Nationalizing States Revisited:  
Projects and Processes of Nationalization  
in Post-Soviet States  

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Abstract  
This paper analyzes Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan as nationalizing states, focusing on four domains: ethnopolitical demography, language repertories and practices, the polity, and the economy. Nationalizing discourse has figured centrally in these and other “post-multinational” contexts. But nationalizing projects and processes have differed substantially across cases. Where ethnonational boundaries have been strong, quasi-racial, and intergenerationally persistent, as in Kazakhstan, nationalization (notwithstanding inclusive official rhetoric) has served primarily to strengthen and empower the titular nation. Where ethnonational and linguistic boundaries have been blurred and permeable, as in Ukraine, nationalization has worked primarily to reshape cultural practices, loyalties, and identities, thereby in effect redefining and enlarging the "core nation." Where boundaries have been strong, yet show signs of being intergenerationally permeable, as in Estonia and Latvia, nationalization was initially oriented towards protecting, strengthening, and empowering the core nation as a sharply bounded collectivity, but has subsequently become more assimilationist and culturalist.  

Keywords:  nationalism, language, Estonia, Latvia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine
Twenty years ago, the political landscape of East Central Europe and Eurasia underwent a radical reconfiguration. Previously multinational political space was reorganized along national lines in a vast region that spanned 11 time zones. Twenty-four putatively national successor states emerged from the breakup of the multinational Soviet and Yugoslav and binational Czechoslovak states. At a moment when Western Europe seemed to be moving beyond the nation-state, Eastern Europe and Eurasia appeared to be moving back to the nation-state, entering not a post-national but a post-multinational era.

Writing in this journal shortly after that great reconfiguration, I suggested that the successor states could usefully be analyzed not simply as national but as nationalizing states (Brubaker 1996a). The dynamic and processual implications of the term pointed to the unfinished and ongoing nature of nationalist projects and nationalizing processes. The achievement of independent statehood, on this account, did not mark an end to nationalist politics, but a transition to a new kind of nationalist politics. The reorganization of political space had produced (nominally) independent states; it had not produced "genuine" nation-states. The new states were national in form, but not in substance. From a nationalist point of view, the states were organizational shells that had to be filled with national content, bringing population, territory, culture, and polity into the close congruence that defines a fully realized nation-state.

Five motifs, I suggested, were characteristic of nationalist discourse in the successor states and used to justifying nationalizing policies in a variety of domains: (1) the idea that the state contains a "core nation" or nationality, understood in ethnocultural terms, and distinguished from the citizenry or permanent resident population of the state
as a whole; (2) a claim to *ownership or primacy*: the state is understood as the state of and for the core nation; (3) the claim that the core nation is in a *weak* or unhealthy condition; (4) the claim that *state action* is needed to strengthen the core nation, to promote its language, cultural flourishing, demographic robustness, economic welfare, or political hegemony; and (5) the claim that such action is *remedial or compensatory*, needed to redress previous discrimination or oppression suffered by the core nation.

The notion of nationalizing states emerged from the comparative study of interwar-era and post-communist forms of nationalism, and from an analysis of the legacy of Soviet nationality policy. Like the post-World War I successor states to the Habsburg, Romanov, and Ottoman empires, the successor states to the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia were extraordinarily heterogeneous in ethnolinguistic and ethnoreligious terms, yet they claimed legitimacy as the states of and for independently existing ethnocultural "nations," and they too have been concerned to “nationalize” their heterogeneous populations and territories. In both eras, the nationalizing agenda was lent urgency by the existence of large, alienated, and putatively dangerous national minorities, connected to and supported by neighboring ethnonational "kin" or "patron" states across the border.

The broader economic, political, and cultural contexts of nationalist politics, to be sure, differed substantially between interwar East Central Europe and post-communist Eastern Europe and Eurasia. The post-communist successor states have been more tightly enmeshed -- though to very differing degrees -- in a web of international organizations such as the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. These
organizations have promoted models of civic nationhood, multiculturalism, integration, and minority rights towards which successor state elites have been obliged at least to gesture, and they have sought with some success to persuade post-communist states, most notably Estonia and Latvia, to moderate certain nationalizing policies (Kelley 2004).¹ Post-communist successor states have also been enmeshed in denser webs of economic interdependence, and models of autarchic nationalism have lost their allure. Yet despite these contextual differences, the similarities in nationalizing stance, discourse and policies between interwar and incipient post-communist successor states seemed striking.

Two aspects of the Soviet legacy, I suggested, were contributing to the prevalence of nationalizing discourse and policies in the incipient successor states.² One was the distinctive Soviet system of institutionalized multi-nationality; the other was the manner in which centralized rule and state-wide economic integration led to linguistic and demographic Russification. The Soviet regime went to unprecedented lengths in institutionalizing nationhood on a sub-state level (Suny 1993: chapter 3; Slezkine 1994; Brubaker 1996b: Chapter 2; Martin 2001). More than fifty putatively autonomous national "homelands" were established and arrayed in a four-tiered ethnofederal hierarchy, each defined as the territory of and for a particular ethnonational group. Paralleling the national classification of territories was the national classification of persons. Every citizen was assigned an official ethnocultural "nationality." This was ascribed at birth on the basis of descent, registered in personal documents, and recorded in bureaucratic encounters.

Constructing national territories as the polities of and for ethnocultural nations, classifying and categorizing people by "nationality," and giving preferential treatment to
members of national groups in "their own" territories fostered and legitimated the habit of
distinguishing between the core, state-bearing nation – or titular nation, as it came to be
called in Soviet and post-Soviet studies—and the total population of the republic. It also
fostered and legitimated the sense of titular “ownership” of or primacy within each
republic.

Yet while the Soviet regime constituted ethnocultural nations and endowed them
with “their own” theoretically autonomous, even sovereign territorial polities, it did not,
of course, grant those polities substantive powers of self-rule. Quite apart from the
massive repression directed against some ethnonational communities at certain junctures
during Stalin's rule, large-scale migration and gradual linguistic Russification threatened
to undermine the cultural and demographic bases of a number of the national polities.
This had generated a discourse of titular weakness and ethnic redress already in the late
Soviet period.

The first few years of independence -- and even the final years of the Soviet era --
furnished abundant examples of nationalizing discourse and policies.³ The key motifs of
nationalizing discourse -- the distinction between core or titular nationality and others;
the claim to titular primacy; the diagnosis of titular weakness; the call for remedial state
action; and the justification in terms of compensation or redress -- were so familiar as to
constitute a kind of political common sense (Smith et al 1998; Wilson 1997: chapter 6;
Schatz 2000:83ff). Laws promoting the national language were adopted in all of the
incipient successor states even before independence. And Estonia and Latvia -- where
nationalizing discourse was particularly strong and pervasive -- adopted restrictive
citizenship legislation that excluded about a third of the population from the citizenry.
The initial characterization of successor states as nationalizing states, however, was sketchy and speculative. Since then, a substantial literature has developed on various aspects of nation- and state-building in the new states. Building on this literature, I analyze in this article the dynamics of nationalization in post-independence Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan. These successor states had the proportionally largest Russian minorities at the end of the Soviet era; Ukraine and Kazakhstan also had -- by far -- the largest Russian minorities in absolute numbers. Nationalizing discourses, policies, and practices have therefore been more central – and more sensitive – in these countries than elsewhere. These countries also capture a good deal of variation in patterns of incorporation into the Russian empire and Soviet Union (Laitin 1998) and in the strength of nationalist mobilization in the last years of the Soviet era; this variation is related to the strength and form of nationalizing discourses, policies, and practices.4

I focus on four domains: ethnopolitical demography, language repertories and practices, the polity, and the economy. I consider the first two in detail, the latter two more briefly. This list of domains is neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive.5 But concentrating on particular domains – rather than on nationalizing discourses, policies, or processes in general – helps address both empirical and theoretical issues in a more differentiated and focused manner.

The paper seeks to make both substantive and theoretical contributions. Substantively, it contributes to comparative work on nation- and state-building in Soviet successor states. Its main finding, to anticipate, is that differing modes of nationalization have corresponded to different sorts of ethnonational boundaries between the "core" or "titular" nation and Russophone minority populations. Where boundaries have been
strong, quasi-racial, and intergenerationally persistent, as in Kazakhstan, nationalization (notwithstanding inclusive official rhetoric) has served primarily to strengthen and empower the titular nation at the expense of clearly distinct minority populations. Where ethnonational and linguistic boundaries have been blurred and permeable, as in Ukraine, nationalization has worked primarily to reshape cultural practices, loyalties, and identities, thereby in effect redefining and enlarging the "core nation." Where boundaries have been strong, yet show signs of being intergenerationally permeable, as in Estonia and Latvia, nationalization was initially oriented towards protecting, strengthening, and empowering the core nation as a sharply bounded collectivity, but has subsequently become more assimilationist and culturalist.

The paper contributes to theoretical work on nationalism by reconsidering and reformulating the notion of "nationalizing states." While my earlier discussion focused primarily on conspicuously nationalizing discourse and policies – that is, on expressly nationalizing projects—I give equal attention in this article to gradual, inconspicuous, and anonymous nationalizing processes. Projects and processes have distinct dynamics: nationalizing projects do not necessarily produce their intended results, while nationalizing processes may occur even in the absence of expressly nationalizing discourse or policies. By highlighting the duality of projects and processes, I seek to provide a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics – and the limits – of nationalization.

**Ethnopolitical demography**
The first domain of nationalization is what I will call ethnopolitical demography. By this I mean discourse, policies, and processes bearing on the absolute or relative size of the core nation and significant minority ethnonational groups. Absolute and relative group size are chronic foci of ethnopolitical concern in many settings; but the large-scale Soviet-era migration of Russians and others into peripheral republics made this issue especially salient in the post-Soviet context, particularly in Estonia, Latvia, and Kazakhstan. How could these states be the states of and for their eponymous nations when titulars comprised, according to the last Soviet census in 1989, just 40% of the population in Kazakhstan, a bare majority in Latvia, and just over 60% in Estonia? In nationalist discourse, the very survival of the nation was at stake.

Migration per se has not been as salient an issue in Ukraine, but the absolute and relative size of the Russian minority has been a major focus of concern there too. The 11.4 million Russians comprised 22% of the population in 1989, and a substantially higher share in borderland regions. In the Crimean peninsula (which had been part of Russia until it was transferred to Ukraine in 1954), Russians formed 66% of the population; in the strategically important industrial region of the Donbass, their share was 44%, while 66% declared Russian as their native language (Wilson 1995: 267). Given Russian nationalist reluctance to recognize the permanent loss of Ukraine, the loyalties and identities of the population of the eastern borderlands have been a matter of vital concern.

On the eve of independence, then, the basic ethnic demography of the state was seen as deeply problematic in all four cases. By the time of the first post-Soviet censuses, a decade later, the ethnodemographic landscape had changed dramatically. In each
country, the census documented a nationalizing trend, with the titular share of the population increasing sharply and the Russian (and Russophone) share declining even more sharply.  [Table 1 about here] Gains by titulars were particularly dramatic in Kazakhstan, where the Kazakh share jumped from 40% in 1989 to 53% ten years later. Preliminary results from the 2009 census show rapid nationalization continuing in Kazakhstan, with the Kazakh share now 63%. (The next censuses in Estonia, Latvia, and Ukraine will be in 2011).

This nationalizing shift in the relative shares of the titular and Russian populations has been driven by three processes. In the Baltics and Kazakhstan, the most important has been the emigration of the Russian-speaking population. The first post-Soviet censuses recorded declines in the Russian population of 22% in Latvia, 26% in Estonia, and 28% in Kazakhstan (39% between 1989 and 2009); other predominantly Russophone minority populations suffered similar or even sharper declines. Almost all of this decline is attributable to emigration.

The emigration of Russian and Russophone populations is not only a cause but also a consequence of nationalization. Migrations of ethnic unmixing have regularly followed the reconfiguration of political space along national lines, when previously dominant ethnonational groups (such as Germans in the eastern provinces of Prussia, or Hungarians in Transylvania) found themselves transformed into national minorities in nationalizing successor states (such as interwar Poland and Romania) (Brubaker 1996b: chapter 6). The post-Soviet pattern has been similar.

Strongly nationalizing discourse and policies encouraged many Russians to leave Estonia and Latvia soon after independence. Russian-speaking immigrants were
routinely characterized as unwanted and even illegal "occupiers" or "colonists," and mainstream politicians, reflecting titular public opinion, made no secret of their desire to see them emigrate (Laitin 1998:166). One relatively moderate statement from a leading politician who was Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1992-94 expressed the hope that "a third or so [of non-Estonians] will become Estonian citizens, a third may remain here with Russian citizenship, and a third at least will leave" (Lieven 1993: 377; emphasis added). Among nationalists, it was commonly argued that all or most of the Soviet-era immigrants -- and even their Estonian- or Latvian-born children -- should leave.

Restrictive citizenship legislation left large majorities of the Russian and Russophone population (and a third of the total population) without citizenship initially, and made naturalization conditional on knowledge of the titular language. In these circumstances, it is scarcely surprising that about a quarter of the Russophone population emigrated. But the emigration wave peaked in the early 1990s, and tapered off rapidly thereafter. Russophones have not felt welcome in Estonia and Latvia, but they have felt secure; and they could see a more promising future there -- or perhaps in "Europe" more broadly -- than in Russia (Laitin 1998:161ff). 7

Public discourse in Kazakhstan -- at least discourse directed at Russophone and international audiences -- has not been as strongly nationalizing as in Estonia or Latvia. All residents were accorded citizenship, and President Nazarbaev -- concerned about the economic disruption a massive exodus would entail -- sought to reassure Russophones about their place in an independent multiethnic Kazakhstan. Informal signals and practices, however, have been strongly nationalizing. Kazakhstan is understood -- by both Kazakhs and Russophone minorities -- as the state of and for Kazakhs; and most
Russophones believe they have no long-term future in the country (Laitin 1998: 98-99; 161, 171-6; Kuscu 2008: 86-89, 93; Dave 2007: 103, 127-8). This was already the case in the late Soviet era, and Russophones had already started to leave Kazakhstan in the 1980s. The outflow picked up substantially in the 1990s, though without an immediate post-independence spike. While Russophone emigration from Estonia and Latvia had largely ceased by the mid-1990s, it has continued from Kazakhstan, and has acquired a self-sustaining dynamic (Laitin 1998: 171ff; Dave 2007: 127-8).

Migration has contributed to the nationalization of Kazakhstan not only through the emigration of Russophones, but also through the immigration of ethnic Kazakhs from neighboring countries (the majority from Uzbekistan), who have been encouraged by the government to return to their "historic homeland" (Kuscu 2008; Diener 2005). Nearly 740,000 Oralmandar (returnees) have resettled in Kazakhstan since independence, contributing substantially to the growth of the ethnic Kazakh population (International Federation for Human Rights 2009:39). Internal migration, too, has had a nationalizing effect, bringing Kakakhs from the south to the Russian-dominated north, especially to the new capital city of Astana; the capital was moved from Alma Ata in the south in part in an effort to strengthen the Kazakh presence in the north (Dave 2007: 122-3).

The second process driving ethnodemographic nationalization in Kazakhstan -- though not in the other countries -- has been differential fertility of titular and minority populations. While the size of the titular population in the other countries has been stable or declined slightly, it has grown by more than 50% over twenty years in Kazakhstan. Some of this -- perhaps a fifth to a quarter of the total growth in the Kazakh population -- reflects the immigration of ethnic Kazakhs; but most reflects the high fertility rates and
young age structure of the Kazakh population (Agadjanian 1999:429; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2003: 25).

Ethnodemographic nationalization in Ukraine reflects a third underlying process. The population identifying as Russian declined by some 3 million people between 1989 and 2001, amounting to more than a quarter of those so identifying in 1989. Yet net emigration of Russians accounts for only about 5 to 10% of this decline (Stebelsky 2009:86; Heleniak 2004:109). Russians have not been leaving the country; they have been re-identifying as Ukrainian (Rapawy 1998; Arel 2002:237-8; Stebelsky 2009). That is, large numbers of people who previously identified their nationality as Russian (many of them presumably from the very large number of ethnically mixed Ukrainian-Russian families) appear to have identified as Ukrainian in the most recent census; and children from mixed-nationality families who were being enumerated for the first time in the 2001 census were more likely to be identified as Ukrainian than were such children in previous censuses. The most thorough study of the matter suggests that re-identification accounts for more than two-thirds of the decline in the Russian population (Stebelsky 2009).

In Ukrainian nationalizing discourse, such ethnonational reidentification represents a form of statistical redress, through which “real” Ukrainians -- having been denationalized and Russified during Soviet times -- rediscover their “true” identity (Arel 2002:237). But this is a naively essentialist misunderstanding of ethnic demography. Mixed and fluctuating identities are characteristic of borderland populations, and constructivist research has demonstrated the malleability of ethnic identification in a wide range of settings. On a constructivist understanding, ethnic demography is not something prior and external to politics, affected only by demographic variables such as fertility,
mortality, and migration; it reflects subjective practices of self-identification that are context-dependent and endogenous to political processes (Chandra and Boulet 2003).

But the seemingly objective facts of ethnic demography not only reflect the subjective self-identifications of individuals; they also reflect the counting and categorizing practices of states. These too are endogenous to political processes. As a number of scholars have argued, the procedures states use to identify, count, and categorize their populations do not provide a neutral and transparent record of social reality, but help constitute that reality (Hacking 1982; Anderson 1991: chapter 10; Kertzer and Arel 2002). The issue here is not the fabrication or falsification of data. It is that choices about counting and categorizing – choices about what to count and how to count it – are always political, not simply technical choices. The data generated as a result of these choices can powerfully shape prevailing representations of state and society, and these representations, in turn, help shape political debate, frame policy options, and legitimate particular stances and decisions.

In Kazakhstan, for example, the nationalizing demographic trend was never in doubt, but it was uncertain whether the 1999 census would reveal a Kazakh majority – a symbolically resonant political-psychological threshold. This may have led officials to “anticipate demographic superiority” (Kolstø 1998) by ensuring that the census would ratify an official demographic majority, in part by taking advantage of the flexibility and ambiguity involved in the counting of Russian and Kazakh migrants (Dave 2004a:453-4; Arel 2002a: 813-4).

Categorization always involves decisions about lumping versus splitting, and disputes about combining or distinguishing categories have shadowed modern censuses
from the beginning (Rothschild 1974:88, 202). In the post-Soviet context, counting by ethnic nationality tends to represent minorities as smaller and more fragmented than would other ways of counting (Arel 2002a:815-6). In Kazakhstan, for example, distinctions of nationality among Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, and Poles have little meaning or relevance for most people. These populations are overwhelmingly Russophone, and they are not divided by any significant social boundaries, such as barriers to intermarriage. In this context, counting by ethnic nationality – presenting statistics on Kazakhs and individual European nationalities, rather than on Kazakhs and Europeans or Slavs – serves to reduce the perceived size of the minority population. Similar techniques of statistical nationalization have been used in Estonia and Latvia to minimize the size and exaggerate the fragmentation of the overwhelmingly Russophone minority population (ibid.)

Statistics on language have also been computed and presented in ways that understate heterogeneity. In Ukraine and Kazakhstan, for example, substantial fractions of the titular population still prefer to speak Russian. This linguistic divide among titulars is masked by using statistics on “native language.” “Native language” continues to be interpreted, as in Soviet times, as the language of one’s ethnic nationality, regardless of whether, or how well, one speaks the language (Arel 2002a: 820). Thus while 98.5% of Kazakhs named Kazakh as their native language in the 1989 census, observers suggested that about 40% of Kazakhs – and a higher fraction of urban Kazkahs – spoke the language poorly or not at all (Fierman 2005:405; Dave 2004a: 450). Kazakhs’ knowledge of the titular language has increased since independence, as will be
discussed in the next section; but statistics on "native language" continue to yield a very different picture than data on actual language use.

A similar point can be made about Ukraine. 85% of ethnic Ukrainians – and two-thirds of the population – named Ukrainian as their native language in the 2001 census. But if statistics had been gathered and published on language of preference rather than “native language,” Ukraine would appear as more or less evenly divided between those preferring to speak Russian and those preferring Ukrainian (Arel 2002b:238-243). These differing representations of the population -- as predominantly Ukrainian-speaking, or as evenly split between Ukrainian- and Russian-speakers -- can be used to justify very different policies. The latter, for example, can be used to argue for policies that would treat Russian on an equal footing with Ukrainian.

The analytical point is that statistics on nationality and language do not simply measure the progress of nationalizing states; they help produce that progress. By publicly ratifying the nationalizing trend, the post-Soviet censuses have strengthened the understanding and representation of the successor states as the states of and for particular nations. Statistics are in this sense a medium through which nationalization is effected, not simply one through which it is described.

Language policies and practices

Language constitutes a second key domain for analyzing nationalizing discourses, policies, and processes. I have already touched on language statistics in connection with
practices of counting and categorizing; here I consider the aims, instruments, and results of policies that seek to alter language repertoires and practices.

Just as the large-scale Soviet-era migration of Russians and others into peripheral republics made ethnic demography a sensitive and salient issue in the successor states, so too the large-scale Soviet-era shift in language repertoires and practices made language an equally salient and sensitive issue. Migration and language shift were of course closely intertwined. But linguistic Russification was not simply a matter of Russophone in-migration; it was also a matter of a shift in the language repertoires and practices of the titular populations. And this involved not only the acquisition of Russian but also, in some cases, the loss of competence in the titular language.

This shift led to large-scale discrepancies between language practices and official nationality, since official nationality -- as inscribed in identity documents and recorded in the census -- was much “stickier” than language repertoires and practices. Members of various national groups increasingly spoke Russian in a wide range of contexts and domains, and in some cases they were unable to speak what was supposedly “their own” language at all. Since language was and is generally understood to be constitutive of nationality, this language shift was widely interpreted as entailing or threatening de-nationalization. This set the stage for one important strand of nationalizing politics -- for the effort to restore the congruence between nationality and language that nationalists saw as having been destroyed by decades of Russification. That this was an imagined and idealized congruence made it no less powerful as an inspiration for nationalizing agendas (Siiner 2006: 173).
Restoring the congruence between nationality and language was relatively straightforward in Estonia and Latvia, where there had been little erosion in the titular population’s command over the titular language. There was no need to change titulars’ language repertoires or preferences; policies sought simply to make it possible for them to use their native language in the full range of domains and contexts, and throughout the territory of the state. This was done by mandating the use of the titular language in various domains, and by using language tests to exclude Russian monolinguals from positions involving contact with the public (Hogan-Brun et al 2008).

The issue was more complicated in Ukraine and Kazakhstan, where substantial segments of the titular population could not speak or write the titular language, or simply preferred to speak Russian. It was easy enough for Russophone Ukrainians to learn Ukrainian; and it was easy enough to expand by decree the domains in which Ukrainian was used. And the prestige of Ukrainian has increased. Yet a substantial and apparently stable fraction of ethnic Ukrainians continue to use Russian, or a mix of Russian and Ukrainian, in private (Bernsand 2001; Wilson 2002; Besters-Dilger 2007).

Restoring the congruence between language and nationality has been equally difficult in Kazakhstan. The prestige of Kazakh, like that of Ukrainian, has increased, and most Kazakhs have acquired at least a minimal competence in the language. Yet for many urban Kazakhs, this competence remains rudimentary, and the use of Kazakh is largely symbolic (Dave 2007: chapter 5; Fierman 2006).

What about policies aimed at getting the non-titular population to learn or speak the titular language? Such policies have been largely symbolic in Kazakhstan, and secondary in Ukraine, given the primary focus on altering the language practices of
titulars. But they have been taken quite seriously in the Baltic states. Such policies are often characterized, and criticized, as assimilationist. Yet there is surprisingly little talk of assimilation. Assimilationist discourse runs counter to prevailing international norms supporting multiculturalism and the preservation of minority languages and cultural identities. It also runs counter to the legacy of Soviet nationality policy, with its quasi-primordialist understanding of ethnic nationality. Moreover, there is considerable ambivalence about assimilation, especially in the Baltics, where language is widely understood as a key ethnic boundary marker, and as the distinctive "property" of an ethnonational group (Siiner 2006). And in Kazakhstan, where the difference between Europeans and Central Asians is widely understood in primordial or ethnoracial terms, assimilation is widely seen as inconceivable (Laitin 1998: 155).

In Estonia and Latvia, policies that seek to alter non-titulars' language repertoires and practices aim in the first instance to redistribute the burden of bilingualism. In the late Soviet era, Russophones could live and work as monolinguals throughout the territory of the state, while others were expected to be bilingual, even in their own republics. Nationalizing language policies in Estonia and Latvia have sought to reverse this arrangement. Requiring Russophones to become bilingual in the titular language and Russian has made it easier for titulars to speak the titular language in a wider range of domains and contexts, instead of being obliged to speak Russian when interacting with Russian monolinguals. In practice, however, as Siiner (2006:179) notes with respect to Estonia, purist, protective, and proprietary attitudes towards the titular language often leads titulars to speak Russian rather than "hear Russian-speakers make mistakes while using Estonian." Shifting the burden of bilingualism has also freed titulars to learn other
foreign languages than Russian, notably English. It should be noted, however, that there remains considerable interest in learning Russian as a second foreign language: 35% of children in Latvian-language schools were studying Russian in 1999-2000 (Bloom 2008), while a 2002 survey reported that nearly half of Estonians wanted their children to study Russian [Laitin 2003:212]).

Having considered the aims of nationalizing language policies, I turn now to the primary instruments of these policies: prescriptive rules or mandates; language tests; and policies governing the language of instruction in the school system. Prescriptive rules mandate the use of the titular language in certain contexts in all four countries. The primary contexts include government and administration, the courts, the media, public signage, some workplaces, and parts of the educational system. Such rules have been justified by the fact that the titular language is formally the sole “state language” in each country. They have also been justified by the assumption that it is the majority languages that require protection and promotion by the state – not, as in most other contexts, the minority languages. This is in keeping with the remedial character of nationalizing policies, and with the emphasis on redress, and it is a key part of what makes the post-Soviet context distinctive.

The second instrument is the use of language tests to regulate access to certain positions and statuses. In Estonia and Latvia, language tests have been used to control access to citizenship itself (see the next section). Language tests were also introduced for a wide range of private- as well as public-sector jobs that required “contact with public” (Ozolins 2003:223). This was in keeping with the aim of making it possible for titulars to conduct their everyday business exclusively in the titular language. In Kazakhstan,
nationalist intellectuals have called repeatedly for language tests. But such tests would be highly divisive among Kazakhs themselves, and no formal tests have been implemented, though there are implicit requirements to learn Kazakh for those seeking work or advancement in government positions (Dave 2007: 107 and Dave, personal communication). Language tests have not been instituted in Ukraine either, though the 1989 language law specified that officials must learn Ukrainian.

The third instrument of linguistic nationalization – and in the long run, the most important – is the school system. Since the late nineteenth century, when states first began to provide universal and compulsory primary education, schools have served as the primary instrument of nationalization in a wide range of cases. Yet schools can also work in a very different direction. Where primary, secondary, and even university education provided in a minority language, schools can serve to reproduce minority “communities” and languages (Brubaker et al 2006: 269ff). This was the situation in the Soviet Union, not only during the period of korenizatsiia or “nativization” in the 1920s, when the regime made vast and unprecedented efforts to promote non-Russian languages and cultures (Martin 2001), but even (albeit unevenly) in the final decades of its existence. Comprehensive titular-medium school systems continued to exist in all Soviet republics, though Russian-medium schooling was also available throughout the Soviet Union (a fact that facilitated the migration of Russian and Russophone populations into the peripheral republics). In the late Soviet era, almost all titulars attended titular-medium schools in Estonia and Latvia. In Ukraine and especially in Kazakhstan, however, substantial fractions of the titular population attended Russian-medium schools.
Russian-medium education has contracted substantially in the successor states, though debates, policies, and trends have varied. In Estonia and Latvia, where Russian-medium schools are used almost entirely by minorities, the proportion of all students being educated in Russian has declined steadily, even after the initial out-migration of Russophones: from 28% in 1999-2000 to 20% in 2006-07 in Estonia, and from 39% in 1995-96 to 26% in 2008-09 in Latvia (Estonian Ministry of Education and Research n.d., Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2010). In the 2009-10 school year, 17% of Russians, and 20% of all non-Latvians, were being educated in Latvian-medium schools.\textsuperscript{10} Russian-medium schools have closed in areas without large concentrations of Russophones, and some Russophone parents have chosen to send their children to titular-medium schools.

In both countries, moreover, exclusively Russian-medium education is being phased out at the high school level. Current policy in both countries calls for at least 60% of the curriculum in grades 10-12 to be taught in the titular language (Galbreath and Galvin 2005; Verschick 2005; Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2010; Estonian Ministry of Education and Research n.d.). The rationale is that this should improve the labor market integration of the graduates of Russian-medium schools. This represents a retreat -- in response to international pressure and domestic protest -- from earlier plans in both countries to abolish Russian-medium instruction altogether in secondary schools. Yet it still represents a substantial nationalization of minority-language education.

In Kazakhstan, the nationalization of education is aimed in the first instance not at minorities, but at Russified urban Kazakhs. While only about half of urban Kazakhs were in Kazakh-medium classes in 1990, the share had increased to nearly three quarters
by 1995. However, there has not been much change since then, and a substantial share of urban Kazakhs continue to be educated in Russian-medium classes. Moreover, as Fierman (2006:107; 2005) has shown, these figures overstate the degree of nationalization, since 40% of the urban students in Kazakh-medium classes are attending mixed schools, where the linguistic environment outside the classroom remains largely Russophone. And part of the increase reflects the heavy internal migration of non-Russified Kazkahs from the countryside, rather than a shift in language strategies on the part of the largely Russified elite. The urban Kazakh elite remains heavily invested in Russian as a language of mobility and opportunity, and is increasingly invested in English as well. As Dave (2007: 111) notes, it is virtually unheard of for children of the Kazakh elite to attend Kazakh-medium schools.

In Ukraine, too, the shift to titular-medium education was aimed in the first instance at titulairs, and specifically at the 25% of ethnic Ukrainian children who were being educated in Russian medium schools in 1989 (Arel 1995:604). Here too nationalists sought to reverse decades of Russification and to restore what they understood to be the “proper” congruence between nationality and language. In the early 1990s, the government strongly encouraged the shift to Ukrainian-medium education. And official statistics report a substantial increase in the proportion of students in Ukrainian-medium schools, from 58% in 1995-96 to 78% ten years later (Bilaniuk and Melnyk 2008: 353). But the increase has been uneven: while education is now almost exclusively in Ukrainian in the west and center, Russian-medium education remains predominant in much of the east and south.
In addition to these formal policy instruments, linguistic nationalization can be promoted or enforced through informal social pressures and informal linguistic "policing." Such policing is found in both intra-ethnic and interethnic contexts. Laitin highlights the role of language "vigilantes" in Ukraine, who seek to shame Russophone titulars into using Ukrainian (1998: 141-2, 341ff); Dave (2007: 103, 109) notes a similar (though less effective) phenomenon in Kazakhstan. And Laitin (2003:207) describes informal titular policing of Russophones' language practices in Estonia.

So much for the aims and instruments of linguistic nationalization. What about the results of nationalizing policies and practices? In Estonia and Latvia, where language policies have been "thick" (Siiner 2006) and implementation serious, and where titulars have made what Laitin calls a "credible commitment" to drop Russian from their linguistic repertoires, there have been strong incentives for Russophones -- particularly the younger generation -- to learn the titular language (Laitin 1998). The teaching of Estonian and Latvian in Russian-medium schools -- and now the teaching of most subjects in Estonian and Latvian at the high school level -- has made it possible, and increasingly necessary, for them to do so. Survey data, moreover, suggest that Russophones acknowledge not only the usefulness of learning the titular language but the legitimacy of being required to learn it (Rose 2000; Laitin 1998:205). Policies, incentives, and attitudes have been aligned in encouraging the learning of titular languages. Progress, however, has been slow, hampered -- especially in Estonia -- by continued social separation of Estonian and Russophone populations, even among the younger generation (Siiner 2006: 177ff; Rannut 2008).
In Kazakhstan and Ukraine, the situation is more ambiguous. The 1999 Kazakhstani census, for example, reported that 99.4% of Kazakhs were "proficient" in the state language. The actual census question, however, did not ask about proficiency. It asked whether one "knows," "knows weakly," "is learning," or "does not know" the state language; and instructions to census enumerators specified that knowing the language did not require the ability to read or write in Kazakh (Dave 2007: 112-3). Self-reported data on language competence are always of questionable value; here, given the normative expectations regarding knowledge of the state language, they are particularly dubious. Dave concludes that the state was "less interested in capturing the actual patterns of linguistic behavior" than in "demonstrat[ing] the 'steady success' of its ethno-linguistic policies" (ibid., 114).

In Ukraine, too, the official portrait of a steady and successful Ukrainization or “de-Russification” of education has been challenged by data focused on actual practices. As indicated above, many of those who report their native language as Ukrainian prefer to speak Russian in everyday life. Some schools are classified as Ukrainian even if only a few subjects are taught in Ukrainian (Besters-Dilger 2007). A survey in Kiev – where formally a massive shift to Ukrainian-medium education has taken place – showed that only a fifth of schoolchildren spoke Ukrainian at school outside the classroom (ibid.; for ethnographic evidence see Bilaniuk 2005: 47-48, 63-64). Print media remain Russian-dominated, while radio and television broadcast in both languages, often on the same channel. The overall picture suggested by sociolinguistic research is that outside Western Ukraine, Ukrainian often functions as a kind of government-supported “artificial language” of education and administration, unable to compete on its own with Russian
The analytical point to underscore is that there are important limits to nationalizing policies in the sphere of language, even where policies are "thick" and seriously enforced, as in the Baltics, and a fortiori in Kazakhstan and Ukraine. The state can mandate that the titular language be used in certain settings; but such mandates may or may not be enforced. In Ukraine, for example, legislation and licensing agreements require a certain fraction of broadcasting to be in Ukrainian, but these have been openly flouted (Besters-Dilger 2007; Bilaniuk and Melnyk 2008:363). Language tests -- or informal hiring policies -- can create incentives for titulars and minorities to develop a certain competence in the titular language; but they cannot guarantee that the language will be used in practice. The state cannot legislate changes in linguistic preferences, nor can a liberal state do much to legislate changes in language practices, especially in the private sphere. Language shift is a very complex process; it is not something that can be simply decreed.

Yet despite the limits to nationalizing policies, nationalizing processes have their own dynamics. The gap between policies and processes is most striking in Kazakhstan. Nationalizing language policies have been weak and largely symbolic (Dave 2007: 106ff; Fierman 2005:414). The 1997 Law on Languages stipulated a duty of every citizen to master Kazakh, but this was a purely symbolic gesture. There has been no serious expectation that Russians would learn the language; indeed the language is widely understood as the exclusive possession of Kazakhs. And while Russified Kakakhs have been pressured incorporate a bit of Kazakh into their linguistic repertoire, they have
encountered no "major economic, professional or social pressure" to master the language or use it more actively (Dave 2007: 112). Yet in the longer run, the mass emigration of Russophones, substantial rural-urban and south-north migration of Kazakh monolinguals, and the rise of English as a contending language of opportunity, mobility, and prestige is likely to erode the place of Russian and foster linguistic nationalization (Fierman 2005:419ff, Laitin 1998:359).

**Polity and Economy**

Two other domains in which nationalizing discourse, policies, and processes are at work can be considered more briefly. In the political domain, the basic question is whether – and if so, how -- discourse, policies, and unofficial practices have promoted the political hegemony of the core nation, or weakened the political power of national minorities. Three forms of nationalization have been salient in the successor states: the nationalization of the demos through restrictive citizenship policies; the nationalization of government and administrative personnel through recruitment and promotion practices; and the limitation of the political voice of minorities through various means, including notably the rejection of demands for autonomy for minority-dominated regions.

The nationalization of the demos through restrictive citizenship legislation has been key in Estonia and Latvia. Alone among the successor states, Estonia and Latvia rejected the inclusive model that based citizenship on residence in favor of a "restored state" model that recognized as citizens at the moment of independence only those who had been citizens of interwar Estonia and Latvia and their descendants (Brubaker 1992).
All others -- including the great majority of the Russophone population -- had to apply for naturalization after a certain waiting period. Annual quotas on naturalizations were imposed in Latvia (though they were abolished in 1998); and fairly strict language tests have been a prerequisite for naturalization in both countries. The pace of naturalizations has been slow, despite a certain easing of requirements, largely in response to international pressures. Even today, nearly half of the Russophone population in both counties remains without Estonian or Latvian citizenship (Järve 2009; Krūma 2009).

The mass disenfranchisement of non-titulars ensured that the Russophone minority was largely excluded from the initial shaping of the basic structure of the new state (Jarve 2009: 47). Russians, for example, did not hold a single seat in the first Estonian parliament elected after independence, and they held only 7% of the seats in the first Latvian parliament, despite forming 34% of the population in 1989 (Smith et al 1998: 99).

Nationalization of the personnel of the government and the state apparatus has followed from restrictive citizenship legislation in the Baltics. In Kazakhstan, citizenship has not been an issue, but informally nationalizing recruitment and promotion practices led very quickly after independence to a substantial overrepresentation of Kazakhs among government and administrative personnel, especially in the Russian-dominated north (Smith et al 1998: chapter 7; Dave 2007: 151ff; Kolsto 1998: 61-62; Holm-Hansen 1999: 197).

Questions of regional autonomy were important and unsettled in the early post-independence years in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and (to a lesser extent) Estonia, where minorities are territorially concentrated and form majorities in certain regions. Leaders of
Ukraine and Kazakhstan skillfully resisted minority claims for territorial autonomy or federalism, framing such calls as threats to the integrity of the state (though concessions were made for the special case of Crimea) (Wolczuk 2002: 72-75; Dave 2007:120). The political voice of Russophones in Kazakhstan was further weakened by ethnic gerrymandering: district boundaries were redrawn so as to deprive northern districts, bordering Russia, of their prior Russian majorities (Dave 2007: 122-3; Arel 2002a, 814-5). And organizations claiming to represent the Russian or Russian-speaking population in Kazakhstan have been hemmed in and effectively depoliticized through ongoing emigration, fragmentation, intimidation, and surveillance (Dave 2007: 129-130, 136).

In the economic domain, the basic question is similar: whether – and if so, in what ways -- discourses, policies, and practices have promoted the economic position and interests of the core nation over those of national minorities. In sharp contrast with interwar Eastern Europe -- where successor state elites expressly sought to nationalize the ethnonationally “alien” urban economy, dominated by Jews, Germans, and other minorities -- overtly nationalizing economic discourse has not figured centrally in the successor states. Soviet-era preferential treatment policies already favored members of titular nationalities in the economic domain, especially in white-collar jobs; as a result, the sense of titular weakness was less pronounced in the economic sphere than in demographic, cultural, and political domains.

Yet if expressly nationalizing discourse has been muted in the economic sphere, nationalizing policies and practices have significantly shaped economic outcomes in the Baltics and Kazakhstan. Informal economic nationalization has been particularly pronounced in Kazakhstan. The neopatrimonial Kazakhstan regime has exercised close
control and supervision of all key industries; major business and financial groups are dominated by Kazakhs with close ties to the President. Nationalization is evident in the labor market as well. Already in the late Soviet era, Kazakhs had been displacing Russians in key positions. This process accelerated after independence, as informal hiring and promotion practices worked in a strongly nationalizing direction (Dave 2007: chapter 7). This is what Smith et al call "nationalization by stealth" (1998: 142), in that it did not involve explicit nationalizing discourses or policies. Mass emigration has of course contributed to economic nationalization, but emigration is itself in part a response to the pervasiveness of informal nationalizing practices.13

Citizenship requirements have excluded non-citizens from some public sector jobs in Estonia and Latvia, and language tests, as noted above, have limited access to private- and public-sector jobs involving "contact with the public." The exclusion of noncitizens has enabled citizens -- belonging in their large majority to the titular nationality -- to monopolize access to leading positions in a number of sectors (Smith et al 1998: 99; Steen 2000). Minorities were also largely excluded from the mass restitution of state-expropriated or collectivized property to previous owners or their descendants in Estonia, and from the compensation vouchers that were issued in cases when the physical property was not returned, a process from which nearly half of ethnic Estonians benefited (Andersen 1997; on restitution see also Feldman 1999). Non-citizens were substantially disadvantaged in the privatization process in both countries, and were barred from purchasing land for several years in both countries (Andersen 1997; Jubulis 2001:179). On the other hand, Russophones do have a significant presence among entrepreneurs in both countries. And a large-scale Norwegian-sponsored 1999
survey found the net effect of lack of citizenship on economic integration to be small in
Estonia and Latvia, compared to education and region of residence (Aasland 2002).
Thus despite various disadvantages, one cannot speak of an economic
marginalization in any way comparable to the systematic political marginalization
of the Russophone population (Kolsto 2000: 120; Commercio 2008).

Discussion

Having considered nationalizing discourse, policies, practices, and processes in
four domains, I want to draw together the threads of the discussion and characterize the
main patterns that emerge. In Kazakhstan, the boundary between the core nation and
Slavic minorities is sharp, socially significant, and understood in primordialist and
ethnoracial terms as fixed and given. Nationalizing discourse, policies, and practices vis-à-vis Russian-speaking minorities have been differentialist, not assimilationist. They
have not sought to turn Russians into Kazakhs, nor have they made serious efforts to get
Russians to learn the Kazakh language. They have sought rather to promote the
demographic robustness, economic strength, and political hegemony of Kazakhs vis-à-vis
others; and in this collective mobility project they have succeeded. The state has been
prevailingingly understood, by Kazakhs and Russophones alike, as the state of and for
Kazakhs. Official discourse has stressed the multiethnic character of Kazakhstan, but
informal understandings and practices have been strongly nationalizing. Nationalization
has been aided by large-scale Russophone emigration; but it has also contributed to that
emigration. Nationalization and emigration have been mutually reinforcing.
Linguistic nationalization has produced more modest and ambiguous results. Nationalizing discourse and policies -- focused on Russified urban Kazakhs, not Slavic minorities -- have been largely symbolic; despite the urgings of cultural nationalists, the state has not taken a stronger nationalizing stand. Competence in and use of the Kazakh language has increased, but Russian remains strongly entrenched among urban Kazakhs as a language of opportunity, mobility, and prestige. Yet despite the only weakly nationalizing language regime, the long-term prospects for linguistic nationalization are bright.

In Ukraine, the linguistic and social boundaries between the core nation and the large Russian minority are blurred and permeable, as indicated not only by linguistic proximity but by the very large number of mixed marriages. Ethnodemographic nationalization has resulted from individuals reclassifying themselves across this blurred boundary, not from sharp ethnic differences in migration and fertility patterns, as in Kazakhstan. The state is understood as the state of and for a particular ethnocultural nation, but that nation is not understood as sharply bounded. Primacy in the state is accorded not to a distinct and sharply bounded ethnonational collectivity, as in Kazakhstan, but to a distinct language and culture. The state is understood as having the task of protecting and promoting that culture, rather than that of protecting and promoting the interests of a bounded collectivity.

Linguistic nationalization, as in Kazakhstan, has been slowed by the continued strength of the Russian language among titulars (as well as Russians) in the east. But in the west, the Ukrainian language is solidly entrenched, and the linguistic proximity between Russian and Ukrainian has made it relatively easy for Russian-speakers in that
region to assimilate linguistically. The result is a core nation that is weakly bounded and easily joinable, but territorially and linguistically divided. Political struggles over nationalizing policies have been articulated along regional and linguistic rather than ethnonational group lines; they have been intertwined with geopolitical and geo-economic questions concerning the relations of Ukraine with Russia on the one hand and the EU on the other.

In Estonia and Latvia, the linguistic and social boundaries between the core nation and the large Russian-speaking minorities have been sharp. Nationalizing discourse and policies were initially expressly oriented towards protecting, strengthening, and empowering the core nation as a bounded ethnonational collectivity by excluding Soviet-era immigrants and their descendants from the demos and encouraging them to "repatriate." As in Kazakhstan, nationalization was both cause and effect of Russophone emigration.

Over time, however, the boundary between core nation and Russophones is likely to become more like that of Ukraine than that of Kazakhstan. The evidence today is admittedly equivocal. Young Russophones, educated and socialized largely in separate Russian-medium schools, remain for the most part strongly marked as non-native speakers of titular languages; they are certainly not recognized as Estonians or Latvians, nor do they identify themselves as such. But the language skills of the younger generation are improving; titular and minority attitudes on a variety of dimensions have converged; and titulars have become more tolerant of Russophones. Most significantly, a substantial and increasing fraction of the Russophone population is being educated in titular-medium schools (20% in Latvia in 2009-10), and a larger fraction has expressed an
interest in doing so. If this trend continues, it will break down the social separation that follows from separate school systems, and rates of intermarriage can also be expected to increase. It is not implausible that a substantial fraction of the children or grandchildren of today's Russophones, schooled in the titular languages and no longer moving primarily in separate Russophone social circles, may come to identify -- and be accepted -- as Estonians and Latvians (Laitin 1998).

Ethnonational boundaries between core nation and Russophone minorities, in sum, have been strong, quasi-racial, and intergenerationally persistent in Kazakhstan, blurred and permeable in Ukraine, and strong but probably intergenerationally permeable in Estonia and Latvia. Patterns of nationalization have corresponded to these kinds of boundaries. Nationalization has been primarily differentialist or ethnicist in Kazakhstan, premised on a strong and clear boundary between core nation and Russophone minorities, and working to strengthen and empower the former at the expense of the latter. Nationalization has been primarily assimilationist or culturalist in Ukraine, taking boundaries as permeable and linguistic repertoires and ethnocultural identifications as plastic, and working to reshape cultural practices, loyalties, and identities. Nationalization was initially differentialist and ethnicist in Estonia and Latvia, oriented towards protecting, strengthening, and empowering the core nation as a bounded collectivity, but has subsequently become more assimilationist and culturalist.¹⁵

Conclusion
The notion of nationalizing states directs our attention to a rich nexus of discursive claims, symbolic representations, formal policies, informal practices, and social processes. It offers a useful conceptual lens through which to bring into focus certain characteristic and distinctive aspects of nationalism and state-building in Soviet successor states, deriving from the dual Soviet legacy of elaborately institutionalized nation-building on the one hand and centralized rule, economic integration, and demographic and linguistic Russification on the other. These include a deeply institutionalized ethnocultural understanding of nationhood; an understanding of the state as the state of and for the ethnoculturally defined “core" or "titular" nation; the claim that the core nation is in a weak or unhealthy condition, and that its very survival is at stake; the argument that state action is needed to strengthen the demographic, cultural, economic, or political position of the core nation; and the justification of such action as rememdal or compensatory. Taken individually, these elements are found in many other settings; taken together, they comprise a configuration that is distinctive to post-Soviet and other "post-multinational" settings such as East Central Europe after the collapse of the Habsburg, Ottoman, and Romanov empires.16

Several limitations to this analytical prism should be noted. First, the concept of nationalizing states is not a theory. It does not enable one to predict how nationalizing states will be, or -- more interestingly -- how they will be nationalizing. Second, the concept of nationalizing states is not (pace Kuzio 2001) a device for classifying states as nationalizing or non-nationalizing; or for ranking states as more or less nationalizing; or still less for assessing the legitimacy of their policies and practices. It is not a device for
posing yes-or-no questions like “is Ukraine a nationalizing state?” or “is Latvia more or less nationalizing than Estonia?”

Third, the term “nationalizing state” is ambiguous. It suggests on the one hand that the state (narrowly understood as distinct from society) is doing the nationalizing, and on the other hand that the state (broadly understood as the "country" as a whole) is undergoing nationalization. The state is understood in the former case as the agent of a nationalizing project, and in the latter as the subject of a nationalizing process. But there is something to be said for this ambiguity, for it highlights the important duality of project and process. Nationalizing projects -- articulated in discourse or embodied in policies -- do not necessarily produce their intended results; conversely, nationalizing processes -- through which language repertoires, ethnodemographic patterns, or structures of economic and political dominance actually change -- are driven by their own dynamics, and may occur even in the absence of expressly nationalizing discourse or policies. The analysis of nationalizing states must attend to both projects and processes. Strictly speaking, though, it makes more sense to speak of nationalizing discourses, policies, practices, or processes in particular domains than to speak of a “nationalizing state” tout court. The term “nationalizing state” is at best a shorthand device, pointing to an assemblage – and not necessary a coherent one – of discourses, policies, practices, and processes, not to a single “thing.”

Fourth, and most important, using the notion of “nationalizing states” as an analytical prism risks occluding other analytical perspectives. In particular, it risks contributing to what I have characterized elsewhere as an “overethnicized” understanding of the social world (Brubaker 2004:12; Brubaker et al 2006:15).17 Processes of state
consolidation, for example, are at best imperfectly described, and may be misleadingly described, if one focuses on nationalizing discourses, policies, or practices. The same holds for processes of cultural transformation, and even more so for process of economic transformation. Nationalizing discourse -- like the discourse of civic nationhood or multiculturalism -- can conceal as much as it reveals, masking, for example, the pursuit of clan, clique, or class interests. Or what appear as nationalizing processes on the aggregate level may mask underlying processes driven by different dynamics. The displacement of Russophone minorities by Kazakhs in key economic and political positions in Kazakhstan, for example, can be described as a process of nationalization; yet the networks that govern access to desirable positions and resources in Kazakhstan are structured along lineage, clan, or patron-client lines rather than ethnonational lines per se (Schatz 2000, 2004; Dave 2007). Thus what appears on the surface as nationalization or “Kazakhization” is in fact a more complex process that involves considerable intra-Kazakh competition.

The notion of nationalizing states is a useful sensitizing concept; but it is not a self-sufficient analytical prism. It needs to be used in conjunction with other political, economic, social structural, and cultural modes of analysis in specifying the material and symbolic interests at stake, the forms of social closure in operation, and the patterns of state consolidation, economic transformation, and cultural reorganization that are underway.

Focusing on nationalizing discourses, policies, and processes is one way of capturing certain social, cultural, and political dynamics in Soviet successor states. The dual Soviet legacy of institutionalized multinationality and linguistic and demographic
Russification helps explain the pervasiveness of nationalizing discourse, and the attractiveness of nationalizing policies, in the successor states. But this pervasiveness and attractiveness are by no means uniform between or within states or over time. Nationalizing discourse is intertwined with other discourses, nationalizing policies with other policies, nationalizing processes with other process. The notion of the nationalizing state is certainly not a “master concept” that can capture the “essence” of post-Soviet political, cultural, and social life. It is simply one conceptual tool among others that may help pose some analytically interesting comparative questions.

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Notes

1 For a differing interpretation, stressing the primacy of domestic politics over international embededness, and focusing on the issue of irredentism in post-communist Eastern Europe and Eurasia, see Saideman and Ayres 2008.

2 A similar argument applies, mutatis mutandis, in the Yugoslav and, to a considerably lesser extent, Czechoslovak cases.

3 Although I limit my attention in the text to the post-Soviet context, nationalizing dynamics have been evident in the Yugoslav and Czechoslovak successor states as well, and figured centrally in the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia. For a discussion of the destabilizing interplay between the incipient Croatian nationalizing state, the incipient Serb national minority in Croatia, and the incipient "kin" or "homeland" state of Serbia, see Brubaker 1996b:69-75

4 Laitin's important 1998 study addresses the same four countries, but his focus is on the Russian-speaking minority population, not on the nationalizing states per se.

5 It does not include, for example, the domain of symbols and narratives (see illustratively Wanner 1998, Schatz 2004, Graney 2007, Wilson 1995, and Marples 2007).

6 Preliminary census results are reported on the website of the Statistical Agency of Kazakhstan: http://www.stat.kz/p_perepis/Pages/n_04_02_10.aspx (accessed 7/28/2010).

7 One factor that might lead to continued differential Russophone outmigration -- among young people who have acquired Estonian or Latvian citizenship and know English -- is the opportunity to work and eventually resettle in other EU countries. (Estonia and Latvia
became EU members in 2004, and the last transitional restrictions on free mobility expire in 2011.) Children of Russophone families, especially those whose Estonian is less than fluent, might be more inclined than others to pursue such opportunities (Hughes 2005; Siiner 2006:171-2). This is consistent with Laitin’s data showing a stronger orientation to Europe on the part of Russian than Estonian youth in Estonia: "It seems that Estonian independence opened up Europe for Russians, while it opened up Estonia for Estonians" (Laitin 2003: 213, 219-220).

8 According to data on mixed marriages from the 1989 census (the most recent available), 22% of all married couples in Ukraine were mixed Ukrainian-Russian couples -- twice the share of Russian-Russian couples (Stebelsky 2009:97).

9 The study of Russian remains obligatory in Ukraine (Besters-Dilger 2007) and Kazakhstan (William Fierman, personal communication).

10 Ministry of education statistics, reported in personal communication from Stephen Bloom.

11 On the influence of international organizations on Estonian and Latvian citizenship and language policies, see for example Kelley 2004, Jurado 2003. The influence of international organizations is evident at the margins; but the changes introduced in response to such pressures -- especially in the context of applications for EU membership -- have been modest.

12 On the 1993 referendum supporting territorial autonomy for the small Russian-majority region in northeast Estonia, see Smith 2002.
13 Commercio (2010: chapter 7) suggests that pressures for economic nationalization in Kazakhstan have eased in recent years, allowing Russian-speakers a niche in the private sector, even though management positions tend to be monopolized by Kazakhs.

14 Boundaries appear to be sharper in Estonia than in Latvia: Russophone populations are less integrated in Estonia on a variety of dimensions, including intermarriage (Steen 2000: 81-83).

15 The rhetoric of assimilation -- globally out of fashion and locally inconsistent with the quasi-primordialist understanding of nationality that is part of the Soviet legacy -- has not been used in any of the successor states. But policies and processes can nonetheless be characterized as assimilationist in the sense specified in the text. For the most sustained treatment of assimilation in the post-Soviet context, see Laitin (1998).

16 Kuzio (2001) suggests that the concept of nationalizing states divides Europe into a civic west and an ethnic east and ignores cross-regional commonalities in forms of nation-building. Having myself criticized at length the civic-ethnic distinction (Brubaker 1999), I don't believe the first charge is warranted. As for the second, Kuzio is of course right that many other states have sought actively to homogenize their populations, and that many other states have ethnic cores. My argument is not that homogenizing policies or processes are distinctive to the post-Soviet or East European context. It is that the specific political and institutional legacy of multinational predecessor polities helps explain the prevalence in the successor states of a distinctive kind of nationalizing discourse. As I have shown, nationalizing discourse, policies, and processes take quite varied forms in Soviet successor states. Yet there is nonetheless a family resemblance
deriving from the Soviet legacy that warrants taking the successor states as a legitimate
domain -- though not, of course, the only legitimate domain -- of comparative analysis.

Hale's (2008) study of separatism in the late Soviet context argues similarly against
attributing primary importance to pre-existing ethnic divisions or deeply held ethnic
identities.