

Economic Determinism and the Inter-ethnic Integration of the Soviet Union

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Abstract

Multiethnic polities came to face severe challenge from nationalism, as human history grew into the Twentieth Century. This tension was most ostensible and sharpest in the Soviet Union, a communist state institutionally cultivated national identities while at the same time strove to maintain hyper-centralization. This article explores a relatively understudied sphere: the economic dimension of imperial integration. With a deep belief in economic determinism, the Soviet state exercised four forms of economic integration – centralization, equalization, interdependence, and ideologization. Centralization gained experiences from revolution and civil war, which concentrated facilities and resources of strategic significance at the Union level. Equalization stemmed from multiple sources, but one of which was the need to showcase egalitarian ideology in ethnopolitics. Interdependence was engineered to block external connections and form a domestic circulation, enhancing the cost of secessionism by deepening integration at the level of infrastructural power. Finally, ideologization referred an effort to draw on economic development and plan to shape a transcendent future-oriented identity, which displaced Russian as well as non-Russian nationalism. By analyzing the historical combination of four means, this article reveals the complexity of economic determinism in multiethnic integration. This article also offers a horizontal perspective in understanding the Soviet economic system.

How did empires maintain unity? Whereas most research focuses on political and military means such as elite rotation, inter-ethnic check-balance, and repression, this article, based on the unique case of the Soviet Union, explores the economic dimension of the multiethnic integration. As a modern multinational polity, the Soviet Union embodied three features: institutionally cultivating national identities, exercising infrastructural power in domestic control and international competition, believing in Marxist economic determinism to prevent ethnic centrifugism. Drawing a longitude survey of the Soviet history, this article elaborates four means of economic integration: centralized control on strategic facilities and resources, equalization of opportunities for development across nationalities and regions, interdependence among ethnic groups and zones through infrastructural power, and ideologization to forge an identity with a common Soviet economic space. This article reveals a complicated relationship between ethnic identity and economic process.

Sociology of Empire and Economic Nationalism

Empire's integration goes against economic nationalism. A core debate on economic nationalism is on definition. Economic nationalism can mean at least four mutually related movements or policy preferences, which implies that there is no fixed relationship between economic nationalism and any normative ideologies. The first is economic integration within a national border, usually associated with

strong state intervention into economy. The role of state may encompass a wide variety of measures and regimes, including the articulation of a consensus on national interest, tariff protectionism, state-planning or state-directing, and industrial policies (Gao 1998; Szporluk 1991). The second refers to equality and evenness, highlighting the fair distribution of economic production and products across various strata of a national society – to make the entire nation wealthy rather than certain individuals or classes wealthy (Greenfeld 2001). A third appeal of economic nationalism speaks to autarky, which seeks a reduction of dependency on foreign actors, be other nation-states, international organizations, or global transborder capitals. The fourth form of economic nationalism, which places nation at a level of culture, pursues policies that can cultivate a national identity and homogeneity. In this scenario, economic miracle is a base for shaping national pride (Helleiner 2002).

With the concept of economic nationalism identified, a related question comes of how empire copes with the challenge of economic nationalism from its colonies and peripheries – more precisely, to what extent economic integration between the core and the periphery can impede the latter's secession. With many cards to play in controlling the border areas, empire takes economic integration as a mission vital to not only its intactness but also prosperity. Existing theories have suggested different approaches in economic integration. Marxist theory of imperialism highlights exploitation, dependency, and uneven development, which caused the colonized unable to and even unwilling to quit empire, out of the fear that severing the economic connections would cause dysfunction and collapse (Good 2008). In a worst scenario, imperial core has no place for peripheral nations in its economic planning. Under an exclusive arrangement, there was no elite from colonies allowed to participate in economic building, even at a low level. A more advanced approach of integration considers the importance of human mind, viewing naked dependence and coerce as brutal. This approach sought to forge economic equality among nations, which manifests in even development across imperial core and periphery. This approach can further split into two versions. One highlights fair distribution of welfare while the other emphasizes equal participation in production.

Soviet Union as a Special Case of Double Movement

The Soviet Union hardly counted a traditional empire. Most empires exercised geopolitics by supporting some forms of nationalist secessionism, using the latter as a strategic instrument to undermine imperial enemies (Hall 2017), but none had ever adopted a format that officially self-organized as a union of nation-states. Within the USSR, union republics and other autonomous units were not sham structures, but rather retained linguistic, cultural, and some formal political rights, by Terry Martin's terminology, an affirmative action empire (Martin 2001). Eventually, as economic proportion increased, these national units gained more bargaining power vis-à-vis the union center. In this sense, the ethnofederalism of the Soviet Union was a hotbed which persistently cultivated nationalism.

Yet, the imperial facet of the Soviet Union should never be understated. Throughout its seven decades of existence, the USSR was a Leninist centralized pseudo-federation, only with exception for the early 1920s and the late 1980s, and probably, Khrushchev's experiment of decentralization at the turn of the 1960s. Although the union faced perennial threats from local nationalism, which implied a decay in centralism over the long term, it never rescinded the effort of maintaining unity and control. Centrifugalism stemmed from multiple sources: the awakening of peripheral populations, the augment of bargaining power from local interest groups, the geographical extension of economy into Central Asia, Far East and North, the fading of communist ideology, the passing of charismatic leaders at the union center, and the geopolitical change in regions adjacent to the Soviet Union. Accordingly, the effort of maintaining unity reflected the

interest of central apparatus, as well as their agenda of competition with the West, the minimalization of rule cost, and development. The struggle between fragmentation, decentralization, and control shadowed the entire Soviet history.

Apart from naked political exclusion and military repression, economic control was of extreme significance in the Soviet Union's struggle against nationalism. Economic construction was placed at the center of political agenda, for many reasons. Unlike kleptocratic authoritarianism that focused on sheer robbery, the Soviet Union defined its ideology by an industrial developmentalism. Despite the historical vicissitudes over the long term, the materialist belief was maintained that communism had to be based on advanced economic development and technology. It was also a longstanding consensus that eventually communist regime would transform all peoples of Russia into modern nations, though how peoples benefited from the modernization remained disputed. The competition with the West on the colonial world further reinforced this developmental belief, that the Soviet Union had to create a more powerful model of production to showcase the advantage of the socialist regime. For all these reasons, economy was central to every area of Soviet politics, including nationality affairs.

This article draws data from a wide variety of sources. Biographies of economic leaders and planners of the Soviet Union, published archival documents, orders, and textbooks on technology, economic history and geography used at Soviet schools, newspaper essays, periodicals, conference proceedings, and pamphlets written by Soviet authors, as well as secondary materials authored by historians.

Economic determinism in sociology

Classical sociologists endorsed the thought of economic determinism to different extent. Karl Marx believed that people's behaviors, institutions, and ideologies can ultimately attributed to their roles in economic activities. Instead of a special term of "economy", Marx always specifically referred to concrete elements such as production, distribution, exchange, and consumption. According to Marxist economic determinism, one is able to change the society by changing economic conditions (Ellwood 1911). While Marx implied a social integration based on homogenous relationship with means of production, known as class consciousness, Emile Durkheim draws a more organic imagination. Durkheim argues that social solidarity increasingly hinges on division of labor as religious sacred power faded, which suggests a version of economic determinism as well. In premodern societies, individuals were similar to each other, held together by the shared common mentality derived from similar social life. By contrast, in modern societies, society splits into groups alongside division of labor, which creates an interdependence. Such integration suffices to overcome social alienation to preclude the disintegration of society (Smith 2020). Durkheim even furthers his thesis to the issue of nationalism. As Durkheim states, nationalism may succeed religion as a new form of self-celebration (Dingley 2008).

Modern sociologists have two important contributions in economic determinism, one in advancing and the other on reflecting. Ernest Gellner suggests a dual relationship between economic integration and nationalism, which defines the area of economic studies of empire and nationalism (Hall 2019). On the one hand, economic integration – "industrialization" in Gellner's term – as a process of standardization presupposes a cultural homogenization, which only nationalism can achieve. Accordingly, a society may seek industrialization in order to achieve cultural homogenization as well as broader integration via-a-vis secessionist nationalism. On the other hand, Gellner, rightfully, suggests that economic integration can become a process of exclusion as well, to arouse secession among the peripheral population who fail to be incorporated and benefited (Gellner 1983). Yet, for Gellner, as many scholars criticize, the missing link

is what economic unity means and how it translates into integration (Conversi 2007; Meadwell 2012), which leads to the perplexing question of whether the unification and session are essentially one process or not (Meadwell 2014).

Whereas Gellner implies the complexity of industrialization, an explicit reflective perspective comes from Karl Polanyi. Polanyi criticizes economic determinism as artificial and false – in premodern societies human behaviors were never determined by economy or any other singular factor. At the same time, Polanyi points out that the collective belief in economic determinism yields an outcome which economic determinism predicted. The effort of forging a de-embedded, de-regulated, and de-territorialized free market since the turn of the twentieth century provoked vehement counter movements, in the form of protectionism, autarky, and even fascism and national communism (Polanyi 1944). Contrary to Marx's and Durkheim's optimism of an economy-based global integration, it is in Polanyi's thesis that a cosmopolitan economic regime ultimately led to fierce economic nationalism at sub-global level (Thomasberger 2012-13). Following Polanyi's thesis, a long scholarship switched discussion to the agency of political power vis-à-vis global economic integration.

A no less relevant thinker was Adam Smith, who in general endorsed an international system integrated through division of labor among nations as well as national solidarity through wealth accumulation. Conceding the usage of competition, Smith had an idea of cooperation, which governed his economics. Smith viewed empire as an economic arrangement from which at least two benefits could be anticipated: security service provided to all members and economic benefits from free colonies (Hopkins 2013). Nevertheless, the case of the Soviet Union differed from Adam Smith's ideal-typical imperial envision in a fundamental way: the interdependence was more of an artificially engineered system, though involving some spontaneity, than a voluntary regime of free trade.

Soviet Economic Thought on Nationality Affairs

When it came to economic determinism in actual historical process, what "determining" means becomes ambiguous, in the Soviet history. On the one hand, Lenin's emphasis on vanguard, which defended making a proletarian revolution in a backward society, deviated from Marx's thesis on the decisive role of economic process. On the other hand, once on power, Lenin's idealism translated into a determined belief that a persistent effort of engineering "economic foundations" could further shape many "secondary" political and social structures. This presumption was entrenched, for example, in shaping Soviet Union's strategies of exporting revolution, which put a priority on advancing indigenous industrialization as a base for creating a modern proletarian class. Such a line characterized the Soviet Union's Cold-War economic competition with the West in the colonial world (Friedman 2015).

In the area of nationality affairs, such a politicized economic determinism was ambiguous in another way. Before revolution the Bolshevik had little serious calculation on nationality question, since the default plan was to create an all-European socialist world which would produce sufficient attractions to various nationalities in Russia and leave no space for them to secede. Serious planning only started after the power seizure of 1917, when the Bolshevik surprisingly found that national secessionism from periphery was real and did not fade away with the downfall of Tsar. As indigenization appeared necessary to advance world revolution and legitimize the Bolshevik regime (Martin 1998), the Bolshevik switched to seek control in hard powers, one of which was economic. This aspiration became even intensified in the middle 1920s, marked by a drive to explore the internal territory, known as "socialism in one country", after the illusion of world revolution had bankrupted (Carr 1958-1964). Provocative subversions in colonial world irritated

Western powers, incurring economic sanctions and forcing the young Soviet state into autarky (Dohan 1976). This propelled the Bolshevik to envision a unified exploration and mobilization of Russia's economic resources, which dictated dampening ethnic secessionism.

Central to the Soviet thought of economic determinism was the separability between politics, culture, and economy. According to the Bolshevik, nationalities could maintain self-consciousness through linguistic autonomy and uniqueness in arts and literature, while at the same time identify with a unified Soviet unity based on shared economic space and socialist relations of production. There was a multifaceted and historically varying understanding of how the two layers of notions could be merged and paralleled. Four elements defined Soviet conception of how economic process might pull people away from secessionism: deprivation, deterrence, gratitude, and identity.

Centralization

Bolshevism was defined by hyper-centralization. Centralization was the most persistent and fundamental strategy in integrating the Soviet Union. Whereas the rights of self-determination and linguistic autonomy was promised to non-Russians, Lenin, throughout the prerevolutionary years, made it explicit that no national autonomy was allowed within the Russian working-class party. This position led to the Bolshevik's perennial conflicts with the Jewish Bund and other national socialist parties. As to economic development, Lenin held the optimism that national revolution would only take place at political and cultural levels. By Lenin's estimation, given Tsarist Russia's economic integration, in terms of common market and Russian as a shared working language among industrial populations, no bourgeois secessionism would be able to attain success, and real proletariat self-conscious of its interests would be willing to stay within the new socialist Russia (Lenin 1971). After the takeover of 1917, negating the project of "All-Russian Nation", Lenin insisted that the former Tsarist Russia should be reorganized as a union of nation-states. Meanwhile, he emphasized that the entire Russia should be planned as a unified entity, which went against the will of union republics to separately develop national economies of their own.

Real experiences of centralization were derived from the Civil War. A most commonly used means of centralization was to take over crucial enterprises and facilities from local actors, which deprived the latter of the capacity for independent actions. In crushing the nationalist rebellions from Georgian communists, Sergo Ordzhonikidze, the hardliner-centralizer granted with larger autonomy than commissars elsewhere, simply took away the control over transportation hubs and crew from local authorities. He also set up a centralized regime to unify local militia, closely monitoring the nationalist government to prevent the latter from involving into skirmishes with German. Soon after the end of the Civil War, Ordzhonikidze unified the trade regime, with all foreign trade power transferred from the hands of Transcaucasian republics to Moscow (Kirillov and Sverdlov 1986: 145-47). Copying the same logic, the centralization of domestic trade extended to the entire Soviet Union, in the name of crashing misconducts and speculative crimes by tiny private enterprises (Tverdiukova 2011).

The decision-making of industrialization in the 1920s was an outcome of centralization. During the NEP, numerous Bolshevik cadres, influenced by the sentimental anti-industrialism then popular in the postwar Europe, called for a relaxing approach allowing for diversity in economic development. The union leaders, like Bukharin, insisted that priority should be placed on industrialization, which dictated a concentration of major resources at the center (Velikhova 1988: 358-70). In accordance with the top-down approach, economic discussions of this period at the Union level generally lacked a territorial perspective. Most debates took place on to what extent capitalist mechanisms of commodity, price, and finance applied to

socialist industrialization, how to distribute resources to different types of ownerships and branches of industries, whether or not it was possible to build socialism within one country, and so on. There was no voice from local interest groups institutionally involving to shaping the agenda of industrialization (Chistobaev 2003; laznyi 2012).

The economic reconstruction ensuing the Civil War continued the logic of concentrating scarce resources on top priorities. In a conference proceeding edited by Gleb Krzhizhanovskii in 1921, the general planner of the GOELRO, it was made clear that economic command and decisions had to be made at the Union level, with the power of setting up regional apparatus only granted to places which had historical connections with certain “proletarian centers” and were located geographically far away (Krzhizhanovskii 1957: 48). This proceeding also argued that existing economic setting-up within Russia was not a reflection of each region’s optical potential, but rather a consequence of long-term distortion and abuse by Tsar’s imperial expansion, serfdom and international capital (Krzhizhanovskii 1957: 92-97). In terms of division of labor, it was proposed that frameworks had to be set up by union institutions, whereas details and advice could be provided by local apparatus. As to increasing ethnic minorities’ participation in economic development, the recommended policy was to reset economic zones inappropriately formulated by the old regime, not to guarantee the latter discretion (Krzhizhanovskii 1957: 172, 199-200). Rather, complaints mounted that Russian cadres and technocrats dealt with non-Russian colleagues with arrogance, viewing the latter as backward and uneducated, which led to escalating conflicts (Gatagova, Kosheleva and Pogovaia 2005: 43-44). As the Bolshevik official textbooks boasted, the 1920s was a gold period for linguistic and cultural nationalism – legalizing national language teaching and promoting non-Russians into apparatus were the easiest most visible evidence of indigenization (Agaian 1977), but indigenization economic areas was more ambiguous and inconsistent.

The logic of centralization persisted throughout the Soviet history. Whereas Khrushchev drove a short-lived decentralization by imposing on regions more responsibilities, Brezhnev era was characterized by a struggling balance between local republics and hardliner-centralizers, when central planning organs had to consult and negotiate with republic institutions in managing economy. Nevertheless, the hard core remained unchanged that giant complexes of economy stayed in direct control by all-Union institutions, and republican-affiliated giant-enterprises were controlled by a centralized banking system and simplified taxing structure (Schroeder 1990). Territorial perspective never achieved significance in Soviet planning – by 1967 only two percent of GOSPLAN staff worked on territorial planning (Kirkow 1998: 30-31). The level of centralization reached such a high level that toward the end of Gorbachev’s reform local nationalists had not yet attained access to economic resources, since a substantial segment of local enterprises were in the firm control of the Union center (Kux 1990). In Ukraine, for example, before 1975 nearly one thirds of the national products was withdrawn by the union center. Though this proportion declined to twenty-five percent, concealed control did not wane (Melnyk 2007: 124).

The flaws of centralization became visible and intolerable over time, as local branches kept facing an extreme shortage of resources vis-à-vis the center. This suggested that the Soviet Union could not solely rely on concentrating every strategic resource at the center to maintain an economic unity. The early Khrushchevian period saw mounting complaints and quests on reshaping the power balance between the Union center and regions. Many regions required a systematic transfer of specialists on fishing, forest, and metallurgic industries downward to the levels of republics, states, and even enterprises, since these specialists had been concentrated at the central organs (Khlevniuk 2009: 169-74). There was also critique from below that central apparatus knew little about the country. Cadres never traveled for investigation

and learned information through bureaucratic paperwork in their office armchairs, which led to many mistaken decisions. Accordingly, pressure mounted that the Union center should regularly absorb cadres from enterprises, collective farms, and regional institutions, and to evenly distribute power (Khlevniuk 2009: 109-110, 160-63).

Equalization

The formative years of the Soviet Union underwent a blossoming of economic nationalism. The newly independent Soviet nation-states self-viewed as real sovereignty and took economic affairs seriously. In Soviet Belarus, national communists demonstrated independence in opposing Moscow's proposal for the peace pact with Poland, arguing that concession of forest to Warsaw would deplete the natural resources of the future socialist national republic. Such stubbornness aroused reaction from Moscow that Belarusian delegates should be excluded from the negotiations at the Riga Conference (Boroskaia 2018: 173-74, 212). Similar aggression took place in Southern Caucasia. Soviet Azerbaijan under the leadership of Nariman Narimanov pursued a monopolized control of the Baku oil, with the nationalist purpose of making the republic the center of the Transcaucasian Federation as well as the broad Transborder area encompassing Turkey and Eastern Mediterranean (Gasany 2013: 527-33). Likewise, Georgia, located at the center of the Transcaucasian railway in possession of crew, thought of itself as the unifier of regional economy as well as a gate-keeper in charge of Russia's connection with Europe (Kirillov and Sverdlov 1986: 133-34).

Early Soviet planning considered the quests of peripheral nations for modernization. As Lenin criticized the early drafts of the GOERLO, the plan of industrializing Azerbaijan only cared about extracting oil but neglected the overall development of the region. Apart from oil-refining facilities, this region, according to Lenin, should develop training school, electric powers, industrial manufacture, and other supportive infrastructures, to become a comprehensive modern economy (Baibakov 2016 vol.3: 13). Nevertheless, restricted by the scarce resource availability, the early Soviet state could only project a limited number of hydroelectric stations, which fell far behind the young republics' aspiration for economic modernization (Poliakov 1983: 103-04).

Even the most determined centralizers noticed that equalization may ease the Soviet rule. 1921 saw three anti-Moscow uprisings in Georgia, in pursuit of independence. After crushing rioters, Sergo Ordzhonikidze, a hardliner in political centralization, carried out an investigation of the economic roots of the rebellions. He made the conclusion that only a genuine economic inclusion could preclude secessionism. In his report Ordzhonikidze deplored that Western Georgia remained undeveloped and isolated. Local peasants had a rich production of beech riveting, corns, and silk, which sufficed to supply the manufacture in Siberia and create a large pool of employment of local population, but no one needed them. Instead, due to the bias against Transcaucasia as well as a lack of transportation system, the Soviet state had to import the raw materials from Sweden (Zhukov 2019: 264).

Equalization was also driven by geopolitical considerations. The prerevolutionary Russian economy was characterized by the overconcentration of a certain type of industry in one region, which caused disasters during the Civil War – the oil production in Central Asia and Siberia only accounted for around 10 percent of total amount in Tsarist Russia (Shaidurov and Lysenko 2020). Donbas coal mining was occupied first by the Germans and then by Makhno. The latter controlled the coal export as a bargaining leverage to pressure the Bolshevik, which caused crisis of heating immediately (Simonov 2016: 250-51). As to oil, before the revolution over 80 percent of Russia's oil production was concentrated in Azerbaijan (Mukhin 2018: 50-56). With Baku and export through Caspian Sea route cut off by the German, the British, and the

Turkish, Moscow saw a drastic decline of fuel supply (Simonov 2016: 253-57). The extension into Central Asia and Eastern Siberia also involved a consideration to move the supportive system closer to the front of confrontation with Japan and China, a learning drawn from the Russo-Japanese War.

The geopolitical drive of equalization manifested in the zigzag development of Soviet economic geography. Championed by Lenin, an ambitious plan was drafted in the course of the Civil War on the RSDLP's Eighth Congress, which regionalized Russia into twenty-two economic regions, each of which should achieve optimized productivities as well as mutual benefit with adjacent zones. Yet, there was not a clear and coherent definition on what economic geography was. Lenin's proposal of a well-integrated system of mutually complemented special zones did not come true. What substituted, in Stalin's industrialization, was a constellation of self-sufficient regional complexes, which were projected to be wartime backups. These complexes had to achieve autarky when the economic centers on the Western borders had been occupied by foreign enemies, a major learning from the Civil War (Baranskii 1965: 95-100).

The war-preparation did not suffice to drive equalization yet. Cadres' pressure for making a high record of output discouraged the effort of spreading factories far away from European Russia, while at the same time the Soviet military thought of "annihilating enemies at border areas" appeared conflictual with plans of industrializing inland Russia. The pre-1941 wave of economic equalization proceeded not without hesitations and zigzags (Stone 2005). The Soviet-German War saw an unintended wave of equalization. The war drove an emergent survey in Kazakhstan and Siberia. Geographers evacuated into these regions were organized to conduct a detailed field work, after which they were required to recommend shortcuts for transportation and wardrobes for grain storage (Lappo 1985).

Being an ideological commitment, in practice equalization unfolded in multiple senses, with differentiated levels of involvement occurring in peripheral republics. To indigenous people, equalization could be simply a physical proliferation of modern industry and agriculture which had little to do with local population except for environmental effects, as the construction of most mega-projects of Stalinist era were – the mining of non-ferrous metal in Central Asia, the felling of forests in Ural and Siberia, extension of fishing from reservoirs to rivers and coastal waters, laying of pipelines to connect Transcaucasia and Volga, as well as constructing of irrigation systems in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan (Chernenko and Smirtiukov 1967b: 45, 89, 97-98). Moreover, a persistent extension of economic power into Central Asia and Eastern Siberia could also speak to an increased participation of previously un-industrialized ethnic groups into the Soviet modernity. Such as electrification of cotton planting and modernization of logistic support for animal husbandry (Chernenko and Smirtiukov 1967a: 752). Though investment in Eastern and Southern parts of the Soviet Union increased, it fell far insufficient to achieve localization. Whereas engineers and technicians were mobilized away from Western part of the Soviet Union, a strategy of relative lower cost, local population in Central Asia, for example, Kazakhstan, continued to stay in traditional industries, playing the role of providing raw materials and accepting economic aids. A congruence of ethnic segregation with division of labor hence crystallized (Liebowitz 1992: 119).

Interdependence

The enthusiasm of engineering interdependence dated back to the moments of crises in Soviet History, mainly the Civil War and the Soviet-German War. During these crucial periods, small peripheral nations suffered economic collapse due to the cut-off of transportation, which severed the supply of manpower and raw materials as well as the access to external market. Decisive cases were Belarus and Azerbaijan. The former lost the shared market with the Polish Kingdom in the wake of the Great War, which led to an

economic avalanche (Tsvikevich 1919: 26-27), whereas the latter's oil industry suffered the interruption of the railways and Black-Sea access to Europe, which led to a drastic decline of orders and raw materials (Mukhin 2018: 76-77). A more disastrous situation occurred in Ukraine, where speculative crime hovered due to extreme shortage caused by the overall shutdown of transportation infrastructure (Fomin 1923). A lesson was hence drawn that interdependence should be artificially forged to enhance the cost of economic nationalism and, ultimately, to deter attempts of secession. Based on this learning, throughout the 1920s and 1930s Moscow made continuous diplomatic attempts in exporting oil to Finland and the Baltic states, with the purpose of monopolizing the latter's energy supply. Though such plots did not gain success as the British and the US interfered (Rupasov 2019).

One way of engineering interdependence within the Soviet Union was to sever economic relations with the external world. Many claims of economic nationalism came from the confidence that one region was more integrated with Europe than with the rest of Soviet Russia. In Belarus, for example, local leaders of the early 1920s insisted that the access to Western Europe should be preserved at any expense, from which Belarus would be able to attain credit, technology, and market to build a prosperous national economy (Lubachko 1972: 50). Such a potential nationalist assertion led the Bolshevik's decision later to block the trade between Western Belarus and the Eastern republic (Taras 2008: 291-92). Similarly, in Soviet Azerbaijan, the national Bolshevik leader Narimanov envisioned that the young republic would play an autonomous role in Europe, based on the conventional powers' acute need of Baku oil as well as the Black-Sea route. Over the negotiations on renting certain oil mining to Western companies, Narimanov even considered support from French capital. This aroused Moscow's reaction – commissar on foreign affairs Maxim Litvinov proposed that concessions to Western companies could be discussed but the negotiation had to be carried out within the framework with the Russian Soviet Republic (Gasanly 2013: 559-70).

There was a warning that the connections with foreign countries would grow into economic nationalism. In an official pamphlet published in 1921, for example, it was analyzed that Poland had to economically depend on Soviet Russia, since Polish national industry had a low quality, its products had no market in Western Europe and could only find outlets in Soviet Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia. The author further argued that given such economic base, the anti-Soviet offence of the Pilsudski government could only come from the financial support from France (Narodnyi komissariat po inostrannym delam USSR 1921: 5-7). There was also a report that the coal at Donetsk had no market within the Soviet Union because of foreign competition – for the central industrial region, the per cost of coal transportation from Donetsk was 60 kopeks while from Britain it was only 45 kopeks (Zhukov 2019: 264).

Engineering interdependency applied to relationship between non-Russian nations. For example, a large proportion of oil mining in Central Asia was completed by Azerbaijani technicians and engineers, through sending technicians or providing technological training in Azerbaijan or Central Asia (Akhmedov 2019). Economic specialization was a device central to forging interdependence as well. In drafting the first Five-Year Plan, it was proposed that Uzbekistan expand cotton planting and accordingly reduced grain production. This aroused opposition on the side of Uzbekistan in that it would increase the dependence on other Central Asian republics (Newton 1976: 88).

To transform union-republics' economic dependence from outward to inward, domestic transportation building was vital – without geographical connections, control on supply and export could only stay on paper. The first years of the Soviet regime from 1921-24 saw a zeal for purchasing locomotives and railway

facilities from the West, in spite of extreme financial difficulties in the aftermath of the Civil War (Heywood 2003). With economy reconstructed, the ensuing decades saw splendid waves of geographic discovery and transportation expansions. In a pamphlet evaluating Krym's economic condition, the author suggested substantial measures should be undertaken to build up transportation infrastructure to forge closer connections of Krym with other parts of Russia. As an autonomous region Krym stayed between Caucasian and Ukraine but administratively separated with both. The author mentioned that only transportation connections could build Krym's local industries of wood, sea products, and manufactures into part of the Soviet economy (Den 1930).

New railways were built up. It was resolved in 1920 that in installing equipment purchased from abroad, priority should be given to Ural and Donets, assuring the products of the two regions could be transmitted to other parts of Soviet Russia (Chernenko and Smirtiukov 1967a: 202). A more comprehensive plan was adopted in 1921 to electrify railway network and river ports within Soviet Russia, to integrate major industrial zones of the RSFSR into one entity (Chernenko and Smirtiukov 1967a: 316-17). After a survey started in 1926, a canal was created to break through Volga and Don water systems (Chernenko and Smirtiukov 1967c: 741-75). Railway and other transportation infrastructure (Chernenko and Smirtiukov 1967a).

Economic Patriotism

A paralleling effort of containing local economic nationalism was of psychological level, to shape a Soviet economic patriotism, which celebrated the Soviet Union as a unified and prosperous economic space. Such sentiment had been visible in the revolutionary period, when Bolsheviks and pro-Soviet intellectuals made the ambitious aspiration that the nature of Russia should be sufficiently developed under a new regime. Such a prosperous space would surpass Western European powers to make a solid base for the world proletarian revolution against imperialism (Golub et al. 1975: 147, 162). The Soviet propaganda of the GOERLO embodied this zeal. Propagandists proclaimed that this mega-project would connect separated peoples and regions of the Soviet Union into one unity through hydroelectric stations on major rivers, under which every region would be perfectly integrated into a well-designed economic geographic plan. A more banal form of economic patriotism was geography-teaching at elementary and middle schools. Students were demonstrated how vast potential the Soviet Union possessed in terms of richness and diversity of natural resources. Numerous biographies of geographers and explorers were published, to glorify these peoples' heroic marches into the far peripheries of Russia. Such patriotic teaching sought to convince students that in the prolonged contest with imperialist powers the advantage would ultimately rest on the side of the Soviet Union (Hara 1960).

Effort of shaping a patriotism for a unified all-Soviet economic space was also a byproduct of economic geography – the abundant materials accumulated through generations of geographical discovery of the Soviet territory. The GOELRO of the 1920s asserted more of a revolutionary zeal than a realistic plan. It boosted an ambitious discovery of the Soviet domain, a survey of each zone's natural resources and labor conditions, but the actual capacity of exploration was limited by a lack of educated manpower and unavailability of supporting industrial products (Budreyko 2020). There were also continuous debates among economic geographers, on such topics as whether or not industrial planning needed a territorial perspective, to what extent human being's agency – means and relations of production in Soviet terminology – would be able to free of the restriction by geographical environment, and how a passive adaption to environment people could be combined with active transformation of natural conditions

(Baranskii 1965: 89, 101-106). Outside of these polemics, it took time to establish research institutes, train geographers, and conduct explorations, which mostly took place in the 1930s – within the year of 1931 and 1932 ninety-two teams were sent to Eastern Siberia and Central Asia (Baranskii 1965: 75-80). It was toward the end of the 1930s that substantial and sustaining accumulation of geographical surveys achieved such an extent that they poured into middle-school textbooks as the materials for patriotic education (Baranskii 1965: 143).

Economic patriotism continued to carry a spatial and geographical connotation after Stalin's death, to an accentuated extent. An official long article published in 1955, the eve of Khrushchev's secret report, inherited a softened Stalinist tone that Soviet patriotism was based on the triumphing means of production of socialism, which had manifested over the past three decades in the fast-decreasing economic gaps with major capitalist powers. The author also argued that for the first ever time created a common social life for various nations of the Soviet Union, while at the same time each nation had been forged into a unique contributor to the treasure of world cultures (Gubanov 1955). As de-Stalinization proceeded, a new drive for shaping Soviet patriotism arose, with the goal of making a revitalized Soviet identity. This stemmed from the CPSU's urgent need to counterweigh the panic and confusion caused by anti-Stalinist ideological disillusion, as well as a search for an alternative to Stalin's disputed Russocentric and backward-looking imperialist patriotism (Tromly 2009). To displace Stalin's top-down patriotism that glorified Tsarist rulers, Khrushchev initiated a campaign of cultivating "regional patriotism", whereby students, party institutions, and schools were required to discover local geography and history. By gathering materials on factories, kolkhozes, sovkhozes, each locality was to celebrate the establishment moment of Soviet history. This campaign was not a repetition of the Kraevedenie of the 1920s, but rather one to dilute the reactionary Russianness to shape an ethnicity-transcendent identity of a common Soviet economic space (Donovan 2015).

Another strategy of equal importance to shape Soviet patriotism was a boast of the USSR's economic competitiveness vis-à-vis the Western capitalism. The USSR's effort of integrating into the Western market, despite its failure in the long term, was used as an evidence to show domestic audience the miracle of Soviet economic growth. Later, as the blockage from the West intensified, the USSR turned to the Third World, with patriotic propaganda emphasizing the popularity of Soviet industrial products and technology (Sanchez-Sibony 2014). Under such an aura, Soviet patriotism underwent an economic and scientific turn. The "Sputnik Generation" grew up receiving the education that the USSR had been a scientific superpower equivalent to the United States (Raleigh 2006). As Soviet economy grew, a socialist history eventually came into being, which provided materials for all-Soviet patriotic education. After Stalin's death, the legendary pilot Valerii Chkalov of Stalinist era was re-depicted as a heroic discoverer of Soviet polar areas, a person who changed Soviets' perception of time and future, which embodied the superiority of the Soviet system vis-à-vis fascism and capitalism (Bergman 1998). Textbooks for middle schools and special colleges usually included at least one chapter or preface in celebration of the economic achievement of the Soviet Union. In a college textbook for chemical industry published in 1957, for example, the patriotic pages covered a contrast of productivity with prerevolutionary Russian chemistry, the 1930s' reversal of strategic materials and equipment from import to export, heroic transfer of factories during the Great Patriotic War, as well as the postwar reconstruction. Envisioning the sixth five-year plan, the author claimed that the USSR had accumulated immense potential over the past decades, in terms of surveying natural resources and developing technologies, which would enable it to create more miracles in the near future (Nekrasov 1957: 30-57).

Concluding remarks

The four means of economic integration persisted throughout Soviet history, but the patterns of their combination varied over time. The early Soviet period, before 1945, was characterized by centralization and interdependence, both of which presupposed charismatic leadership, despotic power in massive resetting existing economic relations, and most importantly, a clearly-identified goal – preparing for war – in driving instrumental rationality. Re-shuttling long-existing economic relations to shape new zones of specialization was a bloody process accompanied with mass mobilization, terror, ethnic cleansings, and frequent cadre rotations, which characterized the revolutionary period from Lenin to Stalin. Moreover, and paradoxically, the exclusive focus on substantial hard power placed ideology at margin, as Barrington Moore pointed out, industrialization displaced ideological primacy (Moore 1950).

The second half of Soviet history saw more of equalization and economic patriotism. With Nazi defeated and Stalin denounced, the communist party, in a transition of from revolution to routinization, was propelled to find new bases for legitimacy. Unlike the pre-1945 war-driven transfer of factories, under Khrushchev and Brezhnev, extending resources and development to remote peripheries was derived from a burning legitimacy thirsty. The communist government sought to present the USSR to be a competitive socialist union where each nation could achieve equal opportunities in modernization. Such a quest was countering pre-1945 war-preparing instrumental rationality in that it often allowed efficiency to be encroached by ideological egalitarianism. This part is what Moore did not gain correct prediction – the primacy of ideology could be displaced, but the relationship was not a statistical linear one. Ironically, as revolution had survived, more resources were transferred from struggle to achieve the original goal.

The post-1945 Soviet Union was also characterized by a commitment to inventing new traditions. In comparison with other historical empires, Russia was fragile, in the sense that the multiple ethnic groups on its territory had a short common history. The limited integration was mainly achieved through military conquest, integration at the level of infrastructural power, forced assimilation, and imperial geopolitical tricks. In the cultural dimension, an inclusive “all-national” identity was thin, closely associated with Tsardom – this partly explained why the anti-dynastic Bolshevik Revolution evolved into a process of de-Russification (Riga 2012). Starting with such thinness, the Soviet Union thus continued to heavily rely on integration in infrastructural power – transportation, economic interdependence, centralized control over strategic facilities. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union strove to forge an ethnicity-transcendent identity. Due to the thinness of preexisting common identity, there was a recurrent tendency within this effort to retreat to Russocentric imperialism. To counterweigh the Russian chauvinism, the Soviet state, without an equally powerful counter-narrative, often resorted to building its patriotism on grandiose construction plan and economic achievement. This approach involved a fundamental flaw that once the performance legitimacy crumpled, the identity with Sovietism came to be displaced by ethnic nationalism. Nevertheless, from a long-term historical perspective, it is worth exploring how the seventy years’ integration had advanced the “indivisibility” of the former imperial space.

A final concluding remark is on the efficacy of economic determinism. As the first established state that institutionally and persistently implementing economic determinism, the Soviet Union embodied, more than any other historical cases, the complexity of economic determinism. There was no monolithic liaison between economic process and individuals’ ethnic identities. Economic power could be exercised both in a benign way of centripetally attracting marginals or in a malign way of deterring secessionist attempts. Economic power could also be extensive or intensive, through shaping a common pride and life experience

diffused among one generation of Soviets, or manipulated by a clear agency with a particular ethnic group as its target, to cultivate a sentiment of gratitude or deprive the latter of the means for independence. In terms of outcomes, it would be oversimplified to assert that economic determinism did not work. Though the Soviet Union broke up, economic connections engineered by the Bolshevik did not pass away, but rather continued to serve as bases for Russia's overt exploitation. Nor did such economic connections look immediately removable by external forces. The Soviet identity in Donbas, Dnest, Oseti would continue to fuel war and conflicts.

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