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**The Role of Asymmetrical Federalism in Ethnic-Territorial Conflicts
in the Era of Democratization:
the RF as a case study**

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Introduction

The paper analyses the role of federal institutions in ethnic-territorial conflict management. For many years, there have been arguments that federalism provides the best possible government for a nation of ethnic and regional disparity. The general idea is that a centralized federal government that protects both national and regional interests is the most responsive form of administration for a state marked with ethnic and territorial diversity. The paper explores the interconnection between conflict, democratization and the role of federal institutions in conflict mitigation.

The main question is whether federal arrangements capable of articulating states with complex territorial and ethnic diversity exist. This is currently one of the most important challenges of federalism. This analytical task is even more challenging if we consider a “democratizing” state – a state in the process of the transition from authoritarian or totalitarian regime to democracy. Democratization as a context of ethnic conflicts in a federal state is important for analysis. The relationship between conflict and democratization resembles the chicken-egg dilemma. Democracy is about conflict and about consensus. More accurately, democracy is about the process that transforms the former into the latter.

In the theoretical part, I have two hypotheses to test. First, during the time of regime change (*i.e.*, regime transition) the federal institutions are important as long as they are viewed in a “dynamic”, or in a “procedural”, perspective. Thus, they help to accommodate the various demands of ethnical territories and to prevent or manage conflict. Then, it is crucial to take into account the issue of the asymmetry of federalism. Asymmetry, as a result of “federal bargaining” and the flexibility of the institutions, is unavoidable, especially in the process of regime change accompanied by miscalculation of multi-level reforms and mistakes. A federal system is also supposed to limit the ability of the ethnic majority of the regions to impose its will on the ethnic minorities.

The second hypothesis is the counter-argument which states that federalism can be analyzed as being Janus-faced arrangement. Federalism can perpetuate and intensify the very conflict it is designed to manage. According to this argument, the conflicts are institutionalized in the design of federal system itself. Thus, federalism empowers regional elites to sustain and exacerbate the conflict.

Then, in the second part, the theoretical assumption on the role of federal institutions in the conflict mitigation is tested by empirical observation. In the empirical part, I analyze three

case-studies – three regions of the Russian Federation (Bashkortostan, Tatarstan, and Sakha). I select the set of conditions that would help to account for the occurrence of properties specific to particular conflicts. I will focus on a narrow set of models comprising, on the one hand, institutional and, on the other, geographical, ethnic, and economic variables.

I. Federalism: Theoretical Analysis

For many years, there have been arguments that federalism provides the best possible government for a nation of ethnic and regional disparity. The general idea is that a centralized federal government that protects both national and regional interests is the most responsive administrative form for a state marked with ethnic and territorial diversity.

Political theories of federalism tend to focus on structures, actors, federal procedures, and processes. One of the most interesting classification of these studies was offered by Anthony Birch (1966:15). He distinguishes four approaches in the scientific literature to this problem:

1. The institutional or constitutional approach (presented by K. C. Wheare and William Maddox);
2. The sociological approach (W. S. Livingston);
3. The process or developmental approach (Carl Friedrich and Karl Deutsch);
4. The political approach (William Riker).

One of the probable fallacies of this classification is the criteria itself. It is not quite clear on what basis the division between the third and the fourth groups is made. The concepts of both these approaches emphasize the “procedural”, or “dynamic”, aspects of federalism and describe it in terms of bargaining.

Thus, in this paper, I will follow the critical analysis of the concepts of federalism according to a slightly different classification which includes three approaches to this political phenomenon:

1. The “static” or “formal” approach (also called “constitutional” approach);
2. The sociological approach;
3. The “dynamic” (or “procedural”, “functional”) approach.

Analyzing approaches group by group will allow us to avoid unsystemized descriptions which would be inevitable if the task was only the analysis of the “*history* of federalism” – on other words analysis according to the chronological order of the concepts. It is also more useful and challenging from an analytical point of view because it allows a broader review of the existing theories and concepts classified according to these three approaches. Another remark should be made at the beginning of this analysis. I have to specify that the division into “static” and “dynamic” approaches is very much conditional because almost every concept involves both

views on federalism – federalism both as a process (“bargain”) and as “form” (as fixed by constitution). Nonetheless, this division has proved to be a useful analytical tool to indicate the main emphasis of the concepts and to demonstrate how the very idea, how the understanding of federalism, was developed over time.

The Formal (or Constitutional) Approach

This approach encompasses quite a number of works. Among them such prominent scholars of federalism as Elazar, K. C. Wheare and William Maddox can be distinguished. Thus, Elazar (1987) describes federalism as a mode of political organization which unites separate polities within an overarching political system so as to allow each polity to maintain its political integrity. Elazar distinguished a few important characteristics and principles of federal systems:

1. A written constitution should outline the terms by which power is divided, should outline the general government, the politics constituting the federal government;
2. Non-centralization is understood as the diffusion of power, and decentralization as the diffusion of specific powers to subordinate local governments (it is a subject to recall by unilateral decision);
3. Areal (regional) division of power – internal division of authority and power on an areal basis;
4. Maintaining union – direct lines of communication between the public and both the general and the constituent governments; the people should be able to elect representatives to all the governments which serve them;
5. Maintaining non-centralization – constitutional politics must be equal in population and wealth (or be balanced in their inequalities); permanence of boundaries of the constituent units (CUs); substantial influence of CUs over the (in)formal amending process;
6. Maintaining the federal principle: both CUs and the nation has set of institutions with (a) the right to change them unilaterally; (b) separate legislative and administrative institutions are both necessary; (c) the contractual sharing of public responsibilities by all governments in the system; (d) intergovernmental collaboration or informal agreements; and (e) different “balances” are to be developed between central government and CUs.

The Elazar’s approach is often characterized as “structural”, “static”, or “constitutional”. However, the last three features of federalism that he mentions are rather about “process” or “dynamics of federation” .

According to Wheare, federalism is a system of government in which the federal and regional governments are both coordinated and independent (Wheare, 1963:36). A federal system should have sharp division in powers and functions with two co-equal sovereign governments.

The conditions for the successful implementation of the federal principle are:

1. A sense of military insecurity and the consequent need for common defense;
2. The desire to be independent of foreign powers, which makes union a necessity;
3. The hope of economic advantage;
4. The experience of some previous political association;
5. Geographical proximity among states;
6. A similarity of political institutions.

William Maddox (1941) suggests conditions conducive to the minimal tension within a federal state which are very similar to those offered by Wheare:

1. The presence of military insecurity;
2. The presence of economic insecurity;
3. The existence of uniformity among states of size, culture, and political and social development;
4. The existence of unifying spiritual, emotional, or ideological forces;
5. Geographic contiguity among states;
6. The presence of independent sources of political, financial, and military power for the central government.

In other words, both Wheare and Maddox see federalism as a form of governmental arrangement that is the product of only a minimal level of consensus.

This approach can be criticized in many ways. First, not every federation is the result of military insecurity. Then, the geographical proximity among the states does not necessarily have to be present to secure the efficiency of federal arrangements. Finally, the sheer vision of federalism only in terms of the static approach, excluding the whole set of features that characterize its dynamics, focusing only on the constitutional act as the only criteria, leaves out many of the essential features of a federal state. It would be difficult to find many of the conditions outlined by Wheare in the Mali Federation, Uganda, Pakistan, or Indonesia.

The Sociological Approach

This approach is presented mainly by work of W. S. Livingston, who provided an alternative to the purely institutional approach. He explains federalism as congruence between a set of federal institutions and a pattern of societal diversity (Livingston 1956:81-95). Livingston argues that the essential characteristics of federalism is not about the polities' division of powers or in the resulting institutional framework, but about society itself. He believes that certain societies are intrinsically federal because they are pluralist and that federalism is simply their practical translation of the relations among the economic, social, political, and cultural forces that exist in these societies.

What is peculiar about this approach is that Livingston was one of the first scholars who brought up the issue of the role of federalism as a means of conflict mitigation. He underlined that the success of conflict mitigation is dependent on how the congruence of governmental structure and the underlying consensus is achieved. The crucial factors for lessening the tension between the federal units and central government are social cleavages of an ethnic nature.

This approach can be criticized from several aspects. First, the defect of this approach is that it is difficult to make any firm generalizations about the members of the ethnic group of which the membership is undefined. The question that remains is what particular form of diversity in what specific kind of federation will produce cleavage and what particular form will not.

Second, Livingston can be criticized for his social vision of federalism. Federalism as such is not about society but about institutions. Every time we speak about similar problems and fragmented but integrated social groups, we can approach it from the point of view of pluralism or consociationalism (plural society with overlapping ethnic/cultural/linguistic groups).

What is important in the theory of Livingston is that he emphasized the role of federalism in conflict management. However, federalism could be called the “institutional mechanism of conflict management”, which consociationalism is “social mechanism of conflict management”. Consociationalism has a few aspects, among which the most important are package deals and the division of power. The main idea of consociationalism is that each group gets special rights, special treatment and arrangements across the state (*e.g.*, different schools for different ethnic groups). Third, it is appropriate only for so-called “segmented societies”, where there is no clear-cut territorial division among ethnic groups, where deep cleavages and diversity of groups exist, federalism cannot be a full solution (it deals with the institutional arrangement for territories, more or less precisely defined regions). For certain societies, federalism cannot be the whole solution of the existing problems. This is the situation when consociationalism in the form of functional political parties which provide the “proper” politics of central government can be the answer to the “pillarization” problem (the tool – political parties, the result – policy which might include special agreements, contracts for groups /not for territories/, subsidiarity, public policy, *etc.*).

Consociationalism was advocated as the only solution for states with overlapping identities, with deep cleavages for which the federal system cannot provide the whole answer to existing or potential conflicts. In other words, federalism might help to “accommodate” the territories in conflict. Consociationalism might help to manage overlapping ethnic groups in conflict.

The Procedural (or Functional) Approach

This approach views federalism as “an exercise in the making bargains”. The best representative of this approach is William Riker. Riker defines federalism as a political organization in which the activities of government are divided between regional governments and a central government in such a way that each kind of government has some activities on which it makes final decisions. Unlike the representatives of the previous approaches, Riker

stipulates only two necessary conditions for federalism: (1) desire of the politicians of central government to expand their territorial control by peaceful means, and (2) willingness of territories to accept the bargain to give up independence for the sake of the union (Riker, 1964:114-115). William Riker emphasizes the role of the party system as the criteria for “measuring” federalism. The structure of parties parallels the structure of federalism. If parties are fully centralized, so is federalism (*e.g.*, USSR, Yugoslavia, Mexico). When parties are decentralized, then federalism is only “partially centralized”.

This approach focuses on the dynamics of the division of power between two levels of government. Riker pays special attention to the dynamics of the division of power between the two levels of government. He states that the guarantee that the constitutional act grants the two levels of government in terms of their respective areas of autonomy remains subject to the pull of political forces (Riker 1964). The bargain depends on each side receiving more benefits as a member of the federation than it would have outside the federal structure. The benefits include economic and military resources in return for the diminished degree of autonomy.

Riker accepts the Aristotelian distinction between “essence” and “accident”. The “essence” of federalism is (1) the political bargain that creates it, and (2) the distribution of power in political parties (which shapes the federal structure). Everything else about federalism is “accident”: (1) the demarcation of areas of competence between central and constituent governments, (2) the operation of intergovernmental relations, and (3) the division of financial resources.

In a more detailed manner, this vision of federalism was presented in the works of Carl Friedrich and Karl Deutsch. Both Friedrich and Deutsch stressed the importance of communications systems in politics. Friedrich specifically underlines that federalism should not be seen as a static system, as it is outlined in Wheare’s work, characterized by a precise and definitive division of power between two levels of government. He states that federalism is “a developmental federalization of a political society”, the mechanism whereby separate political communities agree to negotiate solutions or decisions on common problems (Carl Friedrich 1968:7).

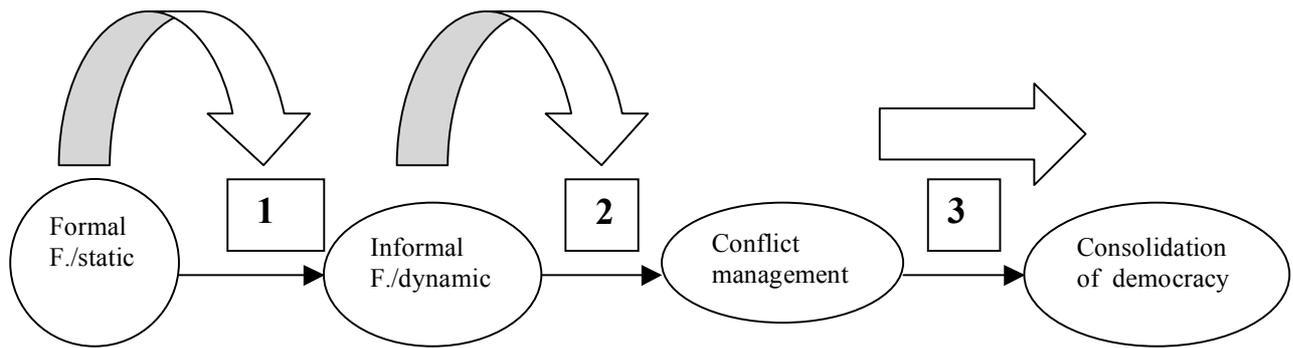
Similarly, Deutsch approaches federalism as the “amalgamated security-community”, which includes uninterrupted internal connections at social level as well as a vast range of means of communications and transactions (Deutsch 1957). His approach is quite interesting. It tries to combine both Wheare’s institutional insights and the sociological approach of Livingston in interpreting federalism as a political society in which the internal communications system is considered as one of the most important factors. Deutsch bases his analysis on thirty-three

cases. He states conditions for conflict preservation rather than for conflict management within a federation. These are:

1. A mutual compatibility of primary values shared by the federal partners;
2. A distinctive way of life within each constituent unit;
3. The presence of popular expectations of stronger economic ties or gains to be made from a federal union;
4. A marked increase in political and administrative capabilities of at least some participating units;
5. The presence of superior economic growth on the part of at least some participating constituent units directly attributable to federation;
6. The presence of unbroken links of social communications, both geographically between territories and sociologically between different strata;
7. A broadening of the political elite throughout the federation;
8. The mobility of persons, at least among the politically relevant strata;
9. A multiplicity of ranges of communications and transactions within the federation (Deutsch 1957).

What makes Deutsch's analysis interesting both from a theoretical and a practical point of view is that he tests these conditions empirically (by analyzing the origin and maintenance of the federations that existed in the past two hundred years). On the other hand, in his analysis, he does not consider military, diplomatic and political factors to be important in the federations.

To sum up, we can distinguish three main streams in the literature on federalism – institutional, dynamic, and sociological approaches. Since, we consider the “sociological approach” of Livingston inappropriate for the theory of federalism (we are not going to analyze the concept of consociationalism in the present work), I shall leave it out from the diagram here, and analyze only the two other schools. The following diagram illustrates the possible connection between three phenomena: federalism - conflict management – and the consolidation of democracy:



1st and 2nd Links: Static (structural/formal) against Dynamic (procedural/informal) aspects of federalism and its impact on ethnic-territorial conflict management.

The diagram demonstrates the interconnection between the “formal” (or static) federalism, “informal” (or dynamic) federalism and conflict management. First, it does not make much sense to separate these approaches in terms of what is the best solution. Almost every phenomenon of political life can be characterized both from the aspect of its structure and its procedure. So can federalism. But by distinguishing these two aspects of federalism we can grasp the essence of the phenomenon especially when it is to be analyzed in connection with conflict management. When the “formal” aspect of federalism is created in the form of the constitution, it cannot foresee all its consequences, nor can it provide the mechanism of conflict resolution in advance because the conflicts might come into play after the creation of Constitution itself. This is why it is so very important to see the difference between the two aspects of federalism and their influence on conflict management. Otherwise, we risk becoming involved in the chicken-egg dilemma: what causes what? It may be considered that federalism causes conflict rather than resolves it, or manages the conflict (if the conflict appeared, or was intensified after the federal constitution had been adopted, it would be natural to come to this kind of conclusion). Conflict may raise from a whole set of different factors and from the “formal” federal arrangements. In fact, it is the “informal” – “dynamic” aspect of federalism that might be the most helpful tool for peaceful institutional conflict management within a federal state. From this perspective, we can say that Wheare, Elazar in part and some others have defined federalism as a static phenomenon, while Riker and Friederich were at the beginning of what was later called the “procedural” approach to federalism. They saw federalism not only as a constitutional act, as a frozen system or organization, but emphasized the role of the bargaining process, the role of the “federalizing process”, and characterized federalism in terms of continuous negotiations and a search for a balance between the

governments of one single state and the balance made at each certain point of time which is different if its target is to avoid conflict, or to avoid at least conflict intensification, or to manage existing conflict.

Despite the criticisms of the division of federalism into static and procedural federalism, this division is useful to understand the very nature of this phenomenon. It allows us to grasp the essence of federalism as a combination of two aspects simultaneously. Conditionally, I would describe any form of modern federalism as a sum of its' "formal" aspect (or static aspect fixed in the Constitution) and "functional" aspect (bargaining procedure, bilateral and multilateral treaties between the regional governments, regional governments and central government, *etc.*). Another argument made in this "procedural" school seems to be plausible. As Friedrich notes, all federal states experience different "waves" of centralization and decentralization over time, waves of concentration and dispersion of power in the central government (for example, under the influence of such international factors as the Second World War, cold war, states tend to become more central). To put differently, we can say that "federalization" (procedure) is embodied in federation (form). The notion of "federalization" is used here to indicate a dynamic process of finding a balance between the center and the CUs (constituent units) at every certain point of time.

The dynamics of federalism – "federalization" - can be checked by the changes in (1) ideology; (2) identity change (in the CUs and/or ethnic groups); and (3) financial situation (for example, changes in taxation policy of the center).

3rd Link: Federalism as a tool of conflict management in relation to Consolidation of Democracy

The relationship between conflict and democratization sometimes reminds us of the chicken-egg dilemma (does conflict lead to democracy or democracy to a conflict?). Democratization breeds conflict but, at the same time, it is aimed to resolve it. In other words, democracy is to transform a conflict into open dispute which is to be managed by democratic means (*e.g.*, elections, *etc.*).

But there are other types of conflict (apart from regional conflicts) which accompany democracy and, in particular, the transition to democracy. And these are to be left out of this research because the main focus is to be on federal structures and federalism as political phenomenon. Thus, the democratization of a state is taken as a context which cannot and should not be ignored.

Federalism is associated with democracy: a democratic state may be a federal state, but not necessarily. However, a federal state is supposed to be a democratic state.

Conceptualization: ethnic-territorial conflict and federalism

Ethnic-Territorial Conflict I employ the term “conflict” in the broad sense in line with the description given in the Blackwell Dictionary of Political Science. Conflict is any form of disagreement concerning the ends to be pursued. It involves disputes over issues and interests which may or may not escalate into violence. Following this approach, the terms “conflict” and “dispute” are synonyms. I also adopt the approach of Ho-Won Jeong in using “conflict resolution”, “conflict management”, and “dispute settlement” interchangeably. I accept Jeong’s definition of “conflict resolution” as “a process of dealing with conflict” and “dealing with root causes which implies some institutional changes” (Jeong 1999: 413).

The categories of “ethnicity” and of “ethnic conflict” are highly ambiguous (see, for example, Harff 1994, Mazrui 1990, Midlarsky 1992). The notion of an “ethnic group” is used here to signify a group of people sharing a distinctive and enduring collective identity based on common cultural traits such as language, religion, race, and perception of common heritage, linked with the specific territory, shared experiences, and often a common destiny.¹

“Ethnic conflict” is a problematical category. This term causes confusion regarding the categorization of disputes and actors in the conflict because it suggests that the conflict itself derives from ethnicity instead of the actual issues in question. To avoid this misleading implication, following the other scholars, I will use the term of “ethnic-territorial conflict” interchangeably with “regional conflict”. “Ethnic-territorial conflict” includes the issue of ethnicity, but also allows for a wider range of factors to be taken into account (among which ethnicity might not be a central concern). This term is mainly used to describe a *complicated relationship between a region such as a CU) and a federal government*. Such conflicts are sometimes described as *central-peripheral*, but it is a notion of “ethnic-territorial conflict” that allows for the emphasis of the issue of ethnicity in disputes and the multi-ethnic nature of the whole RF. For example, in using this approach, one is able to take into account not only disputes initiated by ethnic minorities (*e.g.*, Tatars or Yakuts) but also the majority ethnic group (in my case – Russians) that happens to be a minority within a particular region but still fight for more independence of this region (as, for example, is the case of Tatarstan, where those Russians who live in this republic voted for its independence along with Tatars. This case cannot be described as an “ethnic” conflict, although the issue of ethnicity was important.² This

¹ This approach to “ethnic group” is in no way peculiar. In using this concept, I am following the approach of other scholars who define this term along the same lines. Among them are Henderson, Esman (1992) and Gurr (1993).

² It would be wrong to describe the situation we have in the case of Tatarstan as an ethnic conflict; it is not a conflict between two ethnic groups (Russians and Tatars), but rather between the center and a region. However,

is why the use of the terms “regional conflict” or “ethnic-territorial conflict” seems logical, taking into consideration that the main focus of the analysis is on the intergovernmental relationship (the relations between the central government and the governments of the CUs). As is specified in the RF Constitution, all CUs are divided into two main groups – *ethnically* defined *regions* (which include 21 national republics, 10 autonomous *okrugs*, and 1 autonomous *oblast*) and *territorially* defined *regions* (6 *krais*, 49 *oblasts*, 2 federal cities – Moscow and St. Petersburg with the status of an *oblast*). This provides another reason for legitimate usage of both the term “*ethnic-territorial*” and “*regional*” conflicts.

Federalism I define “federalism” as, first, a set of institutions – the division of public authority between two or more constitutionally defined orders of government – and a set of ideas which underpin such institutions. “Federalism” encompasses the notion of the “federal principle” which is described by Elazar as “a balance between shared-rule and self-rule” (Elazar 1987:12). Thus, federalism incorporates both constitutional (static) and procedural (dynamic) aspects.

Consequently, I will use the term “federation” in a broad sense as a political system in which a territorial division of authority between a general government and several regional governments is constitutionally established. A federal structure is designed to ensure that the constituent units within a given state retain at least some measure of independence in the making of public policy. Although the key features of federation are the jurisdictional autonomy of the different constituent units and a constitutionally defined separation of powers, there is also an immense variation in “intergovernmental relations”.

II. Empirical Analysis: the case of the Russian Federation (transition, asymmetry, conflict)

What is the role of federalism in the ethnic-territorial conflict management? To answer this question with regard to Russia, we have to take into account (1) that Russia is a “country in regime transition” (so, we have to find the peculiarities of this transition as an environment of existing conflicts); (2) the fact that the RF is a highly asymmetrical federation (and asymmetry is a defining characteristic of Russian federalism and presumably caused by the transition); (3)

even in this case, the issue of ethnicity cannot be eliminated from study (it was one of the key argument of the Tatars elite in negotiation with the central government).

finally, we have to define the contextual variables of the conflict itself, to find out what might influence the conflict or, once it is already in place, the intensity of the conflict.

(1) Regime Transition in Russia

Once we think of putting the RF in the theoretical framework of the so-called “regime transition literature”, we have to include the major peculiarity of the transformation of the state which is to a certain point determined by its past. “The shadow of the past” of the RF regions and republics – being part of the USSR experience – has a strong influence on the present state-building process in the Russian Federation. This factor influenced federalization reforms in the RF (just one of the examples is that many of the RF constituent units were an integral part of the USSR economy and were dependent on the center).

As far as the historical legacies of the undergoing conflicts are concerned, their roots can be found even in pre-Soviet time. The Soviet period just intensified the fragile balance that had been kept in the country.³ The Constitution of the RSFSR of 1918 established “a free union of free nations”, joined in federation (Art. 2). This document did not contain any provisions for the resolutions of disputes between the federal authorities of the different republics. Article 9 proclaimed that the present Constitution was designed for the transition period only and the state itself was supposed to wither away.

As for the issue of ethnicity in the new-formed federation, it was never emphasized and was actually left out of Lenin’s federal politics and reforms. Another reason was that many of the territorial autonomies formed during the first years of Soviet rule – Stavropol, Donetz, Don, Kuban, Tersk, North Caucasus and the Black Sea Republics – had never had an ethnic character even during the Tsarist regime. Moreover, in many regions, the ethnic mosaic did not correspond to strict boundaries. The census 1897 (the first properly organized census in

³The dominant ethnic component of the Russian state was the Eastern Slavs, whose culture was to give rise to the ethnic identities of Russians, Ukrainians and Belorussians. However, from the earliest stages of its formation, the population of Russia also included Finns, Balts, Turkic and other non-Slavic groups. The Volga area and Siberia were added to the state in the 16th century; the Ukraine, West Siberia and a part of the Caucasus – in the 17th century; East Siberia, Caucasus and Central Asia were included by force or treaty in the 18th- 19th centuries. By the end of the 19th century, Russia had the size of 22.5 sq million km and 128.2 million people of population. Tsarist Russia was divided into *guberniyas* and each of them was administered by a governor appointed by tsar. These administrative divisions were retained for a few years after the revolution. According to the data, in tsarist Russia, ethnic Russians comprised less than half of the population. The multi-ethnicity of Russia had evolved over the course of the centuries of territorial expansion (military conquests and the development of new lands carried out by the state – first, in the form of the Moscow Principality and later in the so-called Russian Centralized State).

The population of periphery was extremely diverse. Siberia and the Far East were inhabited by small unrelated groups of hunters and gatherers, but the same territory was used to form the early states of Turkic and Mongolian peoples (Siberian Tatars, Yakuts, Buryats). By the time these regions became incorporated into the Russian Empire, Central Asia and Transcaucasus had already had a long tradition of independent statehood.

Russia) had registered 146 languages and dialects in the country. Religion and language, not ethnicity, were regarded as the criteria for the division of the people into groups.

But Lenin's politics proclaimed self-determination only for "formerly oppressed nations" (in Lenin's words). Thus, it became important to count not the languages or religious affiliations, but ethnic group *per se*. For this purpose, the first Soviet census of 1926 asked citizens to indicate their "nationality". The census produced an amazing result. It stated the existence of over 190 different identities displaying varying sorts of particularism, from locality to clan affiliation (Tishkov1997:31). This census was considered to be a crucial step in the process of state-formation. Groups that numbered 100,000 members and more were called "nations" and the smaller groups were called "*narodnost(i)*". The former had the right to their own statehood in the form of the union or an autonomous republic, while the others were only entitled to a lower national-administrative status.

Thus, in 1918, the Turkestan autonomous republic was set up within the RSFSR. Its borders corresponded to the former Turkestan territory, which was inhabited by numerous ethnic groups with complex tribal structures. The Kirgiz (later called Kazakh) autonomous republic was established within the RSFSR in 1920. The same year, the Khorezmian and Bushkara republics were proclaimed (initially, they were recognized as sovereign states, then became part of the RSFSR as autonomous republics). Some autonomies of different levels were formed for Bashkirs, Chuvash, Germans, Komi, Mari, and Mordova. In the North and in Siberia, a dozen ethno-territorial units of different levels emerged: the Byryat autonomous *oblast*, the Karel autonomy, the Khanty-Mansi and Nenez national *okrugs*, the Oirat autonomous *oblast*, the Yakut autonomous republic, and others.

A Treaty of Union was adopted in December joining the RSFSR, the Ukraine, Belorussia, and the Transcaucasian SFSR. The Constitution⁴ was ratified on 31 January 1924, at the second All-Union Congress of Soviets. The Constitution established the 104 officially recognized nationalities. These units were arranged hierarchically (union republic, autonomous republic, autonomous regions).

Autonomous republics had previously been incorporated in the RSFSR and the soviet republics joined the new USSR by various separate treaties and enjoyed higher institutional status.

Stalin became famous for his experiments with administrative units and consolidated small guberniyas into larger "*oblasts*". However, between the mid-1930s and mid-1940s, these were again split into smaller units also called "*oblasts*". Stalin's new constitution was drafted in 1936. The Constitution registered the state structure as consisting of 11 union republics and 20

⁴ The description of the USSR Constitution can be found in English in Kahn, 2002:74-75

autonomous republics. This constitution defined 15 autonomous republics within RSFSR. After this, changes in the number of national-territorial units were caused only by the annexation of foreign territories (Simon 1991, 147). A 16th republic was added to the RSFSR when the previously independent Tuva People's republic on the border with Mongolia was incorporated, first as an autonomous *oblast* in 1944 and later as a republic. This structure of the RSFSR was compounded by *oblasts*, *krais*, and 16 autonomous republics was inherited by Gorbachev at the beginning of the period of transformation and reforms.

By the time of its demise, the USSR included 53 national-state entities: 15 union republics and 20 autonomous republics, 8 autonomous *oblasts*, and 10 autonomous *okrugs*. The territory encompassed 128 ethnic groups, numbering from a few hundred to several million, some densely settled, others widely dispersed.

Another important historical aspect is the current process of transition to democracy. Transition, understood as a period of change and major reforms of the state, offers the opportunity for regions as potential constituent units to bargain and demand more competencies, more power, more autonomy, and sometimes complete independence (as the cases of Tatarstan, Sakha, and Bashkortostan demonstrate).

Gorbachev's reforms created contradictions for the old thinking on nationalities issues. On the one hand, modernization and the equalization of living conditions required the direction of the central government, substantial resources and their redistribution among the regions. On the other hand, Gorbachev's politics for the first time in Soviet history put forward the economic interests and economic development which led to less central planning and control, more economic decentralization which granted the regions considerable responsibility for their own management, production, and policy.

A new nationality policy was announced in August-September 1989. Its stated goals:⁵ the renewal of Leninist nationalities policies, the rejuvenation of the federation and increased rights for national autonomy, human rights, culture and language development. It focused on the protection of the political rights inherent in Soviet citizenship for the nationalities. Democratic centralism was to be transformed from the past deviation of "excessive centralism" to a "renewed federation", with "broader rights" for the Unions' republican (SSR) Party branches. However, Gorbachev rejected the suggestions to create a federalized Communist Party of the Soviet Union.⁶

⁵ The description of this programme is cited and analyzed in Kahn 2002:85

⁶ Gorbachev, *Nationalities Policy*, 9, 46-47, cited by Kahn, 2002:93.

The policies that Gorbachev pursued were of *uskorenie* (acceleration), *khozraschet* (cost-accounting) and socialist competition at all levels. Gorbachev promoted the construction of *sotsialisticheskoe pravovoe gosudarstvo*, a socialist rule-of-law state which implied the radical restructuring of electoral procedures, legislative processes and judicial institutions, and referred to the importance of the division of powers in a rule-of-law state and established a constitutional review commission.

By early 1990, two-fifth of the union republics had declared themselves sovereign. In February, Gorbachev announced that it was time to negotiate a new Union Treaty. But it was too late. In January 1990, Gorbachev had promised the legislation to explicate the never-used constitutional right to secession (Art. 72). He acknowledged the right to secede. The law on secession passed on the 3 April 1990. The law “On the Delimitation of Powers between the USSR and the Subjects of the Federation” declared the basic equivalency of rights for SSRs and ASSRs, and consolidated the transfer of economic rights under exclusive and concurrent jurisdictions. It also granted the right bilateral treaties within the Union.⁷ After his election to the new Soviet presidency, in March 1990, Gorbachev established a federation Council composed of chairmen of the fifteen union republics. This institute had no official structures by which to implement any decisions, but was in fact, a shift of power from the Politburo and the Party.

One of the attempts to place these events within the theory of transition can be based on the concept of the uncertainty of transition *per se*. Uncertainty in transition is different from uncertainty in stable regimes. As Valerie Bunce (1993) noted, the distinction is that within authoritarian regimes the positions of actors are more or less certain, although the institutions are ill-defined (or uncertain). In democratic polities, however, the institutions are defined (or certain), while the positions of the actors are uncertain or, at least, not defined *a priori*. During the transition period, both these elements of political regimes – the actors’ positions and the institutions – are uncertain to varying degrees.

What transitology failed to address is the role of state institutions in the management of central-peripheral conflicts and, as a number of scholars argue,⁸ the role of federalism as a key stabilizing device in multi-ethnic states undergoing democratization. Political regimes that existed in the Russian Republic from the mid-1950s until the late 1980s – both at national and subnational levels – were commonly regarded as authoritarian. There were some difference in

⁷ Kahn, 2002:93 [Law “On the Delimitation of Powers Between the USSR and Subjects of the Federation”, 26 April 1990, *Vedomosti SND SSSR* (1990), No. 19, item 329)

⁸ See for example, Stepan, 1999.

the relative economic development and ethnic composition of Russia's administrative units; the regional regimes were still similarly configured along the lines of a set of actors and institutions.

In the late 1990s, the varieties of political regimes in Russia demonstrated large-scale diversity in Russian regional politics – regimes with some features of democracy in St. Petersburg, authoritarianism in Kalmikiya, even “warlordism” in the Primorskii *krai* as well as some hybrid regimes in other Russia's regions. The puzzle here is why have once similar administrative units of the Soviet empire developed in such varying directions over the last ten years causing so many conflicts across the country?

There are two approaches for solving this regional “puzzle”. The first approach is “procedural”, and rejects the idea of “objective” preconditions to democracy as well as other forms of political regimes (Rustow, 1970, Karl and Schmitter, 1991). Alternatively, this approach tends to explain the consequences of political regime change through the analysis of the transition process itself.

The second framework is regarded as “structural” (Melvill, 1998), and connects the causes and consequences of the political changes with macro-level variables, such as the level of socio-economic development (Lipset, 1960), or with popular values and attitudes (Almond and Verba, 1963) as well as with their social capital (Putnam, 1993). But this approach fails to explain why the regime of pre-industrial Kalmikiya is close to the advanced industrial Tatarstan with its lack of political competitiveness and the domination of the informal institutions. It is also hard to explain the emergence of completely different political regimes in the city of Moscow and in the Sverdlovsk *oblast* as both regions clearly exhibit pro-democratic and pro-market orientation in mass voting behavior. As the result, the applicability of these frameworks to Russia's regional politics will remain on the agenda of future discussions. However, it is not the task of the current study to resolve this puzzle but rather to show the certain dependence of the intensity of conflict on the regime transition of the whole country and on the varieties of regime of each particular CU.

(2) *Asymmetrical Federalism*

The aspect which matters in defining the role of federalism in conflict mitigation is the degree of asymmetry among the CUs. One of the advantages of distinguishing the two aspects of federalism – structural and functional – is that it allows us to bring up an enormously important issue for the theory of federalism, the issue of asymmetry. “Asymmetry” is inseparable from all modern theories of federalism. To start with, there is not a single federation in the world that is considered to be absolutely symmetrical in terms of the rights and statuses of its CUs.

The factors that usually foster asymmetrical federalism are strong disparity in size of the regions, density of population, the presence or absence ethnic minorities, and socio-economic diversion.

All of the federal states are more or less asymmetric, with a prevalence of different types of asymmetry (ethnic mosaic, social infrastructure, wealth, historical legacies, etc).

Consequently, the only way to mitigate the conflict (and to accommodate so different CUs within one state) is to give them different rights at different points of time (from a procedural point of view) and, finally, to establish different statuses for them in the Constitution (from static point of view). This demonstrates how federalism, both in its static and procedural aspects, can help in conflict management.

The intensity of conflict was partially dependent on the statuses of the CUs. Within such a complicated hierarchy of CUs' statuses within the RF, the relationship of the CUs with the center were and are different. Thus, the most intensive conflicts led to secession of the soviet republics. The relationship between the center and ethnic republics (among them are Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Sakha) were less conflict-prone. Finally, almost no conflict was found in the relationship between the center and *krais, okrugs, etc.*

What is important and might be crucial to know is *how much* asymmetry there should be so as to keep stability and peace in a state? There are two kinds of asymmetry in a federal state that might affect the tensions in the relationship between the center and the CUs. Alfred Stepan considers asymmetry in federal systems to be legitimate in two areas: *socio-economic asymmetry* that affects inter-elite bargaining, and *constitutional asymmetry* that affects the fundamental "rules of the game" in a political system (A. Stepan 2000:141-145). Similarly, Watts points out that there is *constitutional asymmetry* and *political asymmetry*. *Political asymmetry* arises from the cultural, economic, and social cleavages. *Constitutional asymmetry* is established by the constitution, and relates to the degree of power assigned to regional units by the constitution. Constitutional asymmetry refers to the differences in the status or legislative and executive powers assigned to the different regional units by the constitution. In most federations, the formal constitutional distribution of legislative and executive jurisdiction and of financial resources applies asymmetrically to all the fully fledged member states in order to increase regional autonomy.

Both larger and smaller units can be sources of tension between the center and the particular CUs. Incentives, whether distributive, structural or both, as a means of conflict-management,

in particular, the use of power-sharing institutional designs, have become a key issue for policy-makers and political scientists.⁹

Asymmetry diminishes the potential of conflict between the constituent units and the central government by reinforcing the country's democratic system (*e.g.*, encouraging public participation in the decision-making process, accommodating differences between political communities and buttressing the democratic legitimacy of the federal state). Through the examination of the history of the relations between Quebec and the government of Canada, Cagnon states that opposition minority rights has led to unstable political situations in several federal settings, and that the call made for asymmetrical federalism by most of Quebecers has not led to a large disaffection in the rest of Canada. Asymmetry in this case lessens the tensions between this province and the center. The Canadian model, with the "compartmentalized mode of dividing powers" and a form of intergovernmental relations that consists of diplomatic interactions among executives as though they were international actors, seems to decrease the tension between the center and constituent units significantly (but, as some scholars argue, it has not established a stable accommodation).¹⁰ It provides Quebec with a high degree of autonomy, but "does not offset the integration of Quebecers into a federal system". Simeon describes this system as "watertight compartments – as distinct from concurrent powers", "a recipe for a zero-sum approach to overlapping responsibilities, and a politics of fighting for turf" (Simeon 2001:301). Executive-dominated intergovernmental relations focuses on the strategic goals of premiers and prime ministers, and undercuts "functional cooperation at lower levels". This model of federalism equips constituent units, particularly Quebec, with the tools and resources to make a move towards secession. In contrast, the German model of federalism emphasizes interdependence, partnership, cooperation and consensus. In this model, the two orders of government are much more tightly bound which makes secession very unlikely. But one should take into account that Germany is not a multi-national federation.

Given the widely varying models of federalism, and the differences in the societal conditions in which federalism may be implemented, it is virtually impossible to make broad generalizations about the effectiveness of federalism in conflict management of multi-national societies. The argument against the efficiency of asymmetrical federalism is that an asymmetrical arrangement provides resources and institutional levers to nationalist elites and can produce the dynamic of 'disbuilding' – the situation when "demands for increased powers can lead to further calls for autonomy, the only logical stopping place for which is secession" (Simeon and

⁹ See for example Hughes 2001a, 2001b.

¹⁰ See for example Richard Simeon and Daniel-Patrick Conway 2001

Conway 2001:304). This is why it is more important to think about the contextual conditions under which federalism is likely to constitute a stable outcome, and the factors which undermine a previously established settlement (as, for example, in Canada it is important to take into account that the federation existed for 100 years before a serious secessionist challenge arose).

The puzzling fact is that, on the one hand, constitutional asymmetry among regional units within a federation complicates the relationship between central government and the CUs and makes it more prone to conflict. On the other hand, some federations have found that the only way to accommodate the diversity between the regions is to incorporate asymmetry in the constitutional distribution of powers. In some cases, asymmetry has proved to be useful as a transitional arrangement for accommodating regions at different stages of political development. The RF is one of the examples for this vision of asymmetrical federalism. The asymmetrical approach to the administrative division of Russia was officially established during the Yeltsin government and was considered to be the only way to establish stability in the RF and to manage the growing tension between the CUs and Moscow.

The Russian republican elections of March 1990 returned Yeltsin to Moscow as a deputy in the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies and he became a Chairman in May 1990. This was the beginning of newly constructed highly asymmetrical Russian federalism. On 12 June 1990 RSFSR declared its own sovereignty.¹¹

The RSFSR was the seventh of the fifteen union republics (SSRs) to declare sovereignty. All fifteen SSRs became independent separate states (these are the RSFSR, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Belorussia, Ukraine, Moldova, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, *etc.*). The next tier in Soviet federal hierarchy were the autonomous republics (ASSRs) within Russia. It is notable that not a single ASSR adopted the strategy followed by all the SSRs in seeking sovereignty.

The explanation of the different expectations and strategies between the SSRs and ASSRs rested in the fact that (1) the SSRs were better placed (had more favourable geographic positions) to declare sovereignty and, later, independence. (2) Another reason is that they were

¹¹ The flood of bilateral treaties, agreements between union republics, autonomous republic, and the RSFSR weakened the centre exclusive jurisdiction. Among these were the decree "On protection of the Economic Foundation of the Sovereignty of the RSFSR" which asserted sole control over all foreign economic activity, natural and industrial resources, and procedures for privatization, the law "On the Operation of Acts of Organs of the USSR on the Territory of the RSFSR" which granted the Republics supremacy over Union authority, and the law "On Guaranteeing the Economic Basis of Sovereignty of the RSFSR" which expanded the decree of August "500 Days Plan".

incorporated into the USSR by treaty, and a claim to equal status was more easily defended. In contrast, ASSRs were established by unilateral administrative decisions, and the directives of the RSFSR had supremacy over the limited autonomy of the ASSRs. (3) Union republics had a past history of independence when the ASSRs had been lodged within Russia during the Tsarist time. The ASSRs were unsure what to do and looked to Russia. Most Supreme Soviets chose to watch and wait as declarations in the union republics began in November 1988. (4) Another explanation that might be used here is one of an ethnic composition. The majority of autonomous republics of the RF are artificial constructs. In twelve out of twenty ASSRs, Russians outnumbered the titular nationality. This fact serves to explain the reason why these units did not follow the path of the SSRs and stayed within one single state.¹² The next step was regional elections that provided the regional elites with the chance of forming their own electoral campaigns. Within seven months of the elections, two-thirds of the republics declared their sovereignty.

During this process, the general tendency was that the richer republics made stronger claims for resources and for more autonomy in controlling their own budget while the poorer republics tried to protect the federal subsidies. However, the most important demands that were present in all the declarations remained the same: sovereignty to replace subordination, the supremacy of local laws over federal laws, the autonomy to control economic decision-making and natural resources, and respect for local languages and customs.

The Federation Treaty was signed on 31 March 1992 and became part of the RSFSR Constitution.

The Federation Treaty includes three separate treaties and two protocols: one treaty for national-state formation (*i.e.* ethnic republics), one for administrative-territorial formations (the six *krais*, forty-nine *oblasts* and the two cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg – termed “cities of federal significance”) and one for national-territorial formations (the Jewish Autonomous *Oblast* and ten autonomous *okrugs*). These treaties formalized the three-rank hierarchy of subjects of the federation and the ethnic administration of territory. The signing of the Treaty was preceded by numerous arrangements and agreements between Moscow and some of the CUs that founded the basis for the future federal institutions. Thus, for example, the President of Bashkortostan, Murtaza Rakhimov, claimed that he would never sign the Treaty if a special amendment was not be made giving special status to Bashkortostan. The result was an Appendix (*prilozhenie*) to the Federation Treaty exclusively for Bashkortostan. The Bashkir legislative and judicial systems were declared independent, and property (with some

¹² Census data reprinted in *Argumenti I fakti*, March 1991, cited in Kahn 2002:105

exceptions) was placed under republican control. It was also acknowledged an independent statehood and the right to attendant foreign relations. One demand that was not satisfied was control over taxation.

Bashkortostan was the only republic to receive a special appendix to the Federation Treaty, but not the only republic that had concluded a special agreement with the centre before the Treaty was signed. Thus, in the beginning of 1992, the President of Sakha (Yakutia), Mikhail Nikolaev, advocated more independence from Russia and established business relations with international treaties. But on 23 March 1992, he signed an accord with the central government that granted it exclusive republican control over 32% of diamond profits and 20% of all gem-diamonds, plus a significant percentage of gold and hard currency receipts. The accord was signed shortly before the Federal Treaty. Amazingly, four days after the signing the Federal Treaty, Sakha accepted a new constitution that established exclusive control over all natural resources which, thus, contradicted the Federal Treaty.¹³ Nonetheless, the Federation Treaty was signed and was followed by the acceptance of the RF Constitution which incorporated all these asymmetries and contradictions.

If we review to the theoretical approach to such phenomenon as asymmetrical federalism, we can state that the RF exemplifies a highly asymmetrical federal arrangement. The question that the politicians and scientists are now trying to answer is whether this high asymmetry will be followed by state consolidation or by an increase in the number and intensity of ethnic-territorial conflicts.

To conclude, perfect symmetry is impossible. Institutional or constitutional asymmetry implies the existence of special channels between the federal government and the CU. Through these channels, the CU is favored with special privileges in contrast to other CUs. As, for example, Russia's federal structure, based on a system of privileges for select "titular" ethnic groups, exhibits institutional-constitutional asymmetry. The system is sometimes called *aconstitutional* because bilateral relations at governmental levels are not constitutionally justified.

(3) Contextual analysis

The set of contextual variables that have influenced the intensity of the conflicts within the RF are, first, the geopolitical factor; second, the ethnical factor; and, finally, the economic situation. The geopolitical factor implies the geographic position of the CU within the federation: the size, population, and the existence or absence of external borders. The geopolitical factor should be analyzed in close connection with the ethnic-demographic factor

¹³ *Konstitutsiia (Osnovnoi zakon) respubliki Sakha (Iakutia)* (Yakutsk: 1995). Kahn 2002:130

(it is especially important to account for the percentage of the ethnic groups within the CU). Unlike the other two factors, the geopolitical factor causes the least confusion for it is probably the only factor that can be described as stable throughout the history of Soviet and Post-Soviet time. The second, ethnical, factor is often considered as one of the most crucial for the initiation of conflicts.

One of the assumptions is that, if the ethnic group forms a majority, or at least the dominant element, in a geographically-defined area, then the probability of conflict is high. In other words, the higher the percentage of the ethnic group within one constituent unit (CU), the higher the probability of conflict or the higher the intensity of the conflict between the CU and the center. The basic role of implementation of the federal institutions in this situation is to give the CU with the predominant ethnic group certain priorities, rights, a degree of autonomy and, thus, reduce the tension.

The third assumption is that the issue of resources plays an important role in the demands of the CU for greater independence, thus, influencing the intensity of the conflict. Resources can be further subdivided into a few issues: the financial politics of the central government (fiscal policy), the level of the economic development of the region at the beginning of transition (defined by the factories, plants, infrastructure inherited from the Soviet period), and the existence (or absence) of natural resources (oil, natural gas, diamonds, gold, etc.). The basic correlation is the wealthier the CU is, the more demands for autonomy it has on the center, and the higher the intensity of the conflict.

1. Geopolitical Conditions

By “geopolitical factor” I mean the geographic location of constituent units, their size, and population. Eleven out of 32 units border another state. These are the Karelian, Altaian, Tyvinian, and Buriatian republics, the republics of the northern Caucasus (with the exception of Adygeya), and the Jewish autonomous *oblast*. The republic of Sakha and five autonomous *oblasts* – Nenets, Yamalo—Newest, Taimyr, Chukchi, and Koryak – are situated along the shores of the Arctic Ocean and the Bering Sea. Although they are situated along the sea-shore, climatic conditions deny access by ship for most of the year and reduce the significance of these coasts.

The ethnically defined units that border foreign states are, in general, quite small (both in area and population). Altogether, these ten units account for only 10% of the area under ethnic-territorial administration and their share of the population is about 30%.¹⁴ The most populous

¹⁴ Their higher share of the population is caused by the fact that all the autonomous *okrugs*, with their sparse population, belong to their ethnic enclaves.

republics - Tatarstan and Bashkortostan – do not have external borders and are cut off from other states by a belt of *oblasts* and *krais* with an overwhelming Russian population.

2. *Ethno-demographic factors*

The position of the titular nation in many CUs is quite weak compared with the other national groups in these areas. The ethnic groups are highly dispersed across the territory of the RF because of the immigration policy of the tsarist time (especially under the rule of Catherine II) and during the Soviet time (notably during Stalin's period). One may be amazed to find out that only 2% of all the Jews in the RF live in a territorially defined CU called the "Jewish autonomous *oblast'*". The highest percentage of any ethnic group living within their own CU is the Tatars. But even here only 48.9% of the population of Tatarstan are Tatars, while the absolute majority are composed of Russians, Ukrainians, Moldovans, and a mosaic of Caucasian ethnic groups, *etc.*

According to the 1989 census,¹⁵ the titular nation made up less than half of the population in fourteen of the administrative units that are RF republics today. In Kabardino-Balkaria and Dagestan, a majority exists only if two or more titular groups are added together. It leaves only four republics in which a singular titular nation forms the majority of the population – Chuvashia, Tyva, North Ossetia and Checheno-Ingushetia.

In autonomous *oblasts* and autonomous *okrugs* (which have a lesser degree of autonomy than the republics), the presence of members of the titular nation is even less. Thus, for example, in the Khanti-Mansi autonomous *okrug* the two titular groups together account for no more than 1.4% of the total population of this CU. In general, the share of the titular nations in these units is quite low (Henz, 1991:26-27).¹⁶

As a result of Russian and Soviet migration policy, ethnic Russians form a majority in nine of today's 21 republics, as well as in 9 of the 11 units with a lower degree of ethnic autonomy. This predominance of Russians is a constraint on potential ethnic separatism. The ethnically defined units have heterogeneous populations.

Most of the nationalities that have been granted autonomy are quite small in size. Within the borders of the republics, the size of the titular nation ranges from 1.8 million Tatars to less than 63,000 Khakassians (Natsional'nyi sostav naseleniya SSSR 1991: 34-48). On average, the

¹⁵ Census 1989 of the RF (ethnic composition of the RF Population) is published in Henz 1991:26-27

¹⁶ The Komi-Permiak autonomous *okrug* and the two Buryat-inhabited *okrugs* where the share of the titular nation did not surpass 17% might be considered an exception.

titular nation accounts for approximately 450,000 inhabitants in the republics, and 25,000 in the other ethnically defined units.¹⁷

Another complicating factor in realizing the demands for self-determination is the lack of consistency between the borders of the territory actually inhabited by the minority and their autonomous units. In many cases the ethnically defined units include only a small part of the minority in question. The largest minority groups with their own territorial units, more than one third of the group lives outside of the autonomous area (*e.g.*, of all Tatars who live in the RF, 68% live outside Tatarstan, among Chuvashs - 49%, Bashkirs – 36%, and Mordvins – 71%). The most striking example are the Jews, 98% of whom live outside their autonomous *oblast*. It would be extraordinary to claim the independence of a federal unit in which the titular ethnic group constitutes only a few percent and which is actually predominantly inhabited by other ethnic groups. Thus, the numerically weak position of the titular nations combined with the large number of Russians living in the ethnically defined areas makes separatist movements based on ethnic exclusivity a non-viable option.¹⁸

Another important point that needs to be made in connection with ethnic factor is the role of self-perception, the existence (or absence) of inter-ethnic hostility, and existence (or absence) of ethnic discrimination. The survey carried out by the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology in three Russian republics revealed the following data:¹⁹

¹⁷ Even these numbers can be considered to certain degree to be an exaggeration because it accounts for the total share of a titular group in each unit, which sometimes include **two or more nationalities**. The smallest of the ethnic groups with its own administrative-territorial unit is the *Evenks* (it has 3,500 persons within the borders of this entity).

¹⁸ This is the main reason why the conflicts analyzed in this study would be better defined as “central-peripheral” or “regional” conflicts rather than “ethnic” ones.

¹⁹ This survey was conducted by Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the RF, March-August 1994 under the research project “National Consciousness, Nationalism, and Conflict Resolution in the Russian Federation”, cited in Tishkov 1997.

Table 1: Perceptions of Ethnic Discrimination in Republics (%)

Q: Have you Experienced violation Of your rights because of your nationality?	Tatarstan		Ossets	North Ossetia		Yakutia	
	Tatars	Russians		Russians	Yakut	Russian	
Yes, often	3.5	1.7	3.2	4.6	5.3	4.6	
Yes, sometimes	18.0	16.9	8.8	25.2	32.4	21.9	
No, not at all	68.8	77.2	83.2	61.9	50.7	63.3	
No answer	9.7	4.2	4.8	8.3	11.6	10.2	

The data show that an extremely low percent of the population said they had “often” experienced violations of their rights because of ethnic affiliation: 3.5% of the Tatars, 3.2% of the Ossets, and 5.3% of the Yakuts; and among local Russians, 1.7 in Tatarstan, 4.6% in North Ossetia, and 4.6% in Yakutia. 68.8% of the Tatars replied “no, not at all”, 83.2% of the Ossets, and 50.7% of the Yakuts. Among local Russians the percentage answering likewise was higher in Tatarstan (77.2%) and Yakutia (63.3%) and lower in North Ossetia (61.9%).

Another survey demonstrates the level of hostility, if it takes place, between ethnic groups, which is utterly important for any “ethnic” conflict. The survey was conducted in the same republics and it posed a question of whether people are willing to accept a person of another nationality as a social partner.

Table 2: Ethnic Attitudes in Republics of Russia (%)

Q: Are you willing to Accept a person of Another nationality as	Tatarstan		Ossets	North Ossetia		Yakutia	
	Tatars	Russians		Russians	Yakut	Russian	
Citizen of your Republic	77.0	83.7	90.4	93.3	68.7	71.4	
Partner in common Enterprise	61.0	74.1	68.8	65.4	57.5	53.8	
Your boss	46.0	59.0	41.3	57.1	30.4	39.0	
Neighbor	68.7	80.2	80.5	85.8	61.9	64.7	
Friend in common Leisure and Entertainment	56.4	71.1	52.8	59.5	43.1	50.6	
Mother/Father of Your children	31.8	54.3	29.6	45.8	29.5	45.7	
Spouse	25.7	47.7	23.5	39.7	21.5	30.6	
Other	7.0	10.5	2.1	13.1	3.8	4.3	

The overwhelming majority of respondents (from 70% to 90%) of titular and Russian nationalities were ready to accept “others” as citizens of their republic (the lowest figure was 68.7% for Yakuts). It is interesting to note that “Muslim” Tatars expressed a more tolerant attitude than the “Christian” Yakuts. This demonstrates that, as one of the parameters of ethnicity, religious affiliation does not play any significant role in conflict in these particular case studies.

The third table demonstrate the answers to the question on the evaluation of the situation of inter-ethnic relations in their republics. The positive answers (“favorable” or “calm”) were given in most cases in Tatarstan and Yakutia (75-80%). North Ossetia demonstrates a different patterns as a reaction to the violent open conflict between Ossetian and the Ingush that had taken place in 1992.

Table 3: Estimates of Inter-ethnic Relations in Republics (%)

Q.: How do you Estimate Relations in your republic?	Tatarstan		North Ossetia		Yakutia	
	Tatar	Russian	Osset	Russian	Yakut	Russian
Favorable	15.1	11.0	6.4	4.8	9.5	5.2
Calm	65.4	62.0	7.2	8.1	66.9	57.3
Tense	7.6	15.1	68.8	67.8	10.6	26.1
Critical, explosive	0.5	0.3	15.2	13.8	1.2	0.9
No answer	11.4	11.6	2.4	6.0	11.8	10.5

This data allows us to reject the thesis about “dividedness” of the peoples in the RF and about hostility among them that might be one of the causes of conflict. However, this conclusion should not be extrapolated beyond the analysis of the RF’s regions.

3. Economic factors These factors can be described in terms of economic dependence rather than interdependence. Many of the ethnically defined units have developed dependence on the center during the Soviet period. The local economies functioned as integrated parts of the Soviet economy. Planning and investment were always carried out along the lines of one particular region for a particular industry, without developing a balanced, self-sufficient economy within the republic or *okrug*.

The areas of the greatest potential for the development of a more or less independent economy are the Volga-Ural area and northern Siberia with their rich deposits of oil, gas and other natural resources. But these territories are surrounded by other regions of the RF.

On the other hand, those republics which are situated along the borders are dependent on subsidies from the federal budget. The republics of northern Caucasus are among the poorest and least developed CUs. The republics of southern Siberia are also highly dependent on transfers of federal funds.²⁰ Most of the republics can be defined as “mono-economies” in the sense that they rely on imports from other parts of the Federation. Thus, for example, 80% of the goods sold in the republics were imported from former union republics (Burell, 1992:134). This may explain why the initial demands for sovereignty have subsequently been moderated. In most of the cases where geopolitical preconditions for independent statehood exist, economic considerations pull in the opposite direction with traditional reliance on federal funds which increased the ties with the center. Separation would probably mean a deterioration of living standards and economic hardship.

²⁰ The best example of it is the fact that 90% (!) of expenditures in the Tyvanian budget have been covered by federal subsidies (Burell, 1992:134)

Asymmetrical Federalism in Ethnic Conflicts

As an example, I take three constituent units of the Russian Federation – the republics of Sakha, Tatarstan, and Bashkortostan. The application of the contextual factors to these constituent units can be illustrated by the table:

	<i>Factors</i>			<i>Outcome</i>
	Geopolitical	Economical	Ethnical	
Sakha	3	2	1	6
Tatarstan	1	2	2	5
Bashkortostan	2	2	1	5

The results for Sakha (6 points), for Tatarstan (5 points), and for Bashkortostan (5 points) show that the higher the degree of points, the higher presumption of the intensity of conflict.²¹

The table allows us to draw the following preliminary conclusions regarding the connection between the three contextual conditions and conflicts. First, the numerically weak position of the titular nations combined with the large number of Russians living in the ethnically defined areas makes nationalism based on ethnic exclusivity a less viable option because of its limited potential for success. This explains in part why local leaders in many cases hesitated to play the ethnic card. This is not to say that the ethnic issue is of no importance. The ethnic card is rarely absent in intergovernmental bargaining. But it is rarely the real reason for demands of greater autonomy, the reason of the conflict itself.

Second, it can be seen from this brief review that, paradoxically, in most of the cases where the geopolitical preconditions for independent statehood exist, economic considerations pull in the opposite direction with traditional reliance on federal subsidies increasing the strength of ties with the center.

There are a number of variables that are relevant only in few cases (for example, political parties in the center and regions, the nature of the elite in central government and the CUs). Unlike the independent (federal institutions) and “contextual” variables (economic, ethnic, and geopolitical conditions) that are relevant for all three case studies (and for understanding the relationship of Moscow with any other CU), other factors did not influence directly, or did not make any difference at all, to the cases under analysis. Thus, I approach these variables as “intervening” at certain moments of time. One example of such “intervening” variables is the political parties. As a transitional country, Russia has a great number of political parties, whose positions, names, and orientation change over time depending on pre-electoral coalitions. For

²¹See the Appendix

this reason, it is impossible to consider it as a consistent factor which has made any difference to the conflicts.

What can the analysis of contextual variables explain? First, it demonstrates the differences between the CUs of the Federation. Even the CUs of the same status – all of them are republics – are marked with significant differences (not to mention a set of CU with different statuses which is left out of this analysis). The overview of contextual variables explains the asymmetrical federal arrangement.

Second, it allows us to check whether these factors may explain the intensity of conflict itself. Third, we can see how different federal arrangements helped to reconcile the differences and mitigate conflict relationship. The analysis of each of the three republics is divided into three parts: first, the data on contextual variables; second, the analysis of the federal arrangements and the asymmetry of the situation of the CU; third, how it is reflected on the regime change within the analyzed CU.²²

Bashkortostan

I. Contextual Variables

Geopolitical factor: The republic of Bashkortostan is the most densely populated region of the RF (according to the census in 1989, its population is 3,943,133 people). Its area is 143,600 sq km. But the republic is landlocked in Central Russia bordering Tatarstan and Udmurt and surrounded by other Russian regions.

Ethnic factor: There are 22% Bashkirs that live in the territory of the republic, 39% of Russians, and 28% Tatars (the data of the 1989 census). Thus, the Bashkirs constitute only the third largest ethnic group in the region. The other ethnic groups are Chuvash (3.0%), Mari (2.7%), and small percentage of Mordovans and Udmurts, with other ethnic groups constituting 5 %.

Economic factor: The republic is rich in oil resources and inherited a well-developed oil-processing industry from the Soviet regime. As far as fiscal policy is concerned, Bashkortostan has always been among the “donors” and is one of the main contributors to the system of regional redistribution.

²² The limits of the paper allows only for a very short observation of the regime changes that took place in the regions. The main focus is to remain on the federal institutions per se and central-peripheral conflict.

II. Federal arrangement and Asymmetry

Bashkortostan, like many other CUs, claimed “sovereignty”. But the terminology of Post-Soviet federalism is very confusing. Thus, “sovereignty” does not mean independent statehood but political and economic autonomy. The republic also sought federal non-interference from the central government in internal affairs and economic self-determination.

The Declaration of Sovereignty of Bashkortostan was adopted (by its Supreme Soviet) on 11 October 1990. It announced the “state sovereignty of Bashkortostan on its whole territory in the existing borders”. The Declaration includes three sections. First, “sovereignty” with a focus on economic self-determination; second, the ethnic component of the self-determination of the Bashkir nation; third, some references to human rights, the rule of law, democracy and the division of power.

In March 1992, Bashkortostan signed the Federation Treaty (but it did so only after the central government accepted an “attachment” to the Treaty that laid down the conditions by which Bashkortostan accepts the Treaty, specifying its special position within the Federation and promising some privileges and amendments to be made in future). The attachment mentions Bashkortostan’s claim to control of the economic resources of the republic, tax sovereignty and judicial independence from Moscow.

The RF Constitution 1993 demonstrates different approach to the federal view of the country which is stated in the Constitution of Bashkortostan.

The Russian Constitution establishes a model of a “moderately asymmetric constitutional federalism with contractual elements” (Gravingholt 188). By contrast, the constitution of Bashkortostan underlines “the idea of voluntary and theoretically reversible integration based on contracts and recognizing the constituent parts’ statehood”. But in the main part, the Bashkir constitution refers only to the agreements that had already been achieved between Moscow and Ufa.

The federal government and the republic concluded a bilateral power-sharing treaty in August 1994. This treaty was accompanied by ten inter-governmental agreements on such issues as economic cooperation, agro-industry, international (economic) relations, state property, fuel and energy, customs, military-industrial complex and others.²³ After the treaty was signed, Bashkortostan resumed paying taxes to federal government.

The concessions the federal government made in its relations with Bashkortostan were **much bigger and more significant than with all other CUs** of the federation. Bashkortostan can,

²³ This treaty, like many other similar agreements of this epoch, was full of undefined words that were crucial for the federation such as “sovereignty”, “international relations”, “statehood”, allowing each side to interpret them according to their own interests and situation.

thus, exemplify the extreme case of asymmetrical federal arrangement within the state. Contextual factors that determined the proper choice of federal institutions to manage the conflict relationship were the huge size of the densely populated republic, the oil resources and the petrochemical industry. Ethnic component did not play a significant role and no ethnic hostility is registered within the region.

III. Result of implementation of asymmetrical federalism for democracy

The implementation of asymmetrical federal institutions helped to manage the conflict between this CU and the central government and to keep the unity of the Federation as a whole.

However, asymmetry within the federation in transition allowed the development of different regimes within one single state. Thus, the transition of Bashkortostan displayed all the features of an authoritarian regime. While the central government of Yeltsin granted privileges to the republican government, the republic promised to pursue social stability, and political predictability. Local democracy and civil rights were not among the demands the center made to the republican leadership and were left to the will of the republican political elite. The further political development of the republic revealed authoritarian properties. Under the rule of President Rakhimov, the Bashkir elite in power systematically deprived the opposition of any fair chance to compete for power. The new system is lacking both horizontal (within the regional institutions) and vertical (center-region) accountability.

In the peculiarities of its regime, Bashkortostan differs from other CUs of the RF just as it differs in the number of privileges and concessions Moscow made with regard to its asymmetrical position within the state. The autonomy of Bashkortostan was used by the republican elite to release themselves from accountability before the central government and to pursue their own interests.

Tatarstan

I. Contextual variables

Geopolitical factor: Tatarstan occupies a significant area compared to other republics, but it is, just as Bashkortostan, landlocked in the heart of the territory of the RF. Its area is 68,000 sq km and the population numbers 3,643,000 people.

Ethnic factor: The percentage of ethnic Tatars is almost half of the population, i.e., 48.0%. The other ethnic groups are Russians (43.0%), Chuvash (4.0%), Mordovans (1.0), Udmurts (1.0%), Others (3.0%). The predominant ethnic group - Sunni Muslims Tatars - link their genealogy to the Turkic tribes of Volga-Bulgaria and the Golden Horde empire. Their language belongs to the Turkic language group. According to the census of 1989, there were 6,646,000 Tatars

living on the territory of the former Soviet Union, with the majority inhabited Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Chuvash republic, Mordova, Udmurt republic, Crimea, the Middle Volga, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

Economic factor: Tatarstan has substantial resources of oil and was extremely well-developed and profitable during the Soviet period of machine-industry (KAM-Az).

II. Federal arrangement and Asymmetry

Tatarstan declared its sovereignty in 30 August, 1990. On 21 February 1992, the parliament of Tatarstan decided to hold the referendum on the status of republic. The referendum took place on 21 March, 1992 (despite the ruling of Russia's Constitutional Court that it was unlawful). The results were: 61.4 % replied "yes", and 37.2% voted "no" (the question was: "Do you agree that Tatarstan is a sovereign state, a subject of international law, building its relations with the RF and other republics on the basis of fair treaties?").

The Constitution of Tatarstan was adopted in November 1992 and proclaimed the independence of the republic, equality of nations, allowed for dual citizenship and two state languages.

Tatarstan was more moderate in its demands for "sovereignty". This is how the President Shaimiev interpreted the issue of sovereignty of its republic: "Tatarstan is a sovereign country, but there is no sovereignty in a pure form. Once it is proclaimed, it is time to start setting limits to it".

Starting from 3 June 1993 (the meeting of the Russian Deputy Prime Ministry Sergei Shakhrai and Tatarstan Deputy Prime Minister Vasily Likhachev) the process of concluding and signing numerous bilateral treaties and agreements was started. Among them, for example, there was the agreement on the sale and transportation of oil, the agreement on the refining of petroleum products and an agreement on higher education.

III. Result of implementation of asymmetrical federalism for democracy

Tatarstan reveals a similar pattern of the regime development to that of Bashkortostan. Initially, in the Constitution of Tatarstan, adopted on 6 November 1992, democratic values were declared. The Constitution proclaimed the rule of law, the separation of power, the universal equality of rights, and freedom of political activity. The Constitution declared the independence of the Parliament (which used to be the Supreme Soviet renamed as The State Council), and the executive branch was headed by the president with precisely defined functions and powers, etc. However, as soon as the republic established its independence from the central government, most of the declared democratic values were formally abolished and other were not implemented.

The President Mintimir Shaimiev enjoys autocratic power. To secure his power, he supported the proposal to remove from the Constitution Article 108, which states that “the same person cannot serve as President of the Republic of Tatarstan for more than two successive terms”. President Shaimiev also supported the inclusion in the Constitution uncontested elections (although it contradicts the federal legislation). Such uncontested elections were held for Shaimiev himself (the presidential elections in 1991 and 1996) and for 21 heads of local administrations (the parliamentary elections 1995). The Parliament became the tool of executive branch and the results of the election is 100 percent predictable.²⁴

The Sakha-Yakutia Republic

I. Contextual variables

Geopolitical factor: The Sakha (Yakutia) is one of the biggest Russian republics. Its territory is 3,103,200 sq km but quite sparsely populated – 1,094.000 (according to the 1989 census). The republic is situated in the Russian Far East and is of the size of the whole Western Europe.

Ethnic factor: The predominant ethnic group are constituted by Russians (50.0%), then, followed by Yakuts (33.4%), Ukrainians (7.0%), Siberian peoples (2.0%), Tatars (2%), Belorussians (1.0%), and others (4.6%). Russian penetration in the area began in 1600s. Increased contacts over the centuries led to the high degree of assimilation between the two ethnic groups, Russians and Yakuts. During the Soviet period, assimilation was even fostered after the discovery of gold mines in the regions. From 1924, the republic witnessed migration of Russians on a large scale. The inter-ethnic relations within the region between Yakuts and Russian might have been characterized as tense at a certain point of time. Thus, in the 1970s-1980s the growing awareness of Yakutia’s wealth and economic potential led to some hostility towards Russians and mass demonstrations throughout 1980s.

Economic factor: Yakutia may be called the Russian richest region in terms of natural resources. It produces 98% of Russia’s diamonds and much of its gold, as well as coal, timber and other resources. It is the only republic with unrestricted access to the sea. As a northern republic, Sakha has traditional and poor agriculture, lives on extractive industry, energy resources, and a transport system geared to the bringing in of supplies and the export of raw materials.

²⁴The situation was achieved with the help of the previous electoral system. State Council elections are conducted in two types of constituencies: administrative-territorial and territorial. The boundaries of administrative-territorial constituencies coincide with the boundaries of towns and districts where the heads of local governments exercise full control (Farukhshin 196).

II. Federal arrangement and Asymmetry

In the autumn of 1990, the Yakut Supreme Soviet upgraded the status of Yakutia to that of a full republic²⁵ and renamed it Sakha-Yakutia. The main demands of the republic were control of its natural resources and the self-determination of its economy.

The republican constitution proclaimed exclusive ownership of land, minerals and other resources.

Unlike Bashkortostan and Tatarstan, the Sakha republic approved the Federation Treaty of the RF and signed it together with the representatives of other republics. However it was reached by a previously made asymmetrical arrangement between the republic and Moscow by approving the treaty on the division between the responsibilities and the duties of the republic and the RF.

As in the cases of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, the constitution of Sakha-Yakutia contradicted many issues in the RF Constitution, in the Federation Treaty which had been signed by the republic before. This legal ambiguity implied the necessity to make further amendments in federal arrangement of the country. Thus, the republican constitution proclaimed ascendancy for local over federal laws, as for example in the declaration of sovereignty and the introduction of Yakut citizenship.

While Sakha demonstrated its willingness to stay as a part of the RF, at the same time it claimed its right to control its natural resources unilaterally. Concessions from central government have resulted in Sakha being able to retain 11.5% of its gold and 20% of its diamonds.

III. Result of implementation of asymmetrical federalism for democracy

Sakha-Yakutia obtained sufficient enough privileges and concessions from the federal government despite the fact that, as we can see from the survey, inter-ethnic relations in the regions are slightly more tense than in the other two republics (which demonstrates the fact that the inter-ethnic factor does not significantly influence the degree of asymmetry of the CU and the intensity of conflict itself in the RF). As for local regime change within the republic, it displays less tendency towards authoritarianism than the previous two cases (where the regime can definitely be described as authoritarian). But the politics of the regional government can still be described as “Soviet economy”. In spring of 1994, the economy of Sakha was in crises and the response was to urge a strengthening state control: a return to the “socialist methods of production” whereby 80% of the profit was extracted from the producer by the republican

²⁵ Before it was established by Bolshevik regime only as an autonomous in 1924 – the Yakut Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic

officials. None of the preconditions for a market economy, such as a free labour and capital market, or legal regulations exist.

Conclusion

The puzzle that emerges from this observation and is not still resolved is this: Does the analysis mean that the less privileges - and, thus, the less asymmetry - the CUs gets in a country experiencing a regime change, the more chances there are to have democratization in this CUs (given that federal government is democracy oriented itself)? Then, what is the way to accomplish the division between CUs and how much freedom can be granted to the local governments so as not to damage the fragile nascent democratic institutions and thus prevent the local elite from authorizing power in the regions?

The second point to be made is that the contextual variables help to demonstrate the differences among the CUs of the RF on three parameters: geopolitical, economical and ethnical. They do have an impact on center-peripheral relations. But, as the indexes show, they do not determine the intensity of conflict, the scope of the demands (if we compare these three republics among themselves). In other words, it is a *conflict per se*, not the *intensity* of conflict, that is determined by contextual factors. The size, population, existence of external borders, natural resources, ethnic factor do stimulate the CU to bargain for more independence. But once negotiation has started and asymmetrical arrangement within the federation becomes mutually acceptable, the intensity of conflict changes not just according to the contextual variables. It is also influenced by the possible fiscal arrangements, by the nature of the elite, and even by interpersonal relations with the head of the country²⁶.

Had the conflict been dependent on its “context” alone, then, the table would display the opposite result: the conflict in Sakha-Moscow would be the most intensive one, and, it would be followed by Tatarstan and Bashkortostan. In reality the rank was the opposite. The relationship between Bashkortostan and Federal government were the most tense and the republic got most of the concessions during this period of time. Tatarstan occupied a more moderate position. Finally, Sakha, although pursuing “sovereignty”, never posed the question of absolute independence (though its size and external borders could make this demand justifiable).

²⁶ This statement is applied only to the RF and is one of the properties of regime transition of this particular country, thus, can not be extrapolated to other countries in transition. Such factors as the nature of elite and analysis of fiscal policy and fiscal arrangements are the subject of a separate research.

Although the question of the interrelation between federalism and democratization remains, we can conclude the following. First, one of the factors that explains why the federal structure is one of the most popular vehicles for conflict management, especially in a country in transition, is that it can ensure the rights of minorities that had been suppressed by totalitarian, authoritarian or any other form of undemocratic regime. Federalism can accomplish these goals because it provides for two or more overlapping jurisdictions, each with substantial autonomy but each subject to an enforceable system of constitutional law. Power can be decentralized to various forms of local government, but, if the relationship with the national government is strong, it will keep the country together and prevent secession. By contrast, a unitary system is less effective in this sense. Its structure consists of one jurisdiction in which a majoritarian will can dominate the polity. Federalism allows more avenues for policy articulation, more institutional remedies for problems, fewer overall demands, and thus less chance for so-called ‘open’ (or violent) conflict. On the other hand, one cannot deny that the federal system is more complex and less efficient as far as the policy implementation of the central government is concerned, and it is subject to higher levels of conflict and regional competition.

Second, the federal institutions alone do not guarantee success in conflict management and in the consolidation of democracy in the regions. The federal principle is itself partially influenced by ethnic, economic, and geopolitical factors and needs to be reinforced by other factors both societal and institutional.

To sum up, federalism is not the only factor that influences conflict mitigation in the state. The effects of federalism depend greatly on the institutional structure and contextual conditions. Although federalism does not guarantee absolute conflict resolution, it is hard to find any other form of successful accommodation of multi-national state (or so-called “divided society”) that does not involve federal principle. Federalism does not prevent or eliminate conflicts, but it does make them more manageable.

Appendix

Geopolitical Factor:

0 – describes the situation in which the republics (or any other CUs) are cut off from foreign countries and have no external borders and are relatively small in size;

1 – to this group belong those CUs that, first, have substantial territory (from 40,000 to 70,000 sq km) but are landlocked in the center of the federation and are surrounded by a belt of other regions (Tatarstan); or, second, those CUs small which are situated along the shores of the

Arctic Ocean and the Bering Sea (although they are situated along the borders of the Federation, climatic conditions, denying access by ship for most of the year, reduce the significance of the sea coast; most of the goods and people must cross the territory of central Russia to reach these areas). In this group are five autonomous *oblasts* (Nenets, Yamalo-Nenets, Taimyr, Chukchi, and Koryak).

2 - those CUs which have bigger territory (from 70,000 to 150,000 sq km) but do not have external borders, and, second, those that have external borders but are small in size (this group includes the Karelian, Altaian, Tyvinian, Buriatian republics and all of the republics of northern Caucasus (with the exception of Adygeya) and the Jewish autonomous oblast.

3 – those CUs that are both large in terms of geographical territory (over 150,000 sq. km.) and have external borders with other states or situated along the shores (e.g., Sakha with territory 3,103,200 sq. km.).

a) Economic Factor:

0 – very poor CUs: completely dependent on subsidies from the federal government (e.g., Dagestan and most of the Caucasus republics);

1 – those CUs that either have some natural resources or developed industry (but are still dependent on the center because their local economies functioned as integrated parts of the Soviet economy, where planning and investment were carried out largely without regard for developing a balanced economy within the CUs);

2 – those CUs that have both some natural resources and developed industry, are economically self-sufficient and are not dependent on central subsidies (these are the Volga-Ural area and northern Siberia – Sakha - with rich deposits of oil, gas and other natural resources, namely, in Sakha, diamonds and gold).

3 – both rich in natural resources and absolutely self-sufficient (because of redistributive centralized economy of Soviet time which aimed at creation codependence among the regions, this type can hardly be found within the RF).

b) Ethnic Factor

0 – insignificant percentage of the representatives of the titular nation live within the CU (the smallest are Khanty-Mansi - 1.4%,²⁷ Jewish – 4.2%, Yamalo-Nenets – 4.2%);

1 – significant²⁸ percentage of the representatives of the titular nation live within the CU (Bashkrostan – 21.9%, Adygeya – 22.1%, Sakha – 33.4 %, Tatarstan – 48.5%);

²⁷ For two titular groups – Khanti and Mansi

²⁸ Significant percentage is considered to be if the titular nation constitutes from 20% - 50% of the CU's population.

2 – the majority of the population of the CU is constituted by members of the titular nation (e.g., Tatarstan, Chuvashia, Tyva, North Ossetia).

3 – the ethnic group constitutes an absolute majority of the population (Checheno-Ingushetia)²⁹.

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²⁹ In two other areas, Kabardino-Balkaria and Dagestan, a majority exists only if two or more titular groups are added together. There are 57.8% Chechens in Chechnya – the only region where the titular nation constitutes an absolute majority.

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