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<<Query: AUTHOR: Please provide short title. Ans: Minority nationalism in illiberal settings: an approach and its application to (the?)* contemporary Russian context*I am not sure from the view of English grammar... >>Cultural nationalism and everyday resistance in an

illiberal nationalising state: ethnic minority nationalism in Russia

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Abstract

Ethnic minority nationalism has always been one of the most important subfields of nationalism studies, yet it lacks the consideration in illiberal settings. Limitations of civil liberties and restrictive legislation have undoubtedly affected the existence and the ways to express minority nationalism when it is considered a threat to authoritarian government, which is the case of the contemporary Russian Federation. The paper provides a methodological framework that helps to investigate ethnic minority nationalism when its direct articulation is restricted. It argues that the combination of a cultural nationalism approach and complexity theory can be a fruitful way to explore minority nationalism in an illiberal nationalising state using the case of Russian ethnic minorities. It also argues that the complex context of authoritarianism and market economy creates tipping points towards the growing importance of ethnic minority identification as a basis for social solidarity.

Introduction<<Query: AUTHOR: Please check that level headings are correct. Ans: Confirm>>

The rise of regional movements and nationalism among ethnic minorities has been widely studied from various perspectives. However, the specifics of these movements in the context of an authoritarian regime are still far from clear. The present-day Russian Federation provides valuable research opportunities to explore such movements. Russia's multicultural society with the recent legacy of being an ethno-federation has been transformed significantly since Vladimir Putin came to power. During the first decade of his presidency, Putin built an effective 'vertical of power' along with significant change in centre-regions relations towards state centralisation. Over the next decade, ethnic minorities in Russia have contended with a new political drive by the president towards the cultural homogenisation of Russian citizens, instigated by his national state agenda (Laruelle 2009; Goode 2016; Kolsto<<Query: AUTHOR: Reference "Kolsto and Blakkisrud 2016" is mentioned in the text but not in the reference list. Please provide full publication details or delete the citation from the text. Ans: Kolstø P. and Blakkisrud H. (eds.). 2016. The New Russian Nationalism: Imperialism, Ethnicity and Authoritarianism 2000-15. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016, 288pp>> and Blakkisrud 2016).

The current article contributes to the study of minority nationalism in illiberal settings. More precisely, this article provides a distinctive approach for investigating minority nationalism as a grassroots counterculture,

which rises out of the restricted political environment of nationalising authoritarian states. I aim to fill three gaps within nationalism scholarship and Russian studies.

The first gap concerns cultural nationalism within the agenda of contemporary nationalism studies (Hutchinson 2013). The reaction of local communities to globalisation<<Query: AUTHOR: The citation "Giddenes 1991" has been changed to "Giddens 1990" to match the author name/date in the reference list. Please check if the change is fine in this occurrence and modify the subsequent occurrences, if necessary. Ans: Correct>> (Giddens 1990; Smith 2010: 50; Sabanadze 2010; etc.), the impact of digital technologies on the revitalisation of minority languages (Cormack 2013; Gruffydd<<Query: AUTHOR: Reference "Gruffydd and Uribe-Jongbloed 2013" is mentioned in the text but not in the reference list. Please provide full publication details or delete the citation from the text. Ans: Jones E.G.H. and Uribe-Jongbloed E. (eds). 2013. Social Media and Minority Languages: Convergence and the Creative Industries. Multilingual Matters, Bristol, 2013, 267 pp>> and Uribe-Jongbloed 2013; etc.) and the recent rise of right-wing nationalism all around the world (Swank and Betz 2003; Knuckey and Kim 2015; etc.) rehabilitated the status of culture in the study of nation states, nationalising countries and secessionist movements. However, minority cultural nationalism remains understudied in authoritarian regimes where openly nationalist claims are dangerous to make. Thereby, a special approach is needed to explore this phenomenon of minority cultural nationalism in illiberal settings. I argue that minority nationalisms manifest themselves in people's day-to-day lives, rather than through open public nationalist claims and can be traced as an everyday cultural nationalism by analysing grassroots processes of cultural revitalisation.

The second gap concerns studies of the legacies of Soviet ethno-federalism (Brubaker 1996; Bunce 1999; Roeder 1991; etc.), which focus predominantly on post-Soviet nationalising states, but ignore ethnic republics within the former RSFSR (currently Russia). Although there are studies of subnational (ethnic minority) politics in Russia that focus on mobilisation in ethnic republics before Vladimir Putin (Gorenburg 2003; Giuliano 2011; Lankina 2004; Treisman 1997; Hagendoorn et al. 2008) and on Putin's centralisation process (Goode 2011; Sharafutdinova 2013<<Query: AUTHOR: The citation "Mosesa 2010" has been changed to "Moses 2010" to match the author name/date in the reference list. Please check if the change is fine in this occurrence and modify the subsequent occurrences, if necessary. Ans: Correct, thank you>>; Moses 2010), we still know little about ethnic minority nationalism within the Russian Federation. The exceptions are<<Query: AUTHOR: The citation "Elise Guiliano and Dmitriy Gorenburg (2012)" has been changed to "Giuliano and Gorenburg (2012)" to match the author name/date in the reference list. Please check if the change is fine in this occurrence and modify the subsequent occurrences, if necessary. Ans: correct>> Giuliano and Gorenburg (2012), who study ethnic policies in Russia until 2011. They conclude that ethnicity will no longer play an important role in Russian politics, and the paper by Rutland (2010: 132), who argues the opposite: after 1989, Russia's nationality policy became internationalised and included adhering to international norms regarding the protection of ethnic minorities. Giuliano and Gorenburg argue that ethnicity will not play an important role in Russian politics due to three major factors: (1) Russia's shift to a market economy, (2) the transition of power at the regional level from legislatures to executives, and (3) the meaningless war with Chechnya. In this paper, I shift their arguments upside down: ethnicity is becoming important again precisely because of Russia's shift to a market economy and the successful path of Chechnya to extended autonomy.

The third gap concerns the role of ethnic commodification for political mobilisation that become crucial in an illiberal context. Although some studies explain how economic initiatives or modes of resource distribution may become ethnicised (Billig 1995<<Query: AUTHOR: The citation "Ederson 2002" has been changed to "Edensor 2002" to match the author name/date in the reference list. Please check if the change is fine in this occurrence and modify the subsequent occurrences, if necessary. Ans: correct>>; Edensor 2002; Xie 2010Comaroff and Comaroff 2009), these accounts focus on dominant ethnicities and barely consider the ways that economic forces shape ethnic minorities' identifications on a daily basis. This study fills that gap. The case of the Russian Federation is especially relevant because of its relatively recent transition to a market economy.

In sum, considering recent political and economic developments in Russia, this article enriches recent scholarly debates on the cultural nationalism of ethnic minorities against the backdrop of a newly emerging neoliberal economy and entrenched authoritarianism. The paper proceeds as follows: first, I describe the theoretical framework that I suggest for investigating minority nationalism in illiberal settings. Second, I

introduce the methods and data that help to illustrate this framework in the case of Russian ethnic minorities. Third, I briefly describe the Soviet legacy and current context for minority nationalisms in Russia in general. Fourth, I specify the background of the main case study of the paper – social and political conditions of sub-state nationalism in Tatarstan. Fifth, I focus on mundane practices of the reinvention of the Tatar vernacular culture and language revitalisation as well as processes of their dissemination. Finally, I explore the life strategies of people who create those practices at the first place and show which ideas they share might potentially become political claims. In conclusion, I summarise main arguments of this paper arguing that although cultural nationalism foster mundane practices of ethnic minorities without open political claims, it eventually leads to the rise of ethnic consciousness despite the politics of homogenisation instigated by the state.

Theoretical framework: cultural drivers for everyday nationalism

Culture has recently returned to nationalism studies because of the rise of ethnic nationalisms in the modern world. It has become a main resource for constructing contemporary Russian citizenship and, as I will show later, for constructing alternative identification for ethnic minorities. To understand minority nationalism in the historically multinational and recently federative but currently nationalising (on the base of a core Russian ethnic group) and *de facto* unitary Russia, we need two complementary theoretical approaches, along with an analysis of nation-building in an authoritarian context.

First, within theory of cultural nationalism, scholars commonly accept Hroch's (1985) idea that cultural nationalism emerges at the beginning of nationalising projects. However, Hutchinson (2013) recently noted that it can return to the agenda of long-established national states. <<Query: AUTHOR: Reference "Guo, 2005" is mentioned in the text but not in the reference list. Please provide full publication details or delete the citation from the text. Ans: Guo. Y. 2003. Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary China. Routledge. 208 pp.could you please indicate the right year in the citation (2003, not 2005) as well?>>Guo (2005), for instance, discusses new cultural nationalism (as opposed to the official national discourse) in contemporary China, but rather differently from the approach in this article. Guo studies alternative visions of the dominant Chinese culture introduced by four groups of cultural nationalists – nationalist historians, Confucians, opponents of language reform and cultural linguists and postcolonialists. By contrast, I investigate alternatives based on ethnic minorities' culture. Various cultural elites are developing the phenomenon of cultural nationalism. In his prominent book about modern Japan, Yoshino (1992) suggests a distinction not just between intellectuals and intelligentsia among cultural nationalists as proposed by Hutchinson (1987) in his classical study of Irish nationalism but inside the intelligentsia itself, dividing businessmen and educators. The division of cultural nationalists in this research is based on the same logic, but I exclude educators from my investigation since in illiberal settings, the educators are obliged to obey federal centre and not the nationalising province. In the current study, I refer both to intellectuals who produce ideas of nationalism and invent or rediscover ethnic symbols and practices and entrepreneurial people who use ethnic symbols and nationalising discourses to advance their products and services on the market as *ethnopreneurs*. Leerssen's (2006a, 2006b, 2014) work on the transnational diffusion of nationalism in nineteenth-century Europe is of particular interest here. Although Leersen's research is historical, it sheds light on how minorities' nationalisms influence each other in contemporary Russia by suggesting commonalities in newly invented and rediscovered cultural practices.

The second approach is based on complexity theory. As Kaufmann (2016: 7) notes in his introductory article on the theory of complexity in nationalism studies, 'National identity is like a forest, emerging from peer-to-peer flows and feedbacks more than via state direction, especially in our post-industrial, democratic age'. This metaphor best describes how complexity works in such phenomena as nationalism. The main concepts of this theory are emergence, feedback loops, tipping points and distributed information. Feedback loops and tipping points appear when some everyday practices start to be replaced by newly emerging (or reinvented) practices. Distributed information about what does it mean to have a particular ethnic identity is characterised by *multi-vocalism*. In other words, despite the different meanings people attribute to 'the national' from different vantage points (i.e. local, gender and class perspectives), the focal point remains a common national identity that 'orchestrates' nationalism from below (Kaufmann 2016: 13–16). Complexity theory in nationalism studies,

thus, explains how national movements may arise from various types of apolitical associations, social media communication and leisure activities.

Everyday nationalism, an approach that focuses on the quotidian practices of peoples' thinking, talking and acting through the nation<<Query: AUTHOR: The citation "Brubaker et al 2004" has been changed to "Brubaker et al. 2008" to match the author name/date in the reference list. Please check if the change is fine in this occurrence and modify the subsequent occurrences, if necessary. Ans: NO, sorry, both years are incorrect, the correct year is 2006>> (Brubaker et al. 20068; Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008; Wimmer 2013Goode and Stroup 2015), is at the core of this theory. According to complexity theory, micro-social practices, like consuming ethnic products, speaking regional languages and listening to ethnic music, serve as a basis for the emergence of a national identity with a political consciousness. This intuition is upheld by Bonikowski (2016: 435), whose work on the variety of meanings attached to the nation is helpful for illuminating the connection between everyday nationalism and politics. Complexity theory introduced by Kaufmann (2016) also emphasises the role of popular activities in reproducing national identities over the role of the state. Focusing on 'horizontal processes of nationalism' can explain the spread of national conduct and nationalism through small causes that may result in big changes.

Following this line of thought, I argue that cultural nationalism in an illiberal context of an historically multicultural society can eventually lead to changes in everyday nationalism: ethnic music has to be listened to, ethnic movies have to be watched, books in vernacular languages have to be read and ethnic products have to be consumed. Introduced by cultural elites and ethnopreneurs, these practices and products create a distinctly alternative social environment to state-imposed patriotism. Thus, in light of complexity theory, cultural nationalism needs to be reconsidered as a mechanism of social coordination rather than a marker of a stable identity (Laitin 2007). This mechanism could be explained through cultural or linguistic cascades, in which members switch from one practice to another.

Finally, I elaborate briefly on the theoretical importance of studying minority nationalism in an authoritarian context. David Laitin argues in *Nationalism, States and Violence* that democratisation leads to the politicisation of ethnicity. In the same way that local entrepreneurs tend to support local enterprises where the market economy is growing, interest groups coalesce around ethnicity during the process of democratisation. *Does this mean that authoritarianism leads to a decline of ethnicity?* Goode and Stroup (2015) observe that, within contemporary constructivist paradigm that predominates approaches to ethnic politics, ethnic nationalism (understood as the opposite of civic nationalism) is a form of national identification that tends towards authoritarian politics. *Is there a place for ethnic minorities in an authoritarian state that frames its nation-building around the cultural traits of the core ethnicity?* Goode and Stroup (2015) argue that minority ethnic movements are easier to identify because they mobilise through frames of injustice. *But what about illiberal contexts where appealing to injustice is irrelevant and political mobilisation is almost impossible?*

The contemporary literature on nationalism has not adequately reflected on these questions so far. My research is based on three intuitively derived assumptions. First, considering the unavoidable processes of globalisation, authoritarianism can lead to the flourishing of minority ethnic identification despite policies of state unification. Second, because people cannot effectively profess political grievances in an illiberal authoritarian context, minority nationalism is better manifested in through everyday life. Three, because of its silent resistance to the homogenisation of citizens, minority nationalism could lead to democratisation by promoting diversity in society. The third assumption does not imply that diversity is an exclusive precondition for democracy, only that it is a crucial condition (Calhoun 2007).

However, we should be careful about how conceptualise authoritarianism, generally, and Russian authoritarianism, specifically. While recognising the complexity of the term at hand, I think it deserves fuller clarification and incorporation into nationalism studies beyond this article. As Goode and Ahram 2016: 828) have noticed, 'authoritarianism, like democracy, is already a conceptual and taxonomical morass' and cannot be summarised succinctly. Other researchers provide a wide classification of contemporary hybrid regimes by depicting the tensions and blurred boundaries between democracy and authoritarianism, classifying the Russian Federation as an illiberal hybrid regime characterised by competitive multiparty elections but low

civil liberties (Gilbert and Mohseni 2011: 294). In contrast, the political scientist Gelman (2015) characterises the Russian political regime as a form of 'electoral authoritarianism' based on super-presidentialism and monopoly of power in both electoral and parliamentary politics. For the present purposes, I use terms 'illiberal' and 'authoritarian' interchangeably, and, considering the power monopoly in cultural and educational policies, I classify Russia as a limited authoritarian state. The extent of state coercion in the country is circumscribed by free internet access, citizens' ability to travel abroad and globalisation processes that affect social values alongside capital markets. Globalisation strengthens people's interest in ethnicity as a means of resisting the state's policies of Russification. I would like also to highlight an important effect of authoritarianism, namely, the state/society alienation, which is a background to all processes considered in the paper (Greene 2011; Wedeen 1999).

Authoritarian rule in a long-established multicultural society, combined with a system of professed (but not fully realised) federalism, creates a space where the day-to-day silent practices of cultural nationalism can flourish. In other words, such practices are not publicly obvious in the political discourse of the society but are reflected in the minds and worldviews of the people who engage them.

Methods and data

The primary data for this article comes, first, from 2 years of in-depth ethnography in Tatarstan, one of the ethnic republics of the Russian Federation. This work helped me identify the daily practices of ethnicity production and consumption, alongside various social and cultural agencies. Second, I conducted twenty biographical interviews with young people professing strong ethnic identification as ethnic Tatar. All of them were ethnic Tatars living in the region of Tatarstan. Third, I conducted a content analysis of online data on ethnicity reproduction and consumption in the region. The data collection was based on the personal websites of informants and a link-analysis of web pages relevant to the research topic of cultural nationalism. To get a broader picture of the revival of cultural nationalism of ethnic minorities in Russia, I conducted twelve semi-structured interviews with representatives of other ethnicities who also engaged in the symbolic reproduction of their identities. Among them were three Udmurts, two Yakuts, two Chuvashs, three Maris and two North Ossetians.

Ethical considerations forced me to avoid direct questions about respondents' appeals for separatism because of a federal law that restricts and criminalises any such claims. Even if such appeals existed, they could not be articulated up front. Still, the long-term ethnographic fieldwork and close familiarity with my informants allow me to vouch for the validity and relevance of the data. The predominance of narratives about federalisation and democratisation (rather than secession) during our discussions was the result of informants' honest attempts to describe their position in the current political atmosphere.

Context

Russia has remained on the path of transforming the Soviet system of ethno-federalism into a unitary state. Although maintaining the formal status of a federation, it essentially became a unitary state. Before discussing the current political situation, I delve briefly into how ethno-federalism operated in the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union created all the conditions for the ethnic division of Soviet citizens. This was expressed in the mandatory 'nationality' column as an indicator of people's ethnic affiliation on all sorts of official documents.[1] Together with the division of the larger territory into national republics, autonomous regions and autonomous provinces (which defined the titular nationality), this led to the ranking of Soviet society along ethnic lines. Ethnicity in the Soviet Union was, thus, institutionalised in two ways: ethno-culturally – at the individual level and politically – at the territorial level (Brubaker 1996). In his famous article on the Soviet system of ethno-federalism, Slezkine 1994 argues that the first state of 'workers and peasants' in history was also the first to legally classify its citizens by nominal ethnicity and to formally prescribe government preferences by ethnicity. In reality, however, ethnic culture mainly comprised language and certain elements

of 'everyday life'. In theory, every ethnic group found its place on an evolutionary scale between a tribe and a nation. In practice, this place was defined by territory and social status.

As a result, each individual was 'tied' to a particular nationality, and the majority of nationalities were 'tied' to defined areas. Thus, in the Soviet system of ethnic federalism, 'titular' ethnic groups had a special privileged status within the boundaries of 'their' territory regardless of their representation in the area. Before the fall of the Soviet Union, Soviet republics named after their dominant ethnic group were in fact quasi-states within fixed territories. There were autonomous territories within some of these republics like Crimea in Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (in 1991–1992) or Abkhaz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic, which did not have as many rights, but the basis or legitimacy of their existence was the same principle of national self-determination. Both Soviet republics and autonomous republics within the RSFSR (Bashkortostan, Tatarstan, Yakutia, Udmurtia and twelve others) also had their own administrative bodies and some other traits of sovereign states.

The special status of the 'titular nationality' was preserved by some regions of the newly formed Russian Federation (the former RSFSR), including Tatarstan and other ethnic territories (Giuliano 2006: 279). During the 1990s, all Russian regions in general, and ethnic republics in particular, enjoyed great autonomy from the federal centre following Yeltsin's famous call to 'take as much sovereignty as they can swallow'. The relationship between the central and regional governments changed dramatically in the late 1990s and the first part of the 2000s (Goode 2011). Unification from the federal centre almost abolished the special position of the national republics and put them on par with other regions in the country (Graney 2009: 116–117). Despite the cosmetic maintenance of multiculturalism, federal support for education in minority languages and other cultural (let alone political) developments of Russian ethnic groups was gradually reduced under Putin (Zamyatin 2016).

The newly emerged nationalising state agenda caused tensions in the ethnic regions,[2] which were exacerbated by a growing economic crisis. A recent survey following the annexation of Crimea shows that the majority of the Russian population associates annexation with negative economic consequences (Alexeev and Hale 2016: 218). Politically, the restoration of gubernatorial elections in 2012 might have important implications for the use of national mobilisation in the republics. In these circumstances, there is a risk of country disintegration, as happened in the USSR in the late 1980s.

Specific features of Putin's authoritarianism affected the availability of reliable data on minority nationalism, restricting my research to cultural activities. In the absence of a general ethnic policy in Russia (Rutland 2010), the main actors who articulate and construct minorities' identities are minority leaders who are interested in revitalising their vernacular culture. Meanwhile, academic research on ethnicity in Russia has decreased with Putin's politics of regional unification. This confirms Brubaker's (2004) thesis about the tendency among many social researchers to confuse categories of practices with categories of analysis: in the current case, disappearance of ethnic policies or nationalist claims has led to assuming that there is nothing to research. However, the disappearance of political and social discourse about some categories of ethnic identification and categorisation has not led automatically to its disappearance on an everyday level and in ordinary people's lives.

I argue that the strong nationalist politics of the 1990s in some ethnic regions of the Russian Federation, notably in Yakutia, North Ossetia, Chechnya, Tatarstan, Bashkortostan and Udmurtia, have created a means of socialisation that has resulted in raising a generation of ethnically oriented youth who are now entering adulthood. These youth groups tend to create countercultural communities that would resist the trend towards cultural unification based on Russian culture. They create a new symbolism and set of ceremonies and an overlapping range of cultural and social agencies: various types of new media and social gatherings. In turn, these are all features of cultural nationalism of ethnic minorities highlighted by Hutchinson (2013: 84). From businessmen to artists, designers to singers and poets to film directors, all are searching for unique advantages using their ethnic cultural resources to win in the world of persistent competition. They create new symbols of belonging, which compete with national, and thus federal, symbols. The role of market economy is clear in spreading those symbols, just as Anderson (2006) identifies in the nineteenth century in western Europe (Anderson 2006: 37–46). This concerns not just materials produced by print capitalism (i.e. by creation and

reproduction of common vernacular languages) but also now by other means, including new media where the sharing of visual images is as important as words (Rutland 2016).

All this raises the following questions: *first, do contemporary ethnic minority cultures exist in contemporary Russia, or are there only remnants of a Soviet legacy? Second, how does the market economy and authoritarianism affect the development of Russia's ethnic minorities? Third, how does the cultural nationalism propagated by some affect the experiences of ethnicity in everyday life for many others?*

Why is the revival of ethnicity in the Russian illiberal context possible?

In their analysis of ethnic politics in Russia from the collapse of the USSR until 2011, Giuliano and Gorenburg (2012) argue that ethnicity will not play a significant role in Russian politics, after<<Query: AUTHOR: "after the short period in which..." This sentence has been reworded for clarity. Please check and confirm it is correct. Ans: confirm>> the short period in which it gained momentum in the early 1990s, due to three major factors. First, due to Russia's shift to a market economy. Second, due to the transition of power at the regional level from legislatures to executives. Third, due to the war with Chechnya, which showed how dangerous and intractable a war for independence could be. The findings of this article contest all three arguments.

First, the famous study by the Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) shows that nationalism nowadays serves as an economic resource for small and medium-sized businesses. Moreover, nationalism has become an important factor of global economic competition, sometimes turning ethnic groups into corporations. This is also becoming an inescapable reality in the Russian context: ethnicity, both Russian and minority groups', is becoming a brand in tourism, fashion, food production and various kinds of services. That is, it's an important component of the basic spheres of small and medium-sized businesses.

Second, as Goode (2010) has argued, there is a crisis of the legitimacy of executive power in Russian regions, which could lead to demands for greater autonomy from these regions. People are increasingly unsatisfied with the regional authorities: Kremlin appointees and local protests are becoming more frequent phenomena in various regions beyond Moscow (Lankina 2015). This is self-reinforcing process that could result in contagion and include even more regions.

Third, the privileged financial support that Chechnya now receives is commonly viewed as a result of the separatist threat. This strategy could be used by other regions again, since a threat of separatism should not be expressed necessarily violently. Rather, mass protests are enough to make claims for greater autonomy. Moreover, some regions like Yakutiya, Tatarstan, North Ossetia, Mordovia and others have become more homogenised in terms of ethnic composition where the prevalence of titular groups continues to increase (population census 2010 and 2002). I explore these dimensions in this article and my other research. I argue that explanations lie beyond natural growth, outward migration of non-titular groups and manipulation of censuses. There is an additional reason: the reconsideration (and strengthening) of ethnic identification. For example, some participants who had only one grandparent from non-dominant ethnic groups highlighted their identification as ethnic minorities. This interesting phenomenon could be explainable. In his article about the current situation of alienation in Russian society, Greene (2011: 464) pointed out:
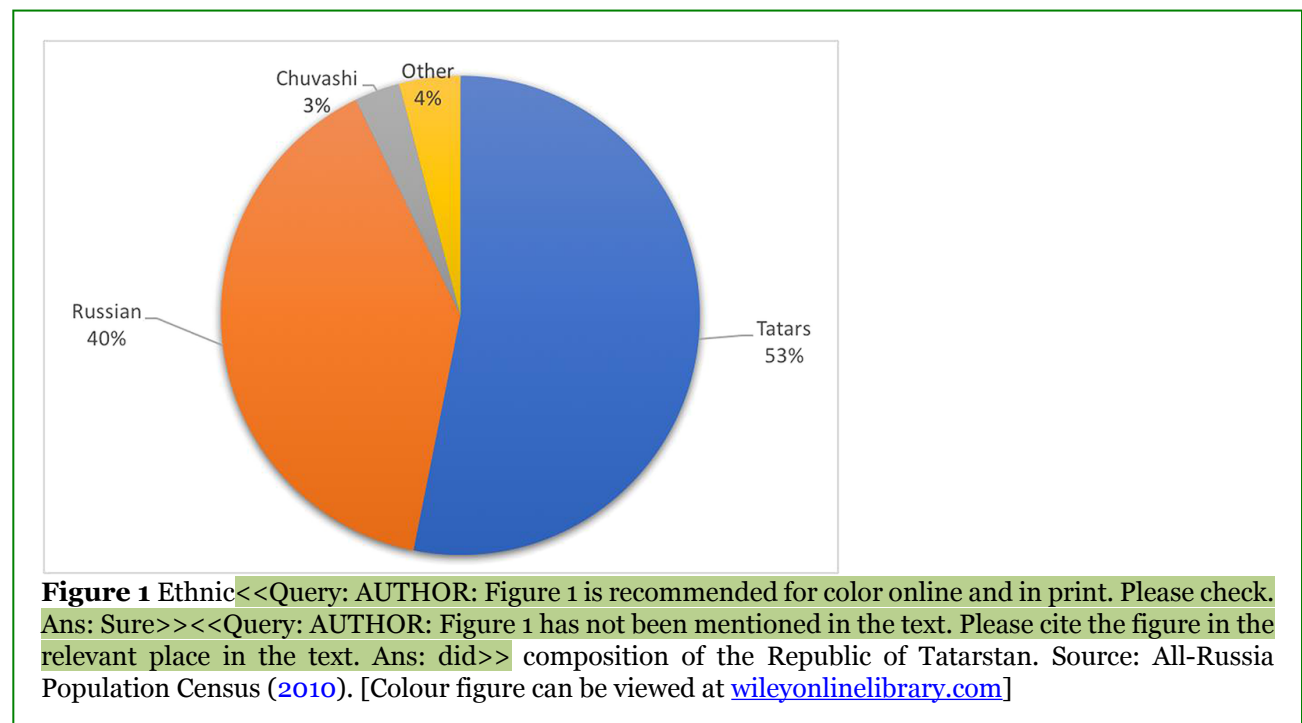
> Young, educated, dynamic, and mobile Russians – as well as a good many of their older compatriots – are seemingly as likely to identify themselves with a global meaning as with a local one ... While remaining physically present in Russia (or at least resident). Russians may take themselves socially, politically, and intellectually out of the Russian space.

Agreeing with this point, I want to add some nuance regarding the members of Russian ethnic minorities on the basis of my findings. Identification as an ethnic minority is another option for identity formation of the Russian citizens who feel alienated from the Russian state. These people rather seek affiliation with something

local, with something she feels a connection to and can influence and change. Below, I develop my arguments in more detail, focusing on the case of the Tatars – the largest ethnic minority in Russia.

Political and social context in Tatarstan under Putin

The Tatars are the second largest ethnic group after Russians within the Russian Federation and constitute about 4% of the whole population. They speak a western Turkic-Altaic language called Tatar and profess Sunni Islam. The group is divided into several territorially assigned sub-groups, but most of the Tatar population are Volga Tatars and native to the Volga region. Although the sub-group of Volga Tatars is also quite dispersed, the overwhelming majority of Tatars live in Tatarstan – one of the ethnic republics of the Russian Federation whose statehood dates back to the eighth century. According to the last census (2010), there are about 2 million ethnic Tatars and 1.5 million ethnic Russians, along with significant numbers of other ethnic minority groups (Chuvash, Mari and Udmurts) Figure 1.

Figure 1 Ethnic<<Query: AUTHOR: Figure 1 is recommended for color online and in print. Please check. Ans: Sure>><<Query: AUTHOR: Figure 1 has not been mentioned in the text. Please cite the figure in the relevant place in the text. Ans: did>> composition of the Republic of Tatarstan. Source: All-Russia Population Census (2010). [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

In the early 1990s, and the beginning of relations between the new Russian federal centre and the regions, Tatarstan was the leader in the struggle for privileges and widespread autonomy. Thus, Tatarstan set the tone for the rest of the Russian regions excluding Chechnya. In this struggle, the strong nationalist movement in the republic helped Mintimer Shaimiev, then the leader of Tatarstan, to receive widespread forms of autonomy from the federal centre. Murzina (2015: 355) suggests that during the 1990s, regional political myth-making was based on the formation of the image of the federal centre as an enemy that restricts the regions' prosperity. But it should be noted that Shaimiev actively promoted the idea that federalism is the territorial basis of democracy in Russia, which first was declared in 1990 by the first Russian president, Yeltsin himself (Sharafutdinova 2013: 366).

However, when Vladimir Putin came to power in 2000, he embarked upon a policy of unifying the Russian regions. The constitutions of the regions were revised in accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation, and elections of the regional leadership were abolished. These steps abolished the republics' special status and equalised them with the other subjects of the Russian Federation, including Tatarstan (Williams 2011: 113–5). This<<Query: AUTHOR: "This threatened the status of..." This sentence has been reworded for clarity. Please check and confirm it is correct. Ans: I would like to change the sentence to the

following: "This threatened the status of titular groups in the republics">> threatened the status of 'Tatars' as a titular group in the republics. Regional leaders, as representatives of the titular nationalities of the republics, have used a variety of mechanisms, including the fostering of religious differences, to maintain their power (Yusupova 2016). Moreover, Tatarstan became widely recognised for its success in attracting federal subsidies and federal support for regional projects for industrial, technological and city infrastructure, which, in turn, has led to the development of tourism in the region (Sharafutdinova and Turovsky 2016). It also means that at least some of money from the regional budget is usually allocated for the support of ethnic initiatives and, first and foremost, teaching in and of the Tatar language. All these result in favourable ground for any ethnic initiatives on the regional level in spite of the federal centre abolishing the 'national component in education' in 2007 (Zamyatin 2016).

As interviews with activists of other ethnic groups reveal, the Tatars' case is not an exception but an illustrative example: the same trends could be found in most of the ethnic republics within Russia, as I will outline below. According to further investigations and my interviews with the representatives of other ethnic minorities from the Caucasus to the Far East, similar practices, agencies and tendencies could be found in the other ethnic republics of the Russian Federation.

Mundane tipping points of minorities' cultural nationalism

Due to the legacy of the Soviet system of ethno-federalism, it is wrong to talk about the 'emergence' of cultural nationalism in the Russian ethnic republics. Rather, we should talk about its revival. In this section, I indicate some practices that serve as eloquent examples of this revival of cultural nationalism.

Most significantly, there is a mix of innovative and already well-known practices of ethnicity reproduction that are related to cultural activities of the young generation of ethnic minorities in Russia. Innovative practices relate mostly to the possibilities provided by the digital age, including Internet discussions in minority languages on social media and production of films and plays and various videos, from ethnic music to language lessons, on YouTube. <<Query: AUTHOR: "including Internet discussions in minority..." This sentence has been reworded for clarity. Please check and confirm it is correct. Ans: confirm>>

First, I focus on practices of producing ethnic culture based on vernacular literature. Such activities like writing poems, songs and various kinds of novels remain popular among the older generation but are also now popular among the younger generation of Tatars. There are various magazines and newspapers in Tatar language in Tatarstan, several publishing houses and more than ten editorial offices. Almost all of them are individual or collective enterprises, not sponsored by the regional government.

The production of films and plays is also an important part of how language-based nationalism is produced. In Tatarstan, the theatre is generously supported by the regional government, while the movie production was much less supported until recently. These ethnic productions are in demand among ordinary people. Once I observed a huge queue of more than 200 people waiting for a new Tatar film series at the cinema on a frosty winter evening at −20 C. People were standing in the street, and it reminded me of the queues at the beginning of the 1990s when there was a shortage of bread. As a result, the managers broadcasted the film twice; both times the cinema hall was full. Some people were watching it while standing the whole time. It was the first series of a long-term project sponsored by the regional Ministry of Culture. Although the content and quality was not so unique, as just a simple Cinderella story, it raised a huge public discussion on social media afterwards. A year after, further new films were announced for production both on behalf of the Ministry of Education and by individual producers. The rise of the popularity of the Yakut and the Buryat cinema within the regions as well as the emergence of Chuckchee movie production supports this observation.[3] I also include in this category of ethnic culture various YouTube channels, which include both videos of popular Russian Soviet animation translated into vernacular languages and self-made by ethnopreneurs videos like MegaArt282, the Lezgian YouTube channel and many others. These videos are mostly short movies, songs, TV programmes and lessons in vernacular languages. YouTube videos serve as the best example for a feedback loop or a 'viral' trend in the distribution of cultural products. For instance, the music clip of the Tatar rap song

'Tatarka-Altyn' posted on YouTube in November 2016 has collected more than 8 million views in less than a month.[4]

Discussions on various social media platforms, themselves, serve both to revitalise language by the possibility of exercising writing in mother tongue and as an arena to express individual's personal nationalism (Cohen 1996; Hearn 2007). For example, they allow individuals to present a personal meaning and self-narrative for how identify as Tatar. There are also various digital media in vernacular languages hosted on social media platforms. These discuss various topics from 'Contemporary Tatar Civic Poetry' to 'Recipes of Tatar Cuisine' or general themes like 'Science and Technology'.<<Query: AUTHOR: "...and self-narrative for how identify as Tatar." The meaning of this sentence is not clear; please rewrite or confirm that the sentence is correct. Ans: For example, they allow individuals to present a personal meaning of identity and self-narrative as Tatar>>[5] These forums and discussions are visual evidence of how information is distributed about the meaning of Tatar ethnicity for participants.

Various kinds of contemporary music from pop music to rock, indie-rock, ethno-folk and rap in the Tatar language are also in high demand. Tatar poets and singers participate in various concerts, TV programmes, radio broadcasts, festivals and small live-music evenings in cafes and restaurants. The growth of this literal multivocality has led to the revitalisation of language among various Tatar youth groups of Tatar youth. This example demonstrates the breadth of engagement, which appeals to many people and different music interest. Beyond Tatarstan, in other ethnic republics, there is evidence of a similar rise of popularity of ethnic music played by local bands. This allows us to think that process of culture revitalisation that I describe in the case of Tatars has the similar impact on everyday life of other ethnic groups of the Russian Federation.

The second type of activity that I identify as evidence of cultural nationalism in everyday life is the organisation of, and participation in, various social and cultural activities based on vernacular culture. These events include music and ethnic craft festivals, public commemorations, celebration of ethnic (but not national) holidays and actions of solidarity with co-ethnics in other regions.[6] Here, I also include various entertainments or leisure activities aimed at fewer groups like poetry slam sessions and ethnically or locally themed street quests.[7] In this section, I focus just on two largest grassroots driven annual ethnic events in Tatarstan, although there are many other small examples that do not get any financial or other support from the political elites neither regional nor federal.

The first example of an ethnic event is an action in support of the Tatar language called *Min Tatarcha suilyasham* ('I speak Tatar'). It was initiated in 2006 by a group of ethnopreneurs called 'Uzebez' (ourselves) who wanted to change people's attitudes to Tatar language from a useless to trendy language. Since then, it has taken place every year on 24th of April, the birthday of the most prominent Tatar poet, Gabdulla Tukai. The event is followed by a concert of young musicians who compose their songs in Tatar language. Interestingly, this form of attraction of public attention to vernacular language has encouraged other ethnic minorities to do the same beyond Tatarstan. Thus, similar actions now are held in other ethnic minority regions, like Yakutia, Mari El and Chuvashia.

The second example is an event which started in Kazan in 2013: *Pshyan Bazary* ('Hay market'). At this market, people sell and buy ethnic crafts and literature, compete in storytelling, musical rap battles and poetry slams and listen to lectures on various topics in Tatar language. Interestingly, ethnic artisans from neighbouring regions are also welcome to attend this annual event to sell their own ethnically labelled goods like clothes, accessorises or jewellery. Every year, new initiatives like this emerge and are welcomed by the populations of the big cities, like Kazan, and smaller cities, like Naberezhnye Chelny.

Most importantly, there are also many other social gatherings based on ethnic grounds that reinforce ethnic identification of participants. Such formal and informal social clubs are based on various interests, but the language of communication in most of them is Tatar, and they all share a common goal: to revitalise an ethnic culture. Also, there are some special physical spaces for social gatherings with changing agenda but with the ethnic atmosphere that became popular just recently. Some of these places do not have open ethnic restrictions, but if they have halal menu or entertainment programme, everybody knows who are most

welcome there. Ethnopreneurs started to use such places as newly emerging co-workings and anti-cafes (cafes where customers pay for time spent rather than for food or drinks) to gather and to collaborate. Thus, these kinds of spaces provide offline platforms for distribution of information about what it means to be a Tatar nowadays. These offline platforms serve as an indicator for the rest of Tatar society that ethnicity is becoming trendy, thereby attracting their attention and creating tipping points.

A third type of activities of cultural nationalism in everyday life could be seen as economic and is based on commodification of ethnic culture, producing ethnic goods and services (fast food, atelier, souvenirs, publishing, game industry and tourism). Vernacular culture is considered as a symbolic resource to attract the attention of tourists from other Russian regions and abroad or Tatar consumers. In the specific Russian plexus of economical and political interrelations, the support of ethnic projects is also the way of building a political career inside ethnic republics. As one of the young entrepreneurs told about the reason why regional investor supported his project of Tatar fast food,

> He supported us because of the relevance of the national project nowadays and also because this is an opportunity for him to increase his popularity with this project. To become known as the men who cares about national (meaning Tatar). Let's think internationally. Russia is clamped. And now is the right time when you have to nationalize all your resources, from furniture to food. We all must do this now (Entrepreneur, 26 years old).

The provision of services for ethnic Tatar audiences is another way of ethnic economic development. Photography schools, magazines and TV programmes, leisure activities, clubs for discussions and cafes where the targeted group is the ethnic Tatar audience are becoming successful enterprises in contemporary Tatarstan. For example, one informant explains how she came up with the idea to open a photography school exclusively for the Tatar community with Tatar as the language of instruction:

> I myself went to a similar school but with ethnically mixed classes. I've noticed that very often Tatars are very shy because some of them don't speak Russian well, some of them moved to city just recently or they were just shy. So I decided to solve this problem and organized a photo-club for Tatars. This is the place where they can feel like at home because we speak Tatar and they can feel free to express themselves as they wish (Entrepreneur, 25 years old).

Tatarstan's fashion industry is another evidence of ethnic revitalisation and commodification of ethnic culture. For example, recently, one young fashion designer with the idea of creating a unique everyday dress style for modern Tatars came up with the idea to revitalise a traditional skullcap – *tubatei*. This idea has two impacts: the public liked it and started to buy and wear the skullcap, while other entrepreneurs started to produce various kinds of *tubateis* after witnessing the success of this reinvention (<<Query: AUTHOR: The citation "Hobsbawm 1983" has been changed to "Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983" to match the author name/ date in the reference list. Please check if the change is fine in this occurrence and modify the subsequent occurrences, if necessary. Ans: correct>>Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983).

The same blossoming of ethnic enterprises could be found in other ethnic republics of the Russian Federation. For example, ateliers and jewellery manufacturing became a profitable business in North Ossetia due to increasingly popular fashion within the Ossetian community. The best and most coveted wedding gifts are gold jewellery made by local artisans that are much more expensive than other types of jewellery. Expensive hand-made men's shirts with an ethnic ornament have become a necessary element in a wardrobe of a 'true' Ossetian. This demonstrates what Goode and Stroup (2015: 14) describe in their discussion of everyday nationalism that the 'successful branding of ethnicity in one community may serve as a template that other communities attempt to follow'.

The above examples – of the rise of minority language usage, the proliferation of ethnic businesses and ethnic fashion trends – are evidence of a pendulum swinging towards the popularity of ethnic minority identification, and, thus, to its politicisation. We can imagine this cycle continuing: the more people use minorities languages, the more people join; the more people are involved in ethnic businesses, the more people consume its products and services; and the more people follow the ethnic trends in fashion, the more people follow these trends. Thus, recent developments in everyday culture create feedback loops, which, in turn, lead to tipping points in each practice. This gradually changing environment altogether might result in politicisation of ethnicity.

Ethnopreneurs' life strategies and their views of nationhood

All ethnopreneurs, who I interviewed, were between 20 and 30 years old. Some of these people were originally from Kazan, the capital of Tatarstan, or other big cities or small towns in Tatarstan. One was from a Tatar village. One quarter of the Tatar participants were originally from the neighbouring ethnic republic of Bashkortostan. Their special interest to ethnicity dictates by ethnic discrimination of Tatars by titular ethnicity in Bashkortostan that was particularly relevant in the 1990s (Gallyamov and Zainetdinova 2004). Despite this diversity, analysing these interviews makes it possible to define several common themes where participants discuss their life strategies and strong ethnic identification, as ethnic Tatar, within a nationalising Russia.<<Query: AUTHOR: Reference "Gallymov and Zainetdinova, 2004" is mentioned in the text but not in the reference list. Please provide full publication details or delete the citation from the text. Ans: Gallyamov, R., and Zainetdinova L. 2004. Etnosotsialnaia stratifikatsiia: teoreticheskie podkhodii, konseptualhaia model. Tendentsii razvitiia. Ufa: Izdatelstvo ZdravookhranieBashkortostana.>>

The first life strategy is cohesion within an ethnically based social circle, which leads to the creation of an ethnic social bubble. Marrying within an ethnic group and participating in social clubs and other gatherings, based on a common minority language or ethnic culture, is just one way for such in-group cohesion. An important root of this strategy is the socialisation at Tatar schools with the Tatar language as the language of instruction. In the 1990s, many such schools offering a high-quality education were opened in Tatarstan. Some of them are prestigious gymnasiums that still exist, but some were gradually closed due to federal nationalising policies that make education more unified than ever. Most of the new generation of ethnopreneurs graduated from such schools.

One of the well-known young poetesses described a mechanism of such a social bubble that takes roots from this type of socialisation:

> After the graduation from the Tatar gymnasium where we got used to speak Tatar, with special homey atmosphere, with portraits of the prominent Tatar people on the school walls. Then I started studying journalism at the Kazan University. And even though I cannot say I am anti-social person, I felt alienation, I could not make any friends at the university. My real friends were still my classmates because at these schools they educate you in a very particular way, so you grow up a different person. I did not have much in common with other people of my university group who have graduated from other kind of schools (Journalist and poetess, 30 years old).

Summer and winter camps for ethnic Tatars are another important institution for socialisation. There are several of them. One, called *Salyat* (Talent), is for children of the Tatar ethnicity from Tatarstan. Another one, *Idel* (Volga), is for children of Tatar ethnicity from the neighbouring regions outside of Tatarstan. Camp *Millyat* (Nation), which is located at the place of ancient town of Bolgar, which was the capital of the predecessor state of modern Tatarstan called *Volga Bulgaria* (tenth–thirteenth century), gathers pupils from various regions beyond Tatarstan and abroad, including diaspora community such as Tatars in Finland. The aim of these camps is the revitalisation of Tatar language and culture among young people. Most of informants either graduated from Tatar gymnasiums or regularly participated in such summer and winter camps. All of

them emphasise that this experience formed their ethnic self-understanding and cemented their social circles, which was not the case with their parents.[8] Social networks based on socialisation in educational institutions is one of the most important for young people. It is important to note that school networks that have a strong ethnic characteristic (just because they are created in ethnically distinctive schools) correlate with friendship network. This makes a wider social network of a person ethnically based not on purpose but because of initial structural conditions.

Emigration abroad and ethnicity as a resource for integration (and professional achievement) to a new society is another life strategy. For some of my informants, emigration to a society that is perceived as having similar culture is a real opportunity. A popular Tatar musician confessed in the interview:

> Informant: I want to move to Istanbul or to any other Muslim city, which is both Muslim and European and at the same time is close to my native culture.
>
> Researcher: Why is it important?
>
> Informant: I like the atmosphere, the aura. It inspires me to create. And as Tatars we could be interesting there, as some kind of exotic band.
>
> Last summer I organized a concert over there [in Istanbul] and it was a success.
>
> I had even much bigger success than I have here (Musician, 28 years old).

Another dream point of destination might be a society with well-developed Tatar diaspora and high quality of life. As one ambitious young writer and journalist told in the interview:

> I want a Nobel prize for the Tatar people ... I would like to emigrate to be able to write and live like I want. I fell in love with the USA. I participated in Tatar Sabantyi there and I will never forget this experience. They don't speak Russian at all, but they didn't forget Tatar ... (poet and journalist, 22 years old).

The last strategy is the reinforcement of democracy and multiculturalism in the country. People who prefer this strategy dream to promote multiculturalism in Russian society and achieve more autonomy for Tatarstan from the federal centre. Most ethnopreneurs are likely to use ethnicity as an advantage inside the ethnic republic and hope for a *de facto* re-federalisation. Thus, one ethnopreneur who is in charge of marketing a tourist brand of Tatarstan and sees his future in the administrative apparatus of Tatarstan explained:

> I stand for the democratization because the fate of Tatars depends on democratization, too. Now we adopt the agenda, which is imposed by federal authorities. People accept opinion of the officials, yes. They try not to reveal their real opinion. But I believe that if they let it developing democratically, it would automatically lead to the demand for Tatarness and thus, to our autonomy (Anonymous).

Thus, an adjustment through ethnic social cohesion, an escape through emigration and a transformation through reinforcement of multiculturalism on the country level are the most common life strategies among contemporary ethnopreneurs in Tatarstan.

Despite different life strategies, ethnopreneurs hold common views on how to promote their business and creative activities. These centre on three shared ideas on the development of Tatar culture. These ideas are an important basis for political claims in the future, the points of growth of ethnicity politicisation. They show how cultural nationalism expressed in people's everyday life can raise a political consciousness.

First, is the idea of the 'Irelandisation' of vernacular culture (Kirby et al. 2002). Here, ethnic culture is used as a way to differentiate from others and to gain international popularity and economic success. This means that Tatar culture must become popular and well known all around the world. The claim is inspired by the example of Ireland's cultural nationalism that made Saint Patrick day, Irish pubs and specific sense of humour world-known in less than 20 years. The common experience of economic and cultural oppression from the federal centre is especially relevant in the narratives about this idea. As one participant explained:

> My position is that we shall look to the Ireland example. We shall learn from them. Everybody knows about St. Patrick's day and now people must get acquainted with our Sabantui, it is highly important to show the cultural strength of our republic in the same way as former British colony did. They gain a lot from it, you know, also economically I mean (Urban activist and journalist, 25 years old).

Individual strategies and collective prospects come together to make the native ethnic culture globally renowned and then to take personal advantage of its popularity.

Second, and relatedly, is the idea of international equivalence of Tatar and Russian cultures. This narrative centres on the desire to improve the touristic attractiveness of the local Tatar homeland abroad as well as participation in international cultural events like exhibitions, theatre and music festivals on behalf of own their ethnic Tatar republic and not the Russian federal state. As one participant explained:

> Everyone knows Moscow and Saint Petersburg. That's all. I want the foreigners to now Kazan on the same level, to know who Tatars are, after all we are the second largest people in this country but nobody knows Tatars abroad, everyone perceive Russia as a country of a single ethnicity (entrepreneur, 30 years old).

Another participant explains: Tatar theatre has everything to become well known worldwide, we participate in the international festivals and must follow the path (theatre employee, 32 years).

Third, is the idea of supporting neighbouring ethnic groups (e.g. Chuvash, Mari and Udmurts) and other ethnic minorities in Russia in their struggle for preserving their vernacular cultures and the goal of a really-existing federal Russian state. That is, to make Russia truly federative, not just in title as it is now. This idea of mutual collaboration between these groups, on the basis of their shared minority position is quite popular, although there are no clear steps implemented and this idea remains rather on the level of discursive practices. However, such initiatives are repressed by federal security services and being cut on the vine. Nevertheless, not only do horizontal networks exist within and across the Tatar community but also networks across ethnic communities have emerged. Indeed, a few political activists have the courage to conduct public actions in support of the nationhood of other ethnic minorities:

> For example, we try to support our brothers from Chuvashia. For example, we held a public action on November 24, the day of the adoption of the Declaration of State Independence of the Republic of Chuvashia. Thus we ourselves have made here on our own money one thousand flags of Chuvash republic. We went in the Chuvash Republic and with the help of the Chuvash activists handed out flags, which was very nice and well received by ordinary people (political activist, 27 years).

Overall, all these ideas are developing within the context of an increasingly ethnicised form of Russian official nationalism within the Russian federal state. For example, the recently discussed draft law 'On the unity of the Russian nation' highlights 'the unifying role of the Russian people, its culture and language as

the historical foundation of Russian statehood' and its 'decisive role in strengthening the unity of the Russian nation' (6 July 2017). In other words, that ethnic Russians are the core of the Russian civic nation with wider rights than other ethnic groups of the country. However, after another discussion, experts working on this draft law decided to change the title and postponed the next discussion of the document until the presidential election in 2018. It is important to note that there have been official discussions on ethnic Russians being the 'state-formation nation' since the early 2000s (Verkhovsky 2010; Kolstø 2015).

All three life strategies – the construction of a Tatar social bubble, emigration and support for deeper federalisation – indicate that ethnic minorities in Russia are not satisfied with their current position and illiberal settings. Ideas of parity between Russian people and ethnic minorities, hopes of federalisation of the state and dreams of cultural visibility at the international level are widespread and could easily become political claims. But most importantly for the central argument of this paper – these ideas are undergoing cultural revitalisation on the level of the everyday, and they are spreading further: from ethnopreneurs to ordinary people through the mundane practices they invent and the content they create.

Conclusion

Overall, the data considered in this paper show that analysing cultural nationalism at the everyday level is a fruitful way to explore ethnic minorities' nationalism in authoritarian settings, like Russia, where at first sight, it seems irrelevant or impossible due to restrictive legislation. Rather, this paper has shown, mainly through the case of ethnic Tatars in Tatarstan, how identification as an ethnic minority becomes a highly valued social resource to resist authoritarianism as well as an economic resource in neoliberal settings. Ethnic minorities in Russia develop new, and adjust old, practices of ethnic reproduction in the context of a complex plexus of nationalising authoritarianism, incipient market economy and globalisation. The contemporary everyday life of Russian ethnic minorities consists of various ethnically labelled activities in social sphere, the Internet and local economy. Ethnic minority culture today is not just folk dancing in traditional costumes like it is presented on federal TV channels but very usable daily rooted practices first introduced by ethnic elites and ethnopreneurs and then picked up by ordinary people. The revitalisation of minority languages, ethnic symbolism in fashion and the spread of small enterprises aimed on ethnically oriented customers and tourists are gaining momentum towards their tipping points when ethnicity has become a crucial source for self-identification. Complexity theory argues that small steps might end up in big changes, and gradual change in mundane reality could result in the rise of political consciousness. These arguments are especially relevant where there is majority–minority opposition. The focus on cultural nationalism, that at first sight lacks a seemingly political component, helps to explore those changes on the everyday level and reveals how cultural domain might lead to ethnicity politicisation in authoritarian settings.

An authoritarian government, like Putin's Russia, aiming to homogenise its citizens towards a core ethnicity based on culture and restriction of any separatist's demands in multicultural country is powerless in restricting these tendencies. It can hardly turn this pendulum in an opposite direction unless Russia pursues aggressive assimilation and strong repression of any ethnic minority representation. However, this is impossible, while the regime is afraid of reactive movements from ethnic republics. State-lead patriotism can be cancelled by an order from the top-down; bottom-up nationalism cannot. Bottom-up nationalism is spread by peer-to-peer interactions, which are not coordinated from a single centre. Rather, it is initiated from multiple points making bottom-up nationalism difficult to stop. It is hardly possible that a highly bureaucratic authoritarian state could implement more repressive policies since there is nothing explicitly political in mundane cultural activities and economic developments. Moreover, as this paper has shown, ethnic minority nationalism from below *in illiberal settings* is rooted in the necessity of social solidarity. Ethnicity is one of the few possibilities to build horizontal ties of trust and support in the situation of state/society alienation. Ethnic culture here serves as crucial, and sometimes the only basis, for such cohesion.

Acknowledgements

Endnotes

[1]That is why in the present paper, I use the term 'ethnicity' and 'nationality' interchangeably, as it is still used in the official policies documentation in contemporary Russia.

[2]From interviews with ethnopreneurs from other four Russian ethnic republics; see also, for example, URL: https://mariuver.com/2012/12/02/pikety-nac-jaz/ (<<Query: AUTHOR: "accede" has been changed to "accessed". Please check. Ans: correct>>accessed on 12.05. or URL: http://forum.ykt.ru/mviewtopic.jsp?id=815861 (accessed on 12.05.2017).

[3]Personal conversation with anthropologist and film director Ivan Golovnev; also see, for example, URL: http://medialeaks.ru/1803nastia_yakutkino (Accessed on 13.05.2017) or URL:http://www.newbur.ru/articles/7953 (Accessed on 13.05.2017).

[4]URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwUQlkAUQDI (Accessed on 27.08.2017).

[5]See for example URL: https://vk.com/gylem (accessed on 13.05.2017) or URL: https://vk.com/udmort (accessed on 13.05.2017)

[6]See, for example, URL: http://www.tatpressa.ru/news/26253.html (accessed on 27.08.2017).

[7]See, for example, URL: http://www.kazantur.ru/tour/928.html (accessed on 27.08.2017).

[8]In 1960–1970, the number of Tartar national schools was extremely reduced, and a Russian language instruction was forced (Shamsutdinov 2014).

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