LOCAL SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND ANTI-IMMIGRANT FRAMES IN RUSSIA

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Executive Summary

This paper contends that neither cresting anti-immigrant sentiment nor deep cultural divisions is directly driving the rise of anti-immigrant mobilization in Russia. It argues that increased anti-immigrant mobilization (and an uptick in the targeting ethnic migrants for resettlement) is a consequence of individual social movements strategically adopting an anti-immigrant frame to promote recruitment, gain resources, and advance their movement’s particular cause. The paper uses the cases of Yekaterinburg’s Gorod Bez Narkotikov (City Without Drugs) and Krasnodar’s Cossack groups to inductively develop this argument and to demonstrate specific ways in which an anti-immigrant frame solidifies and advances individual movements. Through these in-depth cases, the paper highlights the importance of separating anti-immigrant rhetoric from action and the need to systematically examine the sub-national variation underlying the broader waves of anti-immigrant mobilization in contemporary Russia.
Introduction

On December 11, 2010, a riot involving thousands of right-wing protesters on Moscow’s Manezhnaya Square once again raised the specter of xenophobia and racist violence in Russia. Anti-immigrant mobilization is reportedly on the rise in Russia, potentially transforming a fledgling fringe into a thriving radical right. Individual attacks on migrants exceed 500 a year, the annual “Russian March” draws thousands of nationalist supporters into the streets of every major city, and local outbreaks of violence occur with alarming frequency. Polling data in Russia suggests anti-immigrant sentiment is also increasing among the public.¹

Yet no organization or party behind the riot on Manezhnaya Square has been identified, and the participants themselves were a disparate group of ultra-nationalists, neo-Nazis, pro-Kremlin youth groups, and angry soccer fans. In fact, Russia’s apparent wave of anti-immigrant sentiment and mobilization consists of a broad diversity of groups – ranging from well-established “legal nationalist” organizations within the political mainstream to autonomous fringe groups engaged in guerilla warfare against migrants and the state. The diversity of anti-immigrant mobilization raises a number of interesting questions about why and how anti-immigrant mobilization differs across regions, how it spreads, and what potential it has to consolidate into a single tide of mobilization.

Many observers, of course, have noted a lack of unity and cohesion within Russia’s far right movements. Larys and Mares, for example, describe “an ideological clash” between groups over interpretations of Russian history and approaches to the

¹ Levada Center 2010, tables 15.4, 15.6.
Orthodox Church.\textsuperscript{2} Varga finds that, “[f]ar from being dominated by only one organization, it includes skinhead and hooligan subcultures, ‘nationalist associations’, political parties and intellectual circles (think-tanks).”\textsuperscript{3} Others go further, concluding that fissures within the far right establishment have undermined its electoral performance and promoted the overall decline of its political parties.\textsuperscript{4} But not all movements espousing anti-immigrant views are part of the far right. Some are addressing unrelated local concerns yet they find that using anti-immigrant rhetoric as a mobilizational frame can advance the objectives of their movement (and sometimes the personal goals of the movement leaders).

This paper suggests that the rise of anti-immigrant mobilization in much of Russia does not represent cresting anti-immigrant sentiment or even deep cultural divisions within its multiethnic population. It argues that increased anti-immigrant rhetoric and an uptick in targeting ethnic migrants for expulsion from localities is a consequence of individual social movements adopting an anti-immigrant frame to promote recruitment, gain resources, and publicize their particular cause. It uses the cases of Yekaterinburg’s \textit{Gorod Bez Narkotikov} (City Without Drugs) and Krasnodar’s Cossack groups to inductively develop this argument. For observers of the post-Soviet region, we believe this paper presents a more sober assessment of anti-immigrant mobilization in contemporary Russia (and departs from some studies in this regard). More broadly, however, it suggests that the contentious politics of migration in any country can generate a powerful anti-immigrant frame with a potential to be adopted by seemingly unrelated social movements. Lastly, it suggests that by studying anti-immigrant politics as social

\textsuperscript{2} Larys and Mares 2011, p. 130.
\textsuperscript{3} Varga 2008, p. 566.
\textsuperscript{4} Laruelle 2010, p. 34; Umland 2002.
movements, a more concrete and proximate understanding emerges that can complement studies of mass attitudes or legislative changes.

In examining these cases, the paper draws on 40 in-depth individual interviews with movement members, local government officials, NGO activists, and experts from the media and academia. It also utilizes a range of primary sources – regional and national newspapers, reports by non-governmental organizations, and internet sources – as well as the growing secondary literature on migration, identity, and mobilization in Russia. Across the universe of cases of local social movements in the Russian Federation, however, there are vast differences, making it a challenge to seek out and compare commonalities. Instead, this paper uses what Przeworski and Teune termed “most different systems” approach – a strategy in which a similar outcome (anti-immigrant mobilization) is explained by shared causal factors (a common mobilizational frame) despite the existence of other variables (origins, organization, and outreach) that represent the core differences between the cases.5 As summarized in Table 1, GBN in Yekaterinburg and Krasnodar’s Cossack groups are two local social movements that – while different in their origins and purpose, organizational infrastructure, and outreach to national movements – have both targeted ethnic minority migrants for deportation or relocation. Although there are important limitations in any small-n study, including selection bias, these in-depth cases “serve the heuristic purpose of identifying the potential causal paths and variables” that more fully explain the significance of anti-immigrant discourse in Russia’s local social movements.6 The remainder of the article reviews the extant literature on anti-immigration mobilization, outlines our argument,

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5 Przeworski and Teune 1970.
6 Geddes 1990; George and Bennett 2005, p. 23.
develops the argument in the GBN and Cossack cases, and concludes with a discussion of anti-immigrant frames in local social movements in Russia.

**Existing Explanations**

The comparative study of anti-immigration politics is vast, with many studies examining the far right in advanced industrialized democracies in North America and Europe.\(^7\) This literature highlights an extensive array of causal explanations, such as demand-side explanations, electoral institutions, and organizational features of the groups themselves. But rather than help us understand how anti-immigrant mobilization varies across Russia’s regions, most of these studies identify factors that lead us to expect a single, consolidated anti-immigrant movement in Russia, not many.

Some research attributes the success (or failure) of these movements to various demand-side factors that arise during periods of change – perceptions of cultural difference amidst immigration inflows,\(^8\) unemployment during economic downturns,\(^9\) and backlash effects against forces of globalization.\(^10\) Russia in the 1990s and 2000s contained many of these factors. It is home to the second largest immigration population in the world and has experienced a sharp uptick in anti-immigrant mobilization – even in regions that have not experienced large in-migration.\(^11\) Unemployment and economic restructuring – though some studies have questioned whether they help radical right parties\(^12\) – certainly apply well to post-Communist Russia, particularly in a context of

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\(^7\) Mudde 2007; Ramet 1999.
\(^8\) Gibson 2002; Fetzer, 2000; Betz 1994.
\(^9\) Jackman and Volpert 1996.
\(^11\) Alexseyev 2006.
\(^12\) Knigge 1998; Kitschelt 1995.
welfare state retrenchment and rising inequality. This literature predicts that rising immigration, economic decline and uncertainty in the post-Communist period would generate support for anti-immigrant politics in Russia, but they say little about its diversity of groups and organizations that have come to adopt anti-immigrant positions.

Other scholars focus on the opportunities afforded groups by institutional environments, such as electoral rules. These works provide compelling arguments for the performance of anti-immigrant movements in Western Europe. In post-Communist Russia, electoral rules – which are a mixture of plurality (first-past-the-post) and proportional representation systems – also matter but not in the way these studies predict. Conventional wisdom holds that plurality systems constrain the number of political parties and minimize opportunities for small fringe parties to win seats, while proportional representation has the opposite effect. In Russia’s weakly institutionalized electoral system, however, far right parties won some seats but performed poorly regardless of whether they competed in plurality or proportional representation contests. Despite a proliferation in the number of political parties, Russia’s mixed-member electoral system has not helped the far right consolidate their base, develop a coherent platform, and perform well in elections.

Still other studies emphasize features of the anti-immigrant movements themselves, such as their origins in nationalist subcultures and their internal organization and leadership. Mobilization is greatly advantaged, some argue, by those groups with a long track record of organization, stable leadership and personnel. And where a

16 Art 2011; Carter 2005.
movement lacks deep historical roots, a unified nationalist subculture can aid its recruitment and outreach. Russia’s groups can reach back three decades to late Soviet campaigns of anti-Semitism that prepared the rise of the Pamyat movement in the 1980s. Moreover, it enjoys support from a sizeable nationalist subculture of activists since the early 1990s. Why have these conditions – historical continuity and a nationalist subculture – not produced a single, dominant anti-immigrant movement in Russia? And why have some movements in Russia’s regions mobilized around anti-immigrant initiatives despite their lack of a nationalist subculture.

These, and other, arguments tell important parts of the story of rising anti-immigrant mobilization in Russia, but they inadequately explain its diversity across the country. As we argue below, this is because many of its movements are so different – characterized by historically unique origins, diverse organizational bases, particular ties provincial politicians, and varying success in outreach to the national level. While the localized nature of these movements has prevented the emergence of a consolidated anti-immigrant mobilization (even though favorable conditions exist for its development), the question of what, if any, common variable can explain the development of anti-immigrant mobilization in Russia’s regions.

**The Argument**

This paper argues that the increase in anti-immigrant mobilization is partly a consequence of some local social movements strategically adopting an anti-immigrant frame. This is true despite the variety of social movements across provincial Russia,

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17 Korey 1995.
18 Larys and Mares 2011; Laruelle 2010.
which reflect the country’s sheer size and the diverse political, economic, social, and demographic factors at work in its regions. To develop the argument, we treat anti-immigrant mobilization as a type of social movement, and identify four likely causal factors to explain how various movements in Russia might incorporate anti-immigrant agendas and target migrants. First, origins matter. Why and how a movement emerges in the first place is essential to understanding its objectives and why it might promote anti-immigration causes. Second, movements’ organizational resources – social networks and institutional structure especially – can explain why movements can successfully recruit new members, promote their causes, and bring about policy change. In the provinces of Russia, organization can explain who its leadership is, who supplies its human and financial resources (and why), and the nature of its political support – all of which may determine whether a movement is predisposed to pursuing an anti-immigration line.

Third, a movement’s outreach to national organizations, political parties, or government bodies can shift its focus toward or away from anti-immigration causes by bringing funds, infrastructure and publicity. Finally, a mobilizational frame can be strategically adopted – and adapted – by movements that may shore up member support, improve recruitment to the cause, and bring tangible resources to the movement. Such a frame that applies to local circumstances of some individual movements in Russia might explain their focus on anti-immigrant issues. We develop each of these below, drawing on social movement and migration literatures.
### Table 1: Most Different Case Comparison of Local Social Movements in Yekaterinburg and Krasnodar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GOROD BEZ NARKOTIKOV (SVERDLOVSK REGION)</th>
<th>COSSACK GROUPS (KRASNODAR REGION)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ORIGINS</strong></td>
<td>New Social Problems</td>
<td>Old Ethnic Identity Claims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--Arose to eliminate rising drug use and crime</td>
<td>--Arose to restore Cossack identity and land rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ORGANIZATION</strong></td>
<td>Societal</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--Enforcement and financial support from Uralmash</td>
<td>--Enforcement and financial support from local government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OUTREACH</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--Outreach to national level</td>
<td>--Focused at regional level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ANTI-IMMIGRANT FRAME</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--Identify migrant “other” to define drug use and crime as imported problems</td>
<td>--Identify migrant “other” to reaffirm Cossack “self” and defend Cossack land rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OUTCOME</strong></td>
<td>Mobilization targeting Gypsies, Tajiks, Azeris</td>
<td>Mobilization targeting Meskhetian Turks, Kurds, Chechens, Ingush, Central Asians</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The literature on social movements has long focused on the origins and internal organizational infrastructure of mobilization. Early studies, in their critique of arguments that deprivation or collapsing social structures drove mobilization, began investigating the importance of resources and strategies available to movements, exploring how social ties among activists affected the emergence and organizational structure of social
movements. As such, this literature serves to fill a gap in explanations of the rise of anti-immigration politics in Russia generally, and provides a basis for exploring sub-national movements.

Those movements that center on a single issue or purpose tend to foster greater internal cohesion. The cases examined here, however, arose for very different reasons, focusing each movement around its own objectives. GBN emerged as a societal response to rising drug use and crime rates in the city of Yekaterinburg and it has remained focused on the fight against drugs since it was established in the late 1990s. Cossack movements, by contrast, grew out of an intent to restore its ethnic identity, a search for historical justice as a repressed people during the Soviet era, and a desire to develop its cultural traditions (Programmy 2009).

A second feature concerns movement’s internal infrastructure. Dense social networks and effective mobilizational structures enable a movement to expand its activities from local concerns to broad-based mobilization. An essential component in most social movement organizations, therefore, is informal social networks that link collectivities of people together and drawing them into a movement. Historically, “informal social networks that lay at the heart of [many broad-based] associations,” and supported anti-slavery mobilization in 19th century England and the evangelical revival in America’s Second Great Awakening. In these and other movements, a singular objective and tight-knit networks helped movements combat state infiltration, resist repression, and avoid internal divisions and fragmentation into factions. It is also critical for recruiting

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19 See, for example, Gurr 1970; Smelser 1963; Oberschall 1973; Zald and McCarthy 1979.
20 Roizman 2014.
21 Tarrow 1994, pp. 56-57.
new members in order to sustain activism. As the connective tissue linking movement leaders with their base, mobilizational structures play an important coordinating role within a movement and can help sustain a movement over time. According to Tarrow, those movements in which mobilizational structures simultaneously coordinate the movement’s disparate parts without undercutting their autonomy are often the most effective forms of organization. Here too, though, our cases differ markedly. The origins of Yekaterinberg’s movement in urban-based community service, especially its involvement in drug rehabilitation centers, established community-level networks throughout the city. Moreover, in the late 1990s, GBN merged with a local organized criminal syndicate, Uralmesh, and it then acquired the mobilizational structures (internal structure, financing, and muscle) necessary to grow. Krasnodar’s Cossack groups, by contrast, drew on informal social networks rooted in Cossack identity and diffused across the region’s rural areas. Initially divided from within, plagued by multiple agendas and factional infighting, the Cossack movement’s infrastructure came not from a societal actor but from the Krasnodar regional administration. The movement has been absorbed into the territorial apparatus, which identified a leader, injected financial support, and imposed an internal organization that paralleled local state structures. One movement’s infrastructure came from a societal actor, another’s came from the state.

A third resource in mobilization is a movement’s outreach beyond its base to acquire financial, organizational, and political support. A key to mobilization, as studies of far right movements in Western Europe have shown, depend on a group’s cultural imprint on society and its ability to broadcast a message that resonates beyond its core

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22 Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson, 1980.
23 Tarrow 1994, p. 136.
membership. As Deborah J. Yashar has shown in her study of indigenous peoples mobilization across Latin America, successful subnational movements were those that sustained institutionalized links to regional and national social movement organizations. Yet, the cases below differ in their ability to forge ties outside their localities. GBN was successfully allied itself with several nation-wide movements with ties to anti-immigrant causes, providing a decentralized network of communication and support. Conversely, Krasnodar Cossacks’ attempts at outreach were limited and met with little success.

Within social movement literature, framing is usually seen as an enabling instrument that entrepreneurs within social movement organizations utilize to mobilize targeted groups. Similarly, master frames are traditionally understood as facilitators of mobilization, promoting higher levels of turn out when they are effectively coordinated with movement-specific frames. In the regional cases below, local social movements – GBN and Cossack movements – were able to integrate their movement-specific frames with a broader anti-immigrant frame that was promoted across Russia. While GBN’s movement addressed the issue of anti-drug use and anti-drug trafficking, its movement-specific frame was cleaning up the city – of drugs, of criminal activity, and of corruption within the city’s law enforcement agencies. There was also an emphasis on activism – a call to action – in the face of the social malaise that had descended during the 1990s. Cossack movements focused on cultural revival and staking a claim on land in the region, but its movement-specific frame recovering and restoring a lost Cossack culture and identity. For both of these movements, a master frame of anti-immigration invigorated

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24 Koopmanns and Statham 1999.
26 Snow et al., 1986.
and strengthened each of their movement’s goals. In Yekaterinburg, an anti-immigrant frame diverted blame for the city’s travails (and its inability to deal with them) onto Gypsies, Azeris and Tajiks. In Krasnodar, an anti-immigrant frame reaffirmed the Cossack “self” by identifying ethnic “others” who came later to the region and by reaffirming Cossack service to the state by focusing its provision of public safety and security on migrant communities. In both cases, the movement leaders made tactical choices on framing in the fluid environment of post-Soviet Russia and their capacity to adapt to shifting circumstances benefited their movements.28

Beyond the utility of an anti-immigrant frame for galvanizing support around a social movement’s local concerns by deflecting blame on, or identifying oneself against, a distant “other,” there are several advantages to deploying an anti-immigrant frame in Russia. One lies in the fact that most of the migration into Russia is either from regions within the Russian Federation or from other post-Soviet states. Having once been a single state – an empire-state that granted many advantages to its ethnic minorities – the determination as to whether a labeling someone a foreigner refers to an “internal” migration (from within Russia with a focus on non-Russians from the North Caucasus) or “external” migration (from other post-Soviet states) is defined by a persisting ambiguity between self and other.29 This ambiguity in how migrants are perceived matters because it allows for far greater flexibility in the use of anti-immigrant frame, which can be used to identify groups as an unwelcome foreigner, depending on the social and political circumstances of the social movement that adopts this frame. Because of their shared historical experience, and a lingering ethos of Soviet-era policies of internationalism, the

28 Snow and Benford 1992.
29 Beissinger 1995.
difference in citizenship between migrants from Tajikistan and migrants from Dagestan, for example, is a technical legality is not one that on its own determines the stigma attached to each group. Moreover, two wars in Chechnya and ongoing violence in the North Caucasus has often left many groups more accepting of “external” migrants from Central Asia than “internal” migrants from Russia’s own regions. This contrasts sharply with concepts of native and foreigner in other countries hosting large migration populations.

Another advantage, related to the first, is while post-Soviet republics enjoy a visa-free regime, the continued propiska system prohibits unsanctioned relocations of Russian citizens and of “external” migrants within the Russian Federation. This not only further blurs the difference between the two categories of migrants. It also provides a legal justification for extending an anti-immigrant frame to “internal” migrants – who through this frame are identified as illegal not as individual violators of the law but as a cultural group that does not belong. Therefore, many “internal” migrants from poorer parts of the country (i.e., from North Caucasus or Siberian republics) to urban areas are often unregistered, which means that so that they can be targeted as illegal residents by law enforcement just as external migrants can be.

Finally, subnational politicians have greater flexibility in the positions they take on immigration than those at the national level. While national-level politicians tend to conform to public attitudes toward immigration and “are reluctant to break the taboo against apparently racist or xenophobic positions,” subnational politicians are freer to respond favorably toward particularistic anti-immigration positions because they are not

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30 Multiple interviews with informants in Krasnodar, Yekaterinburg, and Moscow.
participating in a broad-based consensus or coalition. Moreover, in cases such as Russia, where there is a multiplicity of movements in far right politics, it is “easier for emerging political entrepreneurs to experiment with new issue appeals and to craft innovative political coalitions.” As a result, regional politicians act as political entrepreneurs in relation to local social movements, fostering mobilization when it serves their political interest, which often entails actively support a social movement’s adoption of an anti-immigrant frame in their jurisdiction. While true generally, this is especially likely in contemporary Russia, where the continued confusion with Russian migration and citizenship policy has opened a space for regional politicians and local movements to take actions independent of Moscow (to a limited extent) and shape public discourse on migration. In fact, non-governmental organizations have observed the increased use of anti-immigrant rhetoric by “an ever growing quantity of politicians” – especially at the local level. One report, for instance, documented a trend of anti-ethnic campaigning in gubernatorial elections in Volgograd and Pskov.

Yekaterinburg’s Gorod Bez Narkotikov

Situated on the eastern slopes of the Ural Mountains, the city of Yekaterinburg is both an industrial and political center in Russia. With a Soviet-era industrial base in metallurgy, machinery and metal processing, the region’s expanding economy and urban development over the 1990s has generated a demand for migrant labor – primarily in construction and outdoor markets – that drew a large population of migrants from Central

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33 Kitschelt 1995, p. 92.
34 Shevel 2012.
35 Kozhevnikova 2005.
Asia and the Caucasus. But the region has also had a large Gypsy population. Over the last two decades, Yekaterinburg has become a large urban center, an increasingly multinational population, and strategically important city both political and economically.

Established in the late-1990s, GBN initially maintained a relatively low political profile, mostly conducting educational programs on the dangers and social implications of drug use. Over time, it branched out into operating rehab centers for addicts and began conducting seizure operations against drug traffickers. As one activist recounted, GBN (known as Fund) had initially focused not on migrants from Central Asia or the Caucasus, but on the Roma population in the province.

It was possible for the entire population of Sverlovsk Province to watch the work of the Fond as it conducted raids against Gypsies. We have compact, settlements of the Roma population in several areas in the city. In some parts of these areas there are palaces, brick homes. Roizman started an information campaign that these houses were built using money from the heroin trade. There was a large public outcry. He gathered people near several houses in these Roma settlements. Then the government supported him, though officially these homes have been destroyed, because they allegedly did not have the proper documentation and permits when they were built.

By focusing on drug rehabilitation and counter-narcotics trafficking – two activities that continue to occupy it – GBN has integrated itself into local communities in Yekaterinburg and the surrounding area. This persistent single-issue focus and dense network structure has enabled the organization to remain internally cohesive and consistent in its objectives.

36 In 2002, for example, the Federal Migration Service FMS estimated that there were 500,000 Tajiks in the Russian Federation, with seasonal migrants accounting for 200,000 to 250,000 of the total. Bukharizade, N. 2002 ‘Seasonal Labor Migration in Tajikistan: Problems and Ways for Solution to Problems’. Asia Plus, 10 June.
37 Interview, Journalist, Yekaterinburg, July 2014.
38 Interview, NGO Activist, Yekaterinburg, July 2014.
A turning point came in August 1999, when representatives of the Uralmash social-political organization (OPS, in Russian) approached GBN to offer a partnership, though it was reportedly more akin to a takeover. The details of this partnership remain unclear. Uralmash OPS, an offshoot of the Uralmashevskaya criminal organization, was created shortly before local election in the summer of 1999. Uralmash OPS’s partnership in GBN’s anti-drug campaign was part of an effort to remake Uralmash’s public image. The gang had engaged in philanthropic work as early as 1997, when it organized a network of sports clubs, delivered care packages to retirement homes, and sent its own gang members as volunteers to patrol schools to prevent smoking. By 1999, the Uralmash leadership decided to “go legit” in order to secure economic gains won after sidelining other criminal groups in the region. While GBN likely provided Uralmash leaders with its good name, the criminal group provided GBN muscle and political connections to regional officials. But there were also several Uralmash leaders whose relatives had become drug users, which suggest personal motivations as well behind GBN’s development. This appeared to be a boon for GBN. It entered a new phase of activity in which it began to confront and harass drug distributors in Sverdlovskaya Oblast’ with the help of Uralmash members (the Uralmashevtsy). This partnership proved to be popular among many citizens of Yekaterinburg, given local and national

39 David Satter writes that Igor Varov, a businessman with close ties to the Uralmash group, became a leader for the GBN and announced that the organization would begin to cooperate with the Uralmash social-political organization, prompting many employees to resign. Satter 2003, p. 246.
40 “There are many versions [on the rise of GBN]. One of the predominant ones is that the Fund was created by OPS Uralmash. Another version is that OPS - socio-political, and the other – can be translated as an organized criminal group. It is believed that Roizman is a native of OPS. They created a foundation to serve as a “roof” for the redirected flows of their own money. Still another versions is that in the 1990s [the situation] in Yekaterinburg was really bad, and Fonders actively fought [against drug use and crime]. Local media covered their activities intently. It gained regional importance. This mythical image Roizman at the time and was formed - the fighter against drugs. And at the same time he was elected to the State Duma in 2003.” Interview, Researcher/Expert #3 on GBN, Moscow, July 2014.
41 Satter 2003, p. 244.
governments’ weak response to a growing drug problem. For two years the Uralmashevtsy patrolled many settlements and well-known locations for drug sales, until around 2001. The partnership also enabled GBN to establish an internal hierarchy of responsibilities. As one specialist explained,

Among Funders there exists the growth of a division of labor: one part gathers and systematizes information about narcotic dens, “barygakh” and so on; another writes on these facts corresponding to inquiries and announcements in the organs of the MVD, prokuratura, and so on.; a third, “operators” are people who participate in guiding militia/police in detainments, arrests, and searches as disguised to be false narcotics purchasers; a fourth – lawyers – participate in the court processes as witnesses for those making accusations in the processes, where the defendants are passed on as drug use (“narkoticheskim”) clauses UK; a fifth are volunteers (i.e., students narcotics doctors, etc.), who work in the rehabilitation centers of GBN.43

GBN’s alliance with the Uralmash also has drawn it into struggles among local authorities split between the regional governor and Yekaterinburg’s reformist mayor, Arkady Chernetsky. Gorod Bez Narkotikov has cooperated with the Governor of Sverdlovkaya oblast’ Eduard Rossel’, in large part because the politician forged a partnership with the Uralmash criminal organization in the past and reportedly used Uralmash against Chernetskii. Chernetskii and Rossel’ had a long-standing animosity towards each other, and GBN’s support for Rossel’ largely assured the radical group’s gubernatorial protection from Chernetskii.44 Chernetskii, by contrast, viewed Yekaterinburg as a global, cosmopolitan city on a small scale and sought to promote economic development. He brought in Armenian investment and took a more favorable stand toward immigration. For instance, when many local government organs reacted negatively to the May 2004 demonstration in Shirokaya Rechka, Rossel’ refused comment until he was forced to so during a visit to the oblast’ by a Tajik embassy

43 Interview, Researcher/Expert #2 on GBN, Yekaterinburg, July 2014.
44 For details on this intra-elite conflict, see Orttung et al 2000, pp. 521-522; Golosov 2004, pp. 130-133.
delegation. In fact, prior to this event, Governor Rossel’ provided GBN with “unlimited support” and rarely commented on the organization’s actions for about five years.45 Rossel’ also appointed Yevgeny Roizman an advisor to the regional administration. In this capacity, Roizman raised an investigation into Mayor Chernetskii’s acquisition of municipal land for private use, which is merely a continuation of the animosity between GBN (and presumably both Uralmash and Rossel’) and the mayor.46 As GBN grew it has been drawn into regional politics, at times praised and at other times vilified. Yet GBN’s agenda was never imposed on it directly by regional political actors, who have adopted some of the organization’s stances and used GBN and its activists for their own purposes when convenient.

In recent years, the regional leadership has taken a stronger position against GBN, bringing court cases against its leading members (including Roizman), seeking to evict the organization from the government building it had previously provided for them, and pressuring the media to portray GBN in a negative light.47 As one informant explained,

Under Governor Rossel, it cannot be said that the provincial authorities held GBN in favor, but by all accounts it did not disturb and even gave preferential conditions through an office in an old residence in the city center. Under Governor Misharin, there passed a period of indifference toward the coexistence of the province and GBN. Governor Kuyvashev did not reach a mutual understanding with Roizman, and that’s why serious personal friction began between them. The provincial authorities initiated court processes in order to take into provincial possession the building that GBN was using, they were sanctioning searches in GBN rehabilitation centers, and finally provincial authorities created their own rehabilitation center, “Ural bez narkotikov” under the provincial health ministry with emblems copied from GBN.48

45 Vyugin 2004a.
47 Interviews, Researcher/Experts #1 and #3 on GBN, Yekaterinburg, July 2014.
48 Interview, Researcher/Expert #2 on GBN, Yekaterinburg, July 2014.
This has continued even after Roizman was elected Mayor of Yekaterinburg in 2013. While remaining closely involved with GBN unofficially, Roizman was unable to completely protect it from opponents in the regional administration.

Gorod Bez Narkotikov has been more successful in developing ties and coordinating activities beyond its original region. Over time, GBN increasingly worked with other extremist organizations and parties that share an anti-immigration stance, including groups such as DPNI, National Fund Against Narcotics, and Volunteer Druzhiny (all of which had joined GBN’s 2004 demonstration in Moscow). DPNI, in particular, has been willing to foster the GBN as an ally, seeing in them partners in the fight against illegal immigration. A former leader of DPNI, Aleksandr Belov has said that although his movement is “apolitical,” it must support other similar groups. DPNI has done just that. When the Moskovskoe Byuro po Pravam Cheloveka (Moscow Office for Human Rights, MBPCh), a human rights NGO, labeled GBN a “Cossack division” along with other radical nationalist movements in a 2005 report, DPNI publicly condemned the report. The group stressed that GBN does not fight illegal Tajik immigrants on a nationalist basis, but because of their alleged role in Russia’s drug trade.

Nikolai Kur’yanovich, a deputy of Zhironovskii’s Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), also responded to the report, calling MBPCh anti-Russian and a “filial of Western services.” In another instance, DPNI posted objections on its website to the trial of a

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49 As stated in one interview, “Though formally, upon becoming Mayor, he left the leadership of the Fund [GBN], passing leadership authority onto one of his deputies. It is less known, however, that he is kept posted on everything the Fond was doing.” Interview, Researcher/Expert #2 on GBN, Yekaterinburg, July 2014.

50 Taratuta 2004.

51 Filipp 2005; See also ‘Nationalists in Russia Create Military Detachments, Claim Human Rights Organizations,’ Turan Information Agency, 15 August 2005.
GBN leader in the city of Nizhnii Tagil (in Sverdlovskaya oblast’) over the treatment of rehab patients.

As GBN’s numbers increased, it worked to expand its influence beyond Sverdlovskaya region to the national level. It has collaborated on with larger, national movements on “linked” issues, including DPNI, which existed in over 40 cities in Russia by 2005.53 Elected to a federal Duma seat in 2003, Roizman was able to highlight the rising problem of migration and drug use at the national level.54 In August 2011, Roizman announced the creation of the fund Strana Bez Narkotikov (Country Without Drugs). But its outreach success, while important for GBN, came well after it began to focus on migrants as a source of drug trafficking and crime in Yekaterinburg.

On the other hand, GBN, and Roizman in particular, saw very early on the benefits to adopting an anti-immigrant frame. As one analyst explained, “You need to understand that Yekaterinburg’s GBN, apart from its protectionist anti-narcotics activities, was used as Roizman’s personal powerful PR instrument. In his time, he luckily succeed in “settling” the struggle against narcotics through societal forces, and his personal charisma enabled him to organize and run GBN, stretched out over many years.”55 As another noted, Roizman, Kabanov and other GBN leaders leveraged their anti-immigrant message during electoral campaigns: “Anti-migrant rhetoric it absolutely engaged in – it becomes relevant during the elections, which is still in political campaigns, if someone wants to earn points, the subject is raised.”56 Both as a publicity campaign for GBN and for the electoral ambitions of its leaders, framing the movement’s

53 Mitrofanov 2005
55 Interview, Researcher/Expert #2 on GBN, Yekaterinburg, July 2014.
56 Interview, NGO Activist, Yekaterinburg, July 2014.
anti-drug agenda around the immigrant groups perceived as trafficking or protecting the
drug trade brought several advantages. It shifted blame away from the victims (the drug
users who were often involved in petty crime as well) and from law enforcement (who
were often accused of providing protection to drug trafficking) to a distant “other” that
was not from the community. It also conformed with public impressions that drug
trafficking was largely carried out by Gypsy, Tajik and (to a lesser extent) Azeri
populations in the city. Public attitudes toward migrants were also slightly less receptive
as their numbers grew, which only facilitated the anti-immigrant message. And it
provided a tangible solution – the deportation of migrant communities – to what had
become by the late 1990s an overwhelming problem of drug trafficking, rising crime, and
complacent law enforcement.

By 2001, emboldened by its expanded organizational ties to the Uralmash and
access to regional powerbrokers, GBN began to target Tajiks in the region. It contended
that Tajiks were the main culprits for the presence of drugs in Sverdlovskaya Oblast’, and
the group sought to link Tajik nationals and drug trafficking in the public’s mind. As one
observer recalled,

In 2002 - 2003, masses of migrants from Central Asia began [to flow into the
region] compared with the previous period. And the Roizman’s rhetoric changed
and already by 2003 he held an anti-Tajik rally at Shiroki River. His whole
discourse was then directed against Tajiks. He said that any Tajik was a drug
dealer. Even if he came as a builder, and had a family. There were several TV
programs/commercials they prepared. The show was called The Big Collection.57

This new anti-immigrant strategy, coupled with the focus on the fight against
drugs, further bolstered GBN’s local network of activists and supporters. At the same
time, GBN’s focus on Tajiks – as with Gypsy or Azeri populations – opposed their

57 Interview, NGO Activist, Yekaterinburg, July 2014.
presence in the region not due to a preexisting negative disposition toward them as an ethnic group, but because they were seen as collectively responsible for drug trafficking in Sverdlovsk. As one expert on GBN observed, “as for their [GBN’s] "nationalist" views, they are nationalistic not because they hate that Tajiks are Tajiks. They do not like what a person of that ethnic group facilitates in the Urals region. Hence their activities, and their rhetoric is anti-migrant, anti-Tajik, anti-Roma.”

To mobilize these supporters, the organization played on fears and stereotypes toward Tajiks (and labor migrants generally). GBN’s website attributed the region’s narcotics inflow to its Tajik migrants. GBN also partnered with several media outlets through which it disseminated its anti-immigrant message: “Roizman also had an affiliated program with "TAU" Innokentiya Sheremeta News. The TV agency Urals. So it was a information partner "Cities without drugs." They showed all operations, all controls on [drug] purchases of control, and so on. Tajiks were publicly humiliated.” The rise of anti-immigrant rhetoric was carefully timed to coincide with creeping discontent about the growth of migrant populations (particularly from Tajikistan) in Yekaterinburg.

Growing anti-immigrant attitudes emerged gradually in the city, which was “simply due to the number of migrants… I heard growing irritation toward migrants.” It is believed that after residing on a site for some time, and as their numbers increase, “people feel that they cease to behave modestly. This was the reaction in the Urals - grumbling and discontent at the level of opinions, while at home. Or it can be heard on public

58 Interview, Researcher/Expert #4 on GBN, Yekaterinburg, July 2014.
59 The website stated: “All the heroin in Sverdlovskaya Oblast’ is from Tajikistan. The four-year experience of our work shows that the overwhelming majority of Tajiks one way or another are associated with the drug trade. Those who do not trade directly help them [the smugglers] deliver, hide, or transfer [narcotics].” ‘In Yekaterinburg for the year remain over 40,000 forty thousand! Tajiks arriving on flights’ May 20, 2004, available at http://www.nobf.ru/news/594/archive/29/, accessed 21 November 2011.
60 Interview, NGO Activist, Yekaterinburg, July 2014.
transportation, in the market, on the street. GBN seized upon this trend, building on the increased number [of migrants] and the behavior change towards them.”61

In interviews and press statements, the leadership used inflated numbers, claiming that Tajik citizens make up 90-92% of all drug couriers in Sverdlovskaya oblast’.62 In fact, many of the claims made by extremist groups do not match official data, especially those charges made by local organs.63 GBN has tried to connect individual crimes perpetrated by Tajik migrants to vague formulations of a violent Tajik past, depicting foreigners as “mujahideen” who had participated in Tajikistan’s civil war64 GBN also alleged that Tajiks criminals were intimidating the local population.65 Additionally, GBN’s leaders have manipulated traditional fears of ethnic “swamping.”66 On several occasions, GBN president, Evgeniy Roizman (2001-03 and 2008-13), raised fears of a “Kosovo of the Urals” or “Kosovo Number Two” – arguing that the population of migrants would reach one million in the next decade and then demand a referendum for an autonomous territory carved from Sverdlovskaya and neighboring Chelyabinskaya oblasts.67 Along with a new, more restrictive visa regime between the Russian Federation and Tajikistan, GBN called for the deportation of all migrants from Sverdlovskaya oblast’.68 Casting GBN as an organization confronting organized crime and drug trafficking has been politically expedient in advertisements for Roizman’s federal Duma

61 Interview, Researcher/Expert #4 on GBN, Yekaterinburg, July 2014.
63 Of the 2,500 drug-related crimes that took place in Yekaterinburg in 2003, the GUVD for Sverdlovskaya oblast’ said only half of those detained were Tajiks and in 2005 only 9% of all defendants in drug related cases in the Urals Federal District were non-Russian citizens. See ‘Deportation of Tajik Migrants Held in Sverdlovskaya Oblast’, AP Blitz, 12 May 2004; ‘As many as 108 organized groups of drug dealers have been arrested in the Urals Federal District since the beginning of 2005…’, Interfax, 11 July 2005.
64 Vinogradova 2003; V’yugin 2004c.
66 For more on ethnic swamping, see Kaufman 2001 and Alexseev 2006.
67 Vinogradova 2003; V’yugin 2004b.
68 V’yugin 2004c.
election campaign. Its leaders and propaganda, for instance, frequently pointed out (actual or fictitious) figures of heroin shipments by Tajik drug traders to Sverdlovskaya Oblast’. It organized speeches and demonstrations against the inflow of migrants, thereby making the case for a revision of Russia’s visa regime.

By 2004, it had expanded its activities, holding demonstrations, issuing numerous inflammatory statements, and publicizing its message through high-profile interviews with Roizman and his deputy, former city Duma representative Andrei Kabanov. The event that received the most press was the demonstration in Shirokaya Rechka, which marked the first public meeting against Tajiks by GBN in Yekaterinburg. It took place May 10, 2005, and according to most media sources and GBN itself, up to 1,500 people gathered to protest the Tajik presence in the area. During this event, Kabanov and Roizman – by then, a state Duma MP - collected signatures for a petition supporting the deportation of Tajik labor migrants from Sverdlovskaya oblast’ and the imposition of a visa regime between Russia and Tajikistan. According to a representative of the local Tajik human rights organization Payvand, open threats prompted all of the Tajik builders in the area to flee after the protest.

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69 In June 2004 GBN sponsored a photo exhibit called “Strength Lies in the Truth” about Russia’s problems with drug addiction and dedicated to the organization’s fifth year of operations. The title of the exhibit is apparently drawn from a well-known quote in the popular Russian movie *Brother Two*. Kimmage 2004.


73 Kimmage 2004.
The Shirokaya Rechka incident extended the publicity and power of GBN. While not wanting to directly adopt GBN’s demands, regional politicians did attempt to co-opt some of the points raised by GBN as their own. An article in the Russian Newspaper Vremya Novostei noted that the authorities in the Sverdlovskaya oblast’ administration reacted to the protest by initiating an anti-terror commission some two weeks later. The commission, which meets with Governor Rossel’ three times a month, covers the subject of immigration and will be involved in trials concerning illegal migrants. A few months later in October 2004 the State Administration of Interior Affairs for the Urals district announced that it planned to open a migration “filtration” center by the end of the year.

Gorod Bez Narkotikov, for its part, continued to pressure the regional government. Andrei Kabanov charged that the filtration center is “a base to collect bribes from Tajiks,” and the project will not solve the problems of crime and the heroin trade. Local government organs do not want to incorporate GBN either, and in fact pushed back against the group. The head of the local Interior Affairs department Boris Timonichenko declared after the Shirokaya Rechka demonstration he planned to collect the documents from all participants. The local Tajik diaspora also charged Evgeny Roizman and Gorod Bez Narkotikov with inciting ethnic discord, for which GBN was forced to pay a fine. The radical group fiercely denied the charge, but no one, including Rossel’, saved them from the punishment. Nonetheless, this was a significant event that brought the movement to the forefront of regional politics.

75 Terletskii 2004; V’yugin 2004d.
76 V’yugin 2004a.
77 V’yugin 2004b.
A little over one month later Roizman led a GBN organized a demonstration in Moscow’s Teatral’nyaya Ploshchad’ (Theatre Square). Over 100 participants assembled, calling for the deportation of illegal immigrants.\(^78\) Between 2004 and 2008, Sverdlovskaya oblast’ had 66 anti-minority attacks and the highest number of resulting deaths (outside Moscow and St. Petersburg).\(^79\) By 2011, GBN had become an established source of anti-immigrant action, even providing legal support for local residents facing court proceedings after taking vigilante action against migrants who were allegedly engaged in criminal activity.\(^80\)

Within a decade, GBN moved from the margins to become the mantle piece of Sverdlovsk’s politics. Clearly benefiting from political protection and an alliance with the Uralmashevtsy, GBN’s leaders have propelled themselves into public office. In December 2003, Roizman was elected to the State Duma from Ordzhonikidze raion (a Yekaterinburg city district where the Uralmash gang first began) and in April 2005 Andrei Kabanov was elected as a deputy in the city Duma. Local polls have shown support for GBN’s positions as well. In a survey conducted by the Center of Monitoring and Strategic Enterprise in mid-2004 (around the time of the GBN demonstrations), 80% of Yekaterinburg’s city dwellers supported “the introduction of a visa regime with Tajikistan,” while 60% of respondents would support the immediate deportation of Tajiks in the oblast’.\(^81\) Thanks to GBN’s organization and local ties, Yekaterinburg’s turnout in

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\(^79\) Kozhevnikova 2005.
\(^80\) Roizman blamed the problem of ethnic crime on “unwise immigration policies, the absence of proper entry controls, corruption of law enforcement organs, and the impotence of the authorities” Petrova 2011.
\(^81\) V’yugin 2004b.
the anti-Tajik demonstrations in the spring and summer of 2004 was ten times greater than the protest in Moscow.

The future of GBN after Evgeny Roizman’s election as Mayor of Yekaterinburg in 2013 is uncertain, with some contending that his departure leaves a leadership vacuum.\(^8^2\) However, most informants in Yekaterinburg believed that the continued flow of migrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus – coinciding with an ongoing drug trade – into the city are likely to keep GBN’s anti-drug trafficking agenda relevant as well as its use of an anti-immigrant frame. Anti-immigrant mobilization had recently targeted Tajik communities in the Akademik District of the city, where they have become what one observer noted “a visible minority.”\(^8^3\)

Overall, the organization has proven its ability to mobilize itself, especially in its hometown Yekaterinburg. However, GBN has shown only an attenuated ability to reach beyond Sverdlovskaya oblast’, because the movement has remained dependent on the patronage and protection of the provincial administration. This has delimited the reach of the movement, especially as it was utilized for regional aims. Thus, GBN introduced an anti-immigrant frame that proved useful as a mobilizing tool. But GBN (and Roizman) remain focused on drug use and related criminal activities. Nevertheless, opponents to GBN – some of whom are in the regional administration – have engaged in counter framing to portray GBN and Roizman as extremist or nationalistic. For instance,

But for him [Roizman], the primary fight against drugs. Fighting with the Tajiks are not the first, nor the second or even third place in its agenda. He has a drug rehabilitation center. It sought not Tajiks but drug users. Billing Roizman as nationalist opposition - it is very conscious propaganda, maintained by the

\(^8^2\) As one informant concluded, “only Roizman has the charisma and is widely known...[while] the remaining leaders (except for 1-2 names) are more rank-and-file, largely publicly unknown, members of GBN.” Interview, Researcher/Expert #2, Yekaterinburg, July 2014.

\(^8^3\) Interview, Researcher/Expert #4, Yekaterinburg, July 2014.
regional administration. Profitable for them so imagine Roizman, a nationalist leader of the Nazis. That's not true. Around it is a semi sectarian organization.84

*Gorod Bez Narkotikov* (City Without Drugs) began as an organization countering the region’s drug trade and escalating narcotics use within its population. Entering a vacuum left by the severely attenuated strength of the Russian state in the 1990s, GBN’s rhetoric and activities initially addressed local societal decline, crime and disorder. However, it quickly developed an anti-immigrant agenda that increasingly targeted labor migrants in Yekaterinburg.

**Krasnodar’s Cossack Groups**

Krasnodar’s Cossacks today trace their origins back to several hundred years, having emerged in the late 19th century both as a social class tied to the state as military service and as a culturally defined ethnic group.85 Prior to the 1970s, Cossack association was considered a liability, given Cossack resistance to the Bolsheviks during the Civil War. Since 1991, Cossack leaders have promoted a sense of victimization, emphasizing “genocide” and underlining the Soviet-era policy of *Raskazachivanie*, whereby the Bolsheviks attempted to destroy Cossack institutions and identity.86 Cossack organizations emerged late in the *glasnost* period, in part from the region’s hard line Communist administration that resisted Gorbachev’s reforms. During this time, individuals formed clubs to study Cossack history and traditions, drawing on a revived interest sparked among academics and by the famous “Cossack Choir.” These individuals

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84 Interview, Journalist, Yekaterinburg, July 2014.
85 Interview, Local Government Official #1, Krasnodar, July 2014; See, for example, Programmy 2009.
86 See Skinner 1994 and Boeck 1997. Cossacks are the only ethnic or social group in the North Caucasus officially permitted to carry arms, thanks to federal laws in the mid-2000s, though Cossacks carried arms well before these official sanctions. Tlisova 2008.
formed the core leadership of the early post-Soviet Cossack movement, which saw a proliferation of Cossack groups as well as regional Cossack newspapers.87

This emergent leadership, however, faced steep political and organizational challenges that undermined their attempts to create a united organization representing Kuban Cossacks’ interests. Within the first year of the movement’s existence, there were 183 chapters with many supporters, but the organization could not establish centralized control over its own local branches.88 Cossack groups had many disparate aims. Some Cossack leaders merely sought to revive their traditional culture and forms of organizing society, including the Cossack system of ranks (i.e., the ataman, or chief). Others wanted to promote the Cossack identity as a distinct socio-ethnic group that resides within the greater Russian nation, which also is situated within the Slavic “meta-ethnos.” Still others aimed for legal rehabilitation, which meant not only receiving formal recognition from the state but also privileges such as reinstated collective forms of landholding and tax breaks.89 The federal government had granted Cossacks the status of a rehabilitated people in 1992, but there also emerged internal differences in how leaders saw Cossacks within the Russian state. Some petitioned state authorities for a revision of administrative territorial borders, which they hoped would coincide with the historical Kuban region of prerevolutionary Russia. Others within the burgeoning leadership sought to protect “Cossack land” within the Russian state not by seeking territorial status but through

89 Boeck 1997, pp. 636-647; As one participant remembered, “The initial stage was first [forming] social clubs, groups and so on. The second was when these circles, these group, began to gain some weight and try to establish different parties and movements. This began in ’91 or ’92… Some Cossacks went this way, some in there. I was at the convention, saw them. I mean, if you consider all of them – Sibirtsev, Orenburg. – and we, too, there was a split. At one time, there were 2-3 Cossack associations.” Interview, Local Government Official #1, Krasnodar, July 2014.
service to the state-- by lending their manpower to law enforcement and even through military action.\footnote{In the 1990s, the general atmosphere of state weakness as well as instability in the North Caucasus bolstered public support for Cossack vigilantism among many residents of Krasnodar Krai. Events such as the Chechen war and the Budyonnovsk incident have likewise generated support for enforcement actions by Cossacks Lankina 1996, p. 725. For instance, Cossack volunteers fought alongside Transdniestrian separatists in 1992 and during the 2008 Russo-Georgian war. Montana 1992; Parfitt 2008.}

From the very beginning, moreover, two factions developed within the movement – the Communist-associated Kuban Cossack Rada and the Kuban Cossack Host – with the former putting forward central claims for communal property while the latter was linked to pro-Ukrainian groups and radical influences.\footnote{Boeck 1997, p. 642.} By 1996, though, the Rada prevailed and transformed itself into the dominant All-Kuban Cossack Host (hereafter KKV).\footnote{As a leader recalled, “In 1998, the decision had been made to enter the Kuban Cossack Host – an organization with a well-built structure -- into the state register. That meant it would take on certain obligations to the state.” Interview, Leader of Cossack Movement #2, Krasnodar, July 2014.} Amid the struggle for power and resources in Krasnodar Krai, moreover, competition for land enabled a politically connected local elite to prevail as the region’s primary landowners while also consolidating and coopting the Cossack movement. Land reform debates in Krasnodar’s local legislature in the 1990s, and the emerging dominance of the KKV, led many Cossack groups to see it as a means of reinstating their traditional communal landholdings. Instead, privatization promoted the rise of large joint-stock companies that acquired the best plots in the region, disenfranchising large swathes of the rural Cossack population. One of the largest agro-industrial enterprises was owned by Tkachev (and was based in his native village of Vselki), which, it is alleged, illegally liquidated 32,619 land titles out of 52,000 titles issued as part of the region’s privatization process.\footnote{Shahnazarian 2012.} As family and communal lands were taken over (often under the guise of...
bankruptcy), displaced Cossacks have either left the region for better opportunities elsewhere or fell in with the KKV backed by the regional authorities.

Krasnodar Krai’s leadership has played an influential role in shaping the Cossack movement and bringing it under the administration’s control. Regional laws, such as “Rehabilitation of the Cossacks” and “Special order of land-utilization in Krasnodar Krai” of 1995, established Cossacks’ “special access to official power structures and provides financial support” and created a land fund. 94 By the early 2000s, there were two divisions devoted to the revival of Cossack culture and education in the Krasnodar Krai’s specifically designated Cossack Department, and another three divisions focused on public order and working with law enforcement and the military. 95 Generally, though, the government in Russia saw Cossacks as an instrument of social order and was less interested in supporting their cultural revival. 96

KKV and its members were tightly linked to Krasnodar’s Kondratenko and subsequent Tkachev administrations. This helped KKV develop its infrastructure and acquire state resources. The leadership provided Cossacks with special opportunities to work with law enforcement agencies (as well as giving them tacit approval to operate autonomously within the region). Through specific agreements, KKV worked directly with the Krasnodar’s police force, the Directorate of Internal Affairs, in maintaining

94 Ossipov 2000.
95 “We have somewhere around a thousand Cossack schools, classes Cossack orientation, there are whole school focus and six Cossack Cossack cadet corps, where young people brought up, receives general education and further studies the culture of the Cossacks, history Cossacks.” Interview, Researcher/Expert on Cossacks #1, Krasnodar, July 2014; Interview, Local Government Official #3, Krasnodar, July 2014.
96 “Today, the state needs people who would protect public order. People who have served in the armed forces, fighting against illicit drug trafficking. Therefore, the Cossacks have always been a complex phenomenon. There's always going parallel processes of ethnic, cultural and social service to the state and the country. Our goal was the revival of the Cossacks, we - historians and Cossacks, and saw it, and the state is not interested. It is only interested in service. Here, our interests did not coincide…” Interview, Leader of Cossack Movement #2, Krasnodar, July 2014.
public order, combating crime, and organized syndicates in the region. About 30 thousand rubles per month is allocated to support the 1500 Cossacks who patrol the streets with the police in uniform (albeit stylized).97 Others serve in border patrols monitoring the Krasnodar section of the Russian Federation’s international border.98 As one official explained, border control is a central role of the Cossack movement.

I’ve written a letter yesterday about the activities that we carry out, offers up to 2020 A as well? The state is interested to border guarding. We have seen and who has traveled to the Crimea. Do you think, people from Vologda or Komi arrived at Donbass [in Ukraine]? Cossacks, a thousand people were already there at night. We got up and closed and a. And then have already reached those who need it. Do you think the government does not see the value of the Cossacks? Tolstoy said: "The border has created the Cossacks and the Cossacks - Central Russia.”99

Cossacks were also used in tandem with local law enforcement to maintain security at the 2014 Sochi Olympics:

The governor has decided to spend the eve of the Olympic Games in Sochi raids Migration Service, the police. Given that we are working in tandem with the government. Contracts have been signed with all security agencies in the implementation of 154 civil service law, attract Cossacks as a social force, including the migration work.100

Cossack movement leaders were appointed to official posts in Krasnodar Krai’s government, frequently serving as deputies in regional and local administrations.101 According to Memorial, this blurred the line between the Cossack movements’ and the regional government’s authority, which has led to “gross violations of law and human rights.”102 Significantly, the ataman of the All-Kuban Cossack Host for seventeen years, Vladimir Gromov, served as the administration’s deputy governor for military and

97 Interview, Local Government Official #3, Krasnodar, July 2014.
100 Interview, Leader of Cossack Movement #1, Krasnodar, July 2014.
101 It was, for instance, an “unwritten rule” held that the Krai’s deputy governor come from the local Cossack organization. Popov and Kuznetsov 2008, p. 242; see also Toje 2006, p. 1069; Memorial 1996.
102 Ossipov and Cherapova 1996.
Cossack affairs from 1998-2000, in the regional legislature, and on the committee overseeing Cossack affairs.\textsuperscript{103} In fact, governors Kondratenko and Tkachev may have supported Gromov because of his political vulnerability, as the KKV ataman lacked the high rank from military service many Cossacks consider desirable for their chief.\textsuperscript{104}

Additionally, the regional budget directly financed Cossack organizational infrastructure and activity, particularly the main Cossack organization, KKV. KKV enjoys direct and indirect financial support from the region’s budget and extra-budgetary sources. The administration provides tax privileges as well, including the right to run for-profit enterprises. For example, the KKV provides security services for municipal properties, and Cossack groups were granted tax privileges in areas such as property and land taxes.\textsuperscript{105} Direct budgetary support not only comprises a substantial sum of money – in 2007, Krasnodar Krai’s regional budget provided 2.8 million dollars for Cossack organizations, and earmarked another 6.8 million in 2008.\textsuperscript{106} As one journalist recounts, from “1995-1997… 8.5 billion rubles of Krasnodar Krai’s budget reached the [KKV’s] bank accounts,” which was far more than funds allotted to other local public sector employees.\textsuperscript{107} An investigation revealed that little of the resources disbursed to KKV and intended for agricultural development in Cossack communities went to that purpose.

At the same time, the Krai administration enhanced local control over Cossack groups, at the expense of the movement’s outreach to Cossack organizations at the federal level. In 1997, Kontratenko issued a countervailing decree. Seeking to maintain regional control over the Kuban Cossack movement, he established a regional Cossack

\textsuperscript{103} Gromov’s successor, Nikolai Doluda, was also appointed deputy governor.
\textsuperscript{105} Ossipov 2000.
\textsuperscript{106} Tlisova 2008.
\textsuperscript{107} Voznesensky 1998.
register that permitted opportunities to collaborate with only local law enforcement agencies.\textsuperscript{108} This delayed the Kuban Cossacks’ registration at the federal level, even when most other regional Cossack organizations had done so. While the KKV leader, Gromov, supported Kondratenko’s move, not all of the Krai’s Cossack leaders were pleased with the efforts to keep their activities at the regional, instead of federal, level.\textsuperscript{109} Only after a presidential decree in April 1998 was the KKV included in the federal register along with other organizations.\textsuperscript{110} Over the 2000s there were few sustained efforts to develop KKV’s outreach beyond Krasnodar Krai. Yet, out of a regional population of five million, the Cossack movement has grown to include 141,000 active members as of 2014.\textsuperscript{111}

Many features of the rebirth of the Cossack movement helped make the movement amenable to adopting an anti-immigrant frame. Proponents fostered a revivalist identity glorifying a history of military service to the state that frequently entailed fighting non-Slavic peoples on Russia’s borderlands. A conservative call for restoring communal land ownership formalized and activated suspicion toward land-owning Meskhetian Turks and Armenians in Krasnodar Krai in the early 1990s. Specifically, there emerged a distinction between long-standing Cossack communities and other, new arrivals to the region. To quote a government official: “There are non-residents, who are part of society or people of Cossack villages, who came here on resettlement programs. These are people who are not part of Cossack family, and they tend to live on the outskirts of the village, taking the worst land. These are people who

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{108} Human Rights Watch 1998.
\item\textsuperscript{109} See ‘How Kondratenko Offended the Cossacks’, \textit{NG Regiony}, 3 February 1998.
\item\textsuperscript{110} At which time it became the Kuban Cossack Army, or KKV. Ossipov 2000.
\item\textsuperscript{111} Interview, Local Government Official #2, Krasnodar, July 2014.
\end{itemize}
were looking for something new in life, or simply displaced. “112 It is not surprising, therefore, that Cossack movement turned its attention to non-Slavic migrants residing in Krasnodar Krai, capitalizing on popular frustration with the apparent increase in demand on regional resources and housing resulting from a influx of migrants.113 Yet anti-immigrant discourse was not preordained. The basic goals of revitalizing Cossack traditions and advancing claims to resources and government access, did not need to be formulated and pursued through the stigmatization of non-Russian ethnicities who had come to the region. Yet, a frame that distinguished between a Cossack “self” and ethnic “others” as an array of newcomers to the region served to bolster support for the Cossack movement. Within Krasnodar, among non-Cossacks, Ukrainians are viewed as having resided in the region the longest, followed by Armenians (who are fellow Christians) and then Meskhtian Turks. Others, from the Caucasus or Central Asia, are generally seen as relative newcomers.114 And since Cossack mobilization coincided with the regional political elite’s own objectives, the latter supported this frame to achieve their own ends.

Officials set the tone by employing anti-migrant rhetoric. Leaders in Krasnodar Krai played up fears of ethnic swamping, which were echoed by scholars and local media.115 As one government official explained, several local media outlets were utilized to promote the Cossack cultural revival.

We in the army there is a whole department to work with the media, every week goes "Cossack messenger", there is very hard to source materials. And not only that: there is a radio station "Cossack-FM", Channel 9, which are constantly held and "Cossack messengers" ... You see what newspaper?... "The Cossack-FM"

112 Interview, Local Government Official #2, Krasnodar, July 2014.
113 Ossipov and Cherepova 1996.
114 Interview, Researcher/Expert on Cossacks #1, Krasnodar, July 2014.
works with utrado evening held there anything that we give, the site is huge, one of the best sites, “Glory of Kuban” is called.\textsuperscript{116}

Regional media outlets copied the administration’s rhetoric, even comparing the situation of Krasnodar Krai to Kosovo after 1999.\textsuperscript{117} Human Rights Watch noted that Cossack participation in actions against migrants increased after Kondratenko’s victory in the December 1996 gubernatorial election, who expressed sharply anti-semitic and anti-migrant views.\textsuperscript{118} The governor’s protégé and successor, Aleksandr Tkachev, has cast the issue of migration in similar terms. In a September 2001 speech, Tkachev stated that “Most the of Meskhetian Turks do not want to get out of our territory... I think all available mechanism [sic] of pressure and persuasion will be employed to make the number of departing guests rise.” He has declared that “the Kuban is Cossack land, and everyone should know this.”\textsuperscript{119}

This discourse is used to define and promote Cossack culture and identity as the primary culture into which other groups must assimilate. As one prominent Cossack member explained,

Coming into the village when they are few, clearly live under the rules of his family - respect for elders. They are respectful of the national majority. As soon as a lot of them. They are not able to assimilate… . Everyone already knows that if that is where the superiority of the Russian ethnic group population, already go to the Cossacks, because they know that they are not easy to leave, because they themselves are not interested. That is, the Cossacks as a social force, which is referenced to the residents themselves. Often, the Armenians, we Dagestan. But the Armenians traditionally live here. Since Armenians are a special relationship. Normal. They assimilate, and marry. The Christians, anyway. I have many friends of the Armenians. In this regard, there is no conflict. Only personal. Today the situation - Olympics. On the territory of the region calls in numerous bands, and Tajiks, Uzbeks, Turks. From 2008-2009. Plus a huge investment to the province.

\textsuperscript{116} Interview, Local Government Official #2, Krasnodar, July 2014.
\textsuperscript{117} Ossipov 2002, p. 364.
\textsuperscript{118} Human Rights Watch 1998.
\textsuperscript{119} Finn 2005.
This construction. Companies building. All using cheap labor from the South Caucasus. They are really a lot.\textsuperscript{120}

Thus, the problem of multiculturalism is defined by KKV (and among many Cossacks) as how to assimilate other groups into “Cossack society”. Within this conception of Cossack society, Cossacks embody its core cultural content and are the “social force” or glue that holds it together. The ability of different groups to assimilate differs due to their cultural attributes, their numbers, and the population density of their settlements, but there is little doubt that migrants’ assimilation (or departure) is of primary concern of the Cossack movement.

Framing Cossack cultural revival and historical land claims in anti-immigrant language has had policy consequences. The regional authorities in Krasnodar Krai ensured cooperation between Cossack paramilitary groups and militia and ignore the methods the Cossacks use against their targets.\textsuperscript{121} The local administration first employed armed Cossack groups at the end of perestroika. At that time, Kondratenko (serving as chairman of the executive committee) resisted perestroika-era reforms by hoarding local produce, allowing him to subsidize food in the region. To prevent exploitation by traders in neighboring regions, he sent out armed Cossack volunteers to set up what were essentially customs checkpoints.\textsuperscript{122} Since then, “acting at the behest of the regional authorities, Cossack units have conducted thousands of violent nighttime raids and passport checks… on Meskhetian Turks over the past fifteen years to intimidate them and force them to leave the territory.”\textsuperscript{123} A Cossack leader in the Krymsk region noted Cossacks’ comparative advantage over official law enforcement in local knowledge,

\textsuperscript{120} Interview, Leader of Cossack Movement #1, Krasnodar, July 2014.
\textsuperscript{121} Human Rights Watch 1998; Ossipov and Cherapova 1996
\textsuperscript{122} Derlugian and Cipko 1997, p. 1486.
\textsuperscript{123} Swerdlow 2006, p. 1848; See also Rodriguez 2005.
which the administration gains from using Cossacks to patrol and apply pressure to undesirable elements: “It’s easy for Cossacks to establish order in our villages, since we know everyone there.”

Both governors Kondratenko and Tkachev have pursued the systematic discrimination of certain ethnic groups in Krasnodar Krai, and have employed Cossack units to engage in passport checks and shakedowns. Cossack volunteer units frequently targeted Meskhetian Turks, Armenians, Kurds, and other Caucasian groups. The administration, in fact, creates the legal justification for vigilante acts by periodically refusing to issue regional passports (*propiska*) or grant residency permits; sweeps are then carried out by Cossacks (sometimes working in tandem with the militia) to check migrants for their documents, leading to harassment, violence, and extortion.

Krasnodar Krai’s administration shortened the registration period from six months to three, then to 45 days in 1998, while the cost of registration increased so as to become a serious financial burden. The ultimate aim of this long-running campaign, which Ossipov calls “soft ethnic cleansing,” was to pressure these communities to emigrate.

To this end, the regional political elite has used its allies in the Cossack organizations as one of the main instruments to force out those seen as undesirable elements; the Cossacks, for their part, are willing to serve the administration’s aims that dovetail with their own of reclaiming the Kuban for *kazachestvo*, or Cossackdom. Yet this mutually beneficial relationship, which places the Cossacks under the patronage of powerful regional actors, has also trained their focus and energies on local issues, often at the cost

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124 Finn 2005.
125 Ossipov 2000 writes that from 1989-1994, registration permits granted by officials were skewed against Armenians and Turks.
127 Ossipov 2000.
of establishing links to Cossack organizations elsewhere in Russia. These practices are viewed as providing a wall of stability, preventing rising inter-ethnic tensions from spilling into Krasnodar from neighboring areas.\footnote{In neighboring Stavropol Krai, “there often occur mass fights with Cossacks and Russian Dagestani, Russian Armenians, often these flash mobs are organized quickly, by phone - and everyone jumps into their cars to join in these conflicts. We thank God that we have few of those here, but there they are more and more.” Interview, Researcher/Expert on Cossacks #1, Krasnodar, July 2014.}

More recently, in the summer of 2012, Governor Tkachev formed Cossack units at the cost of 650 million rubles to prevent the migration of individuals from the North Caucasus – in part to distract from the poor government response to floods in Krymsk. These Cossack \textit{druzhiny} are intended to operate alongside official law enforcement, evincing the close cooperation between formal police units. As Cossack groups formed quasi-military organizations, they claimed special status with Krai authorities. These formal and informal ties to law enforcement enabled a permissive environment in which Cossack groups could carry out vigilante actions against non-Slavic populations with impunity. The administration typically remained silent on the excessive use of force employed by Cossacks as they carried out their unofficially sanctioned activities.\footnote{Ossipov 2000.} In an address to local law enforcement, Tkachev stated, “When the Cossacks will be next to a representative of law and order, then you will feel more confident. That which is forbidden to you is possible for the Cossack.”\footnote{Muradov and Perova 2012.} For migrants with intentions to commit crimes, he warned they should understand “here there are the Kuban natives, here they have their own laws, here they are really tough guys. There’s the regular police, there are the Cossacks, better that I go to another place.”\footnote{Shul’ga 2012.}
Since the late Soviet period, Cossack movements have sought to revitalize their ethnic identity (their culture, customs, and a tradition of military service to the state) and reclaim lost land. Through cooptation by and close connections to the local government apparatus, the All-Kuban Cossack Host (KKV) emerged as the predominant Cossack movement in Krasnodar Krai. In addition to promoting Cossack education and culture, however, the movement has become interwoven with local authorities (border, military and police) in the provision of public security. This has provided the movement with unusual resources and leeway to exercise coercion over certain sectors of society in Krasnodar Krai.

At the same time, the movement has increasingly adopted an anti-immigrant frame, finding that the focus on migrants as foreign “others” not only reaffirmed a “Cossack” self but also bolstered their claims for land and property (to make up for historical areas that had been lost). Originally targeting Meskhetian Turks in the early 1990s, the anti-immigrant rhetoric and action turned to “internal” migrants from the North Caucasus (Chechens and Ingush among others), clearly ascribing the notion of “foreigner” to their fellow citizens by identifying them as migrants. Since 2010, the construction boom in preparation for the 2014 Sochi Olympics has generated a wave of Central Asian migrants into the region. Generally, they have not settled permanently, working only as laborers for several months, but Cossack leaders (who are also local government officials) are acutely aware of their increased numbers and the likelihood that some may seek to remain.\(^{132}\) Should their numbers increase further, and should there arise any intra-ethnic or inter-ethnic incidents, these Central Asian migrants will be

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\(^{132}\) Interviews, Local Government Officials #1 and #2, Krasnodar, July 2014.
targeted by the Cossack movement for resettlement and possibly removal from Krasnodar Krai.

**Conclusion**

This paper has investigated the rise of anti-immigrant mobilization in Russia. It has drawn on social movement studies to provide an alternative to the claims that the actions of Russia’s anti-immigrant movements is directly a product of rising anti-immigrant sentiment or even deep cultural divisions within its multiethnic population. Instead, it argues that increased anti-immigrant rhetoric and an uptick in groups that are targeting ethnic migrants for expulsion is a consequence of individual social movements adopting an anti-immigrant frame to promote recruitment, gain resources, and publicize their particular cause. In other words, movement leaders have strategically adopted anti-immigrant rhetoric and programs because it helps achieve their movements’ own (largely unrelated) goals. It uses the cases of Yekaterinburg’s Gorod Bez Narkotikov (City Without Drugs) and Krasnodar’s Cossack groups to inductively develop this argument.

As such this paper stands apart from most studies of Russia’s anti-immigrant movements, which often focus on anti-immigrant attitudes among the mass public (or on the conditions that elicit their expression) or on legislative changes to citizenship policy. In fact, anti-immigrant movements in Russia’s regions do not rise up on public sentiment alone, but require a social and organizational basis to emerge, thrive, and forge ties to enact these programs. At the same time, an anti-immigrant frame can provide subnational movements with a critical means to sharpen their movement’s objectives (by focusing on an individual group as foreign), define their community, and concretize their
claims on resources. The cases of Yekaterinburg’s *Gorod Bez Narkotikov* and Krasnodar’s All-Kuban Cossack Host, however, exemplify only two possible paths through which local movements within the Russian Federation have adopted an anti-immigrant frame. But these processes of mobilization highlight the need to separate movements’ rhetoric from their action and systematically examine the sub-national variation underlying the broader waves of anti-immigrant mobilization in contemporary Russia.
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