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Education and Ethnicity Revitalization in the Eurasian Countries of the Former Soviet Union

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Abstract

Over the past decade, the Eurasian countries of the former Soviet Union all underwent similar transformations with respect to education and ethnicity revitalization. Each country has prominent ethnic populations with strong revitalization agendas who struggled to preserve their language and culture from assimilation and repression. Upon independence, revitalization efforts, while plentiful, were hampered by the reality of post-independent multilingual/multicultural populations that forced indigenous ethnic groups to contend with both their own revitalization efforts and the often conflicting agendas of other ethnic groups. Five stages of development that underscored the relationship between cultural revitalization, language acquisition and ethnic identity are: 1) limited socialization of linguistic/cultural knowledge, 2) vocalization and implementation of linguistic/cultural revitalization, 3) reinforcement of altered minority/majority configurations via language/culture laws, 4) ethnic-based conflict based on rejection of radical social change, and 5) institutionalization of revitalization agendas.

1 Introduction

Over the past decade, the Eurasian countries of the former Soviet Union experienced similar transformational patterns in the revitalization of education and ethnicity. This relationship has historical roots which combined elements of cultural revitalization, language acquisition, and ethnic and nationalistic identity. In the last decade, education served three purposes: a) traditional formal education as a means for cultural maintenance or extinction; b) nonformal education as a means for cultural rejuvenation, and c) revitalized formal education, which served to define, promote and maintain new and emerging ethnic identities. This educational impact consequently affected the formation and adherence to multicultural education throughout Eurasia.

2 Revitalization Foundations

Petherbridge-Hernandez and Raby (1993) delineated four historical eras between 1920 and 1990 through which indigenous ethnic groups in Europe maintained cultural and linguistic

identity and used that identity to define nationalistic agendas. These eras remained consistent in the formation of Eurasian cultural awakening in which diverse ethnic groups used language/culture literacy as a rallying point for defining nationalistic/cultural agendas. In this process, education's role in revitalizing linguistic, cultural and nationalistic socialization was unparalleled, as "education was and remains the primary tool that defined majority dominance and minority subservience" (Kagedan 1991).

Contrary to the Petherbridge-Hernandez and Raby model, in the final stage of development Eurasian countries were not havens in which single ethnic groups achieved cultural revitalization. Indigenous language/cultural literacy reflected both preexisting and new forms of ethnic solidarity, and upon independence, strongly united ethnic groups succeeded in redefining agendas that maintained and enforced revitalization goals. However, severe economic hardships, ethnicity-based conflicts, and the complexities of being a multicultural and multilingual state resulted in unexpected inequities that made the achievement of these goals difficult (Brubaker 1994; Ray & Poonwassie 1992).

During both Tsarist and Soviet periods, the Russian ethnic group constituted the dominant socio-political and economic group, even in areas where Russians were numerical minorities. The term "nationals" was given to non-Russians residing within their own geographical territories. In many regions, local nomenclature of Russianized nationals (ethnic indigenous) perpetuated a typical center/periphery dependency model in which ethnic minorities were accountable to the Russian majority, whether locally or in Moscow. In the post-Soviet era, the legacies of these terms and their applications have changed little.

Inferior indigenous educational attainment echoed societal inequities. Throughout, Eurasia, a disproportionate number of indigenous people attended and completed higher education, and an escalating number of ethnic students dropped out of National Schools before the eighth grade. In 1992, twenty percent of non-Russians attended Russian schools and yet only two percent attended universities. Lack of education deprived minorities of desirable jobs and social positions which further limited future opportunities and perpetuated the poor as disadvantaged. Neither Soviet industrialization nor Russian privatization policies helped the underemployed who were typically rural indigenous minorities. As a result, many indigenous people related neither to their own nor to the dominant culture. This accounted for some being more marginalized in 1996 than they were in 1917. A continued policy of Russian acculturation further threatened indigenous groups to the brink of cultural extinction (Batsin 1993; Tkachenko 1993). This pattern is not atypical in countries where multicultural diversity underscores socio-economic unbalance and subordination (Ogbu 1993; Teck 1993).

Soviet ethnic policy proclaimed the importance of minority ethnic cultures and established the National School to help promote "nation building" (Russian, *natsionalnoe stroitelstvo*) of titular indigenous cultures. However, reinforcement of cultural legacies was undermined by limiting education to folk traditions which ignored both quality and quantity of cultural knowledge. Simultaneously, Soviet policies fostered a "Soviet people" ideology that blended cultures, histories and alliances of all Soviet peoples under a common bond of *sliyanie* (assimilation). Toward this end, conscientious effort was made to disrupt indigenous identity and to create unique combinations of ethnic groups via forced migration, disruption of traditional economic and social patterns, intensive Russification policies, and educational denial and/or misinterpretation of cultural/historical realities. As a result, many ethnic groups were forced to create and share multicultural legacies. This resulted in a deliberately created cultural difference, where none had existed

previously. Indeed, although official policy promoted the concept of unity via the “Soviet person”, the reality of ethnic differentiation and indeed nationality ranking along an evolutionary scale from tribe to developed nations persisted (Brubaker 1995; Singh 1995; Slezkine 1994; Batsin 1993; Tkachenko 1993).

Historically, diverse levels of indigenous economic, technological and literacy existed. Prior to the Soviet period, non-Russian ethnic groups (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan) had rich literary histories that spanned centuries. Post nineteenth century literary histories for Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine and some Central Asian countries; and rich oral histories with limited or no written history (Kyrgyzstan, Yakutia and several Siberian ethnic groups) also existed. There is no correlation, however, between indigenous economic, technological and literacy levels and the intensity of desire for linguistic/cultural revitalization.

Post-independence, Eurasian countries contended with a multicultural and multilingual heritage, where the existence of more than one numerically significant minority ethnic group remained the norm. As multiple ethnic groups articulated revitalization agendas, and as many indigenous minority groups were transformed into a political majority, cultural conflict was heightened by conflicting perceptions of whose culture would predominate.¹ In the name of self-preservation, some regions, like Estonia and Latvia, limited the rights of non-titular indigenous peoples. In regions where the titular indigenous and Russians were almost numerical equals, such as Kazakhstan, a bicultural/bilingual compromise was planned. The agendas of empowered minorities in the Republics of Chechnya, Tatar, Tuva and Saka conflicted with those who preferred to maintain the status quo. Russians labeled themselves “minorities under opposition” to help support their agendas in Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, and the Ukraine. The agendas of other ethnic groups conflicted with both the titular indigenous and Russians in Moldova between Ukrainians and Russians, in Tajikistan between Uzbeks and Russians, and among minority Poles who resided in the Ukraine, Latvia and Lithuania. Finally, several ethnic groups viewed revitalization as a means of countering their linguistic/ cultural extinction in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Siberian Far East, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

3 Revitalization Development

The bond between ethnic revitalization and language/culture education has historic roots. Fervent cultural conviction enabled ethnic groups to withstand intense linguistic/cultural repression. Collective anger over this suppression of heritage emerged in the 1980s as the cultivation of ethnic revitalization. Matuszewski (1993) claimed that this revitalization countered “resentment and abandonment felt by long-suppressed peoples” (p. 2). Revitalization development took four forms: 1) Identification of formal educational policy that promoted cultural maintenance and/or extinction, 2) Emergence of revitalization agendas via nonformal education, 3) Manifestation of a policy for altered formal education that serves a new majority, and 4) Cultural conflict resulting from multicultural revitalization agendas.

3.1 Formal Education: Agent for Cultural Maintenance/Extinction

Throughout Tsarist and Soviet history, formal education impeded as well as promoted ethnic revival. Although primary level curricula reflected the cultural heritage of non-Russians, the overall educational system promoted Russification policies, which undermined the socialization of indigenous culture. In this process, the maintenance of Russian culture contributed to the cultural extinction of many non-Russian ones.

Russification policies began during the Russian empire, and education, when available, included a Russified curriculum, with Russian as the language of instruction. Although some schools had multicultural names, few indigenous students were actually enrolled in them.² Under Soviet rule, non-Russian educational policy (including language policy) shifted from periods of extreme suppression that facilitated cultural extinction to periods of limited acceptance that, while still promoting Russification, acknowledged elements of cultural rejuvenation (Petherbridge-Hernandez & Raby 1993). During the 1920s, the *Korenizatsiia* policy included a) development of a parallel school system, Russian and National Schools (the latter were to help non-Russians maintain their cultural identities), b) creation of written languages for pre-literate ethnic groups, c) transcription of non-Cyrillic script into Latin script, and d) limited indigenous language publications. Due to unequal supplemental resources, languages with developed histories (Armenian, Azerbaijani, Georgian, Kazakh, Tatar, Ukrainian and Uzbek) enjoyed more language freedom than those languages with less-developed histories (Byelorussian, Finno-Ugrian, Moldovan, Paleo-Siberian, Yiddish) (Babtseva 1995; Smith 1995a, 1995b; Batsin 1993; Krasovitskaya 1993; Tkachenko 1993; Volkov 1993).

During the Stalin tenure, Russified formal education policies prohibited the use of Armenian, Azerbaijani Turkish, Byelorussian, Moldovan and Ukrainian. In 1938, literacy campaigns were conducted only in Russian and it became the mandatory language of instruction, Russian class size decreased and instruction hours increased. Russian language teachers received a 15 percent raise, and professional journals and research institutes highlighted Russian language instruction. In the 1940s, Arabic and other languages with Latin alphabets were changed to Cyrillic script, which was especially devastating to indigenous education in Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan. Formal education suppression accounted for public disuse of many languages since the 1950s. The Khrushchev era, 1953-1964, saw a limited resurrection of previously banned indigenous literature and primary language education. However, during the Brezhnev *Zastoi* (stagnation), 1964-1978, Russification policies intensified and National Schools all but completely lost their indigenous character. Nonetheless, previous allowances plus a blossoming dissident movement that illuminated inequities in human, religious and cultural rights formed the foundation from which the various stages denoting social change eventually emerged (Batsin 1993; Krasovitskaya 1993; Tkachenko 1993; Volkov 1993; Raby 1992).

By the 1980s, non-Russian languages “enjoyed the right to freedom but not the right to equality” (Smith 1995a: 46). Formal education allowed some non-Russians to maintain their linguistic/cultural heritage by fostering formal and nonformal multicultural folk education in terms of dance, music, costume, and traditional food. However, in so doing, it largely ignored or misinterpreted more substantial aspects of the culture. The elaborate network of pioneer/komsomol multicultural education could not be considered avenues in which linguistic, historical and cultural appreciation was manifest. Indeed, the

predominance of Russian as a necessary tool for academic, social and economic mobility served as an important incentive for choosing Russian rather than National Schools, even if National Schools offered a Russified curriculum and used Russian for instruction. This was supported by a system where most secondary schools and all vocational, technical and other higher education institutions were taught only in Russian. Indeed, by 1986, the non-Russian RSFSR school population was 19 percent of the overall population, yet only 9 percent attended National Schools (Tkachenko 1993). Consequently, the Russified formal educational system became a vehicle for the cultural extinction of non-Russian ethnic groups.

At National Schools, indigenous language/culture was taught as single subjects, and often, students studied two or more languages prior to learning their own. By 1980, few non-Russian languages were taught beyond the third grade, and access was severely limited. For example, in 1986, out of 100,000 schools in the Kyrgyz capital, only one high school taught Kyrgyz as a subject (Krasovitskaya 1993; Rywkin 1992; Akaev 1991; Kagedan 1991).³ By 1988, only 19 national languages were taught beyond first grade, of which eleven concluded at the third grade. Post-third grade language instruction occurred in Tuvins (seventh grade), Yakut (ninth grade), Bashkir and Tatar (eleventh grade), and Georgian (university). By the demise of the Soviet Union, despite the growth in the number of National Schools, these schools remained “national” in name only, as they shared a common curriculum with Russian schools and were distinguishable only by their majority of non-Russian students. In the post-Soviet era, despite the magnitude of social change, the Institute of National Problems in Education encouraged cultural revitalization, but only within a Russified foundation.

3.2 Nonformal Education: Agent for Revitalization

In the 1980s, in a period called the Khrushchev thaw, a new generation matured whose parents were allowed limited access to indigenous language/culture, yet who themselves, were forbidden such education. Fueled by memories of persecution and encouraged by dissident movements, ethnic language/culture symbolized deep-rooted identities that were resilient to change. Cultural identity was the cornerstone of the Estonian, Georgian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Moldovan and Ukrainian socio-cultural independence movements. This new generation became the first to experience the dichotomy of Russification in formal education and nationalism in nonformal education.

Despite intense Russification pressure, many non-Russians were able to maintain elements of their linguistic/cultural heritage via nonformal education. In the late eighties, these nonformal channels often served as the rallying force for Eurasian revitalization and some nationalistic movements, as well. A vast array of indigenous cultural centers, clubs, and after-school activities explicitly promoted revitalization. These institutions not only taught cultural artifacts that reinforced traditional culture, but through linguistic/cultural literacy training, moral education and anti-drug/alcohol education, they helped to counter the alienation that resulted from decades of Russian colonialization (Singh 1995).

In the late eighties, a proliferation of nonformal nationality-based groups emerged including three hundred such groups in Kazakhstan alone. Other examples included Alifbo [alphabet] Uzbekistan and Turkmenian self-education manuals; Ana Tili articles in Kazakhstan; Ecological Handbook Kwek Tiin (EarthBreath); Ecology camp in Elgai, Sakha Republic, Ekology groups in Kyrgyzstan; Green Front in Kazakhstan; Islamic study groups

in Central Asia; “Kitchen meetings” of the Georgian National Liberation (1978-1989); National Cultural Centers for indigenous in Nikolaevsk-na-Amur, Groups; Nenets cultural revival programs; Khabarovsk Krai T.V. program, “People of the Amur”; Long-Distance Education via television and computers; Spontaneous and Non-Spontaneous Youth Groups; and children’s “singing revolution”, in which nationalist songs were sung in their native language immediately upon independence (Yegorov-Crate 1995; INTERCOM 1994; Kuratov 1993; Richards 1993; Rwykin 1992; Sadomskaya 1991; Central Asia File 1989; Gudava & Gudava 1989).

Between 1988-1991, nonformal education supported the revival of indigenous language/culture as a key element of nationalistic movements in the Armenian Pan-National Movement (ArCP), Association of Korean Organization of the Northern Caucasus, Azerbaijani Popular Front (APF), Buryat-Mongol People’s Party, Byelorussian Popular Front (Adradzhen’ne), Estonia Popular Front; Islamic Party of Tajikistan (Rastakhiz), Iug’r society of Komi-Permiak; Latvian National Independence Movement; Latvian Popular Front; Moldovan Popular Front, Nationalist Kazakh Alash Party and Azat movement, Regional Association of Small Peoples of Chukota and Kolyma, Ainu Council on Kurils/Sakhalin, and the Autonomous Okrugs of the Evenko, Koryak-Evenki (Magadan Oblast), Ukraine Popular Front (Rukh), and Uzbek Popular Front (Birlik). In addition, Russian national consciousness explosion ranged from cultural revival to Pamyat, the Russian militant-right movement, which sought to minimize the consciousness assertions of non-Russian ethnic peoples (Lallukka 1995; Huttenbach 1993; Zaprudnik 1993; Dunlop 1991; Trapans 1991).⁴

It was also through nonformal education that post-Soviet multiculturalism occurred. Many Russian merchants used nonformal education to learn non-Russian languages in order to deal more effectively with American, European, Central Asian, and Asian traders as well as with migrant workers from throughout Eurasia and the world. In regions demanding titular language proficiency, Russians and others participated in nonformal education projects as a means for acquiring citizenship and language competency.

Indigenous language/culture retention hinged upon what Paulston (1980: 16) referred to as the “conceptualization of liberating nonformal education”, in which indigenous used nonformal language education to lay the foundation from which cultural independence was eventually received (Petherbridge-Hernandez & Raby 1993: 1). Brubaker (1994) defines this process as a “resilient ethnonational and ethnoreligious identity structure than could survive over centuries even in ethnically mixed environments” (p. 3). Throughout Eurasia, minority cultures that experienced some level of glasnost during eras of cultural and linguistic suppression, and survived through nonformal, often clandestine channels, eventually supported nationalist movements that were instrumental in cultural and political revitalization.

3.3 Revitalized Formal Educational Policy

Influenced by the politics of perestroika and the openness of glasnost, nonformal movements (1986-1991) asserted linguistic/cultural revitalization policies to define, maintain and secure their newly found independence. To some extent, the void left by communism was filled by ethnic fever. As non-Russians created opportunities to resurrect and explore their language/culture, they defined laws to maintain, legitimize and perpetuate indigenous

literacy and through it, an independent state. Implementation of revitalized policy was, however, dependent upon the educational strengths in the formal sectors.

Language laws initially provided permission for, and encouraged indigenous language literacy on all levels of education, and after independence, defined indigenous languages as the lingua franca for a particular region. Language laws became concrete symbols of resistance to past and future forms of Russification and neo-colonialization. These laws also disassociated education with communism, Soviet teaching materials and pedagogical methods. Between 1989-1990 (but as early as 1972 in Georgia), a series of language laws were enacted that included: 1) giving indigenous languages official status; 2) allowing the indigenous language to become the language of government administration, including international communication; 3) mandating that people who provide public services must demonstrate a working knowledge of that language; and 4) delineating provisions for linguistic minority groups (Gudava & Gudava 1989; Kagedan 1991; Clemens 1993).

In response, the Supreme Soviet 1989 Language Law allowed native languages to become official in their territories, although maintained Russian as the official language of inter-ethnic communication, and hence as the language of instruction in formal education. Some regions enforced compromise bilingual language laws which emphasized both Russian and titular indigenous languages, such as the August 1992 Tatarstan Sovereignty Law, the 1992 Tuva and Sakha constitutional language laws, the 1993 Buryat language law, and the revised Kazakh June 1992 draft constitution.⁵ Other regions held steadfast to their insistence of having the titular language as the official language, such as the 1989 Taiji State Language Law; the August 1991, Declaration of the Ukrainian Primary Language Law, and the 1991 Kyrgyz Language Law (Nationalities Papers 1995; Clemens 1993).

While the road to independence coincided with cultural and linguistic revival, overall success varied and was tenuous as a result of divergent populations. The demise of the Soviet Union left multicultural, multilingual states that sought preservation of a single culture rather than harmonious interaction among cultures. What could have been the culmination of nationalistic development instead became the beginning of a new stage that encompassed ethnicity related tensions and conflict.

3.4 Multicultural Conflict

An ideal harmonious multicultural state was countered by the reality of xenophobia, persecution and genocide found throughout the affected regions. The mono-ethnic illusion which supported cultural revival justified human rights violations as a way for indigenous peoples to avoid minority status once again. Some opposed bilingualism because it could lead to a loss of indigenous groups' political & economic leverage. In the post-Soviet era, ethnic hostilities and economic conflicts, both perceived and real, were equally responsible for redefining ethnic relations and for forcing a reconciliation of multiculturalism and preservation of minority identities while not losing national affinity. The more the titular ethnic group felt threatened by others, the more likely it was to erect legal barriers in the form of language/citizenship laws. For example, Estonia and Latvia had language and residency requirements for citizenship that affected approximately 20 percent of the population, while Kazakhstan, (42% Kazakhs and 32% Russians) had dual citizenship/language policies (Metcalf 1996; INTERCOM 1994; Juviler 1992).⁶

Struggles ensued among Russian majority, Russianized indigenous and nationalistic indigenous all of whom had conflicting agendas that resulted in instability and in some instances, violence. Internal and external migration also redefined social relationships and increased ethnic tensions. As the number of Russian emigrants increased, particularly from Central Asian and the North Caucasus, those who remained became the weaker minority. Often, emigrants were the most educated and well-trained workers in the region, and their loss in terms of a knowledge base was devastating. At the same time, as these groups resettled, often in Siberia, they augmented a local Russian/ Slavic power-base. As a result, language preference became divided along rich/poor, rural/urban and center/periphery terms (Smith 1995a; Brubaker 1994; RA Report 1994; Mitchneck 1993; Izvestiya 1992).

Revitalization efforts had three repercussions. The first involved an opposition to learn indigenous languages despite the passing of language laws. Before 1991, Russians living in non-Russian territories were rarely literate in indigenous languages, even if indigenous people were a large percentage of the population. In 1987, only 0.7 percent of Russians living in Kazakhstan knew Kazakh, and until 1990, National Schools in Uzbekistan taught more Russian than Russian schools taught Uzbek. Many non-titular people who were pressured to learn new languages, blatantly resisted it. Tatarstan Republic presents a typical pattern. In 1992, laws legalized bilingualism, yet in 1993, 77 percent of Tatars knew Russian, but only 7 percent of Russians knew Tatar. Similarly, Russian still predominated in schools in Kazakhstan (1992), more than fifty percent of Russians in Lithuania were illiterate in Lithuanian (1993), and 12 million Russians in Ukraine still refused to learn Ukrainian (1994). Despite a five-year transition period, many non-titular people claimed that they needed 15-20 years of transition time before the law is enacted. Indeed, many language laws were only moderately enforced due to insufficient number of teachers, texts, dictionaries and incentives. Lack of support for bilingualism intensified tensions in Belarus, Latvia, Moldova and the Republics of Tatarstan and Tuva as the titular population, realized an inability to use their own language for everyday activities (Chinn & Roper 1995; Smith 1995b; Statteika 1995; Mongush 1993; Vebers 1993; Zaprudnik 1993).

The second repercussion involved Russianized non-Russians who were physically and psychologically removed from their cultural foundations and socialized in Russianized boarding schools and/or institutes of higher education. These individuals were alienated from their cultural roots by ignorance of their own culture, and from the Russian culture due to an inability to assimilate completely. In the midst of social change, many Russianized non-Russians were among the first to protest against changing the status quo (Brubaker 1994; Nokolaeva 1993).

The final result involved competition for limited power and self-preservation by non-titular minority ethnic groups who often opposed titular indigenous groups. Multicultural conflict increased when Russians became secondary level minorities in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan and tertiary level minorities in Georgia, Latvia, Moldova, and Tajikistan. In the Siberian Far East, Korean and Chinese migrant workers not only displaced indigenous peoples but also threatened historic secondary minorities like the Ukrainians, Germans and Poles. Secondary and other minority groups oftentimes were forced to learn two or more languages while simultaneously trying to preserve their own. A continued depressed economy made educational revitalization of the titular ethnic group difficult at best and educational revitalization of secondary minorities all the more impossible (Gordon 1993; Khisamutdinov 1993; Shakhrai 1993).

From 1994 to 1996, eighteen out of the twenty-one former Republics and 180 “hotspots” experienced culture-based conflict to which secondary minorities were especially vulnerable. Conflict varied from Lithuanian protests (stemming from a lack of church facilities) to economic polarization in Siberia to ethnic rebellions and wars in Georgia, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and North Caucasus area.⁷ As Kassof (1994) claimed, the efforts to “protect minorities and to reduce conflict emphasized the value of culture and group identity” and in the process “often reinforced, rather than blurred the lines of demarcation between populations and actually deepened social and political rifts” (p. 1).

4 Institutionalization of Revitalization Components

As educational policy evolved, the problem to satisfy demands for all levels of language instruction for different ethnic groups increased. Two patterns emerged. The first, monolingual/cultural education, was stressed in Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, and the Ukraine whereby all ethnic groups were encouraged and/or forced by law to become literate in the indigenous language. Some laws made opposition to learning the titular language illegal. Alienation by and persecution of non-titular groups resulted, and little changed, except for now “Germans in Kazakhstan no longer fight with Moscow, but with Alma Ata’s policy of Kazakhstanization, as one majority had been substituted for another” (Anweiler 1993: 7; Vinokurova 1995). The second pattern, bilingual/bicultural education, provided, at least in theory, equals status for numerically strong indigenous ethnic groups, such as in Kazakhstan, Moldova, Sakha Republic and Tatarstan Republic. For the most part, the titular population was almost entirely bilingual and was pushing for more equitable bilingual laws. In the best of conditions, the reality of bilingualism/biculturalism remained dubious and in areas where there remained a high degree of indigenous illiteracy, such a system became separate and unequal.

Institutionalization of revitalization components was subject to economic problems that plagued Eurasia, and eventually became impossible without monetary, technological and human resources. As a result, the old system often prevailed (with Russian language instruction), not out of choice, but because a new educational system could not be maintained financially. In particular, three problems hindered revitalization efforts: 1) inadequate structural foundation; 2) inadequate educational foundation; and 3) a debate over orthography.

An *inadequate structural foundation* existed in the quantity and quality of educational facilities. After 1992, there were not enough schools to physically handle the growing number of students, making schools that operated on second and even third shifts quite common. In many regions, implorable working conditions included numerous schools with no gas connections, no running water or central heat, in capital repairs, and due to unpaid bills, many educational institutions had no electricity. Reports of mismanaged funds further complicated these problems (Raby 1992). In addition, as education received a smaller percentage of federal funding, poorer paid teachers and impoverished conditions proliferated. During 1996 alone, 3,300 educational establishments in Russia participated in a continuous strike for back wages, and better wages and working conditions (Okoneshnikova 1996, May 30, 1996, October 8).

The *inadequate educational foundation* included an acute lack of adequately trained ethnic language teachers, ethnic language texts, dictionaries and teaching materials, a

historical foundation that included ethnic language illiteracy, and an inproportionate number of ethnic students entering and graduating from institutes of higher education, particularly from pedagogical institutes. These inadequacies hindered many Eurasian ethnic groups from educating themselves. It was difficult to get indigenous students to enroll in and complete higher education at rates near the proportion of their population. In many regions, indigenous students received an inferior education. This resulted in the perpetuation of negative stereotypes which fed into ethnic tensions. High unemployment rates of recent higher education graduates further compounded the situation.

While many universities created special faculties for indigenous and Asian studies, indigenous language/culture specializations were still lacking in many pedagogical institutes, and multicultural education was even more rare. The consequences of inadequate indigenous education ranged from reader preference for newspapers in Russian (such as in Belarus) to higher education still being offered in Russian or in the newly preferred language, English (such as in Kahzar University, Azerbaijan).⁸

A *debate over orthography* prevented significant educational change in some Central Asian countries and in Moldova. The question of returning to Latin or Cyrillic script became a symbol of opposition to Soviet cultural imperialism in the late eighties. Many Eurasian alphabets were changed into Latin script in the twenties and thirties and then later changed into Cyrillic script in the forties. These changes delayed literacy attainment of a whole generation. Currently, many Central Asian nationalists want to return to Latin rather than Arabic Script since only a few can decipher early manuscripts in the original Arabic. Resolutions to change the alphabet to Latin script along with revived native-based terminologies, were passed in Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. As a result of the 1995 Latin Alphabet Law, Azerbaijan street signs, newspapers and schoolbooks now use Latin script. In Moldova, a similar resolution awaits full implementation (Chinn & Roper 1995; Smith 1995a; INTERCOM 1994).

5 Revitalization Examples of Success

Given that social change can require generations to take root, Eurasian bilingual seeds planted in 1992 may, in the future, produce fully revitalized languages/cultures. Throughout Eurasia, programs were initiated in which one level of formal indigenous language/culture instruction was added annually combined with nonformal language education via clubs and media supplements. For example, in 1991 Kazak was taught as a subject in kindergarten and 1st grade, and by 1993, Kazak was taught up to 3rd grade and as a graduate specialization in Kazak studies. The Kazak press simultaneously augmented Kazak literacy education with a daily column. Indeed, throughout Eurasia, newspapers printed in both indigenous and minority languages gained popularity.

In general, revitalization efforts did enable a growth in formal education languages from forty-four languages offered at some level in 1986 to sixty-six by 1990. In addition, a plethora of nonformal educational avenues were implemented. Elements of success were not limited to titular populations, but occurred among other minority groups as well. In 1993, the widely attended conference *National School: Concept and Technology for Development Seminar* reiterated a direct link between education, language acquisition and ethnic self-identity, which in turn has affected educational policy throughout Eurasia. Table 1 highlights some examples of success as defined by access to indigenous language/culture education.

6 Conclusion

The phenomena discussed in this article were not case specific. Each case corroborated a process whereby ethnic cultures experienced some periods of linguistic/cultural glasnost during eras of political suppression and used nonformal, often clandestine channels to socialize this knowledge from one generation to another. In this process, the critical stage was not desire for independence but rather an implementation of altered minority/ majority configurations.

Over the past decade, the Eurasian countries of the former Soviet Union experienced similar transformational patterns with respect to education and ethnicity revitalization. Each country had prominent ethnic populations with strong revitalization agendas who struggled to preserve their language and culture from assimilation and repression. Upon independence, revitalization efforts, while plentiful, were hampered by the reality of post-independent multilingual/cultural populations that forced indigenous ethnic groups to contend with both their own revitalization efforts and the often conflicting agendas of other ethnic groups.

Eurasian countries depicted a dichotomy between forces that promoted revitalization efforts (i.e. formal and nonformal education) and those that undermined such efforts (i.e. the realities of multilingual/multicultural conflict). Major obstacles included: a) ability of people to change political affiliations quicker than the ability to erase the effects of centuries of Russification, b) nonexistent structural, economic and educational foundations for indigenous education, and c) splintering of multiethnic minority groups within a region, including Russians and Russianized indigenous, each with their own vested interests.

Complicating the entire process was the inability of the government to provide the necessary elements of economic prosperity and domestic tranquility to support a social system in which revitalization could thrive. Current elections indicated that although cultural revitalization may evoke change, it may not be enough to sustain it. Nationalist movements that led sovereignty campaigns against Soviet Moscow suffered election defeats in Belarus, Lithuania, Moldova, regions of Russia and the Ukraine. What was once a rallying cry for change became an obstacle for economic growth and development.

As English became the preferred international language that linked Russians, indigenous populations, migrant workers, and international aid, the decision to invest in indigenous revitalization efforts has been questioned. The growing prevalence of pidgin languages (Russian and titular), especially in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Ukraine, were indicative of transformations occurring within society itself. While pidgin languages were not officially sanctioned, (i.e. they were not taught in the formal educational nor in the nonformal educational sectors) they have popular support via verbal communication. Their future impact should not be ignored.

In conclusion, the primary issue under study was one of survival. Survival of a revitalized culture required accentuation of a single language/culture in deference to the needs of all others, often in the form of language laws. A divergent multiplicity of language, culture, religion, and political orientation fragmented society and escalated ethnic-based conflict. The issue of altered majority/minority relations is central to understanding the relationship between revitalization, maintenance and ethnic-based conflict. The manner in which these relations is dealt will determine the success or failure of the revitalized Eurasian case studies.

Table 1: Examples of Linguistic/Cultural Revitalization⁹

REGION	PRE-1991	POST-1991
Belarus	Polish was banned from schools in 1831.	1993, 305 Polish students studied Polish as a subject.
Buryatia Republic		Official subject (1993). In 1993, Buryat Pedagogical Institute had 105 graduates who chose to teach in rural areas to help promote Buryat culture. 1995 opening of the Ivolga Datsan Spiritual Training School.
Chukhota Autonomous Okrug	No native language/culture curriculum	Creation of 57 general education schools, a pedagogical college and vocational school in Provideniya and Anadry, and a cultural center in Anadry, all of which incorporated a curriculum that stressed Chukhota culture and language (1992).
Gorno-Altai Republik		As a result of the "One Language Law" (1993), an elementary Altai children's dictionary was published, "Altai Language in Pictures" (1994) to revitalize Altai language/culture.
Kamchatka Oblast		2nd Annual Itelmen Scholar Conference stressed Itelmen and Kamchadal ethnic non formal efforts as well as bilingual education (1995). Itelmen textbook was published (1996).
Kazakhstan	Less than 2,500 of 9,000 Kazakh primary schools offered Kazakh as second language.	Law was passed to substantially increase teaching of Kazakh annually (1994).
Magadan Oblast		21 schools revived study of Evenki language; Magadan Teachers Continuing Education Institute offered workshops on Evenki language teaching and textbook creation (1992).
Moldova	10% of kindergartens used Romanian as primary language (1989). Romanian was a "foreign language" in higher education.	71% of all secondary schools taught Romanian as primary language (1993).
Primorski Krai	No language textbooks	17 indigenous language textbooks (1993).
Sakha Republic	Pre-1963, Yakut was primary language of instruction, 95% used Yakut at home and to a lesser extent outside of the home (1991).	1992 teaching Yakut was permitted in rural areas. 1994, 400 rural teachers and 200 urban teachers are bilingual; Yakut is offered at the university, at 600 primary and secondary schools. 1995 an Ecological Yakut language primer was distributed to all 32 regions of Sakha Republic.
Tatarstan Republic	40% illiteracy rate (1980)	33% literacy rate (1993) with Tatar offered at schools, gymnasias, as a subject at the university, a Tatar newspaper. 1996 agreement to re-open Tatar Cultural Center which was closed in 1941.
Udege Okrug	No Udege language textbooks	Udege language alphabet and textbooks created (1993). Nonformal education for language/culture combined with eco-tourist ventures (1995).
Ukraine	No Ukrainian or Polish language schools	14 Ukrainian language schools (1992); 10 Polish schools (1993)
Uzbekistan		1994 – Uzbek as a state language. University lectures increasingly being read in Uzbek; Nizami Ganjawi Pedagogical Institute being pressured to train more indigenous teachers.

Notes

1. Post 1991, numerical representation within the general Russian population is Tatars (3.8%), Yakuts (0.3%) and Tuvians (0.1%). Within individual republics the ethnic composition is 48.5% Tatar / 32% Russian; 33.4% Yakut / 50.3% Russian and 64.3% Tuvian / 32% Russian. Estonia contained 500,000 Russians plus other numerically smaller minorities including Ukrainians, Poles and Central Asian migrant workers (Pettai 1993; Metcalf 1996; INTERCOM 1994; Batalden & Batalden 1993; Mongush 1993; Chinn 1993; Gordon 1993).
2. See for example the Russian/Mongolian School in Irkutsk and the Vladivostok Russian/Chinese schools (Khisamutdinov 1993).
3. No primary schools used Kyrgyz as a primary language, and 1/5 of all students attending vocational-technical schools were Kyrgyz. As a result of the native language campaign, initiated by Kyrgyz writer/advocate Chingiz Aitmatov, several kindergartens became bilingual in 1991.
4. In the Primorskii Krai, Elena Sosio, an ethnic Nenets scholar coordinated cultural revival programs for 30,000 diverse indigenous peoples (Okoneshnikova 1993).
5. The Kazakh policy was altered from a Kazakh-centric policy, while the Uzbek bilingual policy in the 1989 "Law of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic on Languages" was later altered to echo *Birlik's* demands for Uzbek dominance. The multilingual Moldovan policy of the September 1989 revised language law gave cultural concessions to Moldovans, Russians and other ethnic groups including Ukrainians, Gagauz, Bulgarians and Jews (Chinn 1993).
6. The Estonian 1992 Constitution decreed that only citizens can vote and that non-Estonians, including Russians and others who lived in Estonia for generations, were not eligible for citizenship. A 1993 amendment allowed non-citizens to vote in local elections. In the meantime, the amendment has been replaced with a law that allows non-Estonians to vote after five years of citizenship beginning in 1992. In addition, an "Alien Law" now regulates the annual number of new citizens.
7. Instances of violence included the following: (a) Tbilisi April 1989 massacre which started as a protest against inequitable minority policies, including the loss of status for the Georgian language, and continues today with conflicts between the Georgians, Ossetians and Mingrelians; (b) Alma-Ata riots, 1986, fueled by a revitalized minority consciousness, "Kazakhstan for Kazakhs" that opposed replacement of Kazakh First Party Secretary by a Russian; (c) Ferghana Valley riots, June 1989, between Uzbeks and Meskhetians who both wanted autonomy, resulted in the evacuation of 11,000 – 60,000 Meskhetians (Turkish speaking Muslims) into Russian refugee camps; (d) Tajik civil war which started in February 1990, when Tajik nationals protested against an increased number of Armenian migrants; (e) Moldova conflicts, 1990 when Slavic majority in Trans-Dniester and the Khalky of Moldova both attempted succession from Moldova; (f) Nagorno-Karabagh continued conflict between Armenians and Azeris; (g) Kyrgyzstan conflict in 1993 in the northern territory between Turkic and Mongol clans accentuated ethnic conflict between Kyrgyz and the one million Russians in the area; (h) Chechnya civil war, 1994 violence exploded and currently the entire North Caucasus region is extremely volatile.
8. Personal interview with Inna Gzudskaya, Shafiyeva Firangiz and Zeinalova Zemfiza, Kazan University, Baku, Azerbaijan, November 11, 1994 (see also Sukhnat 1993).
9. Babtseva (1995), Chinn & Roper (1995), Lallukka (1995), Lannon (1995), Yegorov-Crate (1995), Okoneshnikova (1993), Sukhnat (1993), Tkachenko (1993), Vinokurova (1995).

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