: tragicheskaya sud'ba*, Moscow, 2001 (hereafter Khliupin, 'Popytki'), pp. 54-81, (p.72).

¹³ Burke, J., 'Kazakh President's State of Nation Address to Parliament' *Kazakhstan Daily Digest*, <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/kazakhstan/hypermail/200403/0035.shtml> 22 March 2004, [accessed 25 March 2005], (para 45 of 113).

example of this would be the constitution, which as chapter three demonstrates confuses the very issue of Kazakh sovereignty.¹⁴ Post-independence, Nazarbaev has been quick to defend multi-culturalism, whilst at the same time making ambiguous remarks that seem to suggest that the ethnic Kazakh population is, if not the dominant ethnic group, then certainly *first among equals* within the republic.¹⁵

Similar remarks are made with regard to language policy, which was perhaps the most contentious issue with regard to inter-ethnic relations in the post-Soviet period. On the one hand Nazarbaev praises the Russian language for having acted as a conduit by which Kazakhs could receive European culture,¹⁶ while refusing to make Russian a state language along with Kazakh. This decision is purely political seeing as Russian has remained widely spoken in both professional and social contexts. Chapter three has also shown how the 1997 revised language laws have placed a greater emphasis on Kazakh within the education system as well as reducing the use of Russian within the mass media,¹⁷ a policy that has become even more stringent in 2003.¹⁸ A good to fluent knowledge of Kazakh is required for most government jobs, including that of President.¹⁹ Although this is not overt discrimination against the ethnic Russian community, in reality the policy is exclusionary. The apparent lack of state organized discrimination makes it difficult for ethnic Russians to criticize, but placing a Kazakh

¹⁴ *Konstitutsiia Respubliki Kazakhstan (s ofitsial'nyimi tolkovaniiami)*, Almaty, 2004 (hereafter, *Konstitutsiia Respubliki Kazakhstan*), p.5.

¹⁵ Nazarbaev, N., 'Iz vystupleniia na shestoi sessii assamblei narodov Kazakhstana', *Welcome to the Official Kazakhstan!*, 10 December 1999 <<http://www.president.kz/mainframeframe.asp?lng=ru>> (para 11 of 19).

¹⁶ Nazarbaev in Ertysbaev, E., *Kazakhstan i Nazarbaev: Logika Peremen*, Astana: Elorda, 2001, p.251.

¹⁷ Landau, J.M. and Kellner-Heinkele, B., *Politics of Language in the ex-Soviet Muslim States: Azerbaijan(sic), Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan*, London, 2001. p.91.

¹⁸ Laruelle and Peyrouse, *Les Russes*, p.113.

¹⁹ *Konstitutsiia Respubliki Kazakhstan*, p.27.

language criterion on a number of jobs does make it harder for ethnic Russians to obtain them.

Grievances towards the direction of state-and-nation-building processes therefore do exist for very good reasons. Although this work has made clear that Kazakhstan has been more accommodating towards their non-titular communities than any other government within the region, as well as comparing favourably to those of other former Soviet republics, in particular the Baltic republics, non-Kazakhs remain at a disadvantage in Kazakhstan.

In spite of Nazarbaev's adeptness as a leader in preventing territorial fragmentation and relative economic prosperity, he is viewed, both from inside and outside of the republic, as both weak and repressive with inconsistent policies regarding Kazakhstan's ethnic problems.²⁰ This implies that Kazakhstan's *nativization program* cannot be discussed separately from the aims of President Nazarbaev. Part of the process of creating a favourable political climate has meant co-opting non-Great Horde Kazakhs into his power structures in order for him and his ruling coterie to maintain power. On the issue of inter-horde politics, although, according to Masanov, the Great Horde is historically predisposed towards holding power and that the Middle and Great Hordes acquiesce in this political power structure,²¹ it is self-evident that Nazarbaev requires the support of all three hordes in order to govern Kazakhstan effectively. This point is especially important because it demonstrates that within the political elite horde differences can be overcome in favour of cooperation for mutual

²⁰ Akiner, *Formation of Kazakh Identity*, p.73.

²¹ Masanov, N., 'Perceptions of Ethnic and All-National Identity in Kazakhstan', *The Middle East Series No. 51. The Nationalities Question in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan*, 2002 <http://icas.org/English/51-_cap1_2.pdf, pp.1-70, (pp.15-16).

gain, as can ethnicity if it is mutually advantageous, as shown by the inclusion of what is sometimes called the *Fourth Horde*- the ethnic Russian community into these power structures, (even if it is a less frequent occurrence as ethnic Russians remain marginalized both in politics and commerce).

6:3 CONCLUDING REMARKS ON RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Discussion of Russian foreign policy involved Brubaker's triadic nexus to analyse the relationship between a state, a national minority within a state and an external national homeland, which acts as a nationalizing state.²² Using this inter-state dynamic as a template has shown the general trends in Russian foreign policy towards post-Soviet republics with sizeable ethnic Russian communities. The underlying motivating factor appears to be that of Russian state security and the maintenance of a zone of strategic security in the form of buffer states. I would argue that these policy goals rather than the protection of ethnic Russians living across the non-Russian post-Soviet space is one of the few Russian foreign policy trends that can be discerned, particularly from 1991-95, when policy appeared rather muddled and reactive.

Although in the immediate post-independence period Russia-Kazakhstan relations were tense owing to Yeltsin's policy towards the *near abroad* being shaped, in part, by the success of Zhirinovskii, Kazakhstan always favoured closer ties with Moscow. Nazarbaev's willingness to support the CIS meant Moscow viewed him as an ally rather than a head of state attempting to break with the past. Furthermore, Kazakhstan has gone further than most other post-Soviet states to ensure that the right of ethnic Russians are upheld. Although Russia has been quick to punish any transgressions of ethnic Russian rights in Kazakhstan, because Kazakhstan is, arguably, of greater strategic importance to Moscow than the nations that form the buffer zone with Europe (with the exception of Ukraine, which is still strategically and politically important to Russia)²³ both states have appreciated the need for positive inter-state relations. This is all the more true since Russia's political, security and economic

²² Brubaker, R., *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, Cambridge, 1996, pp.4-5.

²³ Alexandrov, M., *Uneasy Alliance. Relations Between Russia and Kazakhstan in the Post-Soviet Era, 1992-7*, Westport, CT, 1999 (hereafter, Alexandrov, *Uneasy Alliance*), p.85.

interests appear to be orienting themselves eastwards meaning that Kazakhstan will assume a greater role in Russian strategic and security policies.

Cooperative inter-state relations appear likely to continue because of all the leaders of the post-Soviet space Nazarbaev has been among the most willing to commit to supra-national structures, believing them to safeguard Kazakh security, economic prosperity and territorial integrity;²⁴ bilateral agreements signed between Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation regarding joint-security issues highlight the importance of Russia for Kazakhstan.

Although ethnic Russians in the *near abroad* were initially considered as compatriots and co-nationals, new citizenship laws (passed in 2002) make no reference to this and Putin has not aggressively promoted the rights of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan. This may be because Kazakhstan has more potential as a strategic partner, firstly because of security issues and, secondly, the fact that Kazakhstan forms the first line of defence for Russia against any instability spilling over from Central Asia into Russia's southern region. This strategic partnership remains more important for the Russian administration than the rights of ethnic Russians within Kazakhstan. This does not mean that they no longer play a role in Russia's foreign policy concept towards Kazakhstan. The Treaty of Eternal Friendship, signed in 1998, was the high watermark of Russia's protection of the rights of ethnic Russians within Kazakhstan. For Kazakhstan's ethnic Russians this makes it harder to view Russia as a potential ally against what they view as an unfair nationalizing regime.²⁵

²⁴ Nazarbaev, N., 'Iz vystupleniia na torzhestvennom, posviashchennom dniu nezavisimosti Kazakhstan', *Welcome to the Official Kazakhstan!*, 16 December 1995
<<http://www.president.kz/mainframeframe.asp?lng=ru>. [accessed 21 August 2005].

²⁵ Alexandrov, *Uneasy Alliance*, p.124.

6:4 RADICAL ISLAM AND RUSSIAN NATIONALISM

Russia-Kazakhstan inter-state relations may in the future be affected by growing Islamic radicalism in Central Asia, the potential growth in Russian nationalism within the Russian Federation, rising Kazakh nationalism and an ethnic Russian response within Kazakhstan to such an occurrence. With the ongoing Chechen conflict and the geopolitical reordering of the post-September 11 world, the security challenge to Russia posed by Islamic radicalism affects Russia-Kazakhstan relations because of border security and the attendant threat of growing Islamic militancy across the southern autonomous republics. This makes the Russia-Kazakhstan strategic partnership of great importance, although after an initial surge in popularity, Islam has rather retreated in terms of growth in Kazakhstan.²⁶

This is good news for both Kazakhstan and Russia as any growth in Islamic militancy would affect Russia in the ways described above as well as potentially destabilizing Kazakhstan. Growing Islamic radicalism would undoubtedly call for the development of greater links with Central Asian and other Islamic states removing Kazakhstan from Russia's sphere of influence. This would, most probably, destabilize north Kazakhstan, which remains heavily Russified and could lead to moves to secede and re-federate with Russia.

It is likely that a growth in Islamic radicalism would coincide with a rise in Kazakh nationalism. This is because Kazakh nationalism is most concentrated in the south of

²⁶ Aidosov, S.B. quoted in Ismagambetov, T., 'Is Islamic Fundamentalism a Threat in Kazakhstan?' (hereafter, Ismagambetov, 'Islamic Fundamentalism') in *Prism*, 4.7, 1998
<http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?search=1&volume_id=5&issue_id=265&article_id=3016. [accessed 17 August 2005] (para 16 of 22).

the republic where Islam is strongest.²⁷ It is therefore probable that the two would be intertwined and, with the Russian population decreasing, it appears unlikely that the administration will ever have to resort to crude nationalism in order to retain political support, although this cannot be ruled out definitively. As with the issue of Islamic radicalism, any growth in Kazakh nationalism could be expected to produce an ethnic Russian response. As these have been weak in the past when the Kazakh authorities have begun to *nativize*, these would most likely be similarly uncoordinated responses and it is unlikely that the Russian administration would be willing to respond to them.

A revival of Russian nationalist politics would, however, increase the likelihood of north Kazakh secession and re-federation by providing a powerful body of support behind the ethnic Russian community in north Kazakhstan. Currently, the nationalist voice in Russian politics, for example Rodina, which gained 37 out of 450 seats in the 2003 Duma elections, shows that there is still support for Russian nationalism that has, on occasion, tipped over into racism, but the potential convergence of these factors is unlikely. Taking into account the other variables that have acted as inhibitors on inter-ethnic violence within Kazakhstan, north Kazakh secession or territorial integration with Russia appears unlikely, although as with all potential political upheavals it cannot definitively be ruled out. The most likely period for this to occur will be following Nazarbaev's succession or death. Increasingly, it appears that Nazarbaev's protracted period of governance is causing political stagnation with opposition movements unable to mount a concerted challenge, although regime change could provide an opportunity for dissent to be expressed. With this in mind, although the current political climate in Kazakhstan is relatively stable, this may not always be so.

²⁷Alexandrov, *Uneasy Alliance*, p.124.

6:5 SUMMARY

This thesis has aimed to analyse the reasons why ethnic violence has not occurred in Kazakhstan despite the presence of a number of variables that would seem to predispose the country towards ethnic violence. Although it is difficult to reach a definitive conclusion to this thesis owing to the ongoing processes of state-and-nation-building in both Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation, I would argue that the primary reason behind the lack of conflict in the short term in Kazakhstan is that state legitimisation has been easier to achieve than in post-colonial Africa. This may be because the notion of Kazakhstan as a nation-state has more *credibility* than that of many post-colonial African states, which, despite denying an ethnic content, often lack legitimacy with many ethnic groups. This means that sub-nationalism is able to undermine the workings of the state by creating regional rivalries to central power. Although Kazakhstan is ethnically diverse, its status as an ethnic homeland gave it legitimacy for ethnic Kazakhs, thus creating a strong base for political legitimacy. When coupled with Nazarbaev's program of centralization, which has reduced the power of regional elites and the oblast *rationalization*, which reduced the ethnic Russian population's share of the population across the northern oblasts, this made a secessionist attempt by the ethnic Russian community less likely. These policies have run parallel to high levels of out-migration of those ethnic Russians who saw an uncertain future in Kazakhstan. It is almost certain that this reduced the number those people potentially disaffected by the limitations placed on their prospects by the nationalizing state coupled with a lack of collective action on the part of ethnic Russian groups (although their growth was hampered by a lack of institutional channels open to them following a post-1994 clampdown on political parties). The latter point is due, in part, to Nazarbaev's relatively skilful handling of the *ethnic* question in Kazakhstan; constitutionally forbidding ethnically-based political parties,

granting Russian the status of *language of inter-ethnic communication* (even if this was not enough for some Russian groups, unlike most other post-Soviet republics, Russian was granted a constitutionally-recognized status), conciliatory gestures towards the ethnic Russian community and an unwillingness to allow Islam a role in state symbols, have all helped to placate the ethnic Russian community. The centralized and unitary nature of the Kazakh state is another important factor as the Kazakhification of Russian-dominated regions has reduced the threat of secession.

This would seem to suggest that Kazakhstan is a strong state as, unlike many post-colonial African nations, Nazarbaev has been able to extend and maintain control over all of Kazakhstan's regions. The inability of the Russian Federation to form a coherent policy towards ethnic Russians in the *near abroad* has been the final factor behind the lack of conflict in Kazakhstan. Despite obligations to the ethnic Russian communities of the *near abroad*, maintaining good relations with the post-Soviet states through multi and bi-lateral treaties was of greater importance. As Kazakhstan and Nazarbaev were held up as cornerstones of the CIS, the Russian authorities reticence towards Kazakhstan's ethnic Russian community can be viewed as part of a Russian foreign policy strategy that placed security and stability, particularly upon its southern border, as a very high priority.

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