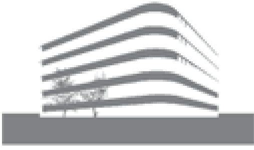

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NATIONAL UNIFICATION, NATIONAL DISINTEGRATION, AND CONTENTION:

A PAIRED COMPARISON OF UNLIKE CASES

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Introduction[1]

"Nationalism," writes Arthur N. Waldron, "in general is a powerful and comprehensible idea. Yet, while it defines general situations, it is not very useful in explicating specific events" (1985: 427). The "adjective `nationalist' has been attached to people, movements, and sentiments in a way that is usually taken (without explanation) as distinguishing each of them meaningfully from some other variety". That analytical stance is sufficient as long as we take no interest in the dynamics of nationalism in specific times and places. Nationalism is struggle -- contentious politics, in our lexicon. We cannot understand any episode of contentious politics as the expression of any single discourse, ideology or nominally distinct form of contention. To understand why there is nationalism, we must understand its varied political sources and why they converge in nationalist outcomes (1985: 433).[2] When we do so we are likely to find that nationalist outcomes intersect with motives, movements, and state policies that have little to do with nationalism. We are also likely to find similar mechanisms to those that drive other forms of contention. It follows from this that we will find similar mechanisms underlying nationalist episodes with very different outcomes – extending all the way from nation-state building to national disintegration. Identifying these mechanisms is the aim of this paper.

Nationalism is most often analyzed as a sentiment or a belief, but less often as a species of contentious politics. Spaniards know better. In the recent international literature, even when nationalism is described as a "movement", little attention is given to its resemblance to or interaction with other kinds of movements. This is one reason – but by no means the only one – why Basque nationalism is so poorly integrated into the international study of nationalism, which emphasizes discourse and social construction rather than contention and interaction. As a cultural discourse we could scarcely credit Basque nationalism's vitality; but as a form of contention it has been remarkably robust. Nationalism is far better understood as a form of contentious politics interacting with more routine processes than as a form of discourse or social construction.

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[1] This paper is a revised version of Chapter Ten of a book in progress: Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, to be published by Cambridge University Press.

[2] This part of the essay owes much to Ernst Haas' work on nationalism: first to his stimulating review essay (1986), followed by his definitive study, *Nationalism, Liberalism, and Progress* (1997).

To make our theoretical point more clearly, we consider two forms of contention that are nominally seen as the reverse of one another: national unification and nation-state disintegration. We use two large, portentous, dissimilar episodes -- nineteenth-century Italian unification and twentieth-century Soviet disintegration -- to identify mechanisms and processes of contention that recur in a wide variety of national and ethnic settings:

• When Italy unified in the 1860s, though the new ruling House of Savoy was French-speaking and transalpine, the question of legitimacy for languages other than Italian was never considered and the administrative model chosen was designed to annex a dispersed and disconnected plethora of petty states to Piedmont-Sardinia. The national state that emerged was centralized but weak: precisely what might have been expected – other things being equal -- to give rise to waves of peripheral resentments and mobilizations. But though revolution was an Italian household word in 1860 (Grew 1996), regional nationalism has been both weak and sporadic, and not even the 1960s cycle of protest produced a serious regional revolt. How a weak and inefficient polity built from a dispersed and disconnected set of petty states avoided serious outbreaks of regional nationalism for most of the past 140 years is a puzzle that few have seriously examined.

• In contrast, under Stalin, the Soviet Union organized much of its regional government around principles of nationality, with regions such as Tajikistan and Uzbekistan named for one of their major populations, languages of those nominal nationalities given formally equal standing with Russian, Moscow-trained party and administrative leaders recruited especially from each region's putative nationality, and systems of regional patronage built up within ethnic lines. Organization of regional politics around nationality lined up claimants for leadership of successor states as the Soviet Union disintegrated; it also made the role of the great connector language, Russian, politically controversial in every post-Soviet territory except Russia itself. Did a national myth never develop across the sprawling Soviet empire? Or were national sentiments – both inherited and constructed by Soviet nationalities policy – so robust that they emerged when the Soviet state was weakened? How the once-titanic Soviet monolith could be undermined by minority language groups is in many ways the converse of how the weak and dispersed Italian state was formed and persisted.

Using as case studies the absorption of Sicily into the Italian state and the detachment of Kazakhstan from the Soviet one, we will close our analysis by examining what we see as very similar mechanisms of contention in these very unlike cases.

Definitions and Distinctions

We cannot proceed very far without a minimal set of definitions: A large number of scholars have been agitated over the question of whether the nation is essential or invented (Eley and Suny 1996); whether it corresponds to language, ethnicity, or communal groups; and whether it emerges from industrialism or is pre-industrial (Gellner 1983; Haas 1986). As a result, definitions of nationalism frequently turn on the "subjective/objective" dichotomy of national feeling; on the “imagining” of nations; and on "good" versus "bad" nationalism -- all discursive, rather than interactive categories. We sidestep the subjective/objective debate, agree that nations are imagined, but think that this is a less interesting question than nationalism’s interaction with other forms of politics – both routine and contentious.

We proceed, following Haas in large part, from the following definitions:

A nation is a body of individuals who claim to be united by some set of characteristics that differentiate them from outsiders, who either strive to create or to maintain their own state;[3]

Nationalism is a claim by a group of people that they ought to constitute a nation or that they already are one;

A nation-state is a political entity whose inhabitants claim to be a single nation and wish to remain one;

National sentiment is a claim among intellectuals and other literate groups that they ought to exercise self-determination at some point in the future;

A nationalist ideology is a body of arguments and ideas about a nation advocated by a group of writers and activists embodying a political program for the achievement of a nation-state;

A national myth is the core of ideas and claims that most citizens accept about a nation-state beyond their political divisions when a nation-state is successfully created;

[3] Haas uses the modifier "socially-mobilized", a term we prefer to avoid because of its semantic overlap with our term "mobilization". The modifier is crucial to Haas' theory because of his embrace of the idea that nationalism relates to industrialism and leads to rationalization.

A nationalist movement (and here we go beyond Haas' definitions) is a sustained struggle engaging a group of activists that embrace a nationalist ideology with states and/or other groups which either oppose or are indifferent toward their claims.[4]

Observe that we have gotten this far without tying nationalism irrevocably to either language or ethnicity. These factors are often central to the content of national sentiments, ideologies, myths and movements. But their centrality is linked to the process of nation-state building, and their relationships with nationalist movements are not unidirectional. What is crucial is that nationalist movements are a form of contentious politics; as such they share with other forms of contention – social movements, strike waves, democratization, civil wars and revolutions, and the like – a number of features that will allow us to draw on the general literature on contentious politics to better understand them.

By contentious politics we mean *episodic, collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects when a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claims and b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the parties to the claims.* Roughly translated, the definition refers to collective political struggle.

Not all politics fits within our definition, and not all contention is typical of nationalism. We distinguish between two broad subtypes of contention:

> *Contained* contention consists of episodic, public, collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects when a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claims, b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the parties to the claims, and c) all parties to the conflict were previously established as constituted political actors

and

> *Transgressive* contention consists of episodic, public, collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects when a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claims, b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the parties to the claims, c) at least some parties to the conflict

[4] Though more sensitive to contentious politics than any student of nationalism we have encountered, Haas oddly reduces a nationalist movement to the political group that accepts a nationalist ideology and adds no organizational or behavioral parameters to his definition (1986: 727).

are newly self-identified political actors, and/or d) at least some parties employ innovative means of collective action.

Notable nationalisms usually fall on the transgressive side of the line: they usually involve either formation of new political actors, the creation of new political means, or both. We deploy the distinction contained/transgressive for two reasons.

• First, substantial short-term political and social change more often emerges from transgressive than from contained contention, which tends more often to reproduce existing regimes.

• Second, many instances of transgressive contention grow out of existing episodes of contained contention, and that is true of nationalism as well.

Our general strategy in our larger project has been to identify similarities and differences, pathways and trajectories across a wide range of contentious politics -- not only nationalism but also revolutions, strike waves, wars, social movements, ethnic mobilizations, and democratization.[5] In our work we have developed a number of paired comparisons of unlike cases to force us away from either case-familiar or form-familiar universes of explanation to try to uncover mechanisms and processes that are both robust and dynamic.

Mechanisms are a delimited class of events that change relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations.

Processes are frequently occurring combinations or sequences of mechanisms.

Our interest in social mechanisms goes back to Robert Merton, who defined them as "social processes having designated consequences for designated parts of the social structure" and thought the main task of sociology was to identify such mechanisms (1968: 43-44). While political scientists have always paid attention to institutional mechanisms, rather

[5] A complete itinerary of our cases and paired comparisons can be found in *Dynamics of Contention*, chapter 5.

statically conceived, few sociologists or political scientists took up Merton's challenge to look at dynamic *social* mechanisms until the 1990s, when Arthur Stinchcombe (1991) and Jon Elster (1989) turned to the theme.

"Mechanisms," wrote Stinchcombe, are "bits of theory about entities at a different level (e.g. individuals) than the main entities being theorized about (e.g. groups) which serve to make the higher-level theory more supple, more accurate, or more general" (1991: 367). Elster too focussed on the internal "social cogs and wheels" that specify the relations between variables or events (1989: 3). Both the Stinchcombe and the Elster view differed from the classical "covering law" model advocated by Hempel and his followers. Both chose to specify mechanisms linking variables to one another rather than to focus on the strength of correlations between them that has become the stock in trade of quantitative social science and causal modeling (Hedström and Swedberg 1998: 8-9).

We follow Hedström and Swedberg in this persuasion. Yet we part company from them when they conclude that the core idea of the mechanism approach is and must be "methodological individualism". We see mechanisms in contentious politics, and certainly in nationalist episodes, falling into three broad categories: cognitive, relational, and environmental.

Cognitive mechanisms operate through alterations of individual and collective perception; words like recognize, understand, reinterpret, and classify characterize such mechanisms.

Relational mechanisms alter connections among people, groups, and interpersonal networks; words like ally, attack, subordinate, and appease give a sense of relational mechanisms.

Environmental mechanisms mean externally generated influences on the conditions which affect contentious politics; words like disappear, enrich, expand, and disintegrate, applied not to actors but their settings, suggest the sorts of cause-effect relations in question.

Given our interest in contentious politics, we focus primarily on relational mechanisms in this paper and on their combination in processes of state integration and disintegration. Since it is language and ethnicity that have usually justified nationalism's treatment as a case apart, we begin by insisting on the non-essentiality of language and ethnicity to nationalism. We proceed by retelling the stories of, first, Italian unification and, then, Soviet disintegration, with attention to the breadth of contentious politics involved. We then turn to the mechanisms we find in both cases.

Language, Ethnicity and Nationalism

A language, according to an old jibe, is a dialect that has acquired its own army. At least for European experience over the last few centuries, the correlation is clear but the lines of causation are not. While some linguistic groups created states and endowed them with armies, others shaped and consolidated the national languages and cultures that they then claimed were the origin and justification for those borders and those armies. In states such as France, England and Italy, languages that were regarded as standard and were learned in school took shape as favored means of communication, while poor linguistic cousins such as Breton and Auvergnat, Welsh and Cornish, Sicilian and Ladino, lost ground. In the eastern part of the continent, small groups of intellectuals shaped "national" languages out of old dialects and imagined them to be have been eternal.

But however important a common language is to nation-and-state building, the idea of a single linguistic group for every state is a peculiarly recent one. Early nineteenth century national movements worried less about linguistic conformity than about national viability (Hobsbawm 1990: ch. 1). If there were agreed-upon criteria allowing a people to be classified as a nation, they were three: historic association with an existing state or with one with a fairly lengthy past; the existence of a long-established cultural elite; or "a proven capacity for

conquest" (Hobsbawm 1990: 37-8).[6] The principle that states can be defined by distinct ties of language is not inscribed in history or nature.

Nor has the mapping of language into state power always prevailed; the Great Frederick of Prussia and Catherine of Russia spoke French to their peers, while Manchu long remained the confidential language of China's Qing rulers. Cavour spoke French more comfortably than the language of the peninsula he unified, while the ruler of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was most comfortable speaking the local neapolitan vernacular. Even today, French, Italian and, to a lesser extent, Romansch flourish alongside Schwyzerdeutsch as fully-fledged languages of Switzerland, revealing the contingent nature of language as a criterion of nationality.

Nor have minority languages disappeared at an equal rate for all purposes in all fully-established nation-states; Sicilian and Venetian survived in united Italy for generations as household languages. In many recently-independent countries, a formula of "two +/- one" languages seems to be emerging, rather than the linguistic homogenization that was expected by many westerners to prevail (Laitin 1992). Of all the major European and European-derived nation-states only France and Israel seem to have made a fetish of linguistic singularity -- the latter at the cost of seeing their language hybridized (Hobsbawm 1990: 21).

A similar ambiguity relates to ethnicities. "Nationalism and ethnicity are related," write Stephen Cornell and Douglas Hartmann, "but they are not the same. What most clearly distinguishes nationalism from ethnicity is its political agenda" (1998: 37). Like other identities, nationality and ethnicity refer to social relations rather than individual attributes, rest on socially-organized categories, and involve claims to collective rights-cum-obligations. In the case of ethnicity, rights and obligations vary in degree and type, from passing recognition of kinship all the way to legal singling out for special treatment, negative or positive. But in the case of nationality, rights and obligations connect people to each other on one side of a

[6] This is why neither Mazzini nor Cavour -- the one the apostle and the other the achiever of Italian statehood -- didn't think Ireland could become a state. The map that Mazzini drew up of the future Europe of nations included "a bare dozen states and federations, only one of which (needless to say Italy) would not be obviously classified as multi-national by later criteria" (Hobsbawm 1990: 31-2).

categorical boundary -- a state boundary -- and to agents of the state which defends it (Eley and Suny 1996: 11).

Nationalist intellectuals, clerics, language teachers, bureaucrats, soldiers, and rent-seekers have at one time or another hitched their wagon to an ethnic star, seeking to elevate it into a nationality by distinguishing it from others. But many others have constructed ethnicity as the foundation for an existing state they hoped to erect in their own images. Still others have cordially ignored it, building national identity on criteria that emerge from common life together, on common suspicion of neighbors, or on a world states have made.

Statebuilding and Nationality

Many cases of nationality construction are the unintended products of states' institutional development (Eley and Suny 1996: 8) or of their processes of national expansion. Long before the invention of the term "nationalism", the rise of high-capacity states and high-intensity economies remade the world's cartography, standardizing national languages, imposing a few of those languages as tools of commerce and empire, sweeping many widely spoken idioms to the peripheries of public life, and producing substantial territories in which most people only spoke a single recognized language. As they created uniform and standardized categories of citizens and their duties, states created national languages. As they created national languages, nationally-certified cultural forms came along with them. As these forms were created, other forms were relegated to the categories of ethnicity, dialect, and folklore (Duara 1996).

Nineteenth century Europeans were following a model set by the conquering French, who under expansionist revolutionary and Napoleonic regimes encouraged local groups of patriots to rebel in emulation of the French nation. When they succeeded, they established French-style governments on conquered territory, no more wishing to stimulate nationalism in these areas than to accord them real autonomy. But nation-building was catching; after the French retreat and the restoration of the old regimes, small groups of conspirators -- many of

them former petty administrators for the French -- developed ideologies of republicanism and democracy. *State-led* French nationalism gave rise to *state-seeking* national movements on the territories that the French left behind.

State-led nationalism incited *state-seeking* nationalism, and this in three ways:

first, by generating resistance and demands for political autonomy on the part of culturally distinctive populations living within the perimeters of a nationalizing state;

second, by proselytizing among culturally related citizens of neighboring states, or at least providing support for their aspirations;

third, by providing clear, advantageous models of statehood for the envious gaze of would-be leaders of stateless would-be nations -- what we have elsewhere called "modularity" (Tarrow 1998; Tilly 1995).

Newer forms of state-led nationalism followed, competing with state-seeking nationalists by combining versions of their own discourses with the legitimacy and the military and administrative resources of existing states – like the Savoy-ruled Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia and the old Czarist Empire.

Within Europe, picking apart of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires produced multiple opportunities for both kinds of nationalism. The former threatened the hegemony of traditional states and empires, leading in part to their breakup and in part -- as in the Turkish and Czarist empires -- to their redefinition as national states. Outside of Europe the same models of state formation increasingly held sway in the Americas and East Asia. State-seeking nationalism led to state disintegration and to the re-definition of dynastic states and empires as nation-states. We will see their interaction in the two cases chosen for analysis in this paper.

Nationalism and Contention

What has all this to do with contentious politics? Plenty, though you wouldn't know it by reading much of the work on nationalism.

For reasons that have more to do with intellectual fashion than with the politics of nationalism, both traditional scholars of nationalism like Kohn (1955) and Hayes (1966) and their modern successors like Anderson (1991) and Balibar (1991) have framed nationalism as a form of discourse and nationalist conflicts as “culture wars” (Smith 1996:123), rather than as contentious politics. We agree that nations and nationalism are socially-constructed; but in the modernist as in the traditionalist account, it is difficult to tell who is doing the construction and where it occurs -- in the classroom, in people’s heads, or in interaction with significant others (but see Hroch 1996). Unless we can root nationalism in struggles between real people making claims on one another and on states, nationalism will remain a detached form of discourse and we will be unable to understand its outcomes, its differences from place to place, and its interactions with other forms of politics.

To summarize: though ethnicity and language are common to the discourse of nationalist movements, they are by no means essential to either nationalism, nation-building – or, for that matter, nation-state disintegration. Particularly state-led nationalism is historically far more likely to be framed on dynastic traditions, reason of state, opposition to or defense against other states, and state expansion and penetration of the periphery. Nationalism is a form of contention, and as such, it is best understood in comparison with other forms of contention and the processes they entail. We examine two dynamically-diverse cases to both illustrate our point and to extract common mechanisms from nation-building and nation-state disintegration in which state-led and state-seeking nationalism come together.

Italy: State-Building without Hegemony

When Italy unified in the 1860s, rather than accommodate to the peninsula's and the two islands' heterogeneity, the Piedmontese under the leadership of King Victor Emanuel and Cavour chose, French-style, to annex the rest of the country with no compromise with their varied administrative and cultural traditions. Though the first decade of national unity was troubled with brigandage, regional and municipal revolts, and particularism, regional nationalism was remarkably rare. In Sicily and parts of the South, a virtual state of siege was the only way the new rulers could keep violence, republicanism, Bourbon legitimism, clericalism and banditry in check; yet the map of Italy today looks much as it did in 1861 – except for the accretion of the Veneto, the Papal domains, and the acquisitions of World War One. The puzzle is how a weak and inefficient polity built from a dispersed and disconnected set of petty states avoided serious outbreaks of regional separatism for much of the last 140 years?

Most discussions of Italian national unity begin predictably by rehearsing Massimo d'Azeglio's famously-reductive aphorism: "We have made Italy, now we have to make Italians".[7] But this deceives as much as it enlightens. It enlightens because it was indeed true that the bulk of the population on the Italian peninsula and the two major islands had little knowledge of Italy and few spoke Italian before 1860; but it deceives because of its unstated assumption that this state of affairs was unusual and because it begs the question of how – if Italians still needed to be "made" -- this product of nineteenth century nationalism has lasted as long as it has with so few episodes of separatism?

Italian unification is often characterized as a "*rivoluzione nazionale mancata*" (a failed national revolution; Gramsci 1950). But when we consider that popular nationalism would have been difficult to find among the masses of *most* future nation-states, Italy's uniqueness becomes quite relative. That the mass of Italians living in a multitude of petty states on a long and mountainous peninsula had little to unite them in 1860 was clear; that this was a special obstacle to national unity is more dubious. In fact, national unity was achieved through the set of

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7. Those who cite d'Azeglio's cute aphorism usually forget its source: a right-wing aristocrat who also relieved himself of the opinion, vis-a-vis the problem of integrating the South into the new state, that "even the best cook will never make a good dish out of stinking meat" (quoted in Mack Smith 1969: 230). They also forget that the Italian middle and upper classes mainly spoke Italian.

resources, opportunities, and durable mechanisms that have given the Italian state its weak and unstable appearance ever since.

Resources and Opportunities

We turn our attention first to the resources and opportunities that helped Italy to unify when it did. Four main ones were:

• The opportunities provided by the international system. Cavour manipulated the international conjuncture to exploit the rivalries of his neighbors -- France, Prussia and Austria -- and take advantage of Britain's balance-of-power politics to expand Piedmont-Sardinia into Italy;

• Italian and *italianità:* while most ordinary Italians could not understand each other, Italy possessed an intellectual elite with a literary and administrative language. Italian -- like many of the languages of nationalism -- "created unified fields of exchange and communication below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars" and had a "fixity", "which in the long run helped to build that image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the nation" (Anderson 1991: 44).[8]

• Liberal and radical Nationalism: Italian unification is often dismissed as not much more than the outcome of royal conquest from Turin. But it was in fact supported by many middle and upper-middle class Italians, especially in the North (Lyttleton 1991: 220), and by a mosaic of nobles and commoners, landowners and peasants, bandits and ideologues in the South.

• In Piedmont-Sardinia, nationalism was identified with the resources and the certification of an expanding state which had European approval for its designs (Lyttleton 1991: 232; Mack Smith 1985: chs. 2-3).

[8] Nor were these Italian-speaking intellectuals passive readers of the *Divina commedia* or of Manzoni's novels. Often proscribed for their political opinions, many lived and plotted abroad or in Turin, where they took advantage of a relatively liberal ambiance, and eventually clustered around two political-ideological centers: Mazzini's republican-nationalist network with its penchant for utopian dreams and insurrection, and Piedmont-Sardinia's constitutional monarchy and its liberal-moderate chief minister, Cavour. Both drew from the educated classes from all over Italy. In fact, it was Sicilians who left their island after the failure of the 1848 revolution who represented both the radical and liberal-moderate factions when they clashed in Sicily in 1860 (Mack Smith 1954: 38, 42).

The most interesting aspect of Italian unification was that it combined state-led with state-seeking nationalism: Cavour and Victor Emanuel already *had* a state that they wanted to extend; the Mazzinians wanted to create one *de novo;* and anti-Bourbon southerners had one that they wanted to be rid of (Romeo 1963). In Sicily in particular, the movement towards acceptance of the new Piedmontese rulers was advanced by the rejection the Neapolitan Bourbons. It was supported by many whose support for national unity was the product -- and not the precondition -- for the contentious episode we will examine below (Riall 1998: 58).

The Revolution of the South

From the familiar story of Italy's unification, the South has been largely excluded as a primary actor. While the northern elite saw the South as "a paradise inhabited by devils" (Pezzino 1992) and generations of "meridionalisti" (advocates of the Southern cause) blamed the South's underdevelopment on the North, its conquest by Garibaldi was preceded by a vigorous indigenous revolt, and it played a crucial role in the de-certification of the Bourbon state in Naples and in the making of the new state. The outcome of its revolution against the Bourbons embodied in particularly acute form the mechanisms that constructed the new polity.

Throughout the South, aristocratic decline, the formal end of feudalism in 1812, and Bourbon land reform policies had created a new provincial middle class. Everywhere in the region, peasants profited little from the Bourbon reforms, and in fact suffered from the hated *macinato* tax that they imposed. From 1820 on, waves of violent but largely ineffective insurrections broke out – most dramatically in 1847-48. But the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was, as one English wag put it, “protected by salt water on three sides and by holy water on the fourth.” It survived due to the sufferance of the Hapsburgs, after 1815 the dominant power on the peninsula, and to the divisions among the possessing classes in Sicily and on the continent.

In Sicily, alongside a proud and insular nobility which had long hated the domination of Naples, the Bourbon reforms had created a new provincial middle class of landowners, who both resented control for Naples but took advantage of it to gain control of the land and

monopolizing local administration (Riall 1998: ch. 1). Autonomist and separatist sentiment was encouraged by the distance of the capital, by the sheer incapacity of the Bourbons to rule the island effectively, and by small groups of democrats on the eastern side of the island. But the same land reform that enriched the middle class denuded the peasantry of the common use rights on which they had depended under the old regime. "By the mid-nineteenth century," writes Lucy Riall, "the peasants in Sicily had become a revolutionary force" (1998: 57). All of this made for an unstable and explosive mixture. As Riall writes,

> it involved a multi-cornered and overlapping struggle among traditional and not-so-traditional elites, liberals, democrats, autonomists, Bourbons, clerics, and the urban and rural poor..It was in Sicily that the revolution against the Bourbons started, and it was here that the collapse of political and administrative authority in 1860 was most dramatic (Riall 1998: 27).

Riall's specification supports our view that nationalism must be seen in relation to politics -- contentious and otherwise; that its most interesting episodes go well beyond the imaginings of nationalist intellectuals; and that contention over nation-building is far more palpable than a "culture war". Indeed, much of it results from the interaction of claims and conflicts that are not self-consciously nationalist.

We cannot rehearse this long and tangled history here, but will focus on the brief cycle of 1859-61 in Sicily, when Cavour's policy of piecemeal annexation went from halting success to success; when Garibaldi and his *mille* stunned the world with their invasion of Sicily; and when Cavour -- in a brilliant but cynical pre-emptive strike -- marched South, ostensibly to prevent the red-shirted Garibaldi from entering the Papal States, but actually to seize control of the revolution he had made. We focus on the episode that erupted at its core: Garibaldi's conquest of Sicily, the social and political conflicts that it triggered, and the co-optation of his victory by the moderate liberals. The major groups were the democrats supporting Garibaldi, the moderate liberals behind Cavour, the Sicilian poor who seized the opportunity of his coming to attack their landlords, and middle and upper class Sicilians whose original instinct was for autonomy but ended with support for annexation. The interaction of these actors reveals the mechanisms that led to the success of unification and to many of the peculiarities of the Italian national state that resulted.

Sicily in 1860: A Contentious Episode

At the dawn of 1859, it would have been difficult to see Cavour and Victor Emanuel emerging as rulers of the entire peninsula and especially of this distinct island culture.[9] With the Austrians ensconced in Milan and the Po Valley fortresses and a French garrison protecting the papal domains, Cavour's aim went no further than the exclusion of Austria from the Po Vally and gaining Piedmontese control over Lombardo-Veneto. He did so in 1859 by provoking a war with Austria when that country was weakest and outflanking the Milanese radicals who dreamed of a Republic. French support was gained by ceding Nice to Louis Napoleon, Prussia's by the blow dealt its rival, Austria, while England's was gained by the prospect that an independent Italy would balance French power (Mack Smith 1954: 1).

So far, nothing more than a small state trying to become a middle-sized one with the sufferance of its betters But ever the opportunist, Cavour annexed the central Italian duchies by encouraging local democrats to stage plebiscites in the name of Italian nationalism. Each of these acquisitions was added to the existing state by Cavour's "artichoke" strategy (Mack Smith 1954: 50). Mazzini's dream of creating an Italian identity by a cathartic national uprising looked like being dissolved by a gradual process of tidying up the border. Cautious Cavour still thought national unity to be a chimera, but that was before Garibaldi's expedition and the conflicts and claims that it triggered.

Sicily was the great exception to the "royal conquest" model of Italian unification. Ruled from Naples for most of the past three hundred years, it had enjoyed a brief moment of constitutional freedom between Napoleon's defeat and the return of the Bourbons, and another in 1847-48, when its bourgeoisie took a leading role in sparking the European revolutions of those years (Romeo 1950: 306). But since Sicily was -- or saw itself as -- a colony of Naples, that revolution had strong separatist overtones and left behind a tradition of autonomism among the island's upper classes (Romeo 1963; Riall 1998: ch. 1). This was an era in which Sicilian

[9] The Piedmontese monarch was a cautious man of little imagination who took his signals from his first minister, whose experience in 1848 taught him to seek expansion only in the lands north of the Po. More comfortable in French than Italian, he had never visited even the Sardinia that gave his sovereign's kingdom its name and knew little or nothing about the South (Mack Smith 1985: ch.4).

intellectuals began retelling the island's tragic history of repeated invasions, and publishing dictionaries in the Sicilian vernacular. Few thought seriously of carrying the flag of Italian nationalism for the Piedmontese Victor Emanuel.

But while the municipal insurrections and rigged plebiscites that accompanied Cavour's conquest of Central Italy were little more than adjuncts of royal policy, Garibaldi's invasion of Sicily, his swift march across the island, and the political struggles that accompanied his arrival in Palermo constituted a dramatic contentious cycle creating new identities and forging new alliances. Triggered by both an autonomous revolt of middle class democrats in the cities and by uprisings of embittered peasants against landholders and Bourbons (Riall 1998: ch. 2), it brought many 1848 exiles back to the island as missionaries to make contact with bands in the hills and organize revolutionary activities in the cities. As the revolt spread from Palermo to the other major centers and into the countryside, these emissaries urged Garibaldi to launch his expedition.

With no support from Cavour – who actually ordered the Piedmontese navy to stop it at one point -- and with a rag-tag army of mazzinians, republicans, democrats, out of work intellectuals and adventurers, Garibaldi's landing at Marsala actually came as the earlier revolts were losing their momentum. News of the landing triggered an even broader wave of peasant uprisings, to municipal revolts in the major cities, to the breakdown of local government and communication, and to the collapse and withdrawal of the Bourbons to the continent.

The Sicilian revolution was no homogeneous "imagining" of a national revolution and included many actors whose goals were far from nationalist. Sicily rallied to Garibaldi and his *mille* from a variety of standpoints and with a variety of motives: nobles opposing Bourbon land reforms, taxes and usurpation of the island's autonomy; urban middle class democrats seeking a representative system of government; impoverished peasants hoping to find in the red-shirted Garibaldi a liberator from landowner pressures; and a good number of local landholding and office-holding opportunists defecting from the collapsing Bourbon regime as soon as it looked as if Garibaldi would win. The liberal nationalists who saw in Piedmont the best hope for a regime of progress and freedom were barely a presence as the cycle of contention began. These different standpoints led to inevitable conflicts under Garibaldi's "dictatorship" and afterwards,

when the Piedmontese set up a provisional *Luogotenenza.* While the peasants sought ownership of the land and the democrats hoped for a constituent assembly that might win Sicily better terms from Cavour, autonomists sought a Sicilian state and landholders wanted to hold on to — and possibly increase – their local power.

Autonomists, democrats, and peasants all lost out. With respect to the first, Cavour hinted (falsely, as it turned out) that he would look kindly at local autonomy if the electorate would agree to annexation. The democrats were likewise defeated by annexation, which attached the South and Sicily to the centralized administrative structures of Piedmont and by the moderates' political success in splitting them (Riall 1998: 27-8). With regard to the peasantry, Garibaldi's government – still engaged in winning control of the continental South -- allied with the local landowning class to stamp out anarchy (Riall 1998: 89-90). As for the latter, they took advantage of easily rigged auctions of Church and Bourbon lands to aggrandize themselves and supported annexation to prevent rural anarchy. Though few had had any notion of Italian nationalism when Garibaldi landed, fear of disorder and Garibaldi's own willingness to support Victor Emanuel rallied them to the Piedmontese cause. When a plebiscite was organized in October, annexation won by an overwhelming margin. A barely-imagined Italy became a reality as the outcome of a complex game of fear, ambition, uncertainty, and military force.

Why did the Sicilians agree to what had turned into a royal conquest so quickly? Were they swept up by Cavour's blandishments? Discouraged by Garibaldi's alternating grand flourishes and hesitations? Or had they been secretly infected with a deep love of Italy? As social disintegration seemed to threaten property, Cavour's agents (not above stimulating demonstrations against Garibaldi's government) gained support for annexation from middle and upper class groups petrified at the danger of rural and urban insurrection. What had begun as a home-grown popular insurrection and a democrat-led guerilla war ended as a royal conquest supported by the island's social elite under the guise of a well-managed plebiscite. As Lampedusa's young hero tells his uncle in *The Leopard*, "It is necessary to change everything, so that everything will remain the same."

As they took power in Sicily and the continental South, the Piedmontese and their local allies rigidly applied Piedmont's market economy, legal system, and centralized administration to the conquered regions (Parenthetically, the same thing was to happen in Germany 130 years later and with equally devastating effects.) To this was added a series of ruthless military incursions into the countryside to stamp out “banditism” and Bourbonism. In the continental South, whole villages which supported insurgent brigands were destroyed (Mack Smith 1969: 55-59); in Sicily, a series of military operations were mounted to destroy resistance to unification (Riall 1998: chs. 5 - 7). In 1866 a full-scale urban and rural insurrection broke out, supported by Bourbonists, democrats, bandits, the urban poor and rural bandits (Riall 1998: ch. 8).

Integration was more than military: the crushing weight of a modern fiscal system and Piedmont's debts from the Austrian war were applied without relief to a region that lacked modern economic resources (Romeo 1959). A liberal customs union opened the South to northern commercial penetration, snuffing out the few infant industries that the Bourbons had sponsored and destroying much of the livelihood of Palermo's merchants and artisans, as that capital city was reduced to the status of a provincial town. The fact that the Sicilian insurrection of 1866 was mounted with the slogans "Long Live the Republic!" *and* "Long Live religion" are indicative of how narrow the government's base was in the island (Riall 1998: 207).

But integration of a peculiar kind did result – and with profound results for Sicily’s and the South’s place in the unified state. From the appointment of Garibaldi's government on, the need for local interlocutors to establish the new government, collect taxes, and control rural disorder brought local elites with no prior adhesion to either the democrats or the moderate liberals to the national cause. In addition to gaining protection for a brutal system of landholding, these elites benefited from the payoffs that would accrue from the control of local and regional government. In some towns, the local governing elite consisted essentially of members of the same family, colluding for their mutual enrichment and to keep their enemies out (Riall 1998: 95-100). The new regional governors appointed by Garibaldi and his successors, as Riall points out,

> used their powers to pursue independent policies of their own rather than obeying instructions from Palermo..Some governors used their considerable powers to pursue personal goals..Those who had been mayors, electors, decurions, *capi-urbani, sottocapi,* and even known spies under the Bourbons were now presidents or members of local councils and commanders of National Guards under the democrats (Riall 1998: 95, 96, 99).

As insurgent challenges continued well into the 1860s, and police and carabinieri seemed incapable of dealing with them, the government saw no alternative to coopting local elites of all ideological stripes. The culmination came after the revolt of 1866, when the chief of police of Palermo "resumed the Bourbon practice of colluding with criminals as a means of maintaining public order". For Sicily's rural elites, "control and manipulation of local government became central to their power within the community as a whole." While this situation undermined the strength and legitimacy of the national government, it also greatly increased the dependence of local elites on central government" (Riall 1998: 227).

It was not until 1876 that the parliamentary "Left" came to power under Depretis, but by that time it was unified by little else than its opposition to the "Right", its hunger for place and power (Lyttleton 1991: 223), and its resentment of Piedmont's hegemony. Depretis' chief strength lay in the South, where prefectoral interference in elections, the "transformation" of deputies from the Right into supporters of the Left in return for favors, and a series of deals with local elites turned the tactics that the Right had used to restore order into a mechanism of consensus. Not only the democrats and Mazzinians on the Left, Catholics of all stripes, but also conservatives on the Right -- and of course, those who had sought regional autonomy -- felt betrayed by a regime that realized few of the hopes of those who had fought to make it. By the 1870s, we find no more publication of Sicilian dictionaries. A proto-nation without a national state produced a state without hegemony and linked the Sicilian elites who might have led a revolt of the periphery to it through clientelism, payoffs, and protection.

The Soviet Union and its Successors

Soviet experience poses a rather different set of empirical problems from its Italian counterpart, notably:

- How did a political economy that seemed so solid, centralized, authoritarian, and resourceful disintegrate visibly in five or six years?
- Why did so much of the contentious claim making take the form of ethnic and national self assertion?
- How then did so many old regime power holders reappear in positions of power after the great transformation?

Understanding the critical moment of transition – 1985-1991 – requires knowledge of what went before (Bunce 1999). Our account of the Soviet past will exaggerate the centrality of nationalities policies as compared with control of enterprises and party structure. Without claiming for a moment that nationalism alone destroyed the Union, we focus on the place of nationalism in Soviet collapse.

State Collapse

The Soviet Union formed in the ruins of war and revolution. Its imperial predecessor took heavy losses from its battering by Germany and Austria in World War I, losing control of Russian Poland and the Baltic provinces in the process. Workers' strikes and soldiers' mutinies in 1917 coupled with resistance of the Duma (national assembly) in driving the Tsar to abdicate and a conservative-liberal provisional government to take power. Soon insurrectionary counter-governments of workers and soldiers were forming at the local and regional level, as Bolshevik leaders such as Lenin and Trotsky returned from exile. Struggle swirled around multiple factions and issues, but by November 1917 the Bolsheviks had gained enough ground to seize power from the provisional government.

Between 1917 and 1921, the Bolsheviks had their hands full simply keeping what remained of the Russian empire together. In a great effort Lenin, Trotsky, and their collaborators returned the country to civilian control by locating a tightly disciplined Communist party (itself recruited in part from former or present military men) within a large centralized bureaucracy. With Stalin's takeover (and expulsion of Trotsky) in 1927, the Soviet Union moved into a phase of forced-draft industrialization, agricultural collectivization, bureaucratic expansion, and increasingly authoritarian deployment of the Communist party as an instrument of central power.

World War II produced an enormous demographic shock, and a major centralization of political power. Even more so than before World War II, the postwar Soviet economy and polity depended on the combination of three elements: 1) maintenance of formidable military might, 2) large scale coordination and division of labor in the production and distribution of subsistence goods, 3) close surveillance and control of all political expression. Yet that imposing system collapsed during the 1980s.

How did it happen? At the time, Soviet assistance in Afghanistan's left-leaning military coup of 1979 seemed like just one more Cold War contretemps, but it proved crucial. As the United States poured in support for a variety of Afghan rebels, the Soviet military suffered a frustrating and humiliating stalemate. In 1985, liberalizer Mikhail Gorbachev arrived at the party's head with a program of opening up public life -- releasing political prisoners, accelerating exit visas for Jews, shrinking the military, reducing external military involvement, and ending violent repression of demands for political, ethnic, and religious autonomy. By 1987, he was promoting *perestroika*, a shift of the economy from military to civilian production, toward better and more abundant consumer goods, and in the direction of much higher productivity.

Reduction of central controls over production and distribution promoted:

- proliferation of small enterprises
- widespread attempts to set up collaborative enterprises with foreign capitalists

• more open operation of the black markets, gray markets, and mutual aid networks that had long linked individuals, households, and firms

• massive slowdowns of payments and goods deliveries to central organizations

• extensive diversion of government-owned stocks and facilities into profit-making or monopoly-maintaining private distribution networks to the benefit of existing managers, quick-thinking entrepreneurs, and members of organizations already enjoying preferential access to desirable goods, facilities, or foreign currencies

• substitution of private media and systems of exchange for public means

All this happened as the government was attempting to generalize and liberate national markets. As a consequence, the capacity of the central state to deliver rewards to its followers declined visibly from one month to the next. In response, officials and managers engaged in what Steven Solnick calls a run on the bank: wherever they could divert fungible assets to their own advantage, they increasingly did so; they set about "stealing the state"(Solnick 1998).

On the political front, a parallel and interdependent collapse of central authority occurred. As the results of Gorbachev's economic program alienated not only producers who had benefited from emphasis on military enterprise, but also consumers who did not have ready access to one of the new distribution networks and officials whose previous powers were now under attack, his political program opened up space for critics and rivals such as Boris Yeltsin, who, from a Moscow base, rose to control the Russian federation. Gorbachev's own effort to check the threatened but still intact military and intelligence establishments through conciliation, caution, and equivocation encouraged defections of reformers without gaining him solid conservative support. Simultaneously, furthermore, he sought to acquire emergency powers that would free him to forward economic transformation. That brought him into conflict with rival reformers, political libertarians and defenders of the old regime alike.

Although demands for guarantees of religious and political liberties arose almost immediately in 1986 and 1987, nevertheless, it was the rush of nationalities to assure their positions in relation to the emerging new regime that overwhelmed the old one. Russia's Communists had dealt with non-Russian regions by co-opting regional leaders who were loyal

to their cause, integrating them into the Communist party, recruiting their successors among the most promising members of designated nationalities but training them in Russia, dispatching many Russians to staff new industries, professions, and administrations, promoting Russian language and culture as media of administration and interregional communication, granting regional power-holders substantial autonomy and military support within their own territories just so long as they assured supplies of state revenue, goods, and conscripts, striking immediately against any individual or group that called for liberties outside of this system. Such a system could operate effectively so long as regional leaders received powerful support from the center and their local rivals had no means or hope of appealing for popular backing.

The system's strength also proved to be its downfall. Gorbachev and collaborators simultaneously promoted opening of political discussion, reduced military involvement in political control, tolerated alternatives to the Communist connecting structure, made gestures toward truly contested elections, and acknowledged diminished capacity to reward faithful followers. As that happened, both regional power-holders and their rivals suddenly acquired strong incentives to distance themselves from the center, to recruit popular support, to establish their credentials as authentic representatives of the local people, to urge priority of their own nationalities within territorial subdivisions of the USSR they happened to occupy, and to press for new forms of autonomy. In the Baltic republics and those along the USSR's western or southern tiers, furthermore, the possibility of special relations with kindred states and authorities outside the Soviet Union -- Sweden, Finland, Turkey, Iran, the European Community, and NATO -- offered political leverage and economic opportunity the Union itself was decreasingly capable of providing.

In political subdivisions containing more than one well organized national population, threats mounted rapidly to those who lost the competition for certification as authentic regional citizens. Those who moved first could gain more. Escalation began, with each concession by the central government to some nationalities giving new incentives and precedents for further demands by other nationalities, increasingly threatening any connected population that shared a distinct identity but failed to mobilize effectively. As early as 1986, demands for autonomy and protection arose not only from Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, and Ukrainians, but also from Kazakhs, Crimean Tatars, Armenians, Moldavians, Uzbeks, and Russians themselves. Within

such heterogeneous regions as Nagorno-Karabakh, a primarily Armenian enclave within Azerbaijan, militants of neighboring ethnicities battled for priority, and did not scruple to kill. In addition to Azerbaijan, Moldavia, Georgia, and Tadjikistan grew mean with intergroup conflict. Between January 1988 and August 1989, ethnic clashes claimed 292 lives, leaving 5520 people injured and 360,000 homeless (Nahaylo & Swoboda 1990: 336).

Time horizons contracted rapidly. On the large scale and the small, people could no longer count on payoffs from long-term investment in the existing system; they reoriented to short-term gains and exit strategies. When Gorbachev sought a new union treaty, with greater scope for the fifteen republics but preservation of a federal government's military, diplomatic, and economic priority in a referendum of March 1991, leaders of six republics (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Moldavia, Armenia, and Georgia, all of which had started the process of declaring themselves independent) boycotted the proceedings, as results for the rest confirmed the division between Russia and the non-Russian portions of the tottering federation. From outside, venture capitalists, development economists, world financial institutions, and great powers such as the United States, Turkey, Iran, and the European Union all strove for their pieces of the action and/or for containment of ugly spillover from Soviet turmoil.

In the face of ethnic disaggregation, economic collapse, and undermining of the old regime's powers, many observers and participants on the Soviet scene feared a bid of the military, intelligence, and Party establishment to reverse the flow of events. History realized their fears. In August 1991, a shadowy Emergency Committee sequestered Gorbachev, but failed in a coup as Yeltsin led resistance in Moscow. Over the next four months Yeltsin sought to succeed Gorbachev, not as Party secretary but as chief of a confederation maintaining a measure of economic, military, and diplomatic authority. Even that effort ended with dissolution of the Soviet Union into an ill defined and disputatious Commonwealth from which the Baltic states absented themselves entirely, while others began rushing toward exits.

Once the Soviet regime collapsed, Russian nationalists (including the opportunistic nationalist Yeltsin) faced a fierce dilemma: on the one hand, they claimed the right of Russians to rule the Russian federation, which actually included millions of people from non-Russian minorities, a claim that supported the principle that titular nationalities should prevail; on the

other hand, they vigorously criticized the treatment of Russians outside the Russian federation -- for example, the large numbers of self-identified Russians in Estonia, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan -- as second-class minorities facing a choice among assimilation to the titular nationality, lesser forms of citizenship, and emigration (Barrington 1995). Unsurprisingly, newly independent neighbors often accused the Russian federation's authorities of imperialism. As in Italian unification, state-seeking nationalism (on the part of republics seeking exit from the Union) and state-led nationalism (on the part of republic leaders seeking to establish hegemony within their own territories) interacted powerfully – but with opposite results.

Mark Beissinger's catalog of protest events from 1987 through 1992 throughout the Soviet Union's space identifies a crucial shift in popular mobilization. Protest demonstrations increased rapidly in numbers from 1987 to 1989, then reached their peak in 1990, only to swing wildly but in a generally downward direction thereafter. Mass violent events, in contrast, reached a minor peak in mid-1989, but began a powerful upward surge in 1991, remaining frequent through 1992; by 1992, the dominant issue of protest events had become the drawing of borders among republics (Beissinger 1998c: 294-305). The shift corresponded to a switch from relatively peaceful, if massive, demands for reform and national representation to bitterly fought struggles over national rights.

Kazakh Contention

Consider Kazakhstan as a vantage point for the closer viewing of both national disintegration and national identity formation. As Martha Brill Olcott sums up:

> Kazakhstan is an accidental country, a nation that was carved out of a Soviet republic whose boundaries were never intended to be those of an independent state. Independence has shaped the nature of Kazakhstan's politics, and not always in ways that are supportive of democratic principles. Although the home of one of the first glasnost-era popular protests, the Almaty riots of 1986, prior to independence Kazakhstan did not make the same strides toward democratization that neighboring Kyrgyzstan did. While independent political groups were organized, they lacked real influence on the political process (Olcott 1997: 201).

Olcott's accurate summary calls for background and explanation.

The territory people now call Kazakhstan centers on the steppe crisscrossed for centuries by caravans between China and Europe. Today's Kazakhstan touches the Caspian Sea, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and China. Across a vast border with the Russian federation it also abuts Siberia, the Urals, and the Volga region. At 2.7 million square kilometers, Kazakhstan covers about the same amount of territory as Argentina. Over most of the last millennium, nomadic Turkic pastoralists have predominated within its territory (The Kazakh language includes a number of terms, mostly derogatory, for settled peoples, but none for nomads). Kazakhstan's pastoralists have endured conquest after conquest.

Conquered by expanding Mongols in the thirteenth century, the region sustained its own khan from the later fifteenth century. Forcible integration of the region into the Russian empire during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, followed by extensive immigration of Russian-speaking farmers from the north, greatly increased Russian cultural and political presence in Kazakhstan: "About 1.5 million new colonists from European Russia came to Kazakhstan at the end of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth century" (Khazanov 1995: 157). Those changes marginalized the region's nomadic herders and drove many of them into settled agriculture. Self-identified Kazakhs took advantage of the Bolshevik Revolution to create an autonomous republic that lasted from 1918 to 1920. Those Kazakh nationalists, however, soon succumbed to Soviet military might.

Come to power, Stalin eventually established his characteristic pattern of governing the region through Moscow-oriented Kazakhs; between 1924 and 1933, Kazakhs grew from 8 to 53 percent of the region's Communist party (Suny 1993: 103). Stalin's regime created a full Soviet republic of Kazakhstan in 1936. In that republic, well situated titular nationals -- certified Kazakhs -- gained preferential access to jobs, higher education, and party membership. But Stalin and his successors also built an economic system that made Kazakhstan's major industrial and commercial nodes tributaries of centers in Russia and Uzbekistan rather than connecting them with each other. The early 1930s brought forced collectivization of agriculture and fixed settlement of the remaining Kazakh nomads; in response to pressure, Kazakhs destroyed 80 percent of their herds (Suny 1993: 107).

Successive Soviet regimes shipped in technicians, peasants, and political prisoners from Russia, Belorussia, Poland, Ukraine, and the Caucasus as displaced Turkic nomads died out or fled to China. Unsurprisingly, Russian-speakers concentrated in and around the Russian-oriented nodes, which meant that ethnic balances varied enormously by region within Kazakhstan. In 1989, only 0.9 percent of all ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan claimed knowledge of Kazakh (Smith et al. 1998: 150).

To be sure, the system looked very different from the bottom up than from the top down. "Among the Kazakhs," remarks Ronald Suny, "soviet power was a façade that disguised the real structure of local power underneath" (Suny 1993: 114). In rural areas at the local level traditional leaders adapted to the Soviet presence, fashioning their own accommodations with regional and national power. But that changed relation to regional and national power constituted a deep alteration of existence. In cities and in Russian-dominated regions, furthermore, the whole way of life altered, obliterating the structures left by centuries of nomadic existence.

Kazakhs themselves divided into three large and sometimes hostile clans, or *zhus*: a Great Horde concentrated chiefly in southern Kazakhstan, a Middle Horde in the north-central region, and a Lesser Horde, in the west. Ethnic Kazakh Dinmukhamed Kunaev became regional party boss in 1964, allied himself closely with Leonid Brezhnev, and eventually acquired full membership in Soviet Union's Politburo. Kunaev brought a number of Kazakhs (especially from his own Great Horde) into his administration. On the whole, Central Asian national leaders, Kunaev among them, opposed Gorbachev's liberalization, which threatened their systems of patronage and control.

In 1986 Gorbachev replaced Kunaev with Gennadi Kolbin, an ethnic Russian unconnected with Kazakhstan. Students and others thereupon demonstrated against the regime in the capital, Almaty (Olcott 1997: 205-206). "Kolbin's inability to master either Kazakhstan's economy, which continued to decline, or Kazakhstan's complex social and demographic make-up," reports Olcott, "led within three years to Kolbin's being replaced by Nursultan Nazarbaev, an ethnic Kazakh who since 1984 had been chairman of the republic's Council of Ministers” (Olcott 1997: 206).

Nazarbaev worked with Soviet authorities to initiate economic reorganization, but within Kazakhstan he consolidated power by stressing Kazakh nationalism. A Nazarbaev-sponsored bill of August 1989, for example, made Kazakh the state language, stepped up Kazakh language instruction, and shifting public business into Kazakh. He then had to hold off Russian resistance organizations, on one side, and more radically Kazakh nationalist organizations, on the other. At the same time, he made a series of attempts to organize parties that could serve as successors to the Communists while providing him with support; those efforts failed, especially because they became vehicles for rivals to challenge Nazarbaev's dominant position. Nevertheless the 1989-90 elections generally brought Communist incumbents back to power from local to national levels.

Nazarbaev's commitment to what remained of the Soviet Union did not prevent him from shifting sides adroitly during the uncertainty following the failed coup of August 1991. As Francis Clines reported from Moscow on 26 August:

> Signaling the republic's refusal to be under Russian influence now that the central Government was collapsing, Mr. Nazarbayev told the nation, "Kazakhstan will never be anyone's younger brother…"
>
> The shocking reversal of fervor for retailoring the union could be seen in the fact that, little more than a week ago, Mr. Yeltsin and Mr. Nazarbayev were close colleagues pushing the union treaty. They were preparing to sign the compromise pact in which Mr. Gorbachev vowed to begin a new era of power for the republics last Tuesday, two days after the coup was launched (Gwertzman & Kaufman 1991: 556-557).

That was not Nazarbaev's last switch. By November 1991, Nazarbaev was collaborating with Gorbachev in a failed last-ditch effort to create a Union of Sovereign States including Russia, Belorussia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan. Many observers thought, in fact, that Gorbachev planned to make Nazarbaev his deputy as well as Union president.

During the Soviet Union's last moments, in December 1991, Nazarbaev gained re-election as president. In 1992, after the Soviet Union's collapse, Nazarbaev finally succeeded in creating a party, the People's Unity Party, that harnessed popular support (at least among Kazakhs) to his personal interest. That party continues the dangerous struggle to hold central

power in the face of Russian resistance on one side and Kazakh nationalist mobilization on the other. It has the help of a predominantly Kazakh government that closely manages candidates, elections, and parliaments. In March 1995, indeed, Nazarbaev had the election of the incumbent parliament annulled and assumed emergency powers until he held new elections late in the year.

Note how regional politics took on ethnic nationalism in a form strongly influenced by the Soviet regime's definitions of titular nationality -- even where, as in Kazakhstan, regional leaders sought to maintain their membership in the Soviet Union or its successor. Speaking of Central Asian states Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan together, Graham Smith and collaborators remark that:

> In addition to drawing on Soviet bureaucratic structures and institutions, the Central Asian states have underpinned their independence by elaborating nationalising policies and practices that seek to assert the hegemony of their respective titular nations. Despite formulations in the constitutions and other legislative acts guaranteeing the equality of all citizens, nationalising policies and practices are manifest in, *inter alia*, the iconography of the new regimes, the privileged status accorded to the local languages, newly revised histories and the exclusion of members of non-eponymous groups from the echelons of power (Smith et al. 1998: 139).

Struggle, then, centers on neither the form nor the cultural frames of the regime, but on who has the right to speak for the titular nationality assigned to the region by Soviet authorities. That struggle, however, leads to resistance -- a form of state-seeking nationalism -- on the part of ethnic Russians and Russified elites. On behalf of both groups, Russia continues to press Kazakhstan for dual citizenship and for protection of the Russian language. Russian nationalist figures such as Alexander Solzhenitsyn step up the pressure by advocating formation of a Greater Russia including not only Ukraine and Belarus, but also northern Kazakhstan. Meanwhile, leaders of other self-identified nationalities make parallel demands for autonomy or even secession; Cossacks, for example, have entered politics contentiously and energetically in Kazakhstan's Northwest.

Having ridden the rapids of the Soviet Union's downstream rush, Gorbachev-appointed Nazarbaev still rules Kazakhstan with a heavy hand, having used the resources that he was endowed with by Soviet federalism. While tolerating (and possibly benefiting from) a

great deal of rent-seeking by former and present state officials, Nazarbaev has sought to advance a definition of Kazakh national identity without alienating either a large domestic Russian minority or the great Russian power to his north. No doubt with an eye to the intermittent civil war in nearby Tajikistan and the volatility of ethnic, linguistic, regional, and religious factions in neighboring Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan (Atkin 1997, Fane 1996, Fierman 1997, Huskey 1997, Juraeva & Lubin 1996), Nazarbaev has handled ethnic-linguistic divisions with kid gloves. He himself expresses uncertainty about language as a basis for political identity:

> I do not accept the concept of "Russian-speaking population." Which of us is not a Russian speaker? After all, the whole of Kazakhstan speaks Russian, including 99 percent of Kazakhs (quoted in Beissinger 1995: 170).

The only nationalist group Nazarbaev's regime has actively suppressed is the militant Alash party, which advocates a great state uniting all the Turkic peoples. Meanwhile, the regime resists pressure from outside (especially Russia) for recognition of dual citizenship, recruits ethnic Kazakh immigrants from China, Mongolia, Iran, Turkey, Uzbekistan, and Russia, as it presses its self-identified Russians to declare themselves either foreigners or dedicated citizens of a Kazakh state.

In Russia, privatization of state property typically put that property mainly into the hands of those who already ran it for the state. Such a policy would have posed serious problems for titular Kazakhs, since managers and urban workers were disproportionately Russian, or at least non-Kazakh. Instead, authorities issued vouchers to certified Kazakh citizens, thus assuring that the enterprises would remain in Kazakh hands (Olcott 1997: 218). Similarly, without actively suppressing or expelling members of other categories, titular Kazakh authorities have treated Kazakh nationality as a patronage system that should advantage those who are willing to live within its limits.

For whoever can claim to control the country, the stakes are high. Including its share of the Caspian, Kazakhstan contains enormous potential wealth in minerals, including estimated oil reserves of 40 to 178 billion barrels, equivalent to a quarter century of total U.S.

oil consumption (Ingwerson 1997: 1). Cocaine, other drugs, and a wide range of valuable contraband flow across the country, with mobsters and officials dividing large profits. Before the economic crises of the 1990s, furthermore, Kazakhstan supplied a substantial portion of the Soviet Union's commercial grains. If the state ever establishes an effective system of taxation and investment, it will have abundant revenues to spend, not to mention fortunes to be made in capitalist enterprises (see Feige 1998).

Claimants to that state divide sharply by ethnic category. As of the early 1990s, demographers enumerated 44 percent of the republic's population as Kazakh, 36 percent as Russian, and about 10 percent as "Europeans" of other varieties; the remaining tenth fell into a hundred other nationalities, chiefly Asian in origin (United Nations 1995: I, 6). By 1997, Kazakh officials were claiming 50.6% of the population as Kazakh and only 32.2% as Russian (Smith et al. 1998: 153). Although the proportion identified as Kazakh was rising through a combination of differential fertility, exits of Russians, in-migration from other parts of Central Asia, and (most likely) shifts of declared identity on the parts of people with mixed ancestry, the 1995 constitution's drafters had to contend with the fact that the country's ostensible nationality accounted for a minority of its population, and that the country's lingua franca was not Kazakh, but Russian.

In fact, many officially designated Kazakhs have grown up as Russian monolinguals, and are only learning their smattering of Kazakh under pressure. David Laitin offers a pungent example:

> Vera Nikolaevna works at the Institute of Railroad Transport as an accountant. At the Institute, they have a young Kazakh woman who teaches Kazakh to the workers. The Kazakhs who work at the Institute are too embarrassed to attend the course, thinking that they should be able to learn it spontaneously. The teacher hardly teaches, Vera told Dave; she is simply interested in filling her "hours." She showed Dave her textbooks, and wondered how anyone could learn the language from such (paltry) materials (Laitin 1998: 156).

The most Kazakh authorities can hope for is that a new generation will grow up bilingual in Russian and Kazakh; even there, the prospect seems dim without a much larger effort at cultural transformation and a great diminution of ties to Russia. Hence great sensitivity to definitions of citizenship in Kazakhstan.

Independent Kazakhstan has established a precarious sort of citizenship, but has remained far from democracy (CSCE 1998: 27-38). The 1995 constitution's announced rights for citizens may look good to the constitution's first audience -- various international actors -- but they do not much constrain the country's current rulers and provide little protection for their domestic opponents.

Mechanisms of Integration and Disintegration

Considered as a whole, the contentious unification of Italy between 1860 and 1870 seems quite a different phenomenon from the disintegration of Soviet unity between 1985 and 1995. It was. In the Soviet case, internal threats and external opportunities figured much more prominently than they had in Italian unification and several spirals of contention succeeded each other. Yet both momentous episodes involved the interplay of state-led and state-seeking nationalism and national integration and disintegration. In both, claims and conflicts that it would be strained to define as essentially nationalist converged in episodes that history has labeled "nationalism." More important for our purposes, though they moved in opposite directions, the two episodes involved some of the same causal mechanisms.

First, in both we find *spirals of opportunity* growing out of the collapse of old state structures, the availability of new resources, and the fear that – in the face of inaction – others would take action to take control of these resources:

• In Sicily, the conflicts in the North as Cavour and Victor Emanuel extended their power to Lombardy and the petty states of the Center triggered indigenous urban and rural revolts. This in turn both offered Garibaldi and his *mille* the opportunity to invade the island and threaten the landholding classes. These events both forced Cavour to attack the Bourbon state to forestall social revolution and led the island's elites – frightened with the threat to their property -- to embrace the Piedmontese cause.

• In the Soviet Union several spirals succeeded each other: first bids for external support of profit-taking and rent-seeking enterprises under declining central controls; then outright

assertions of rights to national autonomy on the parts of existing regional leaders and their local rivals; finally seizure of fungible state resources by whoever could make off with them. In Kazakhstan, leaders' claims to be Communist, Kazakh, and/or rightful rulers of a sovereign entity shifted with dizzying speed in response to changes in the external environment – notably relations to Russia and to the other Soviet republics.

Second, in both southern Italy and in the Soviet Union, as power disintegrated we find *competition between claimants:*

• In Italy, it was competition between Cavour's moderates and the Mazzini-inspired democrats that led Cavour to adopt an aggressive policy against the Bourbons. As soon as Garibaldi landed, Mazzini began to pepper him with radical advice; in fear of losing the initiative to the Democrats, Cavour's lieutenents urged him to outflank this enemy or risk allowing "the reds" to have an open field for their schemes (Riall 1998: 28). This led to the Piedmontese support for Garibaldi and to their march southward and to forestall him from invading the papal states. On the island itself, competition between Liberals and Democrats led Sicilian autonomists to take the side of the invader, Victor Emanuel, in preference to the dangerously "social" revolution the Democrats seemed to threaten;

• In the Soviet Union, competition operated on two fronts: in attempts to gain external economic and political support; and in related attempts to seize organizations and assets previously under state control. In Kazakhstan, competition entered the scene twice, both in struggles to seize resources within the region and in shifting coalitions among the forces of Nazarbaev, Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and other republic leaders.

Third, *identity shift*: the adoption by social actors of new or transformed identities and affiliations under the rapidly shifting conditions of opportunity spirals and competition:

• While few believed that Italy could be made prior to Garibaldi's expedition, by the end of April 1860 the British minister in Naples was remarking on "the amazing development which the notion of annexation [to Piedmont] and a single Italian kingdom has acquired within the last six months" (Mack Smith 1954: 8). On the island, the invasion and the land seizures transformed a certain number of landholding Sicilians from a desire for autonomy to support for annexation (Romeo 1950: 339);

• Considering previous images of the Communist system as an unshakable block, identity shift occurred with startling rapidity, with long term beneficiaries of Communist control backing off from identification with the party and its legacy in favor of a series of improvised alternatives among which ethnic labels (including Russian) assumed ever increasing scope. This was nowhere more dramatic in Kazakhstan, as the capacity and propensity of Soviet central authorities to certify and support the identity of loyal Union members shifted and waned.

Finally, *brokerage* – the linkage of two previously unconnected social actors through the identification and distribution of common resources – led to the soldering of southern Italian elites to what was essentially a foreign state and appears to be bringing about a crude form of national integration in Russia:

• Italy was never unified by a groundswell of nationalist fervor, but by an implicit deal that the Piedmontese moderates made with their southern allies in exchange for their support for annexation. This set a pattern "based more on short-term private gain than on any principle of public service or bureaucratic rationality" (Riall 1998: 227), "Deprived of a true mass base and wedded to old local and clientelistic forms of representation, the liberal strategy became essentially one of mediation" (Riall 1998: 250).

• Brokerage helps to account for the remarkable continuity of rulers through apparently revolutionary Russian turmoil. Though gangsters and tycoons have appeared from the shadows of Soviet society, for the most part the system is being run today by the same sorts of people who ran things in the 1980s. This is because – as connectors in a vast centralized system – they had access to information, resources, and other centers of power. In Kazakhstan, brokerage was crucial on two fronts: both in the connection between Kazakh identity and state power within Kazakhstan on the one side, and as Nazarbaev's generally successful monopolization of relations between Kazakhstan and the rest of the world, on the other.

Operating in different contexts in different sequences and combinations, these mechanisms combined to produce massively different outcomes: a new and durable, if weakly integrated, state in Italy glued together by brokerage, on one side; and a score of more or less independent states with remarkable continuity of personal leadership on the other. We could obviously point to other mechanisms the two episodes had in common, for example *category formation*, *commitment, identity threat, repression and tactical innovation* that we have dealt with in other parts of our larger project. We single out opportunity spirals, identity shift, competition, and brokerage for two reasons: first because they played such salient parts in these episodes; second because they help explain puzzling features of the same episodes.

In the case of Italy, it remains puzzling in principle that such a scattered, heterogeneous set of polities should coalesce around a nationalist program and a constitutional monarchy -- especially over the opposition of a powerful church. Mobilization and counter-mobilization of competitors for the national mantle (e.g. Cavour, Garibaldi, and their respective followers) followed the logic of an opportunity spiral, produced rapid identity shifts for political activists

who had initially mobilized against local or regional enemies, involved direct competition for internationally recognized national power, and depended heavily on brokerage supplied both by veteran revolutionaries and by regional power-holders. Long-standing regimes like the Bourbons' in southern Italy were decertified by a combination of internal revolt and international de-certification. Temporary alliances crystallized into durable arrangements of government. A ramshackle but durable state with grudging but effective acceptance of its priority over other authorities emerged from struggles that could easily have ended in losses of territory to adjacent states, creation of several rival states committed to antithetical programs, or return to the previous status quo.

In the Soviet Union's debacle, the puzzles we identified earlier were

• How did a political economy that seemed so solid, centralized, authoritarian, and resourceful disintegrate visibly in five or six years?

• Why did so much of the contentious claim making take the form of ethnic and national self- assertion?

• How then did so many old regime power holders reappear in positions of power after the great transformation?

Opportunity spirals, identity shift, competition, and brokerage do not by themselves provide full answers to these questions. Yet a clear understanding of how brokerage worked during the Soviet Union's later years helps explain how regional leaders whose power depended on negotiation between Moscow and their favored regional constituencies shifted so rapidly from apparently dogged commitment to outright resistance. The rapid rise of ethnic and national assertion and their almost equally rapid turn to violent confrontation depended on all four mechanisms in concatenation -- as, for example, the threat of one republic to exit from the Union increased the effectiveness of another republic's threat to exit. Old regime power holders reappeared in part because they appropriated pieces of the old state, which is not one of the mechanisms we have discussed at length in this paper. But they also responded to and helped create identity shifts from Communist and Soviet to national, not in terms of age-old identities, but in terms already made available by the broker-mediated government of the disintegrating Soviet Union.

Although we might try to assimilate Italian unification to existing models of democratization or state formation and Soviet disintegration to existing models of revolution or imperial decline, the teaching of our analysis runs in precisely the opposite direction. Instead of considering these whole episodes as instances of distinct large-scale processes that operate according to their own laws, we gain much more explanatory leverage by examining them closely for political mechanisms that operate in a wide range of contention.

Is there a lesson here for the understanding of other countries' nationalist episodes and attempts at national disintegration?

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