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Institutionalization of official nationalisms in the Volga-Urals Region

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The context

Nationalism in the Muslim societies has been declining since the 1950s because it failed

- to achieve a single geopolitical victory vis-à-vis the West and Israel and
- to deliver better life to people within their countries

Consequently, its place is being taken by post-nationalist Islamism

The Volga-Urals region, 1989-2011

is not just another region but

- a thoroughly secularized post-Soviet society
- somewhat later in terms of historical period
- somewhat shorter time-span

Seems different from the Caucasus in some ways and similar in some other ways

1989-1994: Nationalist Victory

Tatar and Bashkir nationalist movements

- win various concessions from the Kremlin
- Quarrels over the status of Tatars in Bashkortostan
- Tatars use Islam instrumentally to back up claims on authenticity, win over Tatar-language Bashkorts, and get support from the richer Muslim nations

1995-2000: Nationalist Monarchies

- The nationalist movements are suppressed by the republics' presidents who become absolute princes
- The republics continue to enjoy a high degree of autonomy from the Kremlin in the context of a weak Russian Federation.
- Their autonomy and relatively high living standards legitimate the regimes locally; the nationalist agenda is still on.

2000-2005: The defeat

- revision of tax status for Tatarstan
- revision of Tatarstan's constitution and other laws
- cancellation of gubernatorial elections
- ability of the Federal President to disband provincial legislatures

No second round of the nationalist game because of

- the political void created by autocracies
- the experience of the Chechen wars

2003-2011: Post-nationalist Islamism

- a sharp rise in the number of believers even as the number of mosques stopped growing
- Islamization of the nationalist opposition
- some militancy
- positive correlation of nationalism and Islamism with respect to Moscow and Russians
- negative correlation with respect to other Muslim peoples (such as Bashkorts)

Tatars in two republics: Rationale

- A natural experiment
- One and the same nation lives on its traditional territory under different institutional conditions
- This setting allows to factor out virtually all other possible factors

Theoretical Framework

- Rational choice theory (people tend to maximize gains and minimize costs)
- New institutionalism (behavior is a function of structural incentives)
- Social dominance theory (group hierarchies)
- Theory of modernization (social mobility)

Hypotheses (1)

- Titulars express greater support for their republic's autonomy

For both titulars and non-titulars we expect effects of

- SES
- education
- religiosity

Hypotheses (2)

Ethnic self-identification is stronger among

- males
- people with lower education,
- people with lower income,
- and rural people,

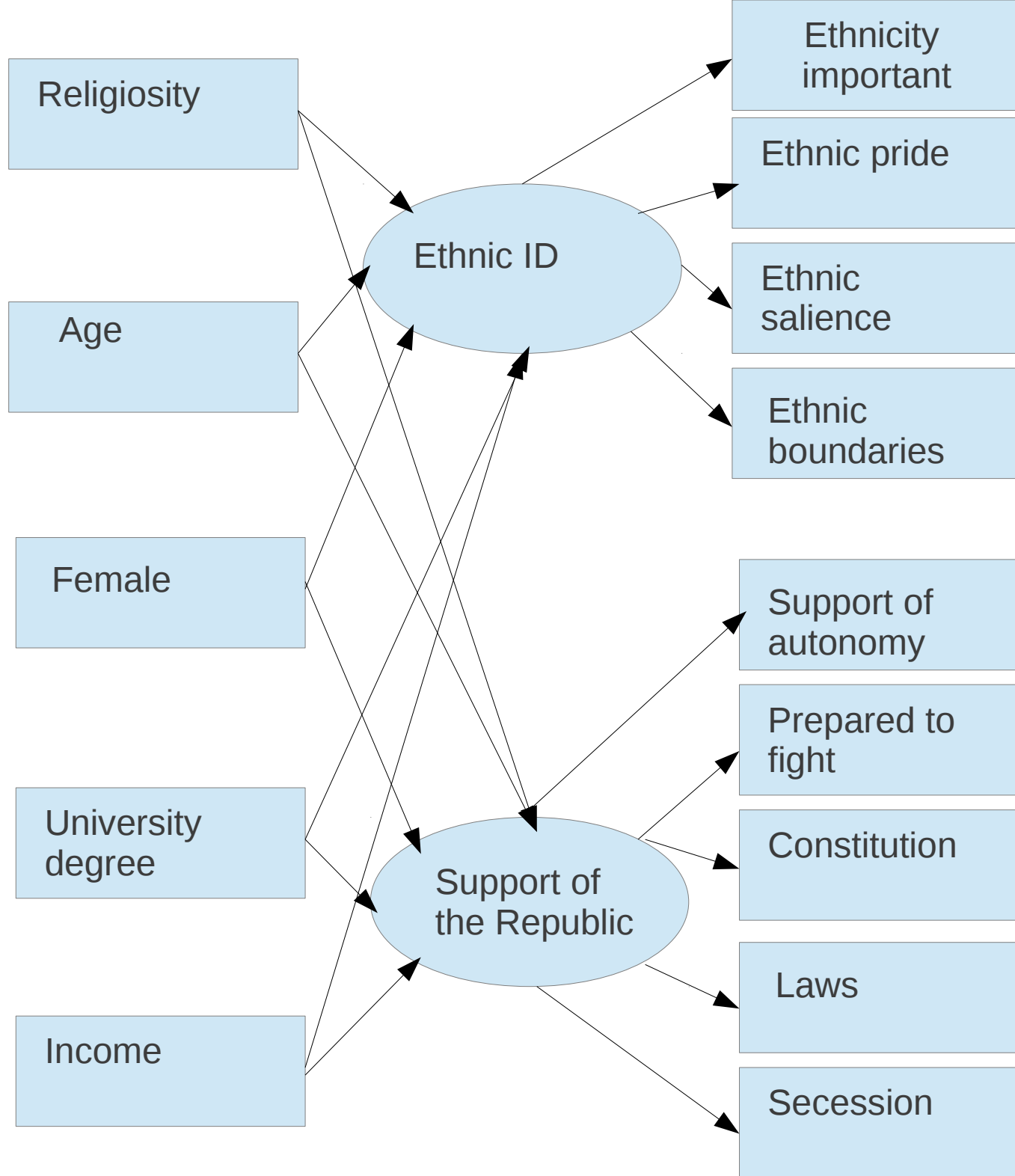
which is true for both titulars and non-titulars

Data

- Surveys in 2005 (n=1196) and 2011 (n=1612)
- Subsample of Tatars (self-definition) with controls for mother tongue and religion
- Tatarstan 403+415
- Bashkortostan 304+385
- Age 17-84 (mean 35), 2/3 females, 1/2 with university education

Method

- Structural equation modeling
- Combines capabilities of confirmatory factor analysis and multivariate regression analysis
- Allows to operate with latent variables in regression-style models



Results (1)

- Both ethnic ID and support of the republic were stronger in Tatarstan than in Bashkortostan back in 2005
- Support of the republic has grown in Bashkortostan to the extent that it does not differ much from Tatarstan anymore
- The change has occurred primarily among the better educated and richer Tatars of Bashkortostan

Results (2)

Ethnic ID in Tatarstan

- was stronger among religious Tatars w/o university degree living in rural areas with high proportion of ethnic Tatar population in 2005
- age becomes a powerful predictor in 2011: the youth's ethnic ID is weaker

Support of the republic in Tatarstan is spread equally among all groups

Results (3)

Ethnic ID in Bashkortostan is stronger among religious Tatars in both 2005 and 2011

Support of the republic in Bashkortostan

- was stronger among younger Tatars, Tatars with lower income, and religious Tatars in 2005
- equally distributed among all groups in 2011

Discussion (1)

Institutionalisation of the Bashkortostani political nationalism

- A principal change has occurred among the richer and better educated Tatars of Bashkortostan
- Adjustment of Tatars to the minority status?
- Political change in the republic?
(Cf. Russians in Ukraine)

Discussion (2)

Ethnic ID is associated with Islam in both republics whereas support of the republic is associated with Islam only in Bashkortostan

- Islam as a bridge between the Tatars of Bashkortostan and ethnic Bashkorts?
- (Depends on who the Significant Other is.)