Proletarian Internationalism in Action? Communist Legacies and Attitudes towards Migrants in Russia

Alexander Libman and Anastassia V. Obydenkova

Abstract:

The goal of the paper is to investigate the effect of the Communist legacies on the attitude towards migrants in the present-day Russia. Since mid-first decade of the 2000s, Russia established itself as an attractive center of labor migration, with hundreds of thousands of migrant workers from Central Asia, Southern Caucasus and Moldova entering the Russian labor market. This rise of migration triggered an upsurge in the xenophobic sentiment and nationalism. This paper, looking at the variation of anti-migrant sentiments across the regions of the Russian Federation, concludes that it is to a large extent triggered by the legacies of the Communist regime – the spread of the CPSU membership in the Russian regions in the 1970s. The effect is highly robust and confirms that parts of Russia with higher share of CPSU members in the past show lower tolerance to migration today.

Keywords: Russian regions, Communist legacies, anti-migrant sentiments, intolerance.

1. Introduction

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the deep economic crisis Russia experienced in the 1990s, it appeared barely imaginable that Russia would ever become a magnet for labor migrants. Yet by the early 2000s, the situation had changed dramatically: as Judah (2013:123) argues, “historians will judge uncontrolled mass migration to be Russian President Vladimir Putin’s most profound legacy.” The United Nations International Migration Report 2017 ranks Russia fourth (after the US, Germany and Saudi Arabia) in terms of the size of the migrant population. Labor migrants from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) became an important part of the Russian economy and of the everyday life of ordinary Russians, especially in big cities (Radnitz 2006; Jones et al. 2007; Laruelle 2007; Korobkov 2007; Reeves 2011; Isabaeva 2011; Bandey and Rather 2013; Obydenkova and Libman 2019; Malakhov 2014).

Growing labor migration became a source of widespread xenophobic attitudes among many in Russia (Schenck 2010; Laruelle 2013; Grigoryan and Ponizovskiy 2018). The fact that many migrants did not have any legal status strengthened these attitudes, making migrants more vulnerable to the abuse of power by the authorities (Reeves 2015; Round and Kuznetsova 2016). The Russian radical right eagerly adopted the anti-immigration rhetoric, making it an important part of their agenda (Pain 2007; Laruelle 2010; Tipaldou and Uba 2014, 2018). The authoritarian nature of the Russian state made the situation particularly complex: on the one hand, the Russian government had no desire to close its borders to the post-Soviet countries, since it could use migration flows as a tool of geopolitical leverage; on the other, it was occasionally willing to embrace some elements of anti-immigration rhetoric or policies at home to accommodate public sentiments, or even encourage xenophobia to distract the population from economic or social problems (Shlyapentokh 2013; Hutchings and Tolz 2015; Pikulicka-Wilczewska and Uehling 2017).

Individual regions of Russia vary a lot in terms of the attitudes towards migrants (Chapman et al. 2018). Investigating these differences represents a highly relevant research question for three reasons. First, from the point of view of the *general research on intolerance and migration*, one can

utilize the variation across regions of Russia to test *general theoretical claims* associated with political, institutional or historical determinants of xenophobia. If one attempts to test these theories using country comparison, one inevitably faces the problem of large differences across countries, which one fails to capture statistically (unobserved heterogeneity). “Scaling down” to the sub-national level reduces this unobserved heterogeneity (Snyder 2001). For example, if one attempted to study the impact of Communist legacies on xenophobia using country data, one had to deal with the fact that Communist regimes in different Eastern European states were very different; and one would fail to distinguish insofar the observed effects are due to different persistence of the Communist legacies or differences in the Communist regimes themselves. Russian regions, on the contrary, were subjected to the same type of Communist rule and hence we can better theorize and investigate the effects of it.¹

Second, from the point of view of the *research on the attitude towards migration in Russia*, there is still rather limited evidence on why there is a variation in this respect on the sub-national level. Bessudnov (2016) shows that in Russia there is a stronger negative attitude towards migrants in urban centers – which is at odds with the findings established for the Western European countries, where urban centers have more cosmopolitan population rather open to migration. Bessudnov and Shcherbank (2018), Gorodzeisky and Glikman (2018) and Herrera and Butkovich Kraus (2016) link the differences in the xenophobia levels (including attitudes towards migrants) to the differences in the ethnic identities of the individuals and the ethnic composition of the regions. The question is whether other factors also matter for the attitude towards migrants.² This paper, in particular, singles

¹ More generally, heterogeneity of Russian regions has been exploited in numerous empirical studies testing a variety of theoretical claims primarily from the political science perspective (e.g., Gel'man 1999; Hale 2003; Frye 2012; Libman and Obydenkova 2014a; 2014b; Saikkonen 2016; Golosov and Konstantinova 2016; Lankina et al. 2016b; Obydenkova 2008; 2012; Ross and Panov 2018; Buckley and Reuter 2019; Obydenkova and Libman 2012; 2013) and economics (e.g., Freinkman and Plekhanov 2009; Bruno et al. 2013; Ledyayeva et al. 2013; Belousova et al. 2016; Sidorkin and Vorobyev 2018).

² According to Bessonov (2016: 579), if one attempts to explain attitudes towards migrants in Russia looking at individual socio-economic characteristics, one obtains models with much weaker predictive power than one would have obtained for the European countries: “knowing a person’s sex, age, level of education, occupation, ethnicity and location provides us with very little information about their views on immigration”. Gorodzeisky et al. (2015) argue that socioeconomic status and conservative values, which predict attitude towards migrants in the Western context, have no predictive power in Russia.

out a variable, which, given the existing research on the determinants of attitudes and values in the post-Soviet societies in general, could also play a role as a predictor of attitude towards migrants, but has rarely been studied before empirically: the Communist legacies.

Third, in terms of *understanding Russian politics*, differences in the attitudes towards migrants and, generally, xenophobia at the sub-national level present an important source of political instability for the Putin's regime. There have been repeated outbursts of ethnic clashes in individual regions. One of the best-known examples is the conflict in Kondopoga in 2006, when the murder of two local inhabitants of the city by a group of migrants from Chechnya and Dagestan resulted in public protests with more than 2,000 participants and unrests involving some 400 people.³ In March 2019, anti-migrant protests (including incidents of attacks on migrants) erupted in Yakutsk;⁴ and in June 2019 inhabitants of a village in Penza Oblast blocked the federal highway after a conflict with Romani.⁵ There are numerous incidents of conflicts in other regions of Russia, like Stavropol, Chelyabinsk, Nizhny Novgorod, Samara, Saratov or Rostov regions.⁶ Whether the central government is able to respond to the unrest in the regions a timely fashion, whether the response will pacify or exacerbate the tensions and whether the conflicts could spill-over to other cities or regions, matters a lot for the stability of Russian political regime.

Our paper investigates the variation in the attitudes towards migrants at the sub-national level in Russia focusing on the role the *Communist legacies* play in explaining this variation. By doing it, our study contributes, first, to the *general research on Communist legacies*, using the comparability of Russian regions to better trace the historical effects; second, to the *research on determinants of xenophobia in Russia*, looking at a factor, which was not studied before, but for which, as mentioned, there are good reasons to believe it could be important; and third, to the understanding of the factors *possibly increasing the political instability in Russia*.

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2006_ethnic_tensions_in_Kondopoga. Accessed 24 June 2019.

⁴ <https://lenta.ru/brief/2019/03/20/yakutsk/>. Accessed 24 June 2019.

⁵ <https://meduza.io/feature/2019/06/14/v-penzenskoy-oblasti-zhiteli-sela-perekryli-federalnuyu-trassu-iz-za-konflikta-s-tsyganami-glavnoe>. Accessed 24 June 2019.

⁶ <http://club-rf.ru/thegrapesofwrath/01/>. Accessed 24 June 2019.

Why do we look at the Communist legacies? There is substantial evidence that Communist experience and socialization shapes attitudes and values for a prolonged period of time (Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2017). This socialization can emerge through living for a prolonged period under Communism and being exposed to Communist indoctrination – for example, from the public schooling system, the media, the system of adult political education, etc. In addition to the indoctrination effects, life itself under Communist rule, with the constant exposure to the realities and practices of this system, combined with the limited access to information outside the system, was likely to produce a distinct set of values (Yurchak 2013). This set of values has the capacity to outlive the old system and survive in the post-transition environment. Whether we look at an encompassing psychological type of *homo sovieticus* (Levada 2001; Gudkov 2008; Gogin 2012) is debatable (Sharafutdinova 2019), but at least certain behavioral features, beliefs and attitudes could have remained lasting reality of the post-Communist Russia. For the case of Germany, Carl (2018) and Kratz (2019) conclude that exposure to Communism of the inhabitants of the former Eastern Germany made them less tolerant towards migrants than the former citizens of Western Germany.

More specifically, rather than looking at the Communist legacies in general, we focus on a particular variable, which has been shown to generate lasting historical legacies in the previous research – the *prevalence of the membership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU)*. Different regions of Russia had very different CPSU membership rates (or party saturation) (Libman and Obydenkova 2013; 2015). The literature shows that the CPSU legacy affects social values in the Russian regions – thus, regions with higher prevalence of the CPSU membership in the 1970s are characterized by higher acceptance of corruption (Obydenkova and Libman 2015a), larger willingness to submit complaints to the authorities (Libman and Kozlov 2017) and lower willingness to engage in political protests (Lankina et al. 2016a).

We test the possible effects of the CPSU legacy on the attitudes towards migrants empirically and confirm that xenophobia and CPSU legacy are significantly and positively correlated with each other. The effect is robust to various checks, including controlling for the overall inflow of migrants,

ethnic composition of the population, and the development variables from the Soviet era. In the remaining part of the paper, we first present the theoretical foundation of our argument and the key hypotheses (section 2); proceed to the description of data and statistical analysis (section 3); report the results (section 4); and sum up our findings (section 5).

2. Theory and hypotheses

2.1. Persistence of the CPSU legacies

The growing literature on historical legacies shows that historical discontinuities (e.g., wars, revolutions, or collapse of the political regime) have a smaller impact on the human behavior and values than one would have expected (Simpser et al. 2018). Once established, social values and norms tend to reproduce themselves, thriving even under very different political environments (and shaping the path of political transformation). This also holds for norms and values, which emerged under Communist regime (Bardi and Schwartz 1996; Schwartz and Bardi 1997; Alesina and Fuchs-Schündeln 2007; Neundorff 2010; Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014; Migheli 2018). From this point of view, as already mentioned in the introduction, it is reasonable to interrogate the impact of the Communist legacies on the attitudes towards migration in Russia, including the legacies of the CPSU. At the same time, both developing the hypotheses regarding the possible effect of the CPSU legacy and explaining the mechanisms of impact of the CPSU on the societal values is non-trivial; this section briefly addresses these issues.

In terms of the effects of the CPSU legacy (and, in general, any other aspect of Communist legacy), the major theoretical challenge lies in the inherent contradiction of the impact the Communist rule had on the Socialist societies. On the one hand, in the former Soviet Union countries (and in Russia) Communist rule was associated with spread of literacy and education and growing urbanization and industrialization. These are phenomena, which we typically subsume under the concept of “modernization”, and the existing social science literature theorizes that modernization is associated with growing tolerance, acceptance of different ways of life and openness to possible out-

groups, including migrants (Inglehardt 1997). In the post-Communist societies, this effect should be even more pronounced, because of the Communist ideology's rejection of racism and xenophobia and principle of the "proletarian internationalism". On the other hand, however, while the Communist regime's rule led to the increase of the values of *indicators* typically used to measure modernization, the actual nature of the processes underlying this change of indicators may be very different. It is not unusual to refer to the Communist regime as a "modernity with a twist" (Lewin 2005) or even "fake modernity" (Sztompka 1993).⁷ Communist societies could have reproduced archaic practices behind the façade of "modernization":⁸ the Communist rule should then lead to growing mistrust and xenophobia.⁹ In what follows, we develop two conflicting hypotheses guiding our study based on two sides of this contradiction.

Why should the CPSU matter in this context? Most existing studies on the Communist legacies concentrate on the socialization of the broad population driven by both formal and informal aspects of the Communist regime. It appears reasonable, however, to claim that different groups of the Communist society were socialized by the Communist rule to a different extent. The members of the Communist Party seem to be likely candidates to have experienced a more powerful socializing impact of the Communist rule. On the one hand, they have been subjected to extensive propaganda and indoctrination by the regime (interested in their loyalty to a larger extent than anybody else's). On the other hand, membership in the CPSU could have provided better access to the information about how the Soviet society really functioned; many (although not all) Communists occupied high positions in the hierarchy of the Soviet society, which could have made them more willing to accept the informal rules by which the Soviet regime governed its country. One should therefore expect that the effect of the Soviet socialization (that of ideology or that of opportunism and adaptation) on the

⁷ Lankina and Libman (2019), for example, show that in the post-Soviet Ukraine urbanization (a very common predictor for democratization) is *negatively* correlated with democratization. Also, as mentioned, Bessudnov (2016) finds a positive correlation between urbanization and xenophobia in the modern Russia.

⁸ It is not uncommon to describe the Soviet or the post-Soviet Russia as essentially feudal (Voslensky 1980; Ericson 2000; Shlapentokh and Woods 2007) and to highlight the continuity between the pre-Communist and Communist governance mode (Hedlund 2005).

⁹ Gudkov (2004) suggests that what he describes as "negative self-identification" – an identification based primarily on separating oneself from a well-defined "enemy" – is predominant in the post-Soviet context.

former CPSU members should have been more durable and lasted longer after the collapse of the USSR.

Our analysis does not look at contemporary values of the former CPSU members (or even their offspring): we investigate the values of the overall regional population. There are two mechanisms which explain the link between the party saturation and the post-Communist social values in a region.

First, Communists could have influenced social values because in Russia former party members frequently managed to maintain the position of power and status in the post-Communist era. Empirical evidence shows that after the onset of transition, former CPSU members were characterized by higher income (Geishecker and Haisken-DeNew 2004). In the post-Soviet Russia, many Communists managed to keep the positions of political power (e.g., Rigby 1990). This relative success in transition could have turned former Communists into “role models” for the regional population, supporting the spread of their values and behavioral patterns. Larger share of the CPSU members in the regional population could have made their success more visible. For example, if the Communists were more willing to embrace the idea of informal ethnic hierarchies of the Soviet era (and thus were less tolerant to other ethnicities), in regions with many former Communists more people would be likely to emulate their behavior.

Second, one of the key qualifications of the CPSU members was their capacity to network. Networking was essential for the career in the party and, more generally, for the success in the Socialist society. In the chaos of political and economic transition, networks were also essential (Schrader 2004), and in regions where the share of former CPSU members was larger, more people could have been part of their networks (Libman and Obydenkova 2019). Networks, however, also serve as tools for transfer of norms and values. Thus, values of the former members of the CPSU could have spread in the general regional population, influencing the attitude to ethnicity and to migration.

Summing up, Communists were potentially able to shape the values of the regional population during the early years of transition. These values, in turn, could have persisted in the region over a prolonged period of time, as late as the 2010s. From this point of view, the regions' attitude towards migrants should be influenced by the original set of values the CPSU members were socialized in during the Soviet era; we, however, can develop two *opposite hypotheses* regarding the former. CPSU membership and socialization could have made individuals *more tolerant* towards migrants through the legacy of the ideology of the *proletarian internationalism*, strengthened by the *Soviet nostalgia*. But the CPSU membership and socialization could have made individuals *less tolerant* towards migrants through (a) greater acceptance of the *de-facto practices of the Soviet nationalities policy* or (b) generally *high level of intolerance* towards the alternative ways of life. In what follows, we present both lines of reasoning in greater detail.

2.2. CPSU legacy and tolerance towards migrants

The Soviet ideology openly proclaimed a highly inclusive view on the interethnic relations. On the one hand, the Soviet Union presented itself as a country where all ethnicities enjoy equal status; where even relatively small ethnic groups receive a certain level of territorial autonomy; and where various languages are preserved and protected. Lenin's writings refer to the old Tsarist Empire as "the prison of nations" (*tyurma narodov*) and the Soviet Union used this concept in its propaganda to show the difference between the old regime and the new Soviet government, which promoted the equality of peoples (Jones and Grupp 1984; Tuminez 2003; Martin 2001). On the other hand, the Soviet propaganda fully embraced the concept of the "proletarian internationalism", or unity of the classes subject to exploitation, which transcended national boundaries. The workers and peasants of all countries should join forces regardless of their ethnic origin in fighting against the capitalists. As a result, all forms of ethnic discriminations were treated as serving the interests of the exploiter's class and were rejected.

An important part of being member of the CPSU was associated with systematic indoctrination in the Soviet ideology. Communists regularly participated in party meetings, where different issues of the current Soviet internal and foreign policy were discussed. Since 1938, the Soviet government established a system of the Universities of Marxism-Leninism, which in 1974 had about 330,000 students (including 210,000 CPSU members), where Marxist philosophy, history of the CPSU, Marxist political economy and other ideological disciplines were taught. Furthermore, party members were expected to themselves engage in disseminating Soviet ideology among non-members, e.g., through the role of lecturers in the *politinformatsiya* (political information) sessions. If this indoctrination were successful, one would have expected the CPSU members to become firm believers in the principles of the proletarian internationalism and in the Soviet equality of peoples. This would make them less xenophobic in general (since xenophobia contradicts the principle of the proletarian internationalism), particularly vis-à-vis other ethnic groups of the former USSR (which constitute the majority of labor migrants coming to Russia today).

This sentiment should have been reinforced by the Soviet nostalgia. There is a widespread sentiment of nostalgia towards the USSR in Russian society, as documented by many studies (Mendelson and Gerber 2005; Holak et al. 2005; White 2010). Assuming Communists were particularly ideological, they should experience particularly strong nostalgic sentiments vis-à-vis the USSR. The presence of migrants from other former Soviet republics could in this case be interpreted as a manifestation of the persistent unity of peoples of the USSR; xenophobic sentiment should have been rejected.

Based on this premise, we formulate the first hypothesis of our study:

H1: A large CPSU saturation in the 1970s should lead to lower intolerance towards migrants (the legacy of proletarian internationalism).

2.3. CPSU legacy and intolerance towards migrants

There are, however, two alternative arguments we can suggest linking CPSU legacy and attitude towards migrants. In the first step, we keep the assumption that the CPSU members were particularly loyal to the Soviet ideology. However, the fundamental premise of Bolshevism was associated with strict adherence to the party line and the rejection of any alternative points of view and opinions (Cortois et al. 1997). Throughout Soviet history, and most certainly after the consolidation of power by Stalin in the 1930s, the party did not allow any internal discussion and disagreement among its members. More generally, Soviet citizens were not encouraged to embrace the multitude of opinions or ideas in the society. On the contrary, any divergent ideas were attributed to ideological enemies trying to undermine the achievements of the Communist state. *The Moral Code of the Builder of Communism* (*Moral'nyi Kodeks Stroitel'ya Kommunizma*), a set of twelve ethical statements passed by the 1961 party congress as a short summary of the moral and ideological principles that Soviet society be built upon, contained two statements explicitly using the word “intolerance” (*neterpimost'*: intolerance of the violations of society's interests, and intolerance of the enemies of Communism, peace, and peoples' freedoms).¹⁰

The idea that Communist legacy should be associated with lower levels of tolerance is recognized in the literature, which, however, to our knowledge, has not investigated the specific attitudes of the CPSU members (rather general attitudes predominant in the post-Communist societies). Gibson and Dutch (1993) show that political intolerance was very widespread in the late Soviet Union, much more so than in Western countries (Gibson (1998) concludes that this intolerance is likely to become persistent over a prolonged period of time). Heltai and Szakolczai (1988) reach a similar conclusion about high intolerance levels in Socialist Hungary (focusing on intolerance in everyday life rather than on politics). Karpov and Lisovskaya (2007), furthermore, identify a high level of religious intolerance in Russia; Pop-Eleches and Tucker (2017) conclude that post-Socialist

¹⁰ https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Моральный_кодекс_строителя_коммунизма. Accessed 24 June 2019.

countries are characterized by negative attitudes to gender equality; and Schwartz and Bardi (1997) generally see the people in post-Socialist societies as more prone to conservative and hierarchical values. Former Communists, in case they firmly believed in the Soviet ideology, would most likely show high level of intolerance, possibly including ethnic intolerance, as well.

Another argument is based on questioning the link between party membership and ideological loyalty. There exists a very large literature, both contemporaneous and modern, implying that at least in the Brezhnev era real belief in the Communist ideology was extremely rare among party members. Most people joined the party to achieve their personal career goals; for this purpose, they were willing and ready to pay the lip service to the Soviet ideology, without really embracing it (Unger 1981; Harris 1986; Glazov 1988; Shlapentokh 1989; Gel'man and Travin 2013). Thus, in order to join the party, an individual had to demonstrate a significant level of opportunism and cynicism, allowing one to use the party rhetoric without really believing in it. After joining the party, frequent interaction with other CPSU members should have reinforced these features. In short, we argue that there was indeed a process of socialization within the party, but this socialization was associated not with stronger belief in the Soviet ideology, but with systematic contact with other career-oriented individuals, have better access to information and thus better understanding of the “real practices” of the Soviet governance. A (former) Communist should have somewhat better understanding of how the Soviet system really worked and should have accepted these real practices (because otherwise she would be unable to remain in the party, dedicated to preserving the Soviet regime). If that is the case, to devise the hypotheses about the link between the CPSU legacy and the attitude towards migrants, we should look at the *real* practices of interethnic relations in the USSR rather than ideology.

From this point of view, there exists substantial evidence of widespread ethnic discrimination in the Soviet Union. It existed in three main forms: outright discrimination against certain ethnic groups; a general informal attitude of a “hierarchy” of nations in the USSR; and sporadic examples of extreme xenophobia and chauvinism, endorsed by the Soviet government. The best-known example of the outright discrimination in post-Stalinist USSR was against Jews, which became an

established practice since the antisemitic campaigns of the late Stalin era (Orbach 1984; Azadovskii and Egorov 2002). The Jewish case is particularly well documented and has attracted a lot of international attention, yet similar discriminatory measures existed against other ethnicities. But even beyond the specific examples of the outright discrimination, the way inter-ethnic relations in the USSR were managed by the central government could have become a fruitful ground for xenophobia. Individual ethnic groups enjoyed different status in the system of the Soviet ethnic federalism. The representation of individual ethnic groups in the CPSU was also unequal, with more urbanized ethnicities enjoying larger membership (Tishkov 1991). In addition, the rhetoric of the proletarian internationalism frequently coexisted with periods of more or less intensive Russification (Dzyuba 1974). Hagedorn et al. (1998) document the existence of clearly defined ethnic hierarchies in the minds of the people in the early post-Soviet era. Finally, there have been examples of outright endorsement of xenophobia by the Soviet leaders, for example, to discourage people from contacts with foreigners (Arkhipova 2018).

The members of the CPSU should have promoted and implemented these informal practices. For example, the “ethnic factor” mattered for making decisions whether an individual was allowed to join the CPSU, and all members of the local party organization had to vote on new applications bearing in mind that “undesired” ethnicities should not enter the party (e.g., the Jews). Frequently being in positions of authority, CPSU members had to make hiring and promotion decisions which were often based on the principles of ethnic discrimination. They had to support any formal and informal rhetoric of the Soviet government and its individual officials, e.g., within the *politinformatsiya* sessions. This experience could have made the existence of an ethnic hierarchy a “natural” feature in the minds of the former CPSU members. As a result, they would reject migration as a factor potentially upsetting these ethnic hierarchies.

Summing up, we can formulate the second hypothesis of our study:

H2: A large CPSU saturation in the 1970s should lead to higher intolerance towards migrants (a legacy of informal Soviet practices of ethnic discrimination, and a general rejection of tolerance in Communist ideology and practice).

3. Data and model

3.1. Dependent and independent variables

Our dependent variable is extracted from a large-scale ARENA (*Atlas Religiy i Natsional'nostey Rossiyskoy Federacii* – Atlas of Religions and Ethnicities of Russia) survey, conducted in 2012 by FOM (*Fond Obshchestvennoe Mnenie* – Public Opinion Foundation). A specific feature of ARENA was that the survey used region-representative samples, so that one is able to infer from the responses of the regional respondents about the public sentiments in the region. ARENA survey covers all regions of Russia except Ingushetia and Chukotka. The main goal of the survey was to collect information on the attitude of Russians towards religion; however, it also included a large number of other questions, one of which is particularly important for us. Specifically, we extract the following question from the survey: “I am concerned about labor migrants (people of other nationalities) who come looking for a job.”¹¹

Our dependent variable is the share of those who agreed with the question. The variable exhibits substantial variation: while in St. Petersburg more than 40% are wary of migrants, in Northern Ossetia less than 4% agree with this statement. In the average Russian region, 18% of the respondents are concerned about migrants; the median of the variable is 16%. *Figure 1* shows the distribution of the attitude towards migrants across Russian regions. In spite of substantial variation of the indicator, there are no clearly visible outliers which could affect our results.

¹¹ The question is asked in the following way: the interviewer asks the respondents: “Furthermore, please select from the list all items you agree with”. After that, the respondents are presented a list of items (for full list see <http://sreda.org/arena>), which also includes the question about migration. We look at the share of respondents, who select this statement as the one they agree with. In Russian, the question is formulated as follows: “И еще из одного списка выберите, пожалуйста, все утверждения, с которыми Вы согласны... Я с настороженностью отношусь к трудовым мигрантам (к лицам другой национальности), приехавшим в поисках работы“. The word “nationality” (*natsional'nost*) in Russian is used as a synonym for ethnicity: therefore, potentially, respondents could have included the non-Russian minorities living in the Russian Federation in their reasoning while responding to the question.

Figure 1 about here

Our explanatory variable is the share of the CPSU members in the total population of the Russian regions in the Soviet era. Obtaining this characteristic is a non-trivial task, since the Soviet statistical yearbooks did not publish this information. However, the CPSU saturation can be inferred from the publications of the party Congresses (*s'yezd*), the main governing bodies of the CPSU. The congresses were (since World War 2) held in roughly five-year turns and were designed to serve as places where the main decisions concerning the development of the CPSU (and, even more, the USSR) had to be made. While the government did not publish any data on the size of the CPSU party organizations in sub-national regions of what then was Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (currently the Russian Federation), it published the information on the size of delegations sent by each of the regional organizations to the congress. The delegations were elected proportionally to the size of the regional party organization, which makes it possible for us to obtain information on how large the organizations were by counting the number of delegates they sent to the congress.

The procedure we use to infer the size of the CPSU membership in a region constrains us in terms of the time periods for which CPSU saturation can be measured. Specifically, we can do it only for the years of Congresses (or, more precisely, Congresses, which were followed by the minutes containing the information we are interested in). In this paper, we use the measures of the CPSU membership inferred from the 1961, 1976 and 1986 congresses. This selection of years covers almost the entire post World War 2 history of Russia and includes congresses, which took place under Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Gorbachev (using pre-World War 2 is problematic, because the territorial division of the Soviet state was very different, so that matching Soviet and modern regions would be impossible; besides, the function of the party and the motives for people to join it changed a lot in the post-Stalin era as opposed to the Stalinist period). There is a very high correlation between the party saturation data at the regional level, which we have obtained from each of these congresses: the

correlation coefficient between the 1961 and the 1976 data is .8456; between 1976 and 1986 data it is .9154. As we will show in what follows, our results hold for the 1976 and the 1986 data almost regardless of the regression specification and the set of control variables. For the 1961 data, while we still find the correlation between the CPSU saturation and the attitude towards migrants in most specifications, the robustness of our results is smaller. It could be related to the fact that there is a larger temporal distance between 1961 and 2012, which weakened the legacy effect.

3.2. Sample

Our sample, in the baseline regression, includes all regions of Russia, with the following exceptions. First, as it is usually the case in the research on Russia, we exclude the autonomous okrugs and Chechnya, for which data are not reliable. Second, we also have to exclude a number of regions due to the imperfect match between the Soviet and the modern territorial division of Russia. Generally, the Soviet territorial structure of the 1970s fits the modern structure. There are, however, some exceptions: (a) we drop St. Petersburg and Leningrad Oblast, since they had a single party organization in the Soviet era, which cannot be divided into two modern regions; (b) we drop Evreyskaya Autonomous Oblast, and the Adygeya, Altai, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and Khakassia republics, since in the Soviet era these regions were parts of other regions and had no independent party organization. We deal with these two sets of omissions in a robustness check. Our main regressions are estimated using OLS, but we relax this assumption in one of the robustness checks (since the dependent variable again varies between 0 and 100%), where we use the fractional logit model, which is better suited to deal with the problem we describe, but it yields identical effects to the baseline OLS estimator.

3.3. Control variables

In our analysis, we regress the share of respondents indicating that they are concerned about migrants on the CPSU party saturation and a set of controls.¹² The first group of controls includes the **socioeconomic and demographic characteristics** of a region. To start with, we control for *income per capita*. Higher income is likely to reduce the perception of migrants as being a risk to the individual's social status and position, as well as fears of redistribution in favor of migrant workers (Kessler and Freeman 2005). Furthermore, we control for two proxies for modernization – *urbanization* and *education*, to single out the specific CPSU legacy effect.¹³ Next, we control for *unemployment*, which again could affect attitudes towards migration, although the direction of the effect is not clear: on the one hand, the unemployed could be more concerned about losing their (already endangered) status because of the inflow of migrants, but, on the other, the unemployed have less to fear in terms of new migrant workers entering the labor market (O'Rourke and Sinnott 2006). We also control for the *size of the regional population*: large regions could create a stronger demand for the services of migrants, but on the other hand even a large inflow of migrants could be less visible. Furthermore, we control for the *age structure of the population*, looking at the share of the elderly (defined as being older than 55 years for women and 60 years for men – this is the threshold used by Russian statistics due to the official retirement age in Russia) and of the young (defined as being younger than 18 years), since it could be relevant for the persistence of the Communist legacies.

Second, we control for proxies of **ethnic, social and religious composition** of the regional population and for the **region's geographic location**. Thus, we control for the *share of ethnic Russians* – as mentioned, in Russia anti-migrant attitudes differ widely depending on the ethnic composition of the region. Furthermore, we control for the Gini coefficient at the regional level: for regions with high income inequality, there may be a larger share of the population in a particularly vulnerable position that fears the inflow of migrants. Furthermore, we control for the *shares of main religious denominations in the regional population* extracted from the ARENA survey, since it could

¹² All variables we use, if not stated otherwise, are for 2012 from the official data of Rosstat (the Russian governmental statistical agency), except for the education and ethnicity data, which are from the census data of 2010.

¹³ Captured by the share of individuals with a university degree.

also affect the levels of tolerance and the attitudes towards migrants.¹⁴ In addition to that, we control for the share of respondents who claim to always or almost always follow the requirements of their religion (i.e., how religious the regional population actually is). Finally, we control for *distance between the regional capital and the City of Moscow*. This is because Moscow is by far the most attractive region for immigration, and territories adjacent to it are also likely to experience higher migration than the rest of the country.

Next, we control for the proxies of the **governance** in the region. We control for the level of *sub-national democracy*. Russia is a country, where individual regions (in spite of the centralization pressure by Putin) still have distinctively different sub-national political regimes, with some territories being more pluralist and competitive and others being under stricter control of the central government (Obydenkova and Libman 2015b). We use the Carnegie Center index of sub-national democracy for 2006-2010; this is the most established and generally acceptable indicator of the political regimes in Russian regions typically used in the literature. In the same way, we use the data from a FOM survey from 2010 to control for the level of *corruption* in the region (experienced corruption in the interaction with public officials, as reported by the regional population). Corruption could equally affect the overall dissatisfaction with the regional situation and, hence, xenophobia.

An important question is whether we observe the effect of the historical legacy of the CPSU or of the **contemporary differences in the partisanship or the political affiliation** in the region. It is possible that the CPSU legacy is associated with a particular set of political attitudes in the region, which in turn affects the attitude towards migrants. Note that in this case contemporary differences in the partisanship are potentially a mediating variable: they could be affected by the CPSU legacy and, in turn, affect the contemporary xenophobia. In case there is no link between the CPSU legacy and the contemporary political differences, the effect of the CPSU legacy in the regressions should

¹⁴ We control for the share of Orthodox, who claim to belong to the Russian Orthodox Church, share of Orthodox, who claim to belong to other Orthodox groups, share of Old Believers, share of Protestants, share of Christians, who do not identify themselves as belonging to one of the Christian denominations, shares of Sunni and of Shi'a Muslims, share of Muslims, who claim not to be part of any of these denominations, share of pagans and share of adherents of Judaism, as well as share of respondents, who simply claim to be religious, without naming a particular denomination.

remain the same regardless of whether we control for the contemporary political attitudes or not. To capture the contemporary attitudes, we use three sets of variables. First, we control for the *share of members of the United Russia* in the region's working population (this variable was published by Slider 2010). Second, we control for the *share of votes Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF)* received in 1999, during the last relatively competitive elections in Russia. CPRF is the self-proclaimed successor to the CPSU, so that by controlling for this variable we are able to identify whether the effects of the CPSU legacy are mediated by the contemporary support of the Communist forces or unrelated to that. Third, we also control for the *outcome of elections most proximate to 2012*: shares of Putin and Zyuganov in 2012 and shares of major parties (CPRF, United Russia, Liberal Democrats, Just Russia and Yabloko) in 2011. Note that heavy electoral fraud, which persisted during this period in Russia, makes it difficult to interpret the outcomes of the 2011-2012 elections as evidence of attitudes or values.

The contemporary UR membership and the CPSU membership in the past are uncorrelated or weakly negatively correlated with each other (-.20 (p-value .09) for the 1961 CPSU data; -.11 (p-value .34) for the 1976 data, -.10 (p-value 0.41) for the 1986 data). The same is true for the share of votes for the CPRF in 1999 and the CPSU saturation (-.23 (p-value .05); -.05 (p-value .66), -.02 (p-value .97)). However, we do observe a significant correlation between the voting patterns in 2011-2012 and the CPSU legacy.¹⁵ We cannot unambiguously attribute it to the preferences or to the modes of electoral manipulation (especially because the sub-national political regime, which has a very strong impact on manipulation, is, as Libman and Obydenkova (2015) have shown, also correlated with the CPSU legacy). More importantly, after controlling for all variables (potentially) measuring contemporary political attitudes, our main effect persists without any changes.

¹⁵ The share of votes received by Putin in 2012 is highly and negatively correlated with the CPSU legacy (-.49; -.50; -.49; significant at any reasonable level of significance); the share of votes for Zyuganov exhibits positive and significant correlation (.22; .37; .36; all significant at at least 10% level). In the same way, the share of votes for the UR in 2011 is negatively and significantly correlated with the CPSU membership in the past (-.36; -.32; -.35; all significant at 1% level); the same holds for the LDPR (.31 (p-value .009); .15 (p-value .21); .23 (p-value .05)) and Yabloko (.61; .54; .52; all significant at 1% level). The share of votes for the CPRF in 2011 is positively and significantly correlated with the CPSU membership in the past (.21; .29; .30; all significant at at least 10% level); the same applies to Just Russia (.27; .24; .24; ; all significant at 5% level).

Another set of control variables accounts for a different interpretation of our results: the **effect of the economic decline of the 1990s**. It is possible that the regions with a larger CPSU membership experienced stronger decline. This could have resulted in an increase in risk-aversion of the regional population, which would make it wary of migration. In this case, the effect of the CPSU legacy on the contemporary attitude towards migration would be mediated by the socioeconomic developments in the region rather than by ideology and culture, as hypothesized in the section 2. To check this explanation, we control for two proxies: the decline of the regional income per capita in 1999 relatively to 1991¹⁶ and, in line with the ideas discussed by Belmonte and Rochlitz (2018), the price increase over 1992-1995 (the period of very high inflation, which caused the major disruption in the Russian economy and massively affected the well-being of consumers). By using these controls, we are able to isolate the CPSU legacy effects from the memory of the socioeconomic turbulences of the 1990s. Note, further, that we control for contemporary income per capita as well, to distinguish between the rich and the poor regions.

Finally, it is plausible that the attitudes towards migration also depend upon how **many migrants are actually in the region**. There are two possible effects we can consider in this case. On the one hand, the larger the inflow of the migrants, the more frequent are the interactions between migrants and the local population; the contact hypothesis (e.g., McLaren 2003) implies that the more frequent these interactions are, the less likely are the inhabitants of the region to be wary of migrants. On the other hand, larger inflow of migrants could make the local inhabitants more concerned about losing their jobs and increase the threat perception for local culture and customs. In terms of the theoretical framework of this paper, controlling for the inflow of migrants could become important for the following reason: assume that some regional characteristics made it more likely to have a large CPSU saturation in the past and attract many migrants today (one possible omitted variable could be the level of development, if it is not entirely captured by income per capita, urbanization and

¹⁶ We apply the region-specific consumption price indices to compute the 1999 income in 1991 price levels.

education: Lankina et al. (2016a) demonstrate that the CPSU membership was higher in more developed regions in the Soviet period, and in the modern Russia it is also more likely that more developed regions attract more migrants looking for jobs). Thus, if we do not control for the actual inflow of migrants, we may encounter an omitted variable bias.¹⁷ We obtain this information from the official Rosstat data (*chislo pribyvshikh*; the number of new arrivals in the region).¹⁸ Here we, first, control for the number of migrants from the CIS countries (the main source of inflow of migrants to Russia). We also add the number of migrants from non-CIS countries and the number of “internal” migrants (migration from other Russian regions) in a further specification. We are aware that any official data on migration in Russia have to be used with extreme caution though.

Because of the relatively small size of our sample and possible collinearity of some of the control variables, we cannot include them all in the same specification. Rather, we use the following approach. We first estimate the *baseline specification*, where we control for three developmental variables (income, education and urbanization). We then add variables in different combinations and check the robustness of our results.

4. Results

The main findings of the paper are reported in *Table 1*. Because of the large number of specifications we have estimated, we do not report the full regression output. Rather, we report only the β coefficient and the standard error for the main variable of interest (CPSU saturation), as well as list additional control variables we have included in the regression.¹⁹ Furthermore, *Figure 2* reports unconditional correlation between the CPSU saturation and the attitude towards migrants. We report scatterplots both with and without City of Moscow (which had a very high CPSU saturation and thus constitutes

¹⁷ We are aware that in this case our results could be particularly prone to reverse causality (potential migrants could take the extent of anti-migrant attitudes into account). This is the reason why we control for the inflow of migrants in some, but not in all specifications.

¹⁸ http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_main/rosstat/ru/statistics/publications/catalog/doc_1140096034906. Accessed 20 March 2019.

¹⁹ Detailed regression output for the 1976 CPSU saturation is reported in the Supplementary Material, which can be found on the website of Alexander Libman (<https://sites.google.com/site/libmanalexander/>): <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1zcwlXgothT9jauOZaJXZ7mZB93mFGW1a>.

an obvious outlier). Both regression analysis and unconditional correlations yield the same result. Using the 1976 and the 1986 data on the CPSU saturation, we find that, almost regardless of the specification, *the CPSU saturation produces a positive and significant effect on the share of those who are concerned about migrants*. This is in line with the hypothesis H2. For the 1961 data, our results are less robust: while the correlation between the CPSU saturation and the attitude towards migrants remains negative, it is occasionally insignificant. As discussed, it could be related to the fact that more time has passed between 1961 and 2012 than between 1976 / 1986 and 2012.

Table 1 about here

Figure 2 about here

The magnitude of the effect depends on the particular specification and the dependent variable we chose. For the 1961 CPSU saturation, an increase of the CPSU membership share by 1% causes the negative attitude towards migrants to go up by 1-2 percentage points. For the 1976 CPSU saturation, the respective increase is 1.9-2.4 percentage points; for the 1986 data it is 1.4-2 percentage points. To illustrate the importance of this effect, we use a counterfactual example. Consider, for instance, the region of Tyumen (Western Siberia – a region where most important Russian oil deposits are concentrated). If in 1976 it had a CPSU membership rate equal to that of Kaliningrad (roughly 9%, instead of 4.6% - Kaliningrad is a Russian enclave at the Baltic sea, which became part of the USSR after World War 2 and had one of the highest CPSU saturation indicators due to a large number of military veterans, who settled there), it would cause the share of those who have negative attitudes towards migrants (currently 21.6%) to jump by more than 10 percentage points. This is a substantial increase, which would probably have a significant impact on the political situation in the region.²⁰

²⁰ The results of Table 1 are substantiated by a number of robustness checks, reported in the Supplementary Material. In particular, we are able to show that the results obtained using the 1976 and the 1986 party saturation rates are highly robust. The 1961 data, again, generate less robust regressions.

5. Conclusion

Summing up the findings of this paper, we were able to show that the CPSU legacy indeed seems to affect the attitudes of the general population, which were “transmitted” from the group of the CPSU party members and persisted for over two decades after the fall of the USSR. However, these values and attitudes are not part of the official ideology that CPSU members were indoctrinated in: they are much more likely to be part of the informal practices many of the CPSU members (especially those in positions of power and authority) were involved in their day-to-day life. While the Soviet state eagerly presented itself as a cradle of equality of nations, based on “proletarian internationalism”, ethnic discrimination was part of daily life in the USSR: and socialization within the CPSU seems to be to a larger extent driven by these informal practices. As a result, in the 2010s, regions with a larger CPSU saturation almost half a century earlier were characterized by stronger mistrust of their population towards migrants. The results hold if we control for the economic decline experienced by the regions in the 1990s and for various proxies of the modern political attitudes and values. Our results once again seem to be in line with the “fake modernity” argument: the “vanguard” of the Soviet society (frequently concentrated in the locations of particular ideological importance, like the large construction projects – *velikie stroyki* – or in the crucial institutions like the media and the army) was to a large extent characterized by pre-modern values favoring intolerance and xenophobia, which are widespread in the modern Russia as well.

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