NATIONAL CULTURAL AUTONOMY: RUSSIA'S MODEL, THE TATARS AND ETHNO-CULTURAL EDUCATION

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The article explores the differences between the original model of National Cultural Autonomy (NCA), as developed by the Austro-Marxists at the end of the 19th century, and the way it has been re-interpreted and applied in post-Soviet Russia. It is shown that Russia's NCA system significantly differs from the original NCA model in two ways: first, in the limited autonomy in the management of nationality issues for NCAs in the Russian case; and, second, in the absence of power-sharing between the Russian state and its nationalities, which restricts the latter's autonomy to control their cultural destiny. In particular, the narrow interpretation of 'culture' in the Russian NCA system results in NCAs' frequent exclusion from processes that shape law and public policy affecting the interests of Russia's nationalities. The article takes into account Tatar ethno-cultural education to highlight the consequences of specific choices that have marked a departure from the original model.

The article is partially based on data from interviews in Russia in 2010, 2011 and 2015, with representatives of national cultural autonomies and peoples' congresses, as well as public officials and scholars.

Key words: national cultural autonomy, ethno-cultural education, Austro-Marxism, Republic of Tatarstan, ethnic federalism, cultural rights.

Finding itself at the crossroads of history following the Soviet Union's collapse, the newly-formed Russian Federation looked for new models to manage its ethnic diversity. The country had a history of ethnic federalism and 'territorialised ethnicity': the Soviet government had designated areas for various ethnic groups (titular nationalities), adopting a strategy based on territoriality in the management of the country's ethnic heterogeneity. At the same time, ethnic mobilisation from the *perestroyka* period onwards led to concerns that titular nationalities might seek to claim greater autonomy from the Federation, ultimately resulting in the country's political instability and fragmentation. Indeed, in what has become known as the 'parade of sovereignties', most of Russia's regions declared their autonomy from Moscow in the period between 1990 and 1992 [1]. The first Chechen war (1994-1996) intensified fears of the country's dismemberment with possible multiple secessionist scenarios. Moreover, by the end of the Soviet period it had become apparent that territorial solutions to the management of ethnic diversity had limitations, as representatives of non-Russian nationalities had not benefitted from them in two cases: when members of titular nationalities resided outside 'their own' republics (e.g. Tatars outside Tatarstan); and in the case of ethnic groups that were not categorised as titular, and therefore not 'assigned' a particular territory where their lan-

guages and cultures could be protected and promoted (e.g. non-territorial nationalities such as the Roma). Thus, according to estimates from 1989, only 10 million of the 27 million non-Russians in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) were in a position to reap benefits from territoriality [2: 266]. The logical step was to consider non-territorial solutions that could compensate for some of the shortcomings of ethnic federalism. It required a 'shift in emphasis'[1] in nationalities policy from an ethno-territorial to an *ethno-cultural* approach to the organisation of social life.

Existing literature [3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9] has analyzed the functions and shortcomings of National Cultural Autonomy (NCA) in Russia, also pointing to the irony of its resurrection after being initially rejected by Bolshevik leaders (Bowring refers to this turn of events as 'Austro-Marxism's last laugh' [3]). Yet in what way exactly does the Russian model differ from the original model of NCA? In other words, how has the Russian government repackaged it? In this article I first outline the contours of the original theory of NCA. Subsequently

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[1] This is repeatedly stressed in the 'Concept of Nationality Policy in the Russian Federation', developed in 1992 by the State Committee for Nationality Affairs headed by Valery Tishkov. Although the Concept was not approved, it is from this point that public references to NCA became increasingly common [6: 66] [Osipov 2004].

I analyze in what way Russia's NCA system, as it was introduced by law in 1996, has diverged from the original model. I then move on to Tatar ethnocultural education to highlight the consequences of specific choices that have marked a departure from the original model. The article is partially based on data from interviews in Russia in 2010, 2011 and 2015, with representatives of national cultural autonomies and peoples' congresses (and some other non-governmental organisations), as well as public officials and scholars[2].

1. National Cultural Autonomy: The Original Model

The seminal work that delineates the NCA model is Austro-Marxist Karl Renner's article *State and Nation*, published in 1899 [10][3], in the final stages of the Austro-Hungarian Empire[4]. Renner argued that, in a multi-ethnic polity such as the Austro-Hungarian Empire, peaceful coexistence could be assured by upholding the rights of nations regardless of territory, on the basis of the 'personality principle'. The principle meant that individual members of a nation residing in regions where they did not constitute a majority ought to enjoy their rights in the same way as co-ethnics in 'their own' territories. Renner wrote:

"[F]or the Czech worker who is forced to migrate […] by the laws of supply and demand – and there are many of them – it is of the greatest importance to be able to establish Czech educational associations and to claim legal protection […] from his own nation […] it would also be a matter for importance for the German officer garrisoned in a Galician town to be able to demand of his nation, to whose burdens he contributes, the provi-

sion of German school lessons for his children" [10: 22].

The personality principle stemmed from Renner's rejection of the assumption of a link between 'consciousness of nationality and a particular territory' [10: 25]. This is in contrast with Stalin's definition of a nation, which instead had placed an emphasis on such a nexus: a nation was described by Stalin as a 'historically evolved, stable community based on a common language, *territory*, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture' [italics added] [12: 239]. Conversely, Renner asserted that, while a state and its territory are 'conceptually inseparable', nations mingle within a state. This means that '[i]n conceptual terms, the nation is not a territorial entity' [10: 26-7]. He then pointed out that state-induced uniformity and the ideal of the nation-state have not always been the only commonly-accepted mechanism to administer a state: in history there are examples of polities with multiple cultural and legal frameworks. Renner referred to the example of the Carolingian Empire, in which 'the Roman provincial retained his national law, even if he lived among Bavarians and Frisians, and the Frank, Alemannic or Chamaver retained his even if living among the Romans. Before dealing with a dispute, the judge would ask him: "*Quo jure vivis?*" Which law do you live by?' [10: 27]. One can also think of the millet system during the Ottoman Empire; or, in the contemporary world, *sharia* law in the UK, which coexists, in some spheres, with autochthonous legal traditions [13; 14]. Renner further traced a parallel between nations and religious communities, which have networks running horizontally: in the same parish, several religious denominations can be represented [10: 29], and religious institutions can transcend borders, uniting their members regardless of place of residence.

At the same time, despite upholding the personality principle, Renner did not advance the view that cultural autonomy should take precedence over territorial solutions in a multi-ethnic state. In fact he acknowledged that the convergence of the borders of nation and state results in a highly desirable political configuration. Indeed, the management of the state requires a 'national culture': thus, a true nation-state, blessed with the full congruence of state and nation, provides an optimal situation from the point of view of stability. Through a 'national culture' shared by all, possible resistance to the state's actions, and the potential for internal friction, are minimised. It means that the attainment of the ideal nation-state would be

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[2] In 2010-2011 I carried out 69 interviews with the said categories of respondents (in Moscow, St Petersburg, Kazan, Saransk, Tver and Petrozavodsk). In 2015 the interviews, held in Kazan and Saransk with 19 respondents, were held as part of the project 'National Minority Rights and Democratic Political Community: Practices of Non-Territorial Autonomy in Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe' (2014-2017). The project is funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council and is being implemented by the School of Social and Political Sciences (Central and East European Studies), University of Glasgow.

[3] Reprinted in 2005 in E. Nimni (ed.) *National Cultural Autonomy and its Contemporary Critics*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 15–47.

[4] The other author who elaborated the concept is Otto Bauer, in *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy* (*Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*), published in 1907 [see 11].

tantamount to resolving the 'national question'. Yet in reality the borders of nation and state hardly ever fully coincide – and particularly so when the state is a large, multi-ethnic polity. It is as a result of the non-alignment of state and nation that, in practice, the legal order of a state turns out to be the reflection of the will of the dominant group. By exclusively employing the 'territorial principle' a state is in a position to impose the obligation for minority groups to speak the language of the majority, and adjust to its legal system. The resulting legal order does not eliminate inter-ethnic conflicts, but rather creates (or exacerbates) them [10: 26-30]. Renner concludes that '[t]he territorial principle can never produce compromise and equal rights; it can only produce struggle and oppression, because its essence is domination' [10: 28].

Cultural *Autonomy*

Cultural, rather than territorial autonomy provides an alternative to the tyranny of territoriality-based arrangements. Renner developed the vision of a state with NCA arrangements in which 'all nationalities *govern and administer themselves …* they deal with their nationally specific affairs *alone* and their common affairs together' [italics added] [10: 24]. This implies a separation of competencies, between issues that concern the nation itself (cultural matters to be managed through NCA) and 'common affairs' (political issues to be managed by the state). Public administration would then require separate sets of organs: one to regulate the functions of 'nations as cultural and spiritual communities', and one for the state ('the people as a constitutional unit') [10: 24]. These parallel institutions, fulfilling different functions, reflect a conceptual distinction between the nation as a 'cultural community' and the state as a 'sovereign territorial entity' [10: 24-5]. In this manner, 'the nations should be constituted not as territorial entities but as personal associations, not as states but as peoples, not according to age-old constitutional laws, but according to living national law' [10: 29]. Hence, in order to resolve the national question, one ought to focus on the *nations* themselves – freeing them from 'political constellations, from the necessity of political barter, from feudal and clerical influences' [10: 31].

At the same time, one cannot completely do away with territory: local administration can only be organised through local councils in pre-established areas, coinciding with places of settlement of particular groups. Territorial arrangements were however conceived by Renner as flexible, with different layers of representation and compe-

tences, and on the basis of preferences of individuals, rather than the top-down delineation of borders:

"The co-nationals inhabiting a parish or district would form a national community [*Gemeinde*], i.e. a corporation under public and private law with the power to issue decrees and levy taxes, as well as its own property. A territorially and culturally affiliated number of communities would form a *national canton* [*Kreis*] with corporate rights. The totality of the cantons would form a nation. It too would be a legal entity under public and private law [italics added]" [10: 30-31].

The system would envisage a requirement for all citizens to declare their ethnicity (on the basis of self-identification), and the compiling of registers listing individual members of various nationalities. Persons listed in these registers would elect their representatives in communal, cantonal and national (state-level) councils; thus, the original NCA model envisaged a form of *power sharing* at the state level. The proportional access to office to various councils was identified by Renner as a factor in lasting peace [10: 43].

In the sphere of culture, each nationality would be in a position to manage its own education system and cultural outputs (literature and art) – 'each master of its members, master of its own resources' [10: 31]. Funds for these activities would be provided directly by the members of each nationality through the payment of taxes – effectively through funds remaining 'within' the nation. On this subject, Renner argued:

If a Bohemian provincial assembly finances a Czech theatre or a Czech school then the Germans cry: 'Our taxes are being used to nourish our enemies!' Each sees itself as being continually cheated. Let every nation build theatres and schools, as many as they want – the more, the better – but let each pay for its own. It is precisely here that division according to the personality principle can contribute the most to maintaining peace [10: 38].

What is described is a model that would dispense both rights and responsibilities to nationalities. Their members would enjoy the protection of the nation regardless of their specific location within a multi-ethnic polity – and the benefits flowing from it – yet such protection would also require individuals to contribute to it. This was not treated by Renner as the imposition of financial obligations, but as the nation's wealth being channelled *directly* to the sustainment of its own institutions, rather than paying all taxes to the abstract entity of 'the state'. Meanwhile, the control over

one's cultural destiny, as well as of the financial resources for it, would eliminate the need for 'special measures' to accommodate minorities to be implemented by the state: all ethnic groups would instead be equipped with the authority and resources to manage their cultural distinctiveness independently [15: 360].

Two more aspects of the model should be highlighted here: the requirement of legal clarity (with rights and responsibilities clearly stated in legal provisions) [10: 42][5]; and an official language enabling the smooth interaction between members of different groups. In the case of the Austro-Hungarian empire, Renner proposed the German language as *lingua franca*; however, he specified that, in an ethnically mixed area, appointments to the local administration would imply a requirement of bilingualism, so as to simultaneously enable the self-determination of nations *and* state sovereignty [10: 43-44].

2. National Cultural Autonomy: The Russian Model

The idea of non-territorial autonomy became an attractive option at the end of the Soviet Union, given that ethnic federalism, and its 'territorialised ethnicity', had become embedded in the organisation of Soviet society, with scattered outcomes. As noted, debates in Russia[6] in the early 1990s stressed the importance of 'shift[ing] the focus' from territoriality to non-territoriality, as a substantial number of persons belonging to titular nationalities in Russia resided outside 'their' territorial formations[7], and thereby could not benefit from territoriality. The introduction of a model based on NCA could then have addressed the need to extend to *all* members of Russia's various nationalities, regardless of place of residence, the opportunity to realise their cultural rights. Moreover, the emphasis on extra-territoriality could contribute to reducing the menace of state dismemberment.

At the same time, the popularisation of the NCA concept in the 1990s roused the suspicions of the ethnic republics [6: 66]. Titular nationalities

feared a de-ethnicisation of the Federation and possibly the ultimate elimination of the republics themselves, in exchange for dubious new forms of autonomy. Persons belonging to titular nationalities were unlikely to renounce the rights that had been conferred on them during the Soviet period; as a consequence, ethnic republics have continued to exist[8], with Russia embracing a form of cultural autonomy that was combined with territorial autonomy. This means that a titular nationality such as the Tatars have had at their disposal, since 1996, two primary means to promote their cultural and linguistic distinctiveness: territorial autonomy in the Republic of Tatarstan (for Tatars residing in the Republic) and NCA (for Tatars outside Tatarstan). To these one can add the World Congress of Tatars, one of Russia's peoples' congresses. Peoples' congresses are ethnicity-based representative assemblies which first developed in the early 20th century, before being set aside to re-appear in the late 1980s and early 1990s [17: 4]. They operate as civic institutions for the internal organisation of ethnic groups, particularly for decision-making on priorities and programmes of activities, although their events are also regularly attended by state representatives. Resolutions are agreed upon during period gatherings with the participation of delegates from regional organisations. Peoples' congresses can be regarded as a form of non-territorial cultural autonomy, inasmuch as they promote the interests of a particular ethnicity, have a representative structure (based on elections of representatives), and often receive public funds [17: 4-5]. The World Congress of Tatars is active in the Republic of Tatarstan but also connects Russia's Tatars with representatives of the same ethnicity outside Russia and the post-Soviet space[9].

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[5] Renner argued that it is necessary to 'state openly what one wants, to formulate concrete legal postulates instead of general phrases' [10: 42].

[6] Russia is not the only country to have adopted a law on NCA in the 1990s. Other countries are Estonia, Hungary and Serbia [16].

[7] For example, according to the last (2010) census, of the 5.3 million Tatars in Russia, only 2 million resided in the Republic of Tatarstan. See the census at http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis_itogi1612.htm

[8] At the same time, there has been a reduction of territorialised ethnicity in some instances, with the merger of six ethnic regions with other, predominantly Russian, regions. This process took place from 2005 to 2008 and the affected regions were: (former) Komi-Permyak autonomous okrug (AO), Evenk AO, Taimyr AO, Koryak AO, Ust-Orda Buryat AO and Agin Buryat AO. The mergers were enabled by Federal Constitutional Law 'On the Procedure of Introducing a New Subject in the Russian Federation', No. 6-FKZ, 17 December 2001.

[9] We should add that the various nationalities that are present in Tatarstan have formed their own local, and at times regional, NCAs, and promote their respective cultures and languages through the Assembly of Peoples of Tatarstan (*Assemblea Narodov Tatarstana*). In Kazan the representatives of these ethnic groups have offices in the House of Friendship of Peoples (*Dom Druzhby Narodov*).

Combining territoriality and extra-territoriality is not in contrast with the original NCA model, which – as noted – reserved cultural autonomy to those regions in which ethnic groups constituted numerical ethnic minorities. Thus, it is in those (frequent) cases in which borders of nations and states *do not* coincide, that cultural autonomy can constitute an alternative arrangement to satisfy the cultural rights of persons belonging to national minorities. At the same time, having drawn from the original NCA model in the 1990s – by then nearly a century old – Russia has substantially reworked the initial concept.

The Nation: *Self*-Government?

NCA was formally introduced in Russia through the 1996 Federal Law 'On National Cultural Autonomy' (NCA Law)[10]. Article 1 of this law defines NCA as:

[A] form of national and cultural self-determination constituting a public association of citizens of the Russian Federation, identifying with a particular ethnic community, finding themselves in a *situation of national minority* in a particular territory, based on their voluntary chosen identity for the purpose of *independently regulating* the issues of their identity preservation and their linguistic, educational and national cultural development. [Italics added.]

This article refers to NCA in relation to ethnic communities 'in a situation of national minority'[11] thereby clarifying that NCA institutions are no substitute for the territorial autonomy provided by the ethnic republics. Indeed, representatives of titular nationalities residing in ethnic republics are not generally considered in Russia as groups 'in a situation of national minority'. This is despite the fact that, in many ethnic republics, representatives of titular nationalities constitute a numerical minority. 'National minority' in the law is therefore to be understood in the sense of 'non-titular' in a particular administrative unit of the Federation[12].

The Russian authorities have described the NCA system, together with other forms of ethnic associations, as 'the major direction of implementation' of the (Council of Europe) Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), ratified by Russia in 1998 [19: 17]. In the Second Report on the implementation of the FCNM in Russia, submitted to the Advisory Committee on the FCNM (ACFC) in 2005,[13] the Russian government stressed that NCA institutions are based on the principles of 'self-organization and self-government' [19: 8]. At the same time, although numerous NCAs have been established – the Russian government referred to 15 federal, 241 regional and 643 local NCAs in 2012 [20] – authors [3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 21; 22], both Western and Russian, have argued that the NCA system has limited effectiveness[14]. The harshest criticism came from Osipov, who asserted that NCAs in Russia are effectively indistinguishable from NGOs [6]; or, rather, he noted, they can be described as 'a deteriorated version' of NGOs, given that the registration procedure is more burdensome than for NGOs, and that some restrictions apply in NCA activities [17: 3-4]. Significantly, a Tatar respondent interviewed in 2010 in Kazan referred to NCA as a 'palliative', ill-equipped to address the core needs of Russia's nationalities[15]. Similarly, the ACFC itself has raised concerns with reference to NCAs' effectiveness in promoting the rights of national minorities in Russia. For example, with regard to various consultative councils on nationalities issues in Russia, including the (federal) Consultative Council on National Cultural Autonomies, the Advisory Committee stated that 'the impact of these councils remains … limited … There is no systematic and consistent involvement of minority representatives in decision-making on issues concerning them' [18: paragraph 25]. Even former Russian Minister of Regional Development Igor Slyunyaev (2012-2014) referred to a need to stimulate the work of

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[10] Law 'On National Cultural Autonomy', No. 74-FZ, 17 June 1996.

[11] This provision was introduced through amendments in 2003 (Law 'On the Amendment of the Federal Law on National Cultural Autonomy, No. 136-FZ, 10 November 2003).

[12] This is different from the meaning of 'national minority' in international law, which treats an ethnic group as a 'national minority' in relation to the state as a whole, even though the group might be a numerical majority at the regional level. Thus, in its documents, the Council of Europe's Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

has treated titular nationalities as national minorities, even in 'their own' republics [for example, 18].

[13] These reports are submitted every five years. They are followed by Opinions of the ACFC, which form the basis of resolutions of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the state parties to the FCNM.

[14] Reasons range from financial difficulties to lack of implementation of the NCA Law [22: 180-201].

[15] The respondent was interviewed in Kazan on 11 June 2010.

the Consultative Council under the Ministry of Regional Development[16], in light of the fact that:

"speaking honestly, today it does not work. In the years 2011-2012 it met only three times, and unfortunately, the representatives of the federal organs, and even the representatives of national cultural autonomies, did not take part in the work of the consultative council. It is necessary to stimulate and broaden the geographical scope of the activity of national cultural autonomies […] The results of every event supported by grants from the state budget have to be clear, and understood by all" [24].

[Russian version: "*Govorya otkrovenno, segodnya on ne rabotaet. Za 2011–2012 gody sobiralsya vsego lish' trizhdy, i, k sozhaleniyu, predstaviteli federal'nykh organov ispolnitel'noy vlasti, a takzhe predstaviteli natsional'no-kul'turnykh avtonomiy ne prinimali uchastiya v rabote konsul'tativnogo soveta. Neobkhodimo stimulirovat' i rasshirenie geografii deyatel'nosti natsional'no-kul'turnykh avtonomiy [...] Vnyatnymi, ponyatnymi dlya vsekh dolzhny byt' rezul'taty kazhdogo meropriyatiya, na kotoroe idut byudzhetnye granty.*"]

The ACFC added that the NCA Law 'does not create any clear obligations on the part of the State with regard to the preservation of the cultural identity of persons belonging to national minorities, nor does it clearly mark the competencies that the creation of a national-cultural autonomy entails' [18: paragraph 72, see also paragraphs 20, 26, 31, 72-76; 23; paragraphs 14, 88-95].

The NCA system's dubious impact can be partially seen in the context of the differences between the Russian system and the original NCA model: the latter had envisaged more far-reaching functions and competences for NCA within a multi-ethnic polity.

What kind of autonomy?

I highlight three of what I consider significant differences between the original model and the way it has been re-elaborated in Russia. First, the Russian system does not envisage the same levels of autonomy for NCAs as those of the original

model. In particular, Russia's NCAs do not run their own institutions, while the Austro-Marxist model conceived a local administration operating fully in the local language – or bilingual institutions in ethnically mixed regions – and the independent management of schools by each ethnic community, also in the local language. In interviews with representatives of NCAs in Russia, the main activities listed by the respondents were: organisation of events, cultural programmes (particularly festivals), teaching of languages (evening courses for adults or Sunday schools for children), production of textbooks in local languages, publication of newspapers in local languages, and participation in discussions on nationalities policy in the republics (together with other organisations promoting non-Russian cultures and languages, such as centres of culture and various NGOs)[17]. While these activities are certainly of paramount importance to representatives of ethnic groups in the preservation of their ethno-cultural and linguistic identity, they are removed from a model of self-governance that involves the direct management of cultural and educational institutions. On the one hand, Renner had argued in favour of nations as 'personal associations' rather than 'territorial entities'; this would result, in his opinion, in tailor-made and evolving regulations governing them ('living national law' [10: 29]). On the other hand, such associations without a territorial component, if not guaranteed clear rights and competences, can easily come to resemble regular NGOs, as argued by Osipov [6]. Indeed, according to some respondents, NCA institutions in Russia tend to be *inward-looking* (primarily focusing on the management of their own activities and events). With regard to the management of such activities, NCAs – like peoples' congresses – have highly complex structures for internal decision-making and coordination, stretching across a large network of institutions (in some cases, even beyond the borders of Russia). However, the general, declarative nature of the provisions in the NCA Law does not provide the legislative framework for NCAs be more *outward-looking*, by serving the group as a whole (for example managing institutions operating in local languages), or by operating at the state level (for example sharing competences in policy- and law-making with state organs). Thus, the range of activities enabled by 'cultural autonomy' is restricted.

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[16] Between 2004 and 2014 the Ministry was responsible for minority issues through its Department of Inter-Ethnic Relations. It was closed in September 2014 (Presidential Decree No. 612, 8 September 2014); responsibility for the 'realisation of the ethno-cultural needs' was temporarily transferred to the Ministry of Culture, and subsequently to a new federal body, the Federal Agency for Nationality Affairs, established on 31 March 2015.

[17] These lists of activities concerned both NCAs within Tatarstan (representing nationalities other than the Tatars), and NCAs outside Tatarstan.

Registers, representation and resources

A second difference between the Russian and the original models lies in the registers that the latter had envisaged and the former rejects. According to the Austro-Marxist model, each person would be required to choose one nationality, on the basis of self-identification, which would be recorded in registers; the registers would be at the heart of the NCA system. Russian legislation, as the original model, provides that ethnic belonging is to be based on self-identification, meaning that subscribing (or not) to a group is a voluntary process. The difference is that the Russian NCA system does not *require* one to choose a form of ethnic affiliation (with a minority or the majority), while Renner's model implied the selection of one (and only one) ethnicity. A mechanism that obliges all individuals to position themselves within a classification system based on mutually exclusive ethnic categories can seem excessively rigid, and anathema to liberal pluralism. Such a system fails to accommodate individuals that identify with more than one ethnic group, as in the case of mixed marriages; indeed, inhabiting a highly diverse, multiethnic environment can lead to persons developing plural, multi-layered identities. In light of this, NCA has then been criticised for consolidating mutually exclusive forms of ethnic identification [25: 99]. Yet registers were meant to fulfil specific functions, and their exclusion has concrete implications.

The absence of registers means that it is not clear who the exact individual beneficiaries of the NCA system are, while the original model foresaw a full list of individual members affiliated to a particular form of NCA. Consequently, the 'group' represented by an NCA leader similarly has undefined boundaries. This can further raise the issue of representativeness: in the original model, the persons on the respective registers would automatically be given the right to elect their representatives. In principle the Russian model allows any person identifying with a particular ethnicity to become involved in the selection of representatives, by joining an NCA (or people's congress) and participating in its activities[18]. Many choose not to take part in these processes, whether due to lack of interest, or limited outreach by NCAs. Despite this, an NCA and its leader(s) are strongly associated with the representation of the nationality in general – at the local, regional and federal levels. The

opacity with regard to the 'represented' also means that the representatives (whether they are elected or not) do not have precise obligations vis-à-vis them, putting into question their accountability.

The registers had another practical function in the original model: that of linking the NCA institutions to the resources of their individual members. By listing members of a particular NCA, funds paid in taxes by these individuals would be directly channelled to NCAs. Thus, as noted, members of the ethnic various groups would have both rights and responsibilities, and, by self-managing, would simultaneously be the implementers and beneficiaries of the NCA system. The system is explained by Renner thus:

"Within this model, national communities are school communities, and the national registers at the same time electoral and schools registers. The nation maintains the schools. Where the national communities are too sparsely structured to be able to maintain an independent school, they are incorporated into the local school communities, but retain their proportional representation in the local school council, since here too the national registers are electoral registers. They appoint teachers who move from place to place for the purpose of cultivating their mother tongue, and for this purpose school premises and the necessary time are made available to them" [10: 44].

NCAs in Russia do not directly manage cultural and educational institutions, and limited cultural autonomy can be linked to limited financial autonomy. On the one hand, NCAs in Russia can receive funding from the state, in the form of grants for their activities (following the submission of applications), and, in some cases, a regular (although generally low) income, or other forms of support such as free office space[19]. On the other hand, the fact that resources do not originate directly from the group's members can reduce options for autonomy and self-management: if the government controls resources, it can, under different circumstances, provide or withdraw them.

While there might be grounds for avoiding the imposition of a choice of ethnic belonging foreseen by the original NCA model, alternative ways of using registers (or other mechanisms) could be considered. For example, Hungary provides to its citizens the option to add one's name (or not) to a national register; being listed in the register gives one the opportunity to vote in elections of representatives of self-government of Hungary's national mi-

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[18] In the case of peoples' congresses, representatives are elected by members. The NCA law does not refer to elections.

[19] Other funding can be provided by private individuals in the form of donations.

norities, which take place at the same time as national and regional elections. In this way, the presence of registers does not force individuals to make a choice of ethnic affiliation, and, when such a choice is made, it is on the basis of self-identification.[20] Moreover, self-governments in Hungary are provided financial autonomy and can take on administrative and financial responsibility for educational and cultural institutions, including by independently managing schools[21] [26: paragraphs 19, 65, 119, 124, 142].

The 'cultural' and the 'political'

A third difference between the original and Russian models concerns the interpretation of the separation of the cultural and political spheres. As noted, Renner had upheld the principle of a distinction between cultural affairs (to be managed by a nation) and political activity (to be regulated by the state). Renner had meant 'culture' to include autonomous decision-making in a range of areas related to culture, education and the use of local languages, leaving to the state the management of ethnicity-neutral matters such as the military. In Russia the understanding of 'culture' and 'cultural activities' is restricted, and often linked to folkloristic cultural events; meanwhile, political parties on the basis of ethnicity are banned in Russia. The ACFC, in its Third Opinion on Russia, stated that '[t]here is … a lack of support for activities other than cultural in a narrow sense' [18: paragraph 20], and:

National-cultural autonomies are limited to the organisation of cultural activities, whereas the interpretation of 'culture' in the implementation of the [NCA Law], as well as other relevant legislative acts, is *narrow*. This discourages the engagement of national-cultural autonomies with other relevant issues related to minority identity [18: paragraph 20] [italics added].

[…] it is regrettable that the activities of national-cultural autonomies are limited to the sphere of culture in a narrow sense, particularly in view of the fact that the creation of political parties established on the grounds of racial, national or religious belonging is prohibited [18: paragraph 26].

As a result, NCAs in Russia may become involved in issues of education, but their areas of competence are not clearly defined and lack insti-

tutionalisation. It means that, while the work of NCAs might sometimes lead to impact in the education sphere (for example, by working with schools and local authorities to promote minority or local languages), such an impact is circumstantial – depending on the individual situations and inclinations of persons involved in these processes.

Relations between Ethnic Groups and Governments: A Nation versus the State?

The original NCA model foresaw the representation of nationalities at the state level – in addition to the local and regional levels – through a form of power-sharing. Indeed, Renner had realised that only in this manner would autonomies see their rights upheld, as they would be empowered to influence state-level decision-making that could impact upon their languages and cultures. As for the Russian NCA system, which envisages a pyramidal structure – with local, regional and federal NCAs – the original NCA model would involve national communities and cantons, which combined would form the 'nation' [10: 31].

The difference between the Russian and original models with regard to institutions at the state level is the extent to which they may genuinely *share* power. Renner argued that 'the nationalities want official (administrative) sovereignty – not alone, but in association with the Crown …' [10: 42]. Thus, the application of the original model in Russia would have envisaged the 'Tatar nation' in the Russian Federation – comprising its members residing both inside and outside Tatarstan – having representation at the federal level. By contrast, the only institution at the federal level formally representing the interests of Tatars, and bringing together state and Tatar representatives[22], is the (already mentioned) federal Consultative Council on National Cultural Autonomies. The Council is a consultative body, rather than one that may have direct impact on policy and law-making: Russian law does not create a direct obligation to implement the recommendations developed by the Consultative Council. This puts into question whether the form of participation through the Consultative Council amounts to *effective* participation foreseen by the Framework Convention for the Protection of

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[20] The procedure was introduced following amendments, in 2005 to the 1993 Act on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities [26: paragraphs 19, 38].

[21] At the same time, in some instances insufficient funds and budgetary cuts have affected these institutions [26: paragraphs 66, 125].

[22] These functions are also carried out by the World Congress of Tatars. The Congress holds periodic meetings which are generally attended by public officials, and in which there are opportunities to raise issues of concern to Tatars. These meetings are however convened at the initiative of Tatar representatives themselves, rather than under the auspices of the government.

National Minorities – in the sense that the *presence* of minorities in consultative and elected bodies has to be matched by their actual *influence* on decision-making [27: 452-3]. Moreover, in 2015 only 16 nationalities (including Tatars) were represented in the Council[23], which met very sporadically, and, as shown above, has been criticised for its limited effectiveness.

Re-structuring at the federal level has affected the representation of regional interests. In particular, in 2000 the leaders of regions were excluded from the Federation Council (the Russian Parliament's upper chamber) to be replaced by their representatives[24]. Its members, in many cases, have had no direct connection with the regions they represent [28]. Following the 2004 terrorist act in Beslan (North Ossetia), President Putin also replaced gubernatorial elections with appointments, arguing that stronger control from the centre was needed in order to contain terrorism [29]. Gubernatorial elections were reinstated in early 2012, yet they were accompanied by additional measures: a 'municipal filter', requiring candidates to have the support of least 5% of their subjects' deputies;[25] and, in 2013, the option for the subjects' legislatures to cancel direct elections and instead opt for the presidential appointment of governors. In 2000, when governors were excluded from the Federation Council, they were included in a newly-established body, the State Council;[26] however, the State Council has only consultative function, without the veto power formerly enjoyed by governors in the Federation Council. In addition, the State Council represents not nations but the administrative units of the state, including the republics: thus, it equally represents Russians and persons belonging to other nationalities.

While a federal system requires a balancing act between the federal level and the regional/local levels, and a division of competences, Russia's federal decision-making prevails over regional interests, including those of nationalities. This is apparent in the area of education, where since the 2000s there has been a movement towards centralisation and standardisation. While federal standards can unify the educational (and social) spaces, decisions on various aspects of the reform of the education system have been taken at the federal level – in some cases by decree at the federal level, thereby eschewing public debate. These include: the elimination of the option to take the secondary school examination (EGE)[27] in any language other than Russian[28]; the reduction of opportunities for autonomous decision-making at the level of the subjects with regard to the teaching of the 'national-regional component' (the study of local languages and cultures)[29], implying a greater role for federal educational standards [30]; the shrinking of opportunities to produce and use textbooks on the history of titular nationalities at the regional level[30]; and the closure of village schools, including those operating in titular languages, in the context of the optimisation of the education system[31], in some instances forcing children to transfer to Russian-language schools [18: paragraph 192]. In particular, the fact that the EGE has to be taken in Russian has had a significant impact on the choices

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[23] In 2015 there were Kazakh, Kurdish, Roma, Lezgian, Lithuanian, German, Jewish, Azerbaijani, Armenian, Belarusian, Greek, Tatar, Ukrainian, Assyrian, Chuvash, and Polish federal NCAs. See the website of the Ministry of Justice, http://unro.minjust.ru/NKAs.aspx. The 16 nationalities were those that had registered a federal NCA, while most other nationalities had registered only regional and local ones.

[24] Through Law 'On the Order of the Formation of the Federal Federation Council', No. 113-FZ, 5 August 2000. One representative is appointed by the subject's legislature and one from the executive.

[25] Or, for independent candidates, to collect the signatures of at least 0.5% of the region's population.

[26] Presidential Decree 'On the State Council of the Russian Federation', No. 1602, 1 September 2000.

[27] The 'unified state examination' (*Edinyi Gosudarstvennyi Ekzamen - EGE*).

[28] Decree of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation 'On the Approval of Regulations on the Methods and Procedures for the State (Final) Certification of Students Having Completed the Main General Education Programmes of Full Secondary Education', No. 362, 28 November 2008.

[29] Law 'On the Amendment of Legal Acts of the Russian Federation Modifying the Concept and Structure of State Education Standards', No. 309-FZ, 1 December 2007.

[30] A 2004 decree provides that schools must select their textbooks from a federal list compiled by the Department of State Policy and Education of the Ministry of Education (Decree of the Ministry of Education 'On the Approval of Federal Lists of Textbooks, Recommended (Admitted) for Use in the Education Process […]', No. 03-410, 21 October 2004). This approach was reaffirmed through the 2012 Law 'On Education in the Russian Federation' (No. 273-FZ, 29 December 2012), stipulating that schools have to select their textbooks from a federal list of recommended materials (Articles 18(4)(1) and 28(3)(9)).

[31] Starting from the Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation 'On the Restructuring of the Network of Education Institutions Situated in the Rural Areas', No. 871, 17 December 2001.

of parents and children, who, understandably, wish to maximise their opportunities for social mobility and economic well-being. Russian and mathematics are the EGE's two primary subjects: the issuing of a diploma (and access to university) depends on satisfactory results in these two subjects. The cumulative effect of the measures towards the centralisation of education has included a general reduction of the study through the medium of languages other than Russian. This has also affected Tatarstan [22: 131-8], even though Tatar is a compulsory subject for all students in the Republic in primary and secondary schools. The Russian government has facilitated moves towards a greater predominance of the Russian language and culture in education, through a series of interventions that other nations in the country are not in a position to counteract. Thus, restrictions to the rights of Russia's nationalities occur not only at the level of cultural autonomy, but also at the level of *territorial* autonomy. This is linked to lingering problems with Russia's ethnic federalism [31], by which the devolution of competencies is substantially restricted; indeed, the Russian Federation has been described as 'de jure a federation (with independent local self-government), de facto a centralised state (with a vertical of power)' [32: 174].

The issues described in this article with regard to the Tatars in Russia are more severe in the case of other nationalities in a more vulnerable position,[32] such as Finno-Ugric peoples in the respecting republics. Titular nationalities constitute numerical minorities in Finno-Ugric republics (for example, only 7.1% versus 79.9% Russians in the case of Karelians in Karelia); and, compared to Tatars, they have very limited resources for the preservation of their languages and cultures.

Conclusion

National cultural autonomy was introduced in Russia in the early post-Soviet period, to address some of the limitations of territorial solutions in the management of ethnic diversity. Indeed, numerous (smaller) ethnic groups had not been classified as 'titular', and consequently not 'assigned' a territory; and, in the case of titular nationalities, clearly not all of their members resided in 'their' republics. Thus, Russia sought alternative models, which could be combined with its tradition of ethnic federalism while also potentially resolving

some of its shortcomings. The introduction of NCA required a partial disassociation of ethnicity from territory, or at least a shifting of the emphasis from territoriality to non-territorial arrangements. Renner had argued:

"The land cannot be arbitrarily divided up and reconstituted. The territory is an inflexible, inert factor. However, it has become easier to bring together and link living people as a consequence of the development of the transport system … Economic and cultural interests unite inhabitants of the most remote districts. The individual has become less tied to the soil…" [10: 32-3].

If Renner noted in 1899 that the transport system had made it easier to link persons across territories, it is even more so in the 21st century, with technology continuously evolving not only with regard to travel but also telecommunications and 'new media'.

By combining territoriality and non-territoriality in diversity management, titular nationalities such as the Tatars have more than one mechanism at their disposal to promote their cultural rights. Consequently, Tatars can benefit both from institutions within the Republic of Tatarstan and Tatar NCAs outside Tatarstan, as well as the World Congress of Tatars. The combining of territoriality with extra-territoriality was also Renner's approach, by which non-territoriality would be employed in instances in which state and nation – or the 'boundaries' of an administrative unit and a particular ethnicity – did not coincide. However, this article has shown that the existing NCA system in Russia significantly differs from the original NCA model as it was developed by the Austro-Marxists in the twilight of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The main differences concern: the forms of management of nationality issues themselves (with regard to levels of autonomy, registers and resources, as well as NCAs' scope of action), and the relations between nations and the state. A particularly crucial difference relates to the approach to the distinction between the cultural and political spheres. The net demarcation between the two is a characteristic of both the Russian and Renner's models; yet the interpretation of 'culture' is significantly narrower in the Russian NCA system, by which the absence of political actorness for NCAs tends to result in their exclusion from processes that shape law and public policy affecting the interests of Russia's nationalities. This, in turn, causes top-down decision-making in the management of Russia's cultural and linguistic heterogeneity.

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[32] Among the ethnic republics and other nationalities, Tatars are in the strongest position, as they are the largest ethnic group in Russia after the Russians, and, within the Republic of Tatarstan, they constitute a numerical majority.

If we consider the area of education, it transpires that the Russian system of NCA (and of management of majority-minority relations generally) significantly diverges from Renner's model, *including* territorial forms of autonomy. Not only are decision-making and policy in the area of (non-Russian) education not under the direct control of NCAs outside ethnic republics, but the autonomy of the republics in devising ethno-cultural education policies can also be curtailed through federal intervention. With regard to cultural autonomy, NCAs can become involved in education in or through the medium of local languages, but they do not directly and autonomously manage schools. Consequently, the practical impact of NCAs is generally linked to the efforts (and creativity) of their representatives and the specific conditions at the local level (such as availability of resources and opportunities to cooperate with the local administration and schools), rather than NCAs being assigned an undisputed managerial role. Activities of Tatar institutions are mostly inward-looking rather than policy-affecting, and interventions are discreet rather than wide-ranging. By contrast, the original NCA model had linked the ethnic group and its individual members to resources and policy implementation in the area of education and culture. Even more significantly, the Tatar nation in Russia is not represented at the federal level, while federal legislation can restrict its *territorial* autonomy, by limiting the options available to the Republic of Tatarstan to promote Tatar language and culture. It is on the basis of these differences that NCA makes a less significant impact on the lives of persons belonging to nationalities that the original model had envisaged. The example of Tatar NCAs – as for other NCAs in Russia – shows that the lack of influence of NCAs at the state level and (federal) law-making can drastically reduce their scope of action. The absence of power-sharing arrangements affects Tatarstan's opportunities as a 'nation' to autonomously manage its cultural distinctiveness – that is, to enjoy genuine 'cultural autonomy'.

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НАЦИОНАЛЬНО-КУЛЬТУРНАЯ АВТОНОМИЯ: РОССИЙСКАЯ МОДЕЛЬ, ТАТАРЫ И ЭТНОКУЛЬТУРНОЕ ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ

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В статье исследуются различия между оригинальной моделью культурно-национальной автономии (КНА), разработанной австромарксистами в конце XIX века, и тем, как она переосмыслена и воплощена в жизнь в постсоветской России. Показано, что в двух аспектах российская система КНА значительно отличается от оригинальной модели: во-первых, это ограниченность автономии в управлении национальными вопросами КНА в российской модели, во-вторых, отсутствие разделения власти между российским государством и его национальностями, что ограничивает возможности автономии последних в определении своего культурного предназначения. В частности, узкая интерпретация понятия «культура» в российской системе КНА приводит к исключению последней из процессов, связанных с формированием законодательной и социальной политики, затрагивающей интересы российских национальностей. В статье также рассматривается татарское этнокультурное образование, что позволяет обратить внимание на последствия конкретных выборов, которые делают более видимыми расхождения с оригинальной моделью.

Статья частично основана на данных, полученных в интервью с представителями культурных национальных автономий и конгрессов народов, а также общественными деятелями и учеными в России в 2010, 2011 и 2015 гг.

МИЛЛИ-МӘДӘНИ АВТОНОМИЯ: РОССИЯ МОДЕЛЕ, ТАТАРЛАР ҺӘМ ЭТНОМӘДӘНИ БЕЛЕМ БИРҮ

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Мәкаләдә австромарксистлар тарафыннан XIX гасыр ахырында эшләнгән милли-мәдәни автономия (ММА) моделенең оригиналы белән совет чорыннан соңгы Россиядә аның кабул ителүе һәм тормышка ашырылуы арасындагы аермалар тикшерелә. Россия милли-мәдәни автономия системасының оригиналь модельдән ике аспектта нык кына аерылып торуы күрсәтелә: беренчесе – Россия моделендә ММАнең милли мәсьәләләр белән идарә итүендә автономиянең чикләнгәнлеге, һәм икенчесе – Россия дәүләте һәм милләтләр арасында соңгыларның мәдәни язмышларын билгеләү мөмкинлекләрен чикләгән хакимият бүленешенең булмавы. Аерым алганда, ММАнең Россия системасында «мәдәният» төшенчәсенең тар мәгънәдә аңлатылуы ММАнең Россия милләтләре мәнфәгатьләренә кагылышлы канун чыгару һәм социаль сәясәтнең формалашуы белән бәйле процесслардан төшереп калдырылуына китерә. Мәкаләдә шулай ук татар этномәдәни белем бирү дә карала, һәм бу оригиналь модель белән аермалыкларны тагын да ачык күрсәткән конкрет сайлауларның нәтиҗәләренә игътибар юнәлтергә мөмкинлек бирә.

Мәкалә Россиядә 2010, 2011 һәм 2015 елларда милли-мәдәни автономияләр һәм халыклар конгресслары вәкилләре, шулай ук җәмәгать эшлеклеләре һәм галимнәреннән алынган интервью мәгълүматларына да өлешчә нигезләнә.

Төп төшенчәләр: милли-мәдәни автономия, этномәдәни белем бирү, австромарксизм, Татарстан Республикасы, этник федерализм, мәдәни хокуклар.