Disintegration and Consolidation: National Separatism and the Evolution of Center-Periphery Relations in the Russian Federation

John W. Slocum
University of Oklahoma

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INTRODUCTION

Practitioners of the late lamented science of Sovietology have been roundly criticized for failing to predict one of the most momentous events of the twentieth century—the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Anxious to avoid a repetition of past mistakes, post-Sovietologists have in turn devoted a good deal of attention to the question of whether the USSR's largest successor state, the Russian Federation, is itself in danger of breaking apart. Like the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation is a multinational state with ethnically-defined territorial subunits; political elites in these subunits, faced with massive political, economic and social uncertainty, may be attracted by the idea of political independence. During the first half of the 1990s, post-Soviet Russia has indeed experienced more than one crisis of center-periphery relations. The present study, however, suggests that the likelihood of a general disintegration of the Russian Federation peaked in the early 1990s and is now decreasing. In view of this analysis, the war in Chechnya is an exception to an overall trend toward consolidation, rather than an indicator of a general breakdown in center-periphery relations.

This study is intended to contribute to the small but rapidly expanding body of research on center-periphery relations in post-Soviet Russia.[1] The analysis set forth here characterizes the overall trajectory of center-periphery relations in terms of the evolution of institutional structures and political demands, focusing on dynamics of center-periphery relations pertinent to the Russian Federation as a whole, rather than the specifics of one particular "subject" of the federation.[2] Special attention is paid to the politically salient distinction between Russia's ethnically defined "republics" and its non-ethnic "regions," an institutional feature of post-Soviet Russian politics that is a direct consequence of Soviet-era nationality politics.

Scholars have suggested that particular factors characteristic of the Russian Federation make it less susceptible to dissolution than the Soviet Union. Among the most frequently cited

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[1] Exemplary studies include Lapidus and Walker 1995; Blum 1994; and Teague 1994c.

[2] The Federation Treaty of March 1992 (actually three separate agreements) established three classes of *subekty*, or "subjects," of the Russian Federation. The term "subject" will be used in this paper to refer to any of the major territorial-administrative subdivision of the Russia. Among the subjects whose politics have received detailed empirical treatment by Western scholars are Altai province (Kirkow 1994), the republic of Sakha-Yakutia (Kempton 1995), and Primorskii krai (Kirkow and Hanson 1994).

factors are (a) the preponderance of ethnic Russians in the population of Russia as a whole and within most of its territorial subunits; (b) the high degree of interregional economic integration within Russia; and (c) a lack of international recognition for the sovereignty claims of various local governments within Russia.[3] These factors are all significant, but their contribution to the stability of Russian federalism will not be well understood without considering the overall context of extreme institutional flux. Throughout the former Soviet Union, the old rules of the game have been discarded, and new rules have yet to be firmly established, as the region undergoes multiple and simultaneous transitional processes of marketization, democratization, and the consolidation of new state boundaries, national identities, and security structures.

The present study examines how institutional change and uncertainty has affected the evolution of center-periphery relations in Russia. I suggest that these relations have passed through several discrete stages of institutional change. The outcomes of political struggles at each of these stages have influenced the scope and range of subsequent conflicts by affecting the definition of relevant political actors, their perceived interests, and the range of politically justifiable claims made by these actors.[4] The overall argument rests on an historical-institutionalist interpretation that posits center-periphery relations in the Russian Federation as the latest stage of a process of institutionalization that occurred throughout the Soviet and post-Soviet period. Early Soviet-era institutions provided sets of political identities for provincial elites (most importantly, an institutionalization of ethnic identity) that in turn implied sets of justifiable claims over resources. The bulk of this paper is devoted to an examination of three recent stages of institutional change—beginning in the last years of the Soviet regime, and continuing through the mid-1990s—that transformed center-periphery relations within the Russian republic. These stages may be summarized as follows:

> (1) In the period 1990–92 the institutions, identities, and realms of justification associated with nationality politics and center-periphery relations underwent massive transformation, as a previously stable set of institutional relations was disrupted by (a)

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[3] See, for example, Kempton 1995.

[4] Thus the methodology guiding this investigation borrows two concepts from the "new institutionalism" in historical sociology: path dependence (see Sewell n.d.) and the idea of "*institutional constitution of interests and actors*" (Brubaker 1994, 48 [emphasis in original]).

the end of the Communist party's monopoly of power in the face of processes of democratization and marketization; and (b) the dissolution of the Soviet Union into fifteen independent states, a process accompanied by proclamations of sovereignty by subunits of the Russian republic, thus threatening the territorial integrity of the emerging independent Russian state.

(2) The period 1992–94 was characterized by a consolidation of Russian statehood, a process that involved multiple negotiations over the contours of center-periphery relations. The relative strength of the periphery (regions and republics) over the center peaked during this period as peripheral units of the Russian Federation mobilized new sets of political identities and claims to rights against the center.

(3) Finally, as the result of events of late 1993 through early 1995, the focus of disputes over center-periphery relations within the Russian Federation has moved from political to economic issues. The example made of Chechnya shows the limits of separatist political claims; the political identities of the regions and republics seem to have coalesced around an understanding that the political disintegration of the Russian Federation would be an unlikely, unfeasible, and probably undesirable outcome. Thus, future center-periphery disputes are likely to revolve around economic issues—most importantly, on devising a working system of fiscal federalism.

Each of the stages of this argument is dealt with separately in the four parts which constitute the bulk of this paper. In a concluding section, I discuss how changing political conditions could lead to a new period of instability in center-periphery relations.

THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF ETHNICITY IN THE SOVIET UNION

Prior to the 1980s, most analyses of Soviet nationality politics tended to fall in one of two categories: analysts either accepted the Soviet governments claim to have "solved" the nationality question, or else they saw the Soviet Union as an imperial "prison of nations," wherein long-repressed national identities were slowly being ground out of existence.[5] Nearly all observers,

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[5] Works on nationality politics published in the Soviet Union prior to the late 1980s tended to offer uncritical, glowing accounts of the successes of Soviet nationality politics. For a similarly pro-Soviet analysis published in the West, see Bechtel and Rosenberg 1984. Critical western analysts of Soviet nationality policies have taken their cue from Richard Pipes (1953), who

both pro- and anti-Soviet, were then caught short when the resilience of separate national identities became apparent during the Gorbachev years.[6]

Why the surprise? In a sense, the two poles of analysis had become mutually reinforcing; in nationality issues as in other policy arenas, outside observers proved all too willing to accept the official Soviet line, if only because its implications reinforced their own worst fears. The officially decreed "solution" of the nationality question, involving the emergence of a de-ethnicized Soviet nation with Russian as the language of inter-nationality communication, signaled to many critical observers that Soviet Russia was bent on implementing old Tsarist dreams of Russification, albeit with modern totalitarian efficiency.

What had been unclear until relatively recently is that, far from having eradicated ethnic or national distinctions, the Soviet state in fact relied on these distinctions as a crucial element of its system of rule.[7] No one denies that non-Russian national cultural and political figures suffered banishment and death under Stalin, nor that this touted "father of nations" sentenced whole peoples to starvation or deportation.[8] Yet there remains the central paradox that official policies —from Stalin's time onward—ended up reinforcing the institutional and political salience of national identity and nationality distinctions within the Soviet system.[9] As the years of Stalin's

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emphasized the inexorable drive of the Bolsheviks toward crushing national independence movements in the years 1917–22, and Robert Conquest (1967), who saw in subsequent Soviet nationality policies a drive toward further Russification and diminution of national autonomy. More recently, Gerhard Simon (1991) offered a more nuanced account, which stresses variation in nationality policy over time and the continuing importance of *korenizatsia* (affirmative action for non-Russian nationalities) even after the overall policy line turned pro-Russian in the mid-1930s.

[6] Prominent early exceptions include Azrael 1978 and Carrere d'Encausse 1981. For a thoughtful exploration of the various factors that contributed to the underestimation of nationality issues in Western scholarship, see Subtelny 1994.

[7] Slezkine (1993) and Brubaker (1994) offer particularly forceful statements of this argument.

[8] On the mass wartime deportations of the 1940s, see Conquest 1970 and Nekrich 1978. The "terror famine" in the Ukraine is dealt with in Conquest 1986. Taking a different emphasis, Simon (1991) argues that the anti-nationality effects of 1930s policies toward the borderlands may be viewed as secondary consequences of campaigns aimed primarily at centralization and rapid industrialization.

[9] See Roeder 1991 and Suny 1993.

terror receded into the past, indigenous (i.e., non-Russian) politicians became more or less comfortably entrenched in leadership roles within the various national republics of the Soviet Union. Such leaders, all loyal communists, could never satisfy the aspirations of ardent non-Russian nationalists, whether these suffered at home in silence (or in prison), or loudly denounced the Soviet system from abroad. But "native" leaders did occupy crucial posts in a state-defined hierarchy of institutionalized ethnicity, and administered populations for whom nationality was one of the primary modes of public identity. When the Communist monopoly of power and ideology finally eroded—and the local leaders found their continuation in office subject to election—these leaders readily changed their tune to become the nationalist leaders of nationally self-conscious populations. Thus did the nationality-based institutions of the Soviet past provide "a ready-made template for claims of sovereignty" in the Gorbachev period (Brubaker 1994, 48).

For the uninitiated observer, unraveling the complexities of Soviet nationality policy is a daunting task. In several crucial respects, policies have changed direction a number of times over the course of Soviet history. But the maze of policies can be made clearer though an appreciation of the persistence of several defining characteristics that have shaped interethnic and center-periphery relations throughout the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. In accordance with new institutionalist theories of sociology, Rogers Brubaker argues that the institutionalized nationality relations of the USSR have not only acted as contextual factors, constraining the range of strategic actors, but these institutions have in fact played a constitutive role in defining political actors and interests (Brubaker 1994, 48–9). Compared to other multiethnic states, the Soviet Union stands out for its unusually comprehensive codification and institutionalization of nationality distinctions on the sub-state level (52).[10] Moreover, the political language of this institutionalization is itself significant; the peoples of the Soviet Union were consistently referred to as nationalities, rather than ethnic minorities, a factor of no little importance in determining the future trajectory of "ethnic" relations in the region.

There were two main elements to the political institutionalization of ethnicity in the Soviet Union—what Brubaker refers to as the "personal" and "territorial" systems of ethnicity.

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[10] The case of Yugoslavia offers the closest parallel to the Soviet Union's comprehensive institutionalization of ethnicity; Yugoslavia's policy was of course modeled on the "Leninist" principles embodied in the territorial-administrative structure of the Soviet state.

The roots of these twin pillars of ethnicity lie in turn-of-the-century Marxist disputes over how to accommodate the ethnic diversity of the multinational empires of Eastern Europe; this is the well-known debate over "cultural autonomy" versus "territorial autonomy."[11] The idea of cultural autonomy, as put forth by Austrian social democrats, involved establishing a set of representative institutions at the national level to further the cultural interests of ethnic minorities (especially in matters of education and language policy), without risking the centrifugal tendencies that might result from the establishment of separate, territorially-based ethnic autonomies. Lenin inveighed against the idea of cultural autonomy, insisting that the right to self-determination, a long-held principle of international social democracy, was meaningless without the establishment of separate territorial units corresponding to areas of compact ethnic settlement.

Lenin's own attachment to the concept of territorial autonomy was quite conditional (class considerations always colored his analysis of the right to self-determination), and his writings on the subject are often contradictory, but nonetheless the idea of territorial autonomy became the basis for the major territorial-administrative subdivisions of the Soviet Union. At the same time, the idea of cultural autonomy *also* found expression in Soviet nationality policy, especially as practiced in the first ten years of the new regime, so that the Soviet state was characterized by a tension between territorial and non-territorially based systems of politicized ethnicity. For all its ideological emphasis on a class-based theory of society, the Soviet system of rule was deeply saturated by a nationality principle that affected both territorial subdivisions and individual identity.

Territorial autonomy was implemented by a multi-tiered territorial-administrative structure, which divided the Soviet Union into a hierarchy of so-called "state" forms ranging from union republics (Soviet Socialist Republics or SSRs) down through autonomous republics (Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics or ASSRs), autonomous oblasts (regions), and autonomous okrugs (districts). Each national-territorial unit corresponded to one "titular" nationality group—i.e., the nationality after which the territory was named. Each category of statehood was associated with a specific degree of organizational, administrative, and cultural privileges, which

[11] For detailed discussion of these disputes, see Conner 1984.

gave certain local advantages to a given territory's titular nationality.[12] The fortunes of a given nationality might rise or fall in terms of moving to a higher or lower form of statehood, but the power to determine the political status of a given nationality group rested with the Kremlin. Nationalities could be rewarded by granting them a higher degree of statehood, punished by depriving them of their state formation (and sending whole peoples into exile), or rehabilitated by reinstating their state form.

This complex ethnofederalist arrangement was interpenetrated by a non-territorially based system of individual ethnic identity. Each citizen had a nationality, which was not tied to place of birth or republic of current residence.[13] Individual ethnic identifications were affected by official measures ranging from "natural" to forced assimilation, and specific nationalities were the targets of repression, mass population transfers and the genocidal policies of the collectivization era. Still, the idea that each individual member of the Soviet polity could be identified by nationality was never challenged.

Territorial and individual-level reinforcement of ethnic identity worked together to perpetuate nationality distinctions, even at times when the Soviet leadership would have preferred to see the "merging of nations" into "new Soviet men and women," or when the dissolution of the union republics was discussed, as in the early 1960s (see Gleason 1990, chapter four). Thus the paradox emphasized in a spate of recent postmortems on the Soviet Union: despite the Russificatory and centralizing tendencies of the Soviet system, and in spite of a ruling ideology that proclaimed the priority of the class nature of a society over its ethnic particularity, Soviet

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[12] Ian Bremmer distinguishes between "first-order" and "second-order" titular nationalities. First-order titular nationalities were those who possessed a union republic; second-order titular nationalities had an autonomous republic (ASSR) (Bremmer 1993, 13). The privileges (within their "own" territorial formation) that accrued to second-order titular nationalities were systematically lower than those allotted to first-order titular nationalities, yet even second-order status was a guarantee of some degree of cultural protection (see Roeder 1991).

[13] Note that the system of individual ethnic identity makes the concept of titular and non-titular nationalities relational and relative to the context in question: "Nations may thus be considered titular in relation to other nations in certain contexts (i.e., titular Russians and non-titular Georgians in Russia; titular Uzbeks and non-titular Tajiks in Uzbekistan) while not in relation to others (non-titular Russians and titular Georgians in Georgia; titular Tajiks and non-titular Uzbeks in Tajikistan), depending on their relative hierarchical status" (Bremmer 1993, 13).

nationality policies in fact reinforced ethnic distinctions and created the institutional basis for the dissolution of the Union. Brubaker captures the paradox nicely:

> In practice, of course, centralized party and ministerial control sharply, although variably, limited the sphere of effective republic autonomy. But the significance of the republics as institutional crystallizations of nationhood lay less in the constitutional fictions of sovereignty, statehood, and autonomy—symbolically potent and self-actualizing though they proved to be under Gorbachev—than in the durable institutional frame the republics provided for the long-term cultivation and consolidation of national administrative cadres and national intelligentsia (periodic purges notwithstanding) and for the long-term protection and cultivation of national languages and cultures (the promotion of Russian as a lingua franca notwithstanding) (Brubaker 1994, 53).

As the Soviet system entered the last decade of its existence, the last Soviet constitution of 1977 (the "Brezhnev" constitution) ratified the status quo: a formally federal state structure comprised of national republics, unified by a centralized command-administrative structure under the leadership of the Communist Party.

Two other aspects of nationality politics in the pre-Gorbachev era deserve mention, one relevant to the Soviet Union as a whole, and the other of particular importance to the Russian republic. First, the Soviet federal system created a structure of incentives and opportunities that, in the context of the command-administrative economic system, encouraged the growth of regional "mafias," local networks of corruption and influence that greased the interlinked workings of government, party and industry, typically extending outward from the desk of the regional party secretary.[14] In many of the union republics (and, to a lesser degree, within the autonomous republics), these "old-boy networks" also had a distinctly ethnic cast, serving as the unofficial source of the local status and privilege of titular nationals. During the Brezhnev years, the absence of wide scale terror and purges generally provided the regional nomenklatura with job security and long tenure in office—ideal conditions for the ripening of corruption networks. And when Gorbachev targeted one such operation for clean-up, firing Kazakhstan's party chief (and ethnic Kazakh) Kunaev in December 1986, so great was the local outcry that the resulting riots in Alma-Ata are widely considered to have been the first irruption of the "revolt of the nationalities."

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[14] Carrere d'Encausse 1993 is perhaps the best general treatment of this phenomenon.

A second feature of the Soviet federal system, the legacy of which has been a significant source of tension in the post-Soviet system, is that several union republics were characterized by a mixture of ethnic and purely territorial principles of territorial-administrative subdivision. Ten of the former union republics had no ethnically defined internal administrative boundaries. But Russia, like four other union republics (Georgia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Tadzhikistan), contained nationality-based territorial subdivisions. Of all these republics, Russia's internal makeup was by far the most complex: its administrative subdivisions were of two types, strictly territorial regions (oblasts and krais), and the ethnically-defined autonomies, which included sixteen autonomous republics (ASSRs), five autonomous oblasts (AOs), and ten autonomous okrugs (AOks). Additionally complicating the situation, the lower-level autonomies (AOs and AOks) were themselves territorial subdivisions of larger, non-ethnic regions.

As long as the Soviet Union was held together by the Communist Party, the distinction between regions and autonomies was of no great importance. But once ethnic nationalism became the legitimating ideology of choice for political entrepreneurs throughout the region, the continuing, often contradictory mix of ethnic and territorial principles threatened the stability of Russia and a number of other successor states. Here, too, is a partial explanation for the contrast between the unexpectedly smooth, nearly bloodless process of late 1991 by which the Soviet Union became fifteen independent republics and the bloody conflicts that have dominated the internal affairs of several of the successor states. The territorial institutionalization of ethnicity in the Soviet Union created fifteen structurally homologous subunits—the union republics—which, like the sections of an orange, readily pulled apart once the overarching Communist Party monopoly of power was removed. The internal structure of Russia (and several other successor states), with its mix of ethnic and non-ethnically defined territorial subunits, suggests that further disintegration of the "former Soviet space" would unleash enormous energies and cause a great deal of destruction—it would look less like peeling apart an orange and more like smashing open a walnut.

INSTITUTIONAL RUPTURE: FROM THE "PARADE OF SOVEREIGNTIES" TO THE FEDERATION TREATY

The late Gorbachev years were marked by institutional rupture on many fronts, not least in the interrelated spheres of nationality politics and center-periphery relations. These ruptures

not only culminated in the breakup of the Soviet Union, but also affected the future course of center-periphery relations within the Russian successor state, largely by providing provincial leaders with opportunities to challenge successfully the center's previous monopoly on defining the nature and competencies of subunits of the Russian federal republic. The remainder of this section traces this institutional transformation, focusing on events beginning with the June 1990 declaration of sovereignty by the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR—since independence renamed the Russian Federation), and culminating in the March 1992 Federation Treaty.[15]

Before Gorbachev, the Soviet state controlled the power to reward or punish whole peoples by its prerogative of assigning them a higher or lower level of "statehood." Any changes in the political-territorial status of a given nationality were to be made at the top; such changes were infrequent and tended to be clustered in time around major regime reorientations.[16] During the last two years of the Soviet regime, however, the central state lost control over its previous monopoly on regulating the relative political status of national-territorial units. The "parade of sovereignties" that swept the union republics was matched within the RSFSR—as the leaders of autonomous republics, oblasts and okrugs rushed to unilaterally upgrade the status of their national-territorial unit, declaring themselves full-fledged "soviet socialist republics" without waiting for approval from Moscow (be it Gorbachev's Moscow or Yeltsin's Moscow). Such unilateral declarations were reactions—in part defensive, in part opportunistic—to a situation of deepening multiple crises of authority on a union-wide scale. The net effect of these develop-

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[15] Over the course of this period, what constituted the "center" changed as well. While the geographic location of the "center" remained within the city limits of Moscow, over the period in question the Russian republic under Yeltsin emerged as a new political center, raising an ultimately successful challenge to the Soviet center led by Gorbachev. As subsequent analysis makes clear, the course of center-periphery relations *within* Russia was intimately bound up with the momentous struggle over center-periphery relations at the level of the Soviet Union, which found personalized expression in the power struggle between Gorbachev and Yeltsin. The latter struggle ended with the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Gorbachev's resignation in December 1991. As regards center-periphery relations within Russia, however, the true endpoint of this phase came three months later with the signing of the Federation Treaty.

[16] The best known examples of demotion and promotion are Stalin's wholesale wartime deportation of several nationalities—accompanied by abolition of their national territories—and Khrushchev's subsequent rehabilitation of most of the punished peoples and their state institutions.

ments was to convince both regional leaders and central authorities that the Russian regions represented important, increasingly autonomous political actors whose support for a given set of central leaders and policies could not be taken for granted.[17]

In examining the recent politics of nationality, territoriality, and separatism within the Russian republic, it is important to keep in mind the connections between separatist movements inside and outside of Russia. The analogy often posited between the breakup of the USSR and the projected breakup of Russia depends in part on a misconceived view of the sequence of events, a view that depicts the separatism of the Union republics as preceding and inspiring separatism within Russia. While to a certain degree accurate, this image obscures the fact that both phenomena were elements of a general reconfiguration of authority relations among elements of the Soviet elite, and that the national independence movements of the former union republics and the so-called "sovereignization" of the autonomous republics within Russia occurred more or less simultaneously in the context of a general political crisis . For the republics within Russia, the most pertinent aspect of this crisis became the power struggle between Yeltsin and Gorbachev—which personified the struggle for priority between republic-level and union-wide structures of authority.

In 1988 and 1989, the rise of popular front movements in the Baltic republics ushered in a series of events that ultimately led to the collapse of the Soviet Union, as the non-Russian republics one by one declared their sovereignty. With these proclamations, the legislatures of the non-Russian republics denied the supremacy of Soviet law on their territories, and claimed the right to make independent policy decisions, especially in the realm of economics. Between November 1988 and July 1990, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Moldavia and Ukraine had all issued declarations of sovereignty, implying that any further relationship between these republics and the Soviet center would have to be established on the basis of a new union treaty (Carrere d'Encausse 1993, 146–9).

The step from a declaration of sovereignty to an outright declaration of independence was first taken by Lithuania on 11 March 1990, followed by Estonia and Latvia in June of that

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[17] One of the future tasks for historians of Soviet Russia will be to trace the role of Russian's regions in the political processes of the RSFSR and the Soviet Union in pre-Gorbachev times. Several important studies of Soviet regional politics exist, but in past Sovietological endeavors, the term "region" more commonly referred to a union republic rather than a subunit thereof.

year. In July, under pressure from Gorbachev, the Baltic states agreed to put their declarations of independence on hold. From then until August 1991, negotiations proceeded on a new union treaty, designed to reconfigure the authority relations between the central government and the constituent republics of the Soviet Union. As negotiations dragged on, the number of republics willing to sign dropped from nine to eight to five (Carrere d'Encausse 1993, 155–65, 246). On 19 August 1991, the hard-liners' coup preempted the planned signing of the union treaty and eventually led to the complete collapse of the USSR, bringing international recognition of the independence of all fifteen of the former union republics.

During the months prior to the coup, the autonomous republics (ASSRs) within Russia had also issued declarations of sovereignty. These declarations lagged behind those of the union republics by a year or more but made similar claims for the priority of local legislative acts and control over natural resources and the local economy. The so-called "parade of sovereignties" within Russia began with the North Ossetian ASSR on 20 July 1990 and culminated with that of the Kabardino-Balkarskaia ASSR on 30 January 1991. In this brief, six-month period, fourteen of the sixteen ASSRs declared their sovereignty and the remaining two republics issued somewhat milder statements upgrading their political status. All of them dropped the designation "autonomous soviet socialist republic" and renamed themselves as either a soviet socialist republic, a socialist republic, or simply a republic (Abdulatipov, Boltenkova, and Iarov 1993a, 82–3).[18] Somewhat later, four out the five autonomous oblasts (AOs) of the Russian Federation also declared their sovereignty, and were recognized as SSRs within the Russian Federation by the Russian Supreme Soviet on 3 July 1991 (Sheehy 1993, 36, note 4; Abdulatipov, Boltenkova, and Iarov 1993a, 90–5).[19]

Among the ASSRs, the process of "sovereignization" was partly inspired by the separatist movements of the union republics, but its immediate political context was the intensification of the power struggle between Gorbachev and Yeltsin. On 12 July 1990, the Russian Congress

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[18] For the texts of these declarations of sovereignty, see Abdulatipov, Boltenkova and Iarov 1993b, 20–57.

[19] The four autonomous oblasts elevated to the status of republic were Gornyi Altai (later renamed Altai), Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Khakassia, and Adygei; these had previously been administrative subunits of the Altai, Stavropol, Krasnoyarsk, and Krasnodar territories (krais), respectively (Slider 1994, 241).

of People's Deputies, chaired by Boris Yeltsin, issued a declaration of Russian state sovereignty; shortly thereafter, Yeltsin encouraged the autonomous republics to "take whatever powers they felt they could handle" (Sheehy 1993, 36). Gorbachev had already sought to channel the separatist ambitions of the ASSRs to his own purposes; with a decree of 26 April 1990, he granted them the right to participate as equal partners with the union republics in negotiations for the new union treaty (Sheehy 1993, 36; Abdulatipov, Boltenkova, and Iarov 1993a, 81–2). Such a move threatened the territorial integrity of the union republics—Russia in particular—and Russia's leaders were faced with the threat that, under a future union treaty, the former ASSRs contained within the borders of Russia might evade the control of Russian authorities and answer only to the union government.

Unlike the sovereignty declarations of the union republics, however, those of the ASSRs were not typically followed up by declarations of independence. Among the "sovereignizing" autonomies, all but Tatarstan and the Chechen-Ingush Republic retained the language "within the Russian Federation" in their sovereignty declarations (Abdulatipov, Boltenkova, and Iarov 1993a, 83). And despite widespread succession anxieties over Tatarstan, only the North Caucasus republic of Chechnya has forced the issue of independence, eventually separating itself from Ingushetia in the process. As long as the Soviet Union still existed, most of the former autonomies were content to limit their political ambitions to the aspiration to be treated as equal partners in the union treaty negotiations.

Clearly, there were contradictions inherent in the idea that a sovereign republic could exist as a subunit of another sovereign republic. Even before the final dissolution of the Soviet Union, Yeltsin's government began to experience openly antagonistic relations with the regions and republics, and the Russian president worked to establish new institutional mechanisms intended to ensure effective central control. In the wake of the August 1991 coup, Russian President Yeltsin began to appoint his own personal representatives to the regions (but not the republics) in an attempt to challenge the authority of local leaders who had supported the coup or were otherwise standing in the way of reform and Yeltsin's consolidation of power. These presidential representatives—quickly dubbed "viceroys" (*namestniki*)—became a permanent institutional feature of center-periphery relations. The presidential representatives often fought bitterly with local soviets and administrations over access to resources and the levers of economic

management. Presidential decrees of early 1993 strengthened the control of presidential representatives over the local operations of federal executive agencies (Slider 1994, 251–6).

A second institutional change directly affected the nature of local executive authority in the regions (krais and oblasts). In July 1991, the regional executive committees (*ispolkomy*) were eliminated, and new local executive posts—heads of administration (*glava administratsii*)—were instituted in their place (Slider 1994, 256). There followed several years of struggle over whether the heads of administration (also called governors) should be locally elected or appointed from the center. Yeltsin claimed the right to appoint governors in November 1991, but this right was challenged in the localities. In early 1993, the Russian Supreme Soviet stripped Yeltsin of his power to appoint heads of administration, and governors were subsequently elected in Krasnoyarsk and Primorskii krais and Amur, Bryansk, Chelyabinsk, Lipetsk, Orel, Penza, and Smolensk oblasts (Teague 1993, 7ff).

Meanwhile, relations between the central government and Russia's ethnically-defined republics evolved along different lines. In contrast to his powers over the regions, Yeltsin did not have the authority to name presidential representatives to the republics; nor did he appoint their executives. Instead, the republics began to adopt their own constitutions, which vested executive authority in a locally elected president—or in some cases, the chairman of the supreme soviet (Teague 1993; Slider 1994, 257–8).

Despite the evolving dichotomy in their statuses, both regions and republics cooperated in 1990–91 in the formation of a set of new "bottom-up" institutional structures, the interregional associations. The first such association, the North-West Association, was formed in July 1990; the most influential one, Siberian Agreement, was founded in January 1991.[20] The interregional associations were (and are) essentially lobbying organizations, whose membership consisted largely of leaders of the local executives and legislatures. Several scholars (Bradshaw 1992; Hughes 1994) have traced the history of Siberian Agreement from its inception through the events of late 1993, at which time separatist threats of the creation of an autonomous Siberian republic reached their peak.

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[20] The original membership of Siberian Agreement included eight regions—Altai, Irkutsk, Kemerovo, Novosibirsk, Omsk, Sverdlovsk, Tomsk and Chita, and two republics—Buryatia and Tuva (Radvanyi 1993, 48). See Appendix C for a complete listing of the interregional associations and their membership.

A final development of late 1991 helped define the extreme limits of center-periphery relations in the first years of the post-Soviet period. This involved Checheno-Ingushetia, the former autonomous republic in the North Caucasus run by the volatile and nationalist General Dzhokar Dudaev. The Chechen-Ingush Republic had issued a declaration of state sovereignty as early as November 1990, but its independence movement gathered momentum with General Dudaev's election as president in November 1991. Without the approval of the Russian parliament, Yeltsin sent in Russian forces with the intent of arresting Dudaev, but these were held up at the Grozny airport by the Chechen national guard and subsequently withdrew, an episode that "fueled Dudaev's anti-Russian, nationalist rhetoric" and his insistence on Chechen independence (Ormrod 1993, 456–7).

The net impact of these developments was to set the parameters for Yeltsin's relations with the regions and republics over the next two years. First, Yeltsin put continual pressure on the regional nomenklatura by reserving the power to appoint and replace local heads of administration. Second, the regions and republics learned to band together to voice their interests (or rather, the interests of economically powerful local elites) in the interregional associations. Finally, the initial reaction of Chechnya led Yeltsin to refrain for nearly three years from using military force against the self-declared sovereign republics.

THE CONSOLIDATION OF RUSSIAN STATEHOOD

The Federation Treaty and its Discontents

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Yeltsin no longer needed the autonomous republics as allies against Gorbachev, but he still needed regional support as long as he continued to face a stalemate with the Russian Supreme Soviet. The political status of the former autonomous republics apparently reached its zenith between March 1992 and October 1993, a period that began with the signing of a series of agreements—collectively referred to as the Federation Treaty (*federativnyi dogovor*)—which outlined the division of authority between the federal government and the so-called "subjects of the federation."

Working out the new federative arrangement was a lengthy process that began in late 1990 (see Abdulatipov, Boltenkova and Iarov 1993b). In discussions over the treaty's final form, one of the prime sticking points was the unequal legal status of regions and republics. Four divergent solutions were debated. One suggestion was to combine all Russian-majority

regions into one ethnic Russian (i.e., *Russkaia*) republic, with a juridical status equal to that of the other republics within the Russian federation. Depending on one's point of view, this would either elevate Russians by finally giving them their own ethnic territory or denigrate them by making their political status equal to that of the small nationalities. At any rate, the complexity of Russian settlement patterns made this solution highly problematic. A second idea, one of enduring popularity among Russian statists, was to eliminate the national-territorial principle altogether and transform Russia into a new federation based on the "economic-geographic regionalization of the country." This solution, however, was seen as impossible to implement in a climate of highly politicized and conflictual inter-nationality relations. A third idea was to equalize the legal status of regions and republics by increasing the rights and privileges of the regions, but this idea was seen both as an attack on republican sovereignty and as a step toward the disintegration of Russia into feuding principalities. Finally, some suggested that the Russian federation should retain a Soviet-style structure with various levels of autonomy (Il'inskii, Krylov, and Mikhaleva 1993, 28–9).

The Federation Treaty in its final form, as signed in March 1992, came closest to the last of these four proposals. The treaty consisted of three separate documents, each establishing the relationship between a given category of "subject" and the federal government. The three types of subjects established by the treaty are: (1) sovereign republics within the Russian Federation; (2) krais, oblasts, and the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg; (3) autonomous oblasts and autonomous okrugs.[21] The self-proclaimed sovereignty of the republics was left unchallenged, but even at that Tatarstan and Chechnya refused to sign.

The treaty had the appearance of raising the status of the regions, Moscow, and St. Petersburg, which, according to the treaties' apologists,

> ceased to be administrative-territorial units and have acquired elements of statehood; their territory cannot be changed without their agreement; along with republics and autonomous formations, they are guaranteed representation in the federal organs of governmental authority of the Russian Federation; they are granted the right of legislative initiative in the higher organs of governmental authority of the Federation (Il'inskii, Krylov, and Mikhaleva 1993, 31–2).

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[21] For a listing of the ethnic territories of the Russian Federation, see Appendix A. For the Russian-language text of the Federation Treaty, see *Etnopolis* 1 (1992): 17–32.

Still, the treaty preserved and reinforced the legal distinction between regions and republics. Not only was republican sovereignty retained, but so was the right of republics to enjoy the attributes of statehood (flags, constitutions, presidents).

In its specifics, the treaty outlined the powers to be exercised by the federal government, the functions under the joint jurisdiction of federal and provincial governments, and the functions left to the sole jurisdiction of the regions and republics.[22] The federal government was assigned responsibility for a number of governmental functions, most significantly foreign policy, defense and security policy, federal financial policy, and citizenship and border issues (including the power to approve internal boundary changes). Joint central-provincial competencies included health, education, welfare, and protection of minority rights. Republics enjoyed greater residual powers than regions; both regions and republics were given the right to conduct foreign economic relations, but only republics had a say in tax collection, and approval of federal declarations of states of emergency. Most problematically, republics (but not regions) were granted formal ownership of the natural resources on their territory.

As Elizabeth Teague points out, the authority of the regions and republics in this and other areas formally subject to their exclusive jurisdiction was subordinated to the caveat that all provincial legislation must conform to federal law. While such a proviso is not unusual for a federal system, the smooth working of federal relations in Russia has been hampered by a politicized and ineffective Constitutional Court (assigned the task of settling federal-provincial disputes), and, as Teague puts it, "[i]n the absence of a mechanism for the exercise of joint powers . . . the center has gone its way while the republics and regions have gone theirs, and the result has been more or less total confusion" (Teague 1994c, 36).

Constitutional Crisis and Consolidation

The Federation Treaty gave federal relations a legal form, but it could not resolve the power struggle between center and periphery. The Federation Treaty was in a sense a stop-gap measure, and the issue of the relative status of regions and republics awaited firmer legal consolidation in a new constitution, successive drafts of which were hotly debated during 1992 and 1993. The period between the signing of the Federation Treaty in March 1992 and the political

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[22] Analysis in this paragraph is adapted from Teague 1994c, 35–8.

crisis of September–October 1993 was marked by two sets of grievances regarded the status of subjects of the federation: regional leaders resented the higher status given the republics by the Federation Treaty (which became a part of the much-amended Russian Constitution of 1978, then still in force), and two republics—Chechnya and Tatarstan—remained unwilling to sign the Federation Treaty. During this period, President Yeltsin tended to side with the republics to the extent that he defended their privileges vis à vis the regions and blocked regional attempts at self-promotion to the status of republic. This made the regions the natural allies of the Speaker of the Supreme Soviet, Ruslan Khasbulatov, in his escalating power struggle with President Yeltsin (Teague 1994c, 42–3). Center-periphery issues thus became intertwined with struggles for supremacy between the president and parliament. When Yeltsin emerged the ultimate victor in this struggle, and with the adoption of a new constitution that clearly established the primacy of presidential authority, further changes in the status of subjects of the federation became much less politically feasible.

While tending to side with the republics, Yeltsin continued to send warning signals concerning the dangers of separatism. In a speech delivered to the Sixth Congress of Peoples' Deputies in April 1992, Yeltsin warned that

> We must precisely and clearly separate the processes of raising the national self-consciousness and natural striving of peoples toward independent determination of the form of their governmental structure from nomenklatura self-isolation from reform . . . separate [it] from their striving to preserve their personal power under the slogans of federative restructuring (cited in Abdulatipov, Boltenkova and Iarov 1993a, 314).

This battle with regional separatism and local nationalism was waged in the context of Yeltsin's worsening relations with parliament. In April 1993, the results of a nation-wide referendum appeared to give Yeltsin the upper hand over parliament and Khasbulatov.[23] Now the site of the

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[23] The referendum had four questions. The exact wording and nationwide vote totals for each question were: question 1, "Do you have confidence in the President of the Russian Federation, B.N. Yeltsin?" (58.7% yes, 39.2% no); question 2, "Do you approve of the social and economic policy carried out by the President of the Russian Federation and the government of the Russian Federation since 1992?" (53% yes, 44.6% no); question 3, "Do you consider it necessary to hold an early election for the President of the Russian Federation?" (49.5% yes, 30.2% no); question 4, "Do you consider it necessary to hold early elections for the Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Federation" (67.2% yes, 19.3% no). The overall turnout was around 64 percent (Clem and Craumer 1993, 482). Regional variations in voting patterns are discussed in a later

power struggle switched for a few months to the constitutional arena, where both Yeltsin and Khasbulatov sought to win over the regions and republics to their competing drafts of the constitution. This prompted the latest (and, so far, last) wave of sovereignization. Yeltsin was willing to make deals with the republics in order to win their support for his constitutional draft, a move that "detonated action in the regions" (*Moscow News*, 23 June 1993, p. 2). A number of regions made tentative steps in the direction of unilaterally declaring themselves republics, in order to take advantage of the higher status guaranteed the republics by the Federation Treaty and apparently to be enshrined in the new constitution. The Constitutional Assembly settled on a compromise draft constitution on 12 July, but as of mid-August, no subject of the Federation had yet agreed to the compromise draft (Semler 1993, 21; *Moscow News*, 20 August 1993, p. 2).

Under the circumstances, it seemed that the regions and republics were beginning to hold the definitive balance of power. On 20 August, in a play for regional support, Yeltsin announced the formation of a "Council of the Federation," conceived of as a governmental body composed of the leaders of the regional and republic administrations and legislatures (soviets) (*Moscow News*, 15 October 1993, p. 6). One month later, on 21 September, Yeltsin dissolved the Supreme Soviet, setting in motion the events that led to the final, bloody events of 3–4 October.

With Yeltsin's dismissal of parliament, it appeared for a time as though the center's extended tug of war with the regions and republics might add considerable fuel to the crisis of dual authority in Moscow. For two anxious weeks, there was much speculation over the loyalties of the military and the regions, each seen as crucial to the outcome of the conflict. In the event, many regions appeared to support the parliament, while others waited cautiously to see which way the chips fell. Yeltsin could not risk alienating the regions and republics as long as parliament held out as an alternative, competing center of political authority. The Federation Treaty, with its recognition of republican sovereignty, seemed secure. But once the parliament was defeated and Yeltsin emerged the clear victor, the president wasted no time in asserting his authority over the regions and republics, and, in the process, reinventing the rules of Russian federalism.

During the crisis of late September and early October, many local leaderships were divided in their loyalties, with local executives tending to support Yeltsin, and local soviets

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section of this study.

tending to support Ruslan Khasbulatov, chairman of the besieged Supreme Soviet.[24] Once he had achieved military victory over the Supreme Soviet, one of Yeltsin's first moves was to fire those regional heads of administration who had remained loyal to the parliament. Among his earliest targets was Vitalii Mukha, the governor of the Novosibirsk region, whose associates were plotting the creation of a huge Siberian republic, and who had personally extended to Rutskoi and Khasbulatov the offer of an alternative venue for carrying on the activities of the Supreme Soviet (*Moscow News*, 8 October 1993, p. 8). With disloyal local executives out of the way, Yeltsin then turned his attention to the provincial legislatures. He "invited" the regional and republican soviets to dissolve themselves, while absolutely demanding the dissolution of elected councils at the city and district level. Finally, he ordered that new legislative elections be held in all of the regions (but not in the republics) by March 1994. The principle of direct presidential appointment of regional governors was reinforced; Yeltsin replaced some governors, and decreed that these appointed regional executives were to retain veto power and budgetary authority over the reconstituted regional soviets for a two-year period (*RFE/RL Daily Report*, 6, 7, 11 and 25 October 1993).

Along with calling for new elections in the regions, Yeltsin moved to disengage himself from his earlier accommodation to republican-level claims to sovereignty. In announcing that an elective Federation Council would form the upper house of the new parliament, while at the same time dissolving the regional parliaments, Yeltsin effectively destroyed the existing Council of the Federation. Regional interests were dealt a further blow by a change in the organizational structure of the Constitutional Assembly, which was reshuffled to place both federal and regional working groups in a singe state chamber under the control of pro-Yeltsin advisors (*RFE/RL Daily Report*, 13 October 1993).

As the final form of the constitution took shape, it became increasingly clear that the Yeltsin team had scrapped the Federation Treaty. When, in late October, Sverdlovsk oblast attempted to unilaterally raise its status by declaring itself the "Urals Republic," a Yeltsin supporter characterized the move as "the last manifestation of regional separatism" . . . a

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[24] "This split between the legislative and executive branches was most noticeable in Russia's regions; there, the president commanded the loyalty of most of the regional heads of administration (or governors), all but nine of which had been personally appointed by him" (Teague 1993, 7).

phenomenon "which has lost both its role in the political game and its base of support," and declared that "localism under a nationalist sauce interferes with the activities of the new economic structure" (*Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 2 November 1993, p. 2).[25]

At about the same time, Leonid Smirnyagin, a member of the presidential council, wrote that "by the middle of 1993 the words 'sovereignty' and 'Federation Treaty' . . . had become synonyms for a striving toward the disintegration of the state" (*Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 30 October 1993, p. 3). Smirnyagin revealed the text of a declaration that had been agreed to by most of the president's representatives to the Constitutional Assembly back in mid-July 1993, a text which firmly rejected confederalism and called for a constitutional federalism based on the following five principles:

1. A ban on secession, that is, on exit from the federation.
2. A ban on unilateral changes in the status of subjects of the federation, in as much as this would affect the interests of other subjects and of the federation as a whole.
3. Freedom of movement of people, goods, and information across the entire territory of the state (internal administrative borders must not be converted into state or economic borders).
4. The supremacy of federal legislation.
5. A single basis of governing structure (subjects are forbidden from introducing non-democratic forms of government—theocracy, dictatorship, etc.).[26]

After some discussion, the presidential team had decided to shelve this declaration in July, but, as Smirnyagin wrote in October, "It appears that the time has come to return to its text" (*Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 30 October 1993, p. 3).

On 8 November, Yeltsin presented a draft constitution that incorporated these principles. It was announced that this constitution would be submitted to the voters in December in a referendum to be held concurrently with elections to a new national legislature. The final draft of the constitution was absent any mention of the Federation Treaty or republic-level sovereignty.

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[25] On the declaration of a Urals Republic, see *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 29 October 1993. For text of the "Constitution of the Urals Republic," see *Oblastnaia gazeta*, 30 October 1993.

[26] This document, as revised in September–October 1993, is "Regional'naia strategiia Rossii: Materialy k obsuzhdeniiu," by A.Ia. Livshits, A.V. Novikov, and L.V. Smirnyagin of the Working Group for Regional Problems of the Presidential Council.

While republics continued to be recognized as enjoying greater privileges than regions, the elimination of republican sovereignty drew a swift and negative response from leaders of several republics. President Shaimiev of Tatarstan ordered a boycott of the constitutional referendum and parliamentary elections. The republics of Komi and Bashkortostan also loudly protested being stripped of sovereign status, with Komi parliamentary leader Yurii Spiridonov threatening to appeal his republic's case to the international community. Only Chechnya, claiming that it had been independent of Russia for two years, announced its complete refusal to participate in federal elections, but Moscow stated its intention to see to it that elections were carried out there nonetheless (*RFE/RL Daily Report*, 26 October, 8 and 9 November 1993).

On 12 December 1993, voters across the Russian Federation were asked to select deputies to the new bicameral legislature (the Federal Assembly) and to accept or reject Yeltsin's draft constitution. In spite of earlier protests from the republics, turnout was sufficiently high to render the elections results valid in all subjects of the federation except Chechnya and Tatarstan. The biggest surprise of the elections came in the vote for the lower house of parliament, the State Duma. Of the Duma's 450 seats, half were selected by a party list system of proportional representation, the other half by single-seat constituencies. The major surprise of the election was the success of Vladimir Zhirinovsky's Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), which outpolled all other parties and electoral blocs, gaining 24 percent of the party list vote. The pro-Yeltsin Russia's Choice bloc wound up with only 15 percent of the party list vote, despite having been "given preferential treatment by the state-controlled media in a two-month, orchestrated election campaign designed to deny other political groups time to consolidate and campaign on an equal footing" (Shevtsova 1995, 24). The Constitution, however, passed with 58.4 percent of the vote, providing Yeltsin with an important victory—the right to exercise enhanced, constitutionally sanctioned presidential powers over the new opposition-controlled parliament.

The new Constitution has been criticized for concentrating too much power in the hands of the president, given that "the entire Federal Assembly can be dismissed by a simple signature on the part of the President" (Shevtsova, in Lyday, Lynch and Way 1994, 22). However, the impact of constitutional changes on center-periphery relations is less clear. While republics feared the non-inclusion of the Federation Treaty in the Constitution would result in a loss of status, a careful analysis by Edward Walker shows that there are fewer outstanding contradictions between the two documents than has generally been assumed. While not encompassing the

text of the Federation Treaty, "Art. 11.3 and Art. 1 in Section II make it clear that the Federation Treaty is still in force to the extent that it does not contradict the Constitution" (Walker 1995, 56). The largest of these contradictions would appear to be the issue of republican sovereignty. Whereas the Federation Treaty had referred to the republics as "sovereign republics within the Russian Federation," the Constitution states that "the sovereignty of the Russian Federation extends to the entirety of its territory," implying that sovereignty claims by subunits of the federation are invalid. While, as Walker notes, "[t]he new Constitution does not explicitly deny that its constituent units are 'sovereign'," it does declare the supremacy of federal law (56). The Constitution assigns specific areas of legislative competency to the regions and republics; the single area of confusion involves the important issue of natural resource rights (see Walker 1995, 56–7 and discussion in the next section).

The Constitution does not eliminate the distinction between republics and regions. Republics retain the right to have their own constitutions, elected executive leaders, flags and official languages. The Constitution also allows the heads of administrations from the regions and republics to run for seats in parliament, giving them the possibility of retaining their local executive position while simultaneously participating in the national legislature. Andranik Migranyan sees this provision as a political mistake on the part of Yeltsin, who risks the possibility that the Federation Council might develop into an independent power base for the regions (*RFE/RL Daily Report*, 8 November 1993).[27] Lilia Shevtsova, on the other hand, considers this feature of the political system yet another example of "Russia's creeping authoritarianism," marking "a return to the communist past when ministers of state and legislators were often one and the same, and there was no distinction at all between the various branches of power" (Lyday, Lynch and Way 1994, 22). Local executive and legislative leaders did gain most of the seats on the Federation Council (whose members have dubbed themselves "senators"), but this body has as yet failed to evolve into either an independent power base for the regions or a passive tool of presidential power—although the Federation Council does tend to vote more pro-Yeltsin than the State Duma.

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[27] The Federation Council is the upper house of the Federal Assembly, to which each subject of the federation elects two deputies.

The passage of the Constitution brought one chapter of center-periphery relations to a close. As long as the final shape of the constitution was in doubt, various drafting committees, presidential advisors, and the Supreme Soviet were all heavily lobbied by subjects of the federation seeking to maintain or improve upon their constitutional status. Displeased with constitutional drafts that institutionalized the distinction between republics and regions, a number of regions unilaterally declared themselves republics, although none of these declarations were ever recognized by federal authorities. At the peak of the struggle between the president and the parliament, worries over constitutional structure were eclipsed by much more urgent questions. Would the provinces would support Yeltsin or Khasbulatov? Could the armed struggle at the center could be contained or would it spread to the periphery?

The two conflicts that made center-periphery relations so tense in 1993 (relations between Yeltsin and parliament, and constitution-making) have greatly diminished in importance. In 1992 and 1993, conflict between Yeltsin and the parliament gave the provinces bargaining leverage, but Parliament ceased to be a political player once the standoff at the White House was settled in Yeltsin's favor by force of arms on 4 October 1993. Yeltsin then began to impose his will both on rebellious provinces and on the constitutional process itself. Republic-level sovereignty claims that declared the priority of local legislation over federal law were nullified, and the unilateral self-promotion of a subject of the federation to a higher status was forbidden. The consolidation of a strong presidential regime has shifted the balance of political authority in favor of the center; with Russia's new Federal Assembly relatively quiescent, the regions and republics have a greatly diminished ability at this juncture to play the president and parliament against each other in pursuit of political gain. The new constitutional order, while it cannot resolve the tensions of center-periphery relations, has provided a new institutional framework for these relations, a framework flexible enough to allow for center-periphery bargaining on some important issues, but rigid on issues of sovereignty, succession, and the political status of the subjects.

STABILIZATION OF FEDERAL RELATIONS?

The Political Landscape

The establishment of a new constitutional order for the Russian Federation seems to have defused the struggle between regions and republics over their relative political status. The new

Constitution retains the distinction between republics and regions, and gives more privileges to the former, yet, as previously noted, it makes no explicit mention of republican sovereignty. The result is a situation of constitutional ambiguity, in which both the Constitution and the Federation Treaty are considered to constitute the basic law of the Russian Federation, with no effective mechanisms for reconciling elements of contradiction between the two. When Yeltsin's constitution was first made public, its apparent abrogation of republic-level sovereignty claims prompted a good deal of protest in various republics. And yet, more than a year into the Constitution, these protests have yet to coalesce into a general revolt of the republics or a boycott of Russia's new political institutions. Outright separatism has remained confined to Chechnya. Tatarstan—which, apart from Chechnya, was the only holdout from Russia's new federal and constitutional order—finally came on board in early 1994. Sovereignty claims have by no means disappeared from the scene, but, from late 1993 onwards, these claims are increasingly put forth by pragmatic local leaders seeking to enhance their locality's economic standing within an evolving system of fiscal federalism, and hardcore political separatism has become a politically isolated phenomenon in nearly every republic.

As Walker (1995) argues, the very flexibility and indeterminacy of the constitutional ordering of center-periphery relations may be a necessary response to the uncertainty and institutional flux characterizing the Russian polity. Lingering references to "sovereignty" by politicians in a number of republics may signal more than anything else a desire to bypass Moscow in forging international trading links. Certainly, the preservation of the republics' special status remains a bone of contention for some regions, and the elimination of ethnically-defined units remains on the agenda for national advocates of strong Russian statehood, but the Yeltsin regime has held firm in consistently rejecting any further "self-promotions" by subjects of the Federation. Indeed, the regime has never countenanced the transformation of any non-ethnic region into a republic.[28] In a sense, the window of opportunity for self-promotions has closed; in another sense, a sovereignty claim, while perhaps useful as a means of mobilizing political support within a republic, has proved not to be a particularly fungible political commodity.

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[28] Neither has the central government permitted any of the lowest-level ethnic subunits—the autonomous okrugs—to promote themselves to the status of republic (Slider 1994, 241–3).

The constitutional status of republican sovereignty is unclear. Most republic leaders maintain that the Federation Treaty—which guarantees their sovereign status—is still in force. But rather than lodge further protestations of sovereignty, the trend in 1994 was for republics to consolidate their gains by entering into bilateral agreements with Russia, Tatarstan being the most prominent example.

Until early 1994, Tatarstan's political leadership held back from participation in Russian federal structures.[29] President Shaimiev called for a boycott of the December 1993 elections for the new Federal Assembly and the simultaneous referendum on Yeltsin's proposed constitution. A small percentage of Tatarstan's population did go to the polls in December, but the low turnout was not enough to validate the election results for the republic. Within two months, however, Shaimiev had changed his tune, arguing that Tatarstan's citizens were being disenfranchised by their lack of representation in the upper chamber of the Russian parliament, the Federation Council. In February 1994, after lengthy negotiations, Shaimiev announced that he was ready to sign a special treaty that specified the mutual relations between Tatarstan and the Russian Federation. The treaty in effect healed the rift that had been created by Tatarstan's refusal to sign the Federation Treaty in 1992; within Tatarstan, the Tatar nationalist opposition to Shaimiev split over the issue of support for the treaty, thus further consolidating the power base and authority of the president.[30]

The significance of the Russia-Tatarstan treaty is subject to varying interpretation. For most political observers at the center, the treaty signified that Tatarstan had at last agreed to join the Federation and renounced its prior claims to sovereignty. Many Tatar nationalists in effect accepted this interpretation, seeing the treaty as a betrayal by Shaimiev of Tatarstan's sovereignty and their own hopes for the republic's ultimate political independence. Shaimiev himself insisted that the agreement was a treaty "between two sovereign states," and that henceforth the Constitution of Tatarstan and the treaty with Russia would serve side by side as the basic law of

[29] This overview of the Russia-Tatarstan treaty is adapted from Teague 1994b. For an overview of Tatarstan's political evolution from 1988 through 1992, see Raviot 1993.

[30] Dmitri Lukashov, Kulturai opposes elections to Russia's Federal Assembly, *Segodnya*, 23 February 1994, p. 3 (cited in *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* [henceforth, *CDPSP*], 23 March 1994, p. 20).

Tatarstan.[31] Following the signing of the power-sharing treaty, Tatarstan held special elections to fill its seats in the Federal Assembly.[32] When Tatarstan, the penultimate holdout among Russia's republic, thus agreed to play by the rules of the game, an important phase in the consolidation of Russian statehood had come to an end. Before the end of 1994, Yeltsin provided vivid demonstration in Chechnya of the price for refusing to join the federation.

Just as the ambiguity surrounding the relationship between the Federation Treaty and the December Constitution seems to have served as a stabilizing factor in the overall pattern of center-periphery relations (see Walker 1995), similar ambiguity surrounding the implications of the Russia-Tatarstan treaty added a degree of stability in the relations between these two entities. Shaimiev appears to have skillfully manipulated the local debate over the treaty, marginalizing hard-core separatists within Tatarstan and shifting the focus of efforts to negotiations over concrete economic interests, rather than more abstract conflicts over Tatarstan's political status. What remains of Tatarstan's "sovereignty" is in the eye of the beholder.

Tatarstan was not the only republic to acquire a special treaty relationship with the federal government. On 1 July 1994, Yeltsin signed a treaty with the president of the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria "on the mutual delegation of powers between the organs of state power of the Russian Federation and the Kabardino-Balkar Republic" (*RFE/RL Daily Report*, 5 July 1994). A similar treaty was signed on 3 August with Bashkortostan, and hopes were high among some government officials that a bilateral treaty might resolve the ongoing standoff with Chechnya (Teague 1994b, 21).[33]

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[31] Aleksandr Sabovyi, Primiril li dogovor dve konstitutsii (interview with M.Sh. Shaimiev), *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 30 March 1994, p. 12.

[32] These elections were held on 13 March 1994. Tatarstan President Shaimiev and Chairman of the Tatarstan Supreme Soviet Farid Mukhametshin were elected as Tatarstan's two deputies to the Federation Council; of the republic's five seats to the State Duma, "two seats went to representatives of the Communists, two to candidates supported by the 'President's Party,' Unity and Progress, and one to a nominee from the local democratic electoral bloc known as Equal Rights and Legality" (*CDPSP*, 13 April 1994, p. 17).

[33] The treaty between Russia and Bashkortostan granted the latter the "right to conduct its own foreign-policy and economic policy, so long as that activity doesn't conflict with the interests of the Russian Federation . . . the right to independently determine the general principles of taxation and other levies for the republic budget . . . [and the] right to its own legislative and judicial system and its exclusive right of ownership of its natural resources" (*CDPSP*, 31 August 1994,

The existence of these treaty arrangements demonstrate that constitutional mechanisms by themselves have not been enough to regulate center-periphery relations. Still, the Constitution, by providing regular, institutional channels for articulation of regional interests, has helped defuse the extra-parliamentary, extra-legal expression of such grievances—which is in itself a positive development. The trend toward constitutional regulation of federal relations is all the more impressive when one considers the fact that the Constitution's legitimacy stands on very shaky ground: subsequent reinterpretation of the results of the December referendum suggests that the Constitution did not receive the required number of votes after all, and so its adoption may not be legally binding. Surprisingly, most Russian politicians have been unwilling to exploit the issues of the Constitution's legitimacy, which may indicate the degree to which the need for stability is recognized across the political spectrum.

Among the regions, one of the responses to the post-1993 political order has been to concentrate lobbying efforts on the Federation Council (the upper house of the new Federal Assembly), where the eight interregional associations have maintained close relations with Federation Council Speaker Vladimir Shumeiko. Leaders of interregional associations would like to see these organizations transformed into institutional channels for legislative initiative. This goal was partially achieved in August 1994, when the two houses of the Federal Assembly passed a declaration stating that "Draft laws governing the development of the regions should be considered in the chambers of the Russian Federation Federal Assembly only following a prior evaluation by the interregional associations" (*CDPSP*, 10 August 1994, p. 18). But the real influence of the interregional associations appears to have waned since the days of the 1993 standoff between Yeltsin and the Supreme Soviet. Shumeiko, it is said, "takes an ironic view of [the] assertion," made by leaders of the interregional associations, that "the associations are the only structure in the country that possesses real authority" (*CDPSP* 10 August 1994, p. 18).[34]

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pp. 14–5).

[34] Federation Council Speaker Shumeiko views the associations' pretensions to authority with barely concealed condescension. At a June 1994 press conference, Shumeiko quipped "[i]f the enlargement of the subjects of the Federation proceeds and the 89 subjects unite into eight . . . then the Federation Council would consist of 16 members in all and would be easier to work with"—implying that a Federation consisting of only 8 enlarged subjects would be even more manipulable by central officials (*Segodnya*, 17 June 1994, p. 2).

James Hughes sees the interregional associations as having emerged considerably weakened from the October 1993 events, although they continue to serve as important elements of the game of "fracture and interplay over economic distributive issues between two key strata of the old communist nomenklatura, the top layer based in Moscow and the main sublayers at the regional level, each battling to preserve and protect their status and extend their control over the country's wealth" (Hughes 1994, 1154). Peter Kirkow reports that Siberian Agreement, the most influential of the interregional associations, despite occasional "declarations of its intention to create a Siberian republic," in fact "was mostly used to lobby in Moscow as a joint force for preferential treatment and the issue of new credits" (Kirkow 1994, 1174).

While the attempt to transform the Federation Council into a working forum for regional lobbying deserves continued attention, the direction taken by center-periphery relations at the national level since late 1993 is perhaps better exemplified by bilateral treaties and economic negotiations. Local elections held in 1994 in many of the regions and republics also offer clues to the ongoing dynamics of the struggle to consolidate local power bases. Anxious to punish local legislatures that had supported the Supreme Soviet in the events of September and October, Yeltsin issued a decree on 22 October 1993 calling for new local and regional elections to be held no later than March 1994 (*RFE/RL Daily Report*, 25 October 1993). These elections were to produce new, streamlined local legislatures; the president hoped these new bodies might break the entrenched hold of the local nomenklatura over local soviets, possibly eliminate some of the local legislative leaders that had sided with Khasbulatov, and bring to power a more pro-Yeltsin set of political forces in the periphery. But when democrats did much worse than expected in the nationwide elections of December 1993, it began to look much less likely that pro-Yeltsin forces would perform well in the subsequent elections to regional legislatures. Sergei Filatov, head of the presidential administration, admitted late in January 1994 that poor economic performance in the provinces and the disunity of democratic forces did not bode well for the upcoming elections. Another presidential aide noted "that reformist parties which scored poorly in last December's parliamentary elections are even less organized at regional than at national level, whereas anti-reform parties such as the Communist and Agrarian Parties have strong regional networks" (*RFE/RL Daily Report*, 1 and 2 February 1994).

The results of local elections held in the spring of 1994 largely bore out these concerns. In some subjects of the federation, local authorities reconsidered their commitment to hold new

elections.[35] Where elections did proceed, the winners overwhelmingly came from the ranks of the former Communist Party nomenklatura and the heads of large industrial and agricultural concerns. Elections to many local legislatures repeated the pattern of the first such election, held on 30 January in Penza oblast, wherein "[f]orty of the forty-five seats . . . were captured by former officials of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), former Soviet deputies, collective farm chairmen, and directors of state-owned enterprises" (Teague 1994a, 1). Local elections were also marked by low turnout—ranging from 6 to 50 percent in the fifteen regions that held elections on 20 March (*RFE/RL Daily Report*, 21 March 1994). These elections reveal the weakness of pro-reform political parties and movements at the local levels, the tendency of democratization to lead to a re-consolidation of local networks of political and economic privilege, and the growing apathy of the electorate.

Economic Aspects of Center-Periphery Relations

The complex, evolving sets of economic relations between center and periphery defy simple characterization; perhaps the most useful way of looking at the situation is as a group of nested, interconnected bargaining games. As Andrew Bond puts it, "[a]ll of Russia's regions are engaged in a complicated bargaining process with the center over tax payments, revenues from resource sales, and levels of subsidization" (Bond 1994, 301–2). Bargaining over economic issues has been a core feature of center-periphery conflicts since the inception of the reform period; behind the demands for political autonomy that characterized the earlier phases of center-periphery relations lay entrenched local economic interests and actors for whom the symbolics of sovereignty were less important that the bottom line—greater local control over resource flows. Whereas the political and economic demands of Russia's regions and republics have always been intimately linked, since 1993 a qualitatively new stage in center-periphery relations has emerged, marked by a change in the nature of the bargaining process.

This argument may be illuminated by an examination of some game theoretic explanations of center-periphery relations in the Russian Federation. Daniel Kempton (1995) argues that

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[35] Members of the parliament of Karelia argued in mid-January 1994 that the decision to hold early elections had been made "under pressure from Moscow," and that local deputies ought to be able to sit out their full terms, until March 1995 (*RFE/RL Daily Report*, 15 January 1994).

the constitutional struggle for enhanced status by the subjects (regions and republics) with respect to central authorities was a multilateral, positive-sum game—a more decentralized constitutional and economic order meant political and economic gains for all subjects (Kempton 1995, 14). The players in this "status game" were the center versus all the subjects of the federation.[36] If one accepts the idea that constitutional issues have been laid to rest (at least for the time being) by the events of September through December 1993, subsequent center-periphery relations may be seen as predominantly characterized by a series of "resource games"—separate bilateral agreements (on taxation, subsidies and other economic issues) between the center and individual regions and republics, in which each subject seeks "to minimize its financial contributions to the center, while maximizing the subsidies it receives in return" (Kempton 1995, 14).

Of course, the events of late 1993 mark a shift in the *relative* importance of multilateral versus bilateral negotiations, not an absolute turning point; bilateral center-periphery negotiations have taken place since the first months of Russian independence. What has changed are the incentives for inter-provincial cooperation and the possibilities for provincial exploitation of fundamental political cleavages at the center. Yeltsin's steadfast refusal to countenance the "republicanization" of non-ethnic regions, the codification of the region-republic distinction in the Federation Treaty, and the subject reinforcement of that distinction (despite the denial of republican sovereignty) in the December 1993 Constitution—all these factors indicate the lingering political salience of the Soviet-era institutional patterns. Still, as long as the center was fundamentally divided by the power struggle between president and parliament, both the continued existence of the status hierarchy and the level of privileges pertaining to each rung in the hierarchy were subject to political negotiation. Under these conditions, not all status games will be engaged in collectively, but the republics *as a group* and regions *as a group* will have incentives to cooperate for the preservation or extension of the constitutional status of these respective sets of subjects, and political competition at the center will provide incentives for politicians to seek provincial allies. On some issues—most fundamentally, the issue of ethnic federalism versus non-ethnic federalism—the collective interests of the republics will clash with those of the regions, while on

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[36] Elizabeth Teague, while not employing explicitly game-theoretic language, describes essentially the same dynamic as "regionalization," and argues that this process characterized center-periphery relations during the years 1991–93 (Teague 1994c).

other issues (general policies of economic decentralization) the republics and regions will have an incentive to act in concert against the center.

To the extent that the constitutional order is perceived as having stabilized in the post-1993 period, provincial leaders may no longer find it necessary or profitable to focus as much attention on "status games," and center-periphery interactions as a whole may be more accurately characterized as a series of separate center-periphery "resource games." Again, while such games are zero-sum from the standpoint of the center-subject dyad (given constant total resources), they may be positive-sum from the standpoint of the regions and republics collectively—to the extent that deals struck by one subject become the basis for claims by others.[37] This point is argued most forcefully by Steven Solnick (1994), who portrays a center engaged in eighty-nine separate but simultaneous chess games with opponents who are continually looking over each others' shoulders to see if someone else received a more favorable rewrite of the rules. Solnick sees the proliferation of separate agreements between subjects and the center as a destabilizing factor, leading to a cascade of copycat demands throughout the system. Yet the regions and republics vary so widely in their ability to manipulate the center that the "asymmetric" situation (whereby some subjects maintain more favorable terms than others) may be more stable than Solnick's analysis suggests.

It is obviously still too early to argue that alterations in the constitutional order are off the political agenda—that the Russian Federation might not experience another round of status games, up to and including additional moves toward outright political separatism. Indeed, voices within Yeltsin's circle of advisors have been arguing for the elimination of ethnically defined administrative-territorial units since the early stages of formulating a post-Soviet constitution (see Teague 1994c). But concerted action in this direction would likely require major shifts in the political landscape, as argued in the concluding section of this paper. The following analysis focuses instead on the resource games characterizing the current phase of center-periphery relations, providing a brief overview of two broad categories of economic conflict—intergovernmental fiscal relations and foreign trade.

Russia has yet to develop a stable system of fiscal federalism; the landscape of intergovernmental fiscal relations is instead characterized by "a series of ad hoc, bargained, nontrans-

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[37] This formulation was suggested by Judith Reppy.

parent bilateral relations" (Wallich 1994b, 10). The problems to be solved are enormous, and devising a system for sharing revenue between the center and the subjects of the federation that is macroeconomically sound, politically viable, and technically possible is a daunting task in the context of Russia's chaotic economy.[38] The Russian Federation inherited from the Soviet Union a dual-channel system of taxation—in theory, local tax revenues were to be forwarded in their entirety to the central government, which in turn redistributed a portion of the revenue back to the regions and the republics. At the heart of regional demands for greater fiscal autonomy was the widely held sentiment that the regions and republics were being shortchanged by this system—paying too much in taxes, and receiving too few subsidies in return.

Resentment has been particularly high in areas of Russia rich in natural resources, which saw the central government absorbing the bulk of the profits from the sale of these resources while local populations in resource-producing areas languished in poverty. Local tax revolts have thus often been tied to calls for more equitable distribution of natural resource revenues. In 1992 and 1993, a whole series of republics and regions (up to thirty in all) began on their own to adopt a single-channel system, retaining all tax revenues at the regional level and unilaterally determining the amount to be forwarded to the federal government. Most of these moves were made without the sanction of the federal government, although in 1993 the Republic of Sakha-Yakutia did reach an agreement with the center in which the republic gave up federal subsidies in exchange for the right to retain all revenue from the sale of natural resources. Such tactics, reminiscent of similar actions on the part of the union republics that helped speed the dissolution of the Soviet Union, do not bode well for the future of center-periphery relations (Wallich 1994c, 25, 57–8).

This brewing crisis flies in the face of attempts by federal authorities to devise a general reform of intergovernmental fiscal relations. The first step in this effort was the Basic Principles of Taxation Law (passed December 1991 for implementation in January 1992).[39] This law assigned all revenue from each of several taxes to specific levels of government—"[v]alue added tax is assigned to the federal government, and personal and corporate income taxes are intended to flow to subnational governments" (Wallich 1994b, 10). In conjunction with the shift in fiscal

[38] Analysis in this paragraph is adapted from Wallich 1994b.

[39] Full text of the Basic Principles of Taxation Law in found in Wallich 1994a, 258–71.

relations, some of the responsibility for funding social expenditures was shifted to the local level, but a fundamental flaw of the new tax code is that it assigns revenue to various units of government without a clear, shared understanding of what level of government is responsible for various categories of expenditures.[40] The new taxation regime has only been partially implemented, and its impact on actual budgetary behavior has been mixed. Clearly, the devolution of responsibility for social spending to the localities was a move intended to ease budget deficits at the federal level, yet the demand for continued social expenditures in the localities and a politically-motivated lack of fiscal restraint at the center has pulled a greater than planned-for share of major tax revenues down to the local level (Hanson 1994, 26).[41]

Further implementation is constantly being undercut by the continuing establishment of ad hoc special taxation regimes. Western economists maintain that the institutionalization of transparent, uniform formulas for distributing taxation revenues is crucial for establishing a stable system of fiscal federalism (Wallich 1994b, 13). In the Russian context, however, attempts to establish uniformity in tax relations has time and again been undercut by agreements granting special taxation regimes to individual regions and republics. The goal of transparency is also undercut by hidden federal subsidies to various regions and the interpenetration of political, economic and social authority in the localities, which provides plenty of room for special treatment, cheating and defection. In view of these conditions, and taking into account the prevalence of special bilateral arrangements, a programmatic call for uniformity and transparency in center-periphery fiscal relations appears not only unrealizable at the present time, but fundamentally inconsistent with political reality.

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[40] See Wallich 1994b, 5, 8–10. In December 1994, the Russian government sponsored an international seminar in Moscow on Fiscal Federalism and Change of Functions in the Finance and Banking System. At the seminar, participants from the regions expressed their anger and frustration at the reigning confusion over which level of government was responsible for various categories of local expenditures (my thanks to James Conant, who participated in the seminar and shared his experiences with me).

[41] Statistics from the third quarter of 1993 show that “local budgets took 69% of the revenues that come from the tax on profits and 36% of value-added tax receipts,” while over the same period local budgets accounted for 79% of all spending on education, and 90% of health care expenditures (Hanson 1994, 26).

The distribution of natural resource revenues presents a particularly difficult set of issues. A series of laws passed in 1992 and 1993 devised formulas for distributing various taxes on natural resource production—export fees, exploration fees, petroleum excise taxes and exploration fees—among central regional, and subregional governments. As Charles McLure points out, not only is the natural resource taxation regime plagued by the usual obstacles to implementing Russian tax law, this regime is also marked by an over-reliance on taxes on production, rather than taxes on profits, thus discouraging further investment in the petroleum sector (McLure 1994, 186–8).

Extracting government revenues from natural resources is complicated by a host of other factors. One major source of tension is a lack of legal clarity as to who holds ownership rights to natural resources. As Edward Walker points out, this is one of the major points of ambiguity between the Federation Treaty, which assigns control over natural resources to the republics, and the 1993 Constitution, which assigns natural resource rights to the joint jurisdiction of federal government and the subjects (Walker 1995, 56). Another complicating factor is the stake of small nationality groups in revenues from sales of natural resources extracted within their titular republics or autonomous okrugs (McLure 1994, 206). A final issue, one that underlies all discussions on the distribution of resource revenues, is the extent to which the country as a whole, rather than the region or republic in question, should profit from sales of natural resources. Should federal fiscal regimes be designed to equalize regional economic disparities? Jennie Litvack argues that "the need for political unity may, for now, be stronger than the need for equity" (Litvack 1994, 236). In practice, in Russia this means that the squeaky wheel gets the grease: the resource-rich republics employ a combination of special fiscal regimes and ad hoc arrangements to minimize their contributions to the federal budget and maximize the level of subsidies they receive in return.

The desire to gain control of foreign trade accounts for much of the initial enthusiasm for local autonomy movements. Under the Soviet system, the central Ministry of Foreign Trade held a monopoly on foreign economic relations, a monopoly that began to devolve to branch ministries and regional authorities in the course of Gorbachev-era reforms (see Aslund 1991, 139–45). Today, several areas of the Russian Federation, notably the Far East and other areas rich in natural resources, are poised to take advantage of increased opportunities to bypass the center and profit from direct links to the world economy.

By no means all the subjects of the Federation are advantageously situated with respect to world markets. An analysis of the foreign trade activities of the Russian regions and republics on the brink of Russian independence shows that "much of the export activity is restricted to relatively few places, with the bulk of the geographic units severely limited in terms of their export capacity" (Langhammer, Sagers, and Lucke 1992, 629). Rolf Langhammer and his co-authors point to two factors that, considered together, will influence the likelihood of future success in foreign trade—the category of major export commodities for a given region, and the currency area to which these commodities are exported (i.e., "hard" currency markets beyond the borders of the former Soviet Union or "soft" currency markets within these borders). They predict that "[t]he benefits from enhanced regional autonomy . . . will tend to be greatest for areas with relatively large export earnings, particularly in the convertible (hard) currency areas" (619). Since primary goods are much more readily marketable abroad than manufactured goods, the overall implication of their analysis is that regions and republics that produce primary goods (agricultural products and natural resources) will be most likely to seek great economic autonomy and the freedom to engage directly in foreign trade; for these areas "economic opportunity makes the battle for sovereignty worth waging" (619, 627).

In 1989, only three regions—the provinces of Tyumen, Arkhangelsk, and Murmansk—accounted for nearly half of all exports earnings to convertible currency areas. In the same year, only five of the (then) autonomous republics—Yakutia, Bashkiria, Tataria, Karelia, and the Komi ASSR—contributed significantly to hard currency exports, these five accounting for over 90 percent of hard currency exports by the Russian ASSRs (27–9).[42] How well have these regions and republics done in their quest for economic sovereignty? Have economic incentives for greater autonomy been accompanied by political demands for outright separatism? The evidence suggests that the respective answers to these two questions are a qualified yes and a qualified no.

The vast Republic of Sakha-Yakutia has been one of the most successful subjects in terms of its ability to secure advantageous foreign trade arrangements. As the source of nearly all of Russia's diamonds, the republic generates over a billion dollars worth of diamond revenues

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[42] Tuva should probably be added to this list, but export figures for the Tuvin ASSR (Tuva) were not available to the researchers.

per year. During the Soviet period, however, little of this revenue found its way back to the republic, the diamond trade being under the firm control of central authorities in Moscow. In October 1990, Sakha issued its declaration of sovereignty, a move heavily influenced by the desire to capture a greater share of the revenue from diamonds, gold and other natural resources (Kempton 1995, 7–8). Since then, political struggle over the proceeds from the diamond trade has passed through various phases. In 1990, the Soviet government reached an agreement to market nearly all rough diamond exports through De Beers, the South African diamond cartel (Bond, Levine, and Austin 1992, 636).[43] Then, as part of the Russia's struggle for economic autonomy, the Russian government wrested control over diamond proceeds from the Soviet government in October 1991, continuing to honor the De Beers deal. In the first few months of 1992, Russian president Yeltsin and the Russian Supreme Soviet offered competing arrangements for splitting diamond proceeds with the Sakha government, with Yeltsin ultimately devising the more attractive offer.

In July 1992, a new enterprise was established to institutionalize shared Russian-Sakhan control over the diamond business:

> ARS [Almazy Rossii-Sakha, or Diamonds of Russia and Sakha] was created as a joint stock corporation; shares were assigned: 32 percent to the Russian Federation, 32 percent to the government of Sakha, 23 percent to workers' groups, 5 percent to a retirement fund, and 1 percent to each of eight local governments. Profits are shared accordingly (Kempton 1995, 10).

The ARS system "has profitably served the interests of both Russia and Sakha" and "[r]eportedly, payments from ARS now comprise 50 percent of Sakha's budget" (11–2).

The ARS arrangement in itself did not satisfy the Sakha leadership's demands for economic autonomy, and in subsequent months and years Sakha president Nikolayev continued "to barter political support for Yeltsin for increased autonomy and sovereignty" (28). One prominent early success was the special tax regime agreed upon in September 1992, whereby Sakha

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[43] The Soviets had been marketing diamonds through DeBeers since 1963, but only indirectly; establishment of a direct business relationship with the South African organization became politically feasible only with the dismantling of apartheid and the winding down of Soviet involvement in Third World countries (Bond, Levine, and Austin 1992, 635–6).

took over federal tax collection and federal expenditures in the republic's territory.[44] Kempton concludes that Sakha has profited greatly from the leadership skills of President Nikolayev and his ability to procure concessions from the center, particularly during times of political struggle at the center. At the same time, despite occasional calls for greater separatism or independence by other members of the Siberian Association, Nikolayev has remained loyal to Yeltsin at times of extreme crisis (for instance, the "October events" of 1993), a loyalty that has not gone unrewarded (Kempton 1995, 27–30).

Tatarstan is another republic with favorable prospects for international trade, with its oil resources and an unusually wide range of heavy industry (including the giant KamAZ automotive factory). But with respect to marketing oil abroad, Tatarstan faces a problem not dissimilar to those faced by Sakha. In both cases, local producers of raw materials are dependent on processing facilities or distribution networks lying outside the territorial control of local authorities. In the case of Sakha's diamond trade, that republic's leaders have worked diligently to establish a local diamond processing industry; toward this end, they have created an organization that has entered into joint venture agreements with a number of foreign firms (Kempton 1995, 12). Tatarstan's oil industry has similarly been held back by insufficient refining capacity within the republic,[45] and the republic's leaders have been working to develop independent links for marketing Tatarstan's oil outside the Russian Federation. Tankers are under construction that would form the core of Tatarstan's state "flotilla" (for navigation down the Volga and hence to foreign ports); oil from Tatarstan is being delivered to Hungary (by pipeline) and Turkey, Italy and Greece (by tanker), and oil terminals are planned for Crimea and the Baltics.[46] In addition,

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[44] "Instead of sending the federal portion of its taxes back to Moscow, Sakha would first use these moneys for the support of federal institutions based in Sakha. Thus any remaining portion of federal revenues would be sent to Moscow. Under this system, the majority of Sakha's tax revenues will stay in Sakha" (Kempton 1995, 15).

[45] Tatarstan's dependence on refined oil products produced in other parts of the Russian Federation, notably in neighboring Bashkortostan, was used by the Russian government as a heavy-handed bargaining chip in the negotiations that ultimately brought about the February 1992 treaty between Tatarstan and the Russian Federation (Teague 1994b, 20).

[46] Author's interview with Rafail Khakimov, advisor to Tatarstan president Shaimiev, 10 August 1994. On Tatarstan's trade relations with Crimea, see Radik Batyrshin, Kazan gains access to warm seas—and is preparing to open up other "windows" on the world, *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 2

Tatarstan is the first and thus far only subject of the Russian Federation to have a permanent trade representative in the United States, although other republics, Sakha in particular, are considering taking this step.[47]

The regions, too, are actively involved in promoting direct foreign trade ties. State authorities in the Primorskii krai, on Russia's Pacific coast, have been particular aggressive in pursuing the burgeoning Asia-Pacific region market, with fish and lumber representing the overwhelming bulk of exports (see Kirkow and Hanson 1994). Rather than representing a separatist danger, these developments mirror a global trend toward increasing involvement by subnational governments in foreign economic relations (see Hocking 1993). Furthermore, analysis of the electoral geography of regions and republics shows that those regions best situated for success in global markets are also most likely to give electoral support not only for decentralizing policies, but also for reform politicians at the center (see below). Given the demonstrably high costs associated with attempts to secede from Russia (see Chechnya), these would-be stars of the global market have strong incentives to pledge their support to the central government, while working to ensure that the government remains dedicated to cautious decentralization and marketization.

These goals, however, are not necessarily in the interests of many regional and republican leaders. Lilia Shevtsova argues that the "increased political influence of regional and republican leaders" may act as a counterweight to any potential moves toward authoritarianism on the part of the Yeltsin government (or a successor) (Lyday, Lynch and Way 1994, 24). Yet at the same time, there is no guarantee that increases in local authority will necessarily further processes of either democratization or marketization. Regions and republics are in many cases dominated by authoritarian power structures led by former communists who continue to rule on behalf of local power monopolies. In some regions and republics, suspiciously high election turnout statistics hint that old patterns of mobilizing the electorate remain in place.

March 1993, p. 2 (translated in *CDPSP*, 31 March 1993: 27–8).

[47] Linar Latypov, who has held post since its inception at the beginning of 1994, feels that Americans have been misled by the Russian media into thinking of Tatarstan as "separatist" and bent on the dissolution of Russia, and hopes to correct that misrepresentation (Otnoshenie k Tatarstanu na zapade meniaetsia, interview with Linar Latypov, *Respublika Tatarstan*, 2 August 1994, p. 2).

Progress toward marketization is impeded by the entrenched economic interests of local power-holders. From a macroeconomic perspective, efforts at lowering the Russian Federation's budget deficit are continually hampered by multiple pressures for maintaining high subsidies for the agricultural and military-industrial sectors. In regions and republics dominated by these sectors, the political survival of local leaders likely depends on their continued success in lobbying for large federal subsidies; thus local political dynamics feed into an overall political climate that works against macroeconomic stabilization. There is little doubt that the economic landscape of most regions and republics remains characterized by large, Soviet-style institutions—either huge industrial combinations (privatized but still largely monopolistic and retaining close ties to political leadership) or large collective farms now going by the name of joint-stock associations. The matrix of market arrangements likely to emerge from such a landscape is characterized by series of monopolistic and monopsonistic relationships, with the social stability of a given region typically too dependent on the survival of a small number of large firms for political leaders to allow any of these to go out of business. Many large industrial enterprises remain responsible, as they did in the Soviet period, for providing a wide array of social services to their workers and retirees—and their dependents.[48] Transferring these services from the (newly) private to the public sector is seen by Western analysts as a necessary step toward the rationalization of market relations—necessary both for transforming private firms into more purely economic rather than social entities and for clarifying the level of social expenditures required of local government (Wallich 1994b, 7). But local governments, especially in revenue-poor regions, are unlikely to want to take on the burden of financing additional social services without some assurance that federal fiscal relations will be so arranged as to provide them with the necessary revenues.

In short, the growth of regional political autonomy is not inherently conducive to the emergence of liberal democracy, and increasing regional autonomy in economic decision-making, while providing a greater number of access points for international capital, is, under present conditions, likely to hamper efforts toward macroeconomic stabilization on the national

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[48] Andrew Walder, a China specialist, coined the term "Communist neo-traditionalism" to describe the way large firms in communist countries provide their workers with a wide array of otherwise scarce goods and services, including food and housing (Walder 1986). This situation obviously vests a great deal of local social, political and economic authority in the managers of large enterprises.

level, thus delaying marketization. However, the interpenetration of political, economic, and social authority at the local level, when translated into political behavior, may act as a brake on further centrifugal tendencies, as the following analysis suggests.

Russia's Electoral Geography

Analysis of the results of the national elections to the Federal Assembly, held in December 1993, helps substantiate the suggested relationship between the economic characteristics of the regions and republics and their political leanings. A useful analysis of party-list voting by Slider, Gimpel'son and Chugrov (1994) shows clear variations among the regions and republics in terms of electoral support for politicians favoring democratic reforms and decentralization of Russia's federal system. Of the major parties involved, only Sergei Shakrai's Party for Russian Unity and Accord (known by its Russian initials, PRES) had a platform emphasizing increased regional autonomy. PRES gained only 6.73 percent of the nationwide, but it did extremely well in Tuva, where it drew 48.38 percent of the party-list vote, and PRES's share of the vote was 17 percent or greater in three other republics and one autonomous oblast (Kabardino-Balkaria, Gorno-Altai, Buryatia, and the Agin-Buriat AO). Of the eight other areas where PRES gained over 10 percent of the vote, seven were republics or autonomous oblasts—a group that included the republics of Bashkortostan and Sakha (Slider, Gimpel'son and Chugrov 1994, 719).

Slider and his co-authors performed a factor analysis of the election results, allowing them to chart the subjects of the federation along two dimensions: a "strong regions" versus "strong center" dimension, and another dimension of "state control over economy versus economic liberalism." Among the subjects favoring both economic reform and strong regions (i.e., further decentralization) were "[r]egions dominated by branches of the economy that benefitted most from Yeltsin/Chernomyrdin policies—particularly mining, and oil and natural gas—includ[ing] Yamal AO, Khanty-Mansi AO (rich in oil), Tiumen *'oblast'*, and the republics of Komi and Sakha" (Slider, Gimpel'son and Chugrov 1994, 719).[49] At the far end of the "strong center" dimension, Vladimir Zhirinovsky's party, the LDPR, won 22.92 percent of the vote nationwide, but did extremely poorly in most of the ethnically-defined republics. Only one

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[49] Note that the Yamal and Khanty-Mansi autonomous oblasts were formerly both under the administrative jurisdiction of Tyumen oblast.

republic—the ethnic-Russian dominated Mordovia—ranks among the 15 subjects in which the LDPR won 30 percent or more of the vote, and, among all the subjects of the Federation, the LDPR polled lowest in five republics where the ethnic Russian population forms a minority (Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, Ingushetia, Tuva and Bashkortostan) (723).

The authors of this study find that differences in political interests among the republics augur against the possibility that they would unite against the center, leading to the conclusion that variations in Russia's electoral geography do not imply insurmountable separatist tendencies:

> The republics favoring a strong periphery are, in their most extreme manifestation, a potential threat to Russian territorial integrity. However, the danger of a collapse of Russia that would mirror the collapse of the Soviet Union is not great. Those territories inclined toward "strong periphery/anti-reform" lack resources and are scattered throughout Russia. For the "strong periphery/pro-reform" regions, the level of support for economic reform tends to outweigh the support for a weak center (which might make the implementation of reform impossible). Thus these regions seem to have an agenda that would prevent them from cooperating with autonomous republics and *okrugs* that voted for communists/agrarians (Slider, Gimpel'son and Chugrov 1994, 732).

The results of earlier nationwide votes—Gorbachev's 1990 referendum on reform, the Russian presidential election of 1991, and the April 1993 referendum on reform, Yeltsin and the parliament—also reveal a fairly consistent regional pattern of support for reform. Support for Yeltsin has always been lowest in the more southerly regions and republics, areas whose economy is weighted toward agriculture and heavy industry (Teague 1993, 10). Conversely, support for Yeltsin in the April 1993 referendum was highest in Moscow and St. Petersburg, the far northern regions, many of the central oblasts surrounding Moscow, most of the Urals and Volga regions, and several Siberian regions, including a number of areas well-positioned to profit from the exploitation of raw materials (Clem and Craumer 1993, 483–7; Teague 1993, 8). This pattern of support for Yeltsin closely matches the geographic distribution of support for the Russia's Choice bloc in the December 1993 elections (Slider, Gimpel'son and Chugrov 1994, 718–21).

Fine-grained analyses of each of the regions and republics shows that a combination of economic and political leadership factors helps account for the varied electoral geography of the Russian Federation (see Teague 1993, Smith 1993). A more global analysis is provided by Georgi Derluguian (1993), who explains the turbulence of the post-Soviet "South" (including

southern regions of the Russian Federation) in terms of its peripheral position within the economy of the Soviet Union, and the consequent divergence between the "real economies" (official plus unofficial economic activity) of North and South. During the Soviet period, economic activity in the North was concentrated in the hands of large industrial and agricultural enterprises, whose managers have since then largely succeeded in securing capitalist property rights though the relatively orderly process of "nomenklatura privatization." By contrast, the greater overall prominence of the shadow economy in the South has led instead to intense struggles between local patronage networks for control of "mafia" activities in the post-Soviet era. While such an explanation cannot explain all political differences among subjects of the Russian Federation, it does provide a corrective to sectoral analyses that leave illegal economic activities and associated patterns of social organization out of the equation.

In Search of Ethnic Separatism

The analysis thus far suggests that the likelihood of republic and region-level separatism is receding in the face of a generalized acceptance of the new constitutional order. The politics of center-periphery relations have largely devolved into a complicated set of bilateral bargaining games, where local interests are heavily determined by the nature of the locally dominant economic interests. Where does this analysis leave the ethnic factor? With the glaring exception of Chechnya, the specter of non-Russian nationalist separatism seems to have diminished in importance since the heady days of the "parade of sovereignties." But an examination of the ethnic factor still seems to identify those republics whose polities contain the strongest separatist movements—movements likely to provoke major crises in center-periphery relations should a major catastrophe at the center (a coup, election of Zhirinovsky, etc.) produce yet one more major realignment in the institutional context of center-periphery relations.

Two factors—demographic and attitudinal—seem to indicate the limits of ethnic nationalism as a factor provoking separatist tendencies. First of all, members of the titular nationality make up a majority of the population in only five republics (Chechnya, Chuvashia, Dagestan, North Ossetia, and Tuva) and a plurality in three others (Kabardino-Balkaria [Kabardians], Kalmykia, and Tatarstan).[50] Even where titular nationals are in a majority, minority ethnic Russians

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[50] See Appendix B.

typically maintain a disproportionate amount of political and economic power (see Teague 1994c, 49). In Tatarstan, by some early accounts the most likely candidate for separatism (after Chechnya), a concordat between Tatars and Russians in the ethnically balanced ruling elite seems to have preserved ethnic peace and a cautious acceptance of the idea of being part of the Russian Federation. Powerful local interests, under the skillful manipulation of President (and ethnic Tatar) Mintimer Shaimiev, have managed time and again to isolate the small but vocal Tatar nationalist opposition. Local nationalist coloration may be appropriated by ethnic Russian elites in places like Sakha-Yakutia, where Russians make up a majority of the population, but such opportunistic nationalist noises seem directed more at economic gain than explicit political separatism.

Although interethnic tensions exist in a number of republics of the Russian Federation, survey research has shown that these tensions tend to be mitigated by countervailing attitudes that, by and large, indicate acceptance of the status quo by both Russians and titular nationals. Beginning in 1993, an ethnosociological research project under the direction of Leokadia Drobizheva has investigated attitudes toward interethnic relations in four republics: Tatarstan, North Ossetia, Sakha-Yakutia, and Tuva.[51] In an earlier article, Drobizheva identified these four republics, plus Bashkortostan, Buryatia, and Checheno-Ingushetia, as all having “the potential for explosive armed conflict” (Drobizheva 1992, 116). Of the four republics selected for further investigation, titular nationals make up a majority of the population in three (Tatarstan, North Ossetia, and Tuva), and all but Tatarstan border on countries outside the Russian Federation. The main sources of ethnopolitical tension vary among these republics: as previously discussed, Sakha’s immense mineral wealth—and Tatarstan’s oil and industrial potential—provide incentives for separatism. In Tuva, the majority ethnic Tuvins face a shrinking occupational mobility structure dominated by Russians, and North Ossetia has experienced occasionally bloody territorial disputes with neighboring Ingushetia (a lingering consequence of Stalin’s deportation

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[51] This research project, Post-Communist Nationalism, Ethnic Identity and National Conflict in the Russian Federation, is headquartered at the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences and involves nearly two dozen participating researchers from Moscow, the targeted republics, and the United States. As of mid-1995, the project has issued five sets of findings, and a large analytical volume is slated for publication in late 1995. My thanks to Airat Aklaev, one of the authors of the research project, for supplying data from the project.

policies) (119–21). Yet none of these republics has spawned separatist movements powerful enough to provoke armed conflict with Moscow.

Attitudinal data from the four republics reveals systematic differences in attitudes between titular nationals and ethnic Russians regarding issues of local sovereignty and the locus of primary political loyalties (republic versus Russian Federation).[52] But, with the exception of North Ossetia, respondents opposed the use of force to settle interethnic disputes. Pessimism regarding the future of interethnic relations rated low, and support for the concepts of civil society and market relations was high. Perhaps even more telling are data showing high rates of political apathy across these republics. While this project's data reveal significant variations in political attitudes by nationality, age, and place of residence (urban versus rural), the survey results published thus far do not seem to suggest that these republics are on the brink of interethnic explosion. If anything, they reinforce the idea put forth in the concluding section of this paper—that political developments at the center, rather than the periphery—are more likely to be the source of any future deterioration in the overall shape of center-periphery relations.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

While center-periphery relations in the Russian Federation remain in a state of extreme flux, the political arrangements in place since the December 1993 constitution, as I have attempted to demonstrate, have imparted a degree of stability to the situation. The real focus of center-periphery politics has moved to economic issues; here too, the evolving relations of fiscal federalism are chaotic and particularistic, rather than predictable and uniform. But I would agree with Philip Hanson that "[a]s far as issues of economic policy are concerned, the conflicts and divisions do not seem to be extreme enough to break up a nation" (Hanson 1994, 28). One factor left out of consideration in the present analysis is the potential of peripheral regions and republics to mount an effective military resistance to the central authorities. In the wake of the war in Chechnya, however, thoughtful local leaders will be unlikely to risk facing the huge costs associated with any such attempt, given the known benefits of economic bargaining with central authorities. This bargaining may continue to produce suboptimal results for the country as a whole, but the prevalence of center-periphery economic bargaining should be seen less as

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[52] The summary analysis provided here is adapted from Drobizheva et al. 1995, 1–6.

evidence of separatist tendencies than as "a symptom of the larger and more general problem of weak state institutions and the lack of established rules for conducting the business of government" (28). In other words, the structured chaos of Russian federalism is no more chaotic and a good deal more structured than the overall chaos of the Russian polity.

While some ethnic nationalist groups operating within the republics continue to clamor for independence, in most cases they do not represent a strong enough political force to sway local government leaders toward outright separatism. A larger risk to the stability of federal relations is represented by those centralist and "imperial" forces at the center who call for a dissolution of the ethnic republics and a return to tsarist-type provincial structures—in other words, a equalization of the status of the regions and republic by bringing the republics down to the level of regions. While equalization would not necessarily entail a move toward centralized, unitary government, those politicians and analysts (in both Russia and the West) who propose a de-ethnicized, democratic, "American-style" federalism for Russia have underestimated the strength and resiliency of the patterns of institutionalized ethnicity inherited from the Soviet regime. Several generations of local leaders have benefitted from the relatively privileged status of titular nationalities within "their" administrative-territorial units. A heightened sense of entitlement became attached to these privileges during the years of "sovereignization," as regional leaders became accustomed to being treated as major players in power struggles at the center. Moreover, as Drobizheva reports, "a majority of both Russians and non-Russians alike in the Russian Federation view th[e] linkage [between ethnicity and citizenship] as legitimate" (Lyday, Lunch and Way 1994, 16). The importance of this ideological factor should not be underestimated; the durability of the idea that nationality and territory *ought* to be linked is perhaps the greatest long-term success of Leninist nationality policy.

Yuri Slezkine believes that the implications for the foreseeable future of the Russian Federation are clear: "in the new Russia, ethnicity will be legitimized and made the focus of rights, and hence of politics (as was the case in the USSR)" (Lyday, Lunch and Way 1994, 48). Furthermore, the persistence of Soviet-style ethno-territorial arrangements also means the continued existence of an officially sanctioned hierarchy of nationalities. The rights and status of nationalities having their own ethno-territorial formation will differ systematically from those lacking such a "home base," and the opportunities available to an individual member of a given

nationality will also vary depending on whether that person resides inside or outside his or her nationality's "own" territory (49).

This scenario obviously leaves ethnic Russians in much the same position they occupied before the breakup of the Soviet Union. As before, they are the country's numerically dominant, most politically powerful nationality, and yet, strictly speaking, they lack a state organization (separate territorial-administrative unit) of their own. In a number of republics (Sakha-Yakutia, for example), ethnic Russians make up a majority of the population while the political leadership is dominated by titular nationals. Throughout Russia, the perception that ethnic Russians are being discriminated against within the republics will generate political capital for Russian nationalists, who will continue to call for a Russia "single and indivisible," for the elimination of ethnic republics and the establishment of a unitary state.

If politicians sensitive to the ethnic dimensions of Russian federalism continue to hold the balance of influence at the center, the risk of separatism is likely to remain manageable; if Vladimir Zhirinovsky or another "imperialist"-type politician were to gain power, all bets are off. Already, the impact of the war in Chechnya has been enough to unite provincial leaders around the fear that a crackdown on "banditry" may bring tanks into their own territories, or lead to a campaign for the demotion of the status of the republics. In January 1995, a meeting was held in Cheboksary (capital of the Republic of Chuvashia) at which leaders of several republics in the Volga-Ural region condemned the Russian government's actions in Chechnya and called for a revival of the Council of the Heads of Republics as a means of exerting more influence on the government than they currently exercise through the Federation Council.[53] The military intervention in Chechnya has been condemned by leaders of many other republics, including those not represented at the Cheboksary meeting, and by a number of regions as well (*CDPSP*, 15 February 1995, pp. 22–3). Other regional leaders (most of whom are Yeltsin appointees) have condemned the Cheboksary meeting, and, according to a correspondent for the newspaper *Trud*: "Sergei Shakrai and Vladimir Shumeiko, among others, have assessed this forum as the beginning of a new wave of separatism, a 'parade of sovereignties'" (*CDPSP*, 15 February 1995, p. 16).

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[53] Lyubov Tsukanova, Regional leaders try to revive council of heads of republics "from below," *Rossisskie vesti*, 10 January 1995, p. 1 (translated in *CDPSP*, 8 February 1995, p. 22).

Opposition to the war in Chechnya is by no means limited to the provinces; wide masses of the public in Moscow and St. Petersburg have also rallied against the war, and the issue has turned prominent (formerly) pro-Yeltsin politicians (such as Yegor Gaidar of Russia's Choice) against the president. Rather than evidence of renewed separatism tendencies (the lesson of Chechnya, after all, shows the limits of political separatism), the republican leaders seem genuinely concerned that, as the Security Council assumes greater and greater power at the center, this body may be tempted to launch additional Chechnya-like campaigns. A strong national advocate for the republics has emerged in the person of Yuri Skokov, who was Secretary of the Security Council until he resigned in March 1993 in protest over Yeltsin's proposal at that time to introduce a state of emergency rule (*CDPSP*, 15 February 1995, p. 20).[54] Another leading critic of Yeltsin's center-periphery politics is Nikolai Fedorov, president of the Republic of Chuvashia. Fedorov, who has attempted to exempt servicemen from Chuvashia from service in Chechnya, charged in a February 1995 interview that "the stupidity and mistakes of the federal organs and of specific persons stimulates nationalism and separatism in the regions."[55] Some commentators see in the coordinated efforts of Skokov, Fedorov, and others an attempt "to take advantage of the Chechen crisis in order to remove Russia's present leadership using 'regional levers'" (*CDPSP*, 8 February 1995, p. 23). But Fedorov feels that the real danger is that the war may be used as a pretext for the elimination of the republics' special status, and the return to a unitary state divided into tsarist-like provinces, or gubernias (*CDPSP*, 15 February 1995, p. 17).

It is too early to determine whether the war in Chechnya has led to a qualitatively new phase in center-periphery relations. An immediate increase in separatist claims seems less than likely. In all the republics besides Chechnya, the leaders have sunk costs in dealing and negotiating with the center; even if individual leaders might, under pressure from influential sectors, be persuaded to follow overtly separatist and independence-minded policies, presumably there exist in many of these republics groups of citizens who would stand to lose by such a significant

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[54] Skokov, who has national political ambitions of his own, was present at the Cheboksary conference (*CDPSP*, 15 February 1995, 13).

[55] Boius', chto Rossiia ne dozvonitsia do El'tsina (interview with Nikolai Fedorov), *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 22 February 1995, p. 10.

alteration in the status quo as independence; these latter groups would form the basis of a fifth column inclined to support Russian attempts to coerce recalcitrant republics back in line.[56]

A more likely result of the war in Chechnya is that it will result in further misguided attempts by the "war party" at the center to tilt the balance of power further toward Moscow. Much depends on how the war issue is mobilized in campaigns for upcoming elections; if Russian-nationalist candidates who combine appeals for greater law and order with campaign platforms aimed at the equalization of the status of regions and republics are successful, this will certainly provoke stubborn political resistance on the part of the republics. Electoral rules are an important factor impeding the ability of a "regional opposition" to succeed in national elections.[57] Another, more ominous factor is the chance that the parliamentary elections, scheduled for December 1995, and/or the presidential elections, scheduled for June 1996, could be canceled or postponed by presidential fiat, perhaps as the result of a "palace coup" at the top. Such an action would have reverberations extending well beyond center-periphery relations, throwing the entire political system into further turmoil.

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[56] An analogous dynamic characterized the internal politics of independence-seeking Baltic republics in the late 1980s, when Moscow-dependent sectors of the local Russian-speaking population were mobilized in opposition to local nationalism by the Moscow-backed Interfront movement.

[57] At the time of writing, the rules for the December 1995 parliamentary elections call for half of the seats to the State Duma to be elected by party list, the other half by single-member constituencies. This mixed system (first used in the December 1993 elections) is opposed by many regional leaders, who feel that the party-list voting unduly favors candidates from Moscow, the headquarters of the national party parties.

APPENDIX A
ETHNO-TERRITORIAL FORMATIONS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

1. Republics

Adygei
Altai
Bashkortostan
Buryatia
Chechnya
Chuvashia
Dagestan
Ingushetia
Kabardino-Balkaria
Kalmykia
Karachaevo-Cherkessia
Karelia
Khakassia
Komi
Mari-El
Mordovia
North Ossetia
Sakha-Yakutia
Tatarstan
Tuva
Udmurtia

Four of these republics were classified as Autonomous Oblasts (AOs) in the Soviet period; these are Adygei, Altai (formerly the Gorno-Altai AO), Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and Khakassia. The rest of these republics were classified as Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics (ASSRs). Chechnya and Ingushetia together formed a single ASSR, the Chechen-Ingush ASSR.

Of the twenty-one republics listed above, the status of Chechnya as a subject of the Russian Federation is still disputed at the time of writing.

2. Autonomous Oblast

Jewish AO

3. Autonomous Okrugs

Aga Buryat (Chita oblast)
Chukchi (Magadan oblast)
Evenki (Krasnoyarsk oblast)
Khanty-Mansi (Tyumen oblast)
Komi-Permiak (Perm oblast)
Koriak (Kamchatka oblast)
Nenets (Arkhangelsk oblast)
Taimyr (Krasnoyarsk oblast)
Ust' Orda Buryat (Irkutsk oblast)
Yamalo-Nenets (Tyumen oblast)

Each autonomous okrug is under the administrative jurisdiction of a non-ethnically defined territorial administrative unit, the name of which is given in parentheses.

APPENDIX B
ETHNIC MAKEUP OF THE REPUBLICS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Republic	Total population	Titular nationality (%)	Russians (%)
Adygei	432,046	22	68
Altai	190,831	31	60
Bashkortostan	3,943,113	22	39
Buryatia	1,038,252	24	70
Checheno-Ingushetia	1,270,429		
Chechens		58	23
Ingush		13	
Chuvashia	1,338,023	68	27
Dagestan	1,802,188	80	9
Kabardino-Balkaria	753,531		
Kabardians		48	32
Balkars		9	
Kalmykia	322,579	45	38
Karachaevo-Cherkessia	415,970		
Karachais		31	42
Cherkess		10	
Karelia	790,150	31	74
Khakassia	566,861	10	79
Komi	1,250,847	23	58
Mari-El	749,332	43	47
Mordovia	963,504	32	61
North Ossetia	632,428	53	30
Sakha-Yakutia	1,094,065	33	50
Tatarstan	3,641,742	49	43
Tuva	308,557	64	32
Udmurtia	1,605,663	31	59

Source: Adapted from Teague 1994c, 18; data from the 1989 Soviet census.
Note: Separate population counts for Chechnya and Ingushetia not available.

APPENDIX C
INTERREGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Associations are listed with their memberships as of late 1992. The founding date of each association is given in parentheses (source: Radvanyi 1993, 66).

North-West (July 1990)

> oblasts of Leningrad, Kaliningrad, Pskov, Novgorod, Vologda, Kirov, Archangelsk, Murmansk; republics of Karelia and Komi

Central (December 1990)

> oblasts of Tver, Moscow, Smolensk, Bryansk, Voronezh, Kaluga, Tula, Riazan, Vladimir, Ivanovo, Yaroslav, Kostromo

Siberian Agreement (January 1991)

> oblasts of Tyumen, Omsk, Tomsk, Novosibirsk, Kemerovo, Krasnoyarsk, Irkutsk, Chita; Altai krai; republics of Khakassia, Tuva, Altai, Buryatia

Greater Volga (February 1991)

> oblasts of Nizhnii Novgorod, Penza, Simbirsk, Samara, Saratov, Volgograd, Astrakhan; republics of Kalmykia, Chuvashia, Mordovia, and Mari-El

North Caucasus (March 1991)

> Rostov oblast; krais of Krasnodar and Stavropol; republics of Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, North Ossetia

Greater Urals (June 1991)

> oblasts of Kurgan, Orenburg, Perm, Ekaterinburg, Cheliabinsk, Tyumen; republics of Bashkortostan and Udmurtia

Far East (June 1991)

> oblasts of Amur, Sakhalin, Kamchatka, Magadan, Tula; krais of Khabarovsk and Primorskii; republics of Buryatia and Sakha-Yakutia

Black Earth (early 1992)

> oblasts of Kursk, Orel, Belgorod, Voronezh, Lipetsk, and Tambov

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