The Case of the Russian Federation

Ethnopolitical Legitimacy and Ethnic Conflict Management.

in the Early 1990s.

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Table of Contents

Introduction **1**

1 Ethnic Dimension of Political Legitimacy and Post-Communist Democratization **4**

1.1 Ethnopolitical Legitimacy 4

1.2 Developmental Crises, Post-Communist Democratization and Ethnopolitical Legitimacy 9

1.3 Post-Communist Democratization and Ethnopolitical Conflict 18

2 Dynamics of Conflict between the Federal Center and Ethnic Republics in Russia in the Early 1990s: Processes of Federalization and Ethnopolitical Legitimation **30**

2.1 Conflict Dynamics 36

3 Republican Variations in Political Attitudes Concerning Trust in Government: Some Surveys' Data **59**

4 Conclusions: Issues of Ethnopolitical Legitimation and Constructive Ethnic Conflict Management in Present-day Russia **69**

Bibliography **76**

Introduction

Concerns with ethnic conflict have got an almost outrageous timeliness. The salient global role of ethnic identity as it affects everything, from democratic development to risk of disruptive communal conflicts at domestic level has become an important dimension of present-day world society. Ethnic conflict is a persistent feature of modernity; yet, for the 1990s and beyond, it seems to loom especially large in multiethnic countries of the former socialist world, where transitions to democracy seem to be threatened on all sides by communal strife.

The disintegrations of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, that have burst asunder the borders of these former communist empires, have already prompted considerable discussion in academic and policy circles of the problems of state formation under conditions of escalating ethno-territorial tension in the new post-Communist countries and the search for avenues available for constructive management of ethnopolitical disputes. One of the elements common to ethnic conflict in the modern world is its highly focused relation to the state. A necessary condition for the occurrence of ethnic conflict is the coexistence of two or more culturally differentiated communities under a single political authority. Parties in conflict make demands of the state and, in severe cases, demands for some reconstitution or recomposition of the state. This particular uniformity is a remarkable tribute to the rapid world-wide spread of the modern state and its acknowledged power in conferring recognition of ethnic status and other satisfactions that ethnic groups seek. Legitimacy constitutes the heart of any political system. In this respect, a focus on the state and ethnic dimension of political legitimation can shed some new shadows of light upon understanding of ethnic conflict and a search for constructive ways to cope with it.

In many countries the crisis of the nondemocratic regime is also intermixed with profound differences about what should constitute the ›state‹. Some political

activists simultaneously challenge the old nondemocratic regime and the existing territorial state itself. Linz and Stepan (1992) suggest that a ›stateness‹ problem may be said to exist when a significant proportion of the population does not accept the boundaries of the territorial state (whether constituted democratically or not) as a legitimate political unit to which they owe obedience.[1] This crisis of ›stateness‹ undergrids many of contemporary issues of Ethnic Peace and international security. At the end of the day, successful resolution of the crisis of stateness hinges upon effective ethnopolitical legitimation of both new governments and political systems of democratizing multiethnic states.

With the break-up of the Soviet Union, the last of the region's avowedly multinational states has disappeared. Everywhere, political authority has been reconfigured along ostensibly national lines and nationalism remains central to politics in and among the new nation-states. The problem of ›stateness‹ and incomplete nation-building is particularly complicated in the Russian Federation, the largest of the post-Soviet successor states and the keys to the region's security. Unlike all other parts of the present-day Eastern Europe, where post-Communism was virtually synonymous with national liberation. Russia after the Soviet collapse, however, felt less like a nation-state newly liberated from a multinational empire than like a deposed metropolitan power facing life without its colonies. While building their new, post-Soviet state, moreover, Russians have had to contend with the arduous challenges of democratizing the regime, replacing a command with a market economy, and creating a sense of national identity broad enough to encompass the ethnic Russian majority and the many minority groups that reside within the borders of what is still the largest national territory in the world.[2]

In this paper the author would like to address several aspects of the problem of ethnopolitical legitimacy in its relation to the management of centre-periphery disputes in the present-day Russia. The structure of this paper includes four major

1. Linz, J. and A. Stepan (1992). ›Political identities and electoral sequences: Spain, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia‹, *Daedalus, 121:* 123–139: 123.
2. Shevtsova, L. (1995). ›The two sides of the new Russia‹, *Journal of Democracy*, 6(3): 56–71:56–57.

sections. The first section discusses some theoretical implications the issues of ethnopolitical legitimacy can have for better understanding the dynamics of ethnopolitics in post-communist democratizing societies. It is argued that the crisis of stateness that is experienced by post-Soviet Russian Federation can be fruitfully conceived as a cumulation of identity and legitimacy crises of post-communist development. The author goes on to consider the problem of securing ethnic peace in the conditions of post-communist ethnopolitical development. The second section provides an overview of the dynamics of ethnopolitical conflict and federalization processes in post-Soviet Russia in the early 1990s. The author suggests identifying five major stages in the evolution of the centre-periphery disputes within Russia as reflecting more or less successful attempts by the federal centre to manage the problem of ethnopolitical legitimation by means of federalism. The third section reports the data of a sociological survey conducted in four ethnic republics within Russia in 1994 – 95. These survey results reflect cross-republican as well as ethnically-relevant variations in the perceived level of trust in central vs. republican levels of political authority as an important dimension of ethnopolitical legitimacy. The concluding section discusses the linkage between the issues of ethnopolitical legitimation and constructive conflict management in today's Russia as underlying the agenda of federalism.

1 Ethnic Dimension of Political Legitimacy and Post-Communist Democratization

1.1 Ethnopolitical Legitimacy

Ethnicity has abundantly demonstrated its durability and its disruptive potential in the domestic politics of numerous states. One of the underlying reasons for the ubiquity of ethnic conflict derives from the given that most states are multinational as regards the ethnic composition of their citizenry and contain at least two statistically and/or politically significant groups. [3] Multiethnic state can be viewed as a particular kind of political system, an ethnopolitical system. Reformulating David Easton (1965), ethnopolitical system could be conceived as a set of interactions, abstracted from the totality of political behavior, through which ethnically relevant values are authoritatively allocated within an ethnically divided society.[4]

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3. Of the approximately two hundred states that exist today, fewer than twenty are ethnically homogeneous, in the sense that ethnic minorities account for less than 5 per cent of the population. The multinational state is therefore easily the most common form of country. In 40 percent of all states there are five or more such groups. Perhaps the most startling statistic is that in nearly one-third of all states (31 percent), the largest national group is not even a majority. Ethnic heterogeneity therefore is not the exception but the rule. (Smith, A. (1991). *National Identity*. London: Penguin Books: 14). The lack of congruence between the state and the nation is exemplified in the many ›plural‹ states today. Indeed, Walker Connor's estimate (Connor, W. 1972. ›Nation-building or nation-destroying?‹ *World Politics*, 24: 319–355, see also Wiberg, H. ›Self-determination as an international issue‹, in M. Lewis, ed. *Nationalism and Self-Determination in the Horn of Africa*. London: Ithaca Press) in the early 1970s showed that only about 10 percent of the modern states could claim to be true ›nation-states‹, in the sense that the state's boundaries coincide with the nation's and that the local population of the state share a single ethnic culture.
4. Easton, D. (1965). *Systems Analysis of Political Life*. New York.

Legitimacy is an important attribute of any political system. Harry Eckstein (1975) conceives of legitimacy as »the extent that a polity is regarded by its members as worthy of support«.[5] Seymour Martin Lipset, following the Weberian tradition, defines the legitimacy of a political system as its capacity »to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society«.[6] Most approaches to political legitimacy make two related distinctions.

On the one hand, there is the distinction between the general regime support (in Easton's terminology, diffuse support) and the government support at any concrete time of its performance (in Easton's terminology, the specific support) The general system or regime support is based on affective, diffuse commitment of the population to the rules of political power, loyalty to the political authority in general, irrespective of what are the concrete incumbents and their policies, the justificatory principles that underpin the given institution of authority, no matter what concrete incumbents occupy the authority positions and what their specific policies are. The specific support to the government, or in other words, the government's popularity is based on the government's effectiveness and its performance. In the most common usage of the term, performance directly relates to what governments do, and it is therefore related to the authority level. Performance implies not only a positive dimension in terms of the goods, services, and symbolic actions delivered, but also a negative dimension in the use of coercive force or sanctions associated with the state's monopoly of force. Actually, it is through its actual performance and concrete policies pursued that the incumbents

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5. Eckstein, H. ›Authority relations and governmental performance: A theoretical framework‹, *Comparative Political Studies* 1971: 50. See also Eckstein, H. and T. Gurr *Patterns of Authority: A Structural Basis for Political Inquiry*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975: 186) who operationalized the *intensity* of regime legitimacy as the extent to which the political unit, its governing institutions, and the incumbents are thought proper and worthy of support. Illegitimacy, to Gurr, is the opposite of legitimacy and can be defined in terms of the extent people regard their regimes as improper and deserving opposition.
6. Lipset, S.M. ›Some social requisites of democracy‹, *American Political Science Review,* 53, 1958: 88.

justify their right to rule. This distinction between general regime support (legitimacy of the regime) and specific support for the government (legitimacy of the government) derives from a split in the criteria of support: General regime support tends to be based on deeper value commitments and is thought to be deep and slow to change. Specific support of the government tends to be based on perceived interests and government's responsiveness to them and, thus, is more shallow and more liable.

On the other hand, a second, partially separate, distinction concerns the objects rather than the criteria of support. It postulates a threefold division among the authorities, the regime, and the community. The legitimacy of a multiethnic state draws heavily upon the state's legitimation by all ethnic segments of the citizenry. In this regard, Lipset's proposition that the extent to which contemporary political systems are legitimate depends in large measure upon the ways in which the key issues which have historically divided the society have been resolved[7], assumes relevant ethnopolitical overtones.

The central concern in analyzing political stability in multiethnic political systems revolves around the notions of identity and legitimacy of the systems. The underlying nature of the nexus pertains to relationships that exist between ethnic groups and the state. A basic understanding of the phenomenon has been proposed by Rothchild who stressed: »If it is to effective over the long run – indeed, if it is to survive – political authority must be sustained by legitimacy. That is, it must be perceived by its wielders and its subjects as appropriate and rightful within its specified limits«.[8] Rothschild notes that politicized ethnicity, remains the world's major ideological legitimator and delegitimator of states, regimes, and governments: »A state's legitimacy depends heavily on the population's perception of the political system as reflecting its ethnic and cultural identity. Indeed, at the margin of choice, today most people would rather be governed poorly by their own ethnic brethren than well by aliens, occupiers, and colonizers (though they hope, of

7. Lipset, S.M. (1960). *Political Man*. London: Heinemann: 77.

8. Rothschild, J. (1981). *Ethnopolitics: A Conceptual Framework*. New York: Columbia University Press: 11.

course, to avoid such a stark dilemma and be well governed by their own people). Indeed, to be ruled by ethnic strangers is perceived as worse than oppressive, as degrading«.[9]

At the end of the day, legitimacy accounts for political stability. Ethnically exclusionary systems are therefore, inherently instable. Exclusion is a permanent source of illegitimacy, given that ethnic divisions tend to be ascriptive and not achieved ones.

Herbert Kelman (1969) discusses the issue of legitimacy as perceived at the individual (socio-psychological) level and also points out at the distinction between diffuse and specific kinds of support. The question »What makes a system legitimate?« is equivalent, at the social-psychological level, to the question, »What ties individual members to the system?«. To Herbert Kelman (1969), an individual's attachment to the nation-state or to any other group, may be rooted either in sentimental (identity, values) or instrumental (interests) considerations. Applying this approach to the sphere of ethnopolitics, it seems appropriate to distinguish between two sources of legitimacy for the ethnopolitical system, which corresponds directly to the distinction between sentimental and instrumental attachment at the level of the individual. A modern nation-state's legitimacy depends on the extent to which the population perceives the regime as (a) reflecting its ethnic and cultural identity, and (b) meeting its needs and interests.[10]

Ethnopolitical legitimacy can be conceived as beliefs, collectively held by members of ethnic groups that the existing ethnopolitical system arrangements are worthy of support. Both the system and governmental effectiveness in a multiethnic polity necessarily acquire ethnic dimension. Indeed, there is more to ethnopolitical

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9. Rothschild, 1981: 14–15.

10. Kelman, H. (1969). ›Patterns of Personal Involvement in the National System: A Sociopsychological Analysis of Political Legitimacy‹, in J.N. Rosenau, ed. *International Politics and Foreign Policy*. 2nd ed. New York: Free Press, 276–288: 283. Muller, E.N. and T. Jukam's empirical research has demonstrated the distinction between the incumbent effect and the system effect, in that the latter is more consequential for the stability of the political regime than the former.
Muller, E.N. and T. Jukam. (1977). ›On the meaning of political support‹. *American Political Science Review*, 71(4): 1561–1595: 1563.

legitimacy than mere governmental performance that demonstrates managerial competence and a degree of distributive justice. This more is cultural and almost certainly its contents varies from case to case depending on configurations of ethnic cleavages and interethnic power arrangements. In a multiethnic polity, for the government to exact legitimacy, it is expected to be responsive to the specific identities of the ethnically pluralist citizenry. Ethnopolitical legitimation is not a zero-sum given, but it is a continuum. Rothschild has grasped the notion in observing: »Perceptions of the legitimacy of systems of dominant-subordinate ethnic stratification may run the gamut from both sides judging the system and their relationship within it to be fully legitimate (in ideal-typical terms, the image of every group knowing its place and perceiving it as appropriate) to both parties viewing the arrangement as categorically illegitimate (in which case no longer viable). In between these two evaluative poles are several possible intermediate positions, combinations, and permutations, in which the parties may repose identical or discrepant degrees of legitimacy in the system«.[11]

Similarly, ethnopolitical legitimacy is not a state, but a process. Ernest Renan is frequently cited for the proposition that a nation is a daily plebiscite. The dynamics of ethnopolitical legitimacy resides in the processes of ethnic legitimation and delegitimation. Politicized ethnic identities interact with beliefs about the legitimacy of the extant ethnopolitical arrangements. Changes in collectively shared beliefs on the group political history (a ›search for identity‹), which result in the course of ethnopolitical mobilization often make the ethnic subordinates radically alter their definitions of themselves, the ethnic dominants, and their interrelationship. In regard to newly appeared multiethnic states in Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union, the problem of ethnic legitimation is most acute. Because the newly established governments, controlled by ethnic dominants, lack past performance on which to base their legitimacy even among the ethnic dominants, to say nothing of the ethnic subordinates (who experience serious apprehensions and often perceive threats arising out of the situation of uncertainty), the likelihood of disruption escalates dramatically.

11. Rothschild, 1981: 104.

1.2 Developmental Crises, Post-Communist Democratization and Ethno-political Legitimacy

Both identity and legitimacy constitute dimensions of a political system. In understanding the system context of the processes of democratization and conditions of ethnic peace the so-called crisis perspective, elaborated in political sociology for analyzing sequences of political development can result helpful and illuminating.

The concept of crisis signifies a turning point, a crucial situation calling for decisions when a society is moving in a new direction.[12] Crisis situations are a manifestation of system stress [13] and tend either to mark an incumbent threat of system collapse or to become antecedents of system adaptation and response to the challenges of development with the promise of significant change and evolutionary growth. Historians treat crises as events, as a kind of social sample to be analyzed. The definition of a crisis as any serious threat to the functioning of a political regime also allows stress on the element of conflict that is usually part of such crises, while inviting one to see events through the eyes of historical actors.[14] Another approach relates ›crisis‹ to an important change in the way politics works, to new institutions or changes in the political process. Finally, crises are also considered as a typology of the problems (or problem areas) governments face. This understanding was advanced by a team of political scientists who over more than a decade were engaged in a collegial search for the understanding of the process of political development. In the concluding volume of a series of studies generated by their work, political development is seen as the successive resolution of a series of crises (legitimacy, identity, participation, distribution, penetration) that are faced by modernizing political systems in the attempts to develop equality, capacity and

12. Zimmerman, E.(1983). *Political Violence, Crises, and Revolution.* Cambridge, MA: Schenkman: 189

13. Easton (1965) Almond G., et al. (eds.) (1973) *Crisis, Choice, and Change: Historical Studies of Political Development*. Boston: Little, Brown.

14. Grew, R. (1978) (ed.) *Crises of Political development in Europe and the U.S.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

adaptation.[15] The five crises that are viewed to constitute the modernization syndrome comprise:

- *Identity:* the extension of an active sense of membership in the national community to the entire population; in essence, this is the issue of making state equivalent to nation;
- *Legitimacy*: securing a generalized acceptance of the rightness of the exercise and structure of authority by the state, so that its routine regulations and acts obtain voluntary and willing compliance;
- *Participation*: the enlargement of the numbers of persons actively involved in the political arena, through such devices as voting and other;
- *Distribution*: ensuring that the valued resources in society, such as material well-being and status are available on equal terms to all persons and
- *Penetration*: implying extending the effective operation of the state to the farthest periphery of the system.

The successful or, on the contrary, failed resolution of each of the crises marks cardinal stages in a polity's developmental process and, therefore, in certain respects, parallels stages of psycho-social development of personality, identified and discussed by E. Erikson.[16] The five crises (or problem areas) discussed are thought as having a close relationship to the process by which the government makes and enforces decisions. Identity, legitimacy, participation, penetration, and distribution may be thought of as aspects of governmental decision-making that may become problems or lead to crises when they become arenas of conflict. To S. Verba, crises represent situations in which the society moves in a new direction. They are the major decisional points at which the society is redefined, and are therefore extremely relevant to sequential political changes. According to Verba, crisis is »a change that requires some governmental innovation and

15. Binder L., J.S. Coleman, J. La Palombara, L. Pye, S. Verba and M. Weiner (1971*) Crises and Sequences in Political Development*. Princeton, NJ. Princeton University Press, 1971.

16. Erikson, E. (1958). *Young Man Luther.* New York: Norton.

institutionalization, if elites are not seriously to risk a loss of their position or if the society is to survive«.[17]

Overviewing late Soviet and post-Soviet ethnopolitical development, we could reasonably conclude that, by and large, during the years of perestroika (the late 1980s), a whole host of ethnic issues (ethnoeconomic, ethnodemographic, ethnoecological, ethnocultural, ethnopolitical) vehemently started to sound as serious problem areas. If the former USSR was to persist, its political modernization was indispensable. At the same time, the Soviet Union's successful modernization (given such extreme ethnic diversity) became dependent upon an adequate resolution of the syndrome of ethnopolitical crises at both the federal (relations between the Union centre and Union republics) and republican (relations between central republican governments and ethnic autonomies or non-institutionalized ethnic minorities) levels. The existing problem areas appeared to require considerable institutional innovation in the sphere of state-ethnic relations.

The five crises components of political development can be each conceived in its ethnic dimension, concretized to the sphere of interethnic political relations:

Identity Crisis posed the problem of the extension of an active sense of membership in the soviet community to the citizens belonging to different ethnic groups and the diffusion of civil loyalties of titular nationalities of the Union republics towards the federal state and, as regards the successor states, of non-titular ethnic minorities to the republics.

The premodern, imperial nature of the Soviet Union was evident to the more insightful Western scholars even before its collapse. As Benedict Anderson put it: »the fact that the Soviet Union shares with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland the rare distinction of refusing nationality in its naming suggests that it is as much the legatee of the prenational dynastic states of the XIXth century as the precursor of a twenty-first century internationalist order«.[18] Similarly, W. Connor in his essay on the nature of ethnonational bond, observes:

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17. Verba, S. (1971). ›Sequences and Development‹ in: Binder 1971: 283–316.

18. Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso, 2nd ed.: 2.

»... to an Englishman the words of ›There'll always be an England‹ inspire a fused sense of nationalism and patriotism. Yet Englishmen seldom appreciate that the words of ›There'll always be an England‹ fail to inspire a similar sentiment in the Scots and other non-English people that live in a multinational state dominated by Englishmen... Similarly, references over years by ethnic Russians to the entire Soviet Union as Russia or Mother Russia – a practice, incidentally, to which Gorbachev was not immune – did nothing to increase the patriotic feelings of Armenians, Georgians, Jews, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, and the other approximately one hundred non-Russian peoples who populated the former USSR. On the contrary it irritated their nationalist sensitivities«.[19]

Indeed, one of most dramatic manifestations of identity crisis was the virulent clash between the Russian and Soviet identities. In many ways, the Soviet Union was indeed a Russian state, although one with added elements that had not been a part of the imperial Russian identity of the pre-revolutionary period. The Soviet Union satisfied Russian ambitions for a world-power status; it insisted that Russian be the universal language of the state, in the armed forces for example, and it was accorded extra-republican privileges as the language of education throughout the Union.

In this regard, Schopflin (1995) observes: »In the Soviet Union, the Russians by and large understood the Soviet identity as a Russian one, even if the influential neo-Slavophile current, of which Solzhenitsyn was the best-known exponent, denied this... . Although after Stalin's death, the superior status of the ›Elder Brother‹ was no longer as explicit as it was before, Khrushchev's project for the long-term merger of all cultures was understood as a form of Russification by non-Russians and probably gave a certain satisfaction to Russians, who felt that at the end of the day the state was theirs, however much they have resented some or many of the ways in which it impacted on them. In this sense, communism and the Soviet state did help to sustain a Russian identity and conversely the Russian identity helped to underpin the Soviet Union. For the non-Russians, on the other hand, the Soviet

19. Connor, W. (1993). ›Beyond reason: The nature of ethnonational bond‹, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 16(3):373–389.

State was alien, its power over them was resented and when the communist ideology that sustained it collapsed, they opted out«.[20]

Resolution of the identity crisis, i.e., the issue of making state equivalent to nation was and is complicated by the multi-level political structure of the former Soviet Union and many of its former Union republics, specifically by the necessity to forge an adequate balance between federal and sub-federal levels. What was and has been sought in this respect is the accommodation of civic, republican, and regional loyalties at the level of the USSR federation and of its Union republics. This problem area of forging national identities persists in the post-soviet successor states, being the most salient in the Russian Federation, which most closely repeats the ethnopolitical structures of the demised Soviet Union.

The Legitimacy Crisis brought about the problem of securing a generalized acceptance of the rightness of the exercise and of structure of authority by the federal state on behalf of all ethnic groups constituting the state's civil population and, particularly, those ethnic groups that have been granted ethnoterritorial autonomy within the existing arrangements (Union or Autonomous republics). For the success of the ex-USSR's attempts to modernize, it became vital, besides securing generalized civil support of the majority of the country's population, to provide also for legitimation of the central government by ethnic subjects of the Union federation.

Recent scholarship has noted the importance of considering the problem of dual legitimation in accounting for the collapse of the former Soviet Union. »In order to be able to explain what has happened, it is imperative to look closely at the specific contradictions of these regimes that were in fact at the very core of their legitimation. On the most general level, these contradictions were rooted in the fact that the Soviet regime, as it developed after its institutionalization in the early 1920s, was characterized by a rather unusual combination of features. It combined ›traditional‹ features – historical, patrimonial, and bureaucratic features char-

20. Schopflin, G. (1995). ›Nationhood, communism and state legitimation‹, in *Nations and Nationalism,* Vol.1, Part 1 (March 1995): 81–91: 89.

acteristic especially, of course, of the czarist empire – with those of a modern regime mobilizing whole populations, rooted in a monolithic revolutionary movement and ideology«.[21]

The Soviet regime changed some of the basic parameters of centre-periphery relations that had been developed under the czarist empire – especially the rather delicate balance between a commitment to the imperial system and the relative political passivity of the periphery. The revolutionary centre mobilized and activated the periphery to a very high degree, but at the same time attempted to control it tightly in the name of the communist salvationist vision as borne and promulgated by the ruling elite and its cadres. »Accordingly, the most far-reaching – the most encompassing and crucial – contradictions developed in these regimes were rooted in their bases of legitimation, in the nature of the vision that combined the basic premises of modernity, together with far-reaching strong totalitarian orientations and policies. The most important of these contradictions were between the participatory democratic and the totalitarian, the Jacobin components of the legitimation of these regimes; between the high level of social mobilization effected by these regimes and the attempts to control totally all the mobilized groups«.[22]

Glasnost resulted in making the bankruptcy of supra-national state authority evident. Among catalyzers of political delegitimation of communist rule in the former Soviet Union, Zubok (1994) identifies exacerbation of competition between federal and republican and regional elites, economic decay, corruption, historical revelations on the ›voluntary‹ nature of Soviet federation (most vehement in the case of Baltics), cumulation of disintegration of Outer (Eastern Europe) and Middle (Union republics) Empires.[23] In the early 1980s, the Soviet elite became

21. Eisenstadt, S. (1992). ›The breakdown of communist regimes and the vicissitudes of modernity‹, *Daedalus*, 121(2): 21–40: 28.

22. Eisenstadt, 1992: 29.

23. Zubok, V.M. (1994). ›Istochniki delegitimatsii sovetskogo rezhima‹ (›Sources of delegitimation of the Soviet regime‹), *Polis* 1994, No.2.

increasingly defragmented into a conglomerate of ethnocratic sub-elites, with each of them striving to provide for self-legitimation on the nationalist basis.[24]

The participation crisis, in ethnic terms, posed the issue of the enlargement of the spaces of the meaningful participation for ethnic groups on the political arena through such devices as elections and voting in civic bodies in a democratic way. Since 1989, one of most debated hot issues had become the declared priority of republican legislation over the Union laws, i.e., the right of republican legislatures (Supreme Soviets) to impose veto on the legislation adopted by the Union parliament if the latter was considered violating republican sovereignty and issues of adequate representation of the republics and other non-established ethnic groups in Union bodies to ensure reasonable accommodation of the ethnic minorities' rights and the ethnic majority's rule, so that to minimize the hegemonic ethnic control over the state. Reacting to the inconclusive and disappealing to republics Union Constitution reform of 1988, delegates from the Baltic republics, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia have repeatedly criticized the new USSR parliamentary system for denying them the opportunity to defend their republics' interests. Some deputies called for a new voting rule under which the delegation of each republic would have an equal vote on essential laws concerning the sovereignty of their republics. Others resorted to such methods as walkouts and boycotts of entire legislative sessions. In February 1990, pro-independence delegates from the Baltic republics notified the USSR Supreme Soviet that they would not participate in preparing the ›internal legislation‹ of the USSR, but would attend as ›observers‹ charged with preparing negotiations on the independence of their republics. That the absence or non-participation of entire republic delegations had no impact on the functioning of the legislature contributed to the growing alienation of these dissidents from the existing parliamentary structures. Kux (1990) observed that the marginalization of the representation of the republics and the breakdown of parliamentary channels of communication resulted in further

24. See on this in Volkov, V.K. (1992). ›Etnokratija – nepredvidennyj fenomen post-totalitarnogo mira‹ (›Ethnocracy – unintended phenomenon of post-totalitarian world‹), *Polis, 1992*, No. 2: 40–48.

polarization between the centre and the periphery. It was no wonder that ethno-political conflicts became increasingly transferred to the extra-parliamentary spheres.[25]

It should be mentioned that participation problems have persisted (and in many cases have even aggravated) in successor states. In the Baltic states of Latvia and Estonia, for instance, it became a particularly acute problem after new legislation on citizenship was adopted there in 1992 – 93 which, virtually, denied citizenship rights to a considerable number of Russian-speaking residents. Thus, after September (1992) elections by the restrictive electoral law in Estonia, all the MPs elected were ethnic Estonians, while almost one third of the Russian population remained without their representatives in the Estonian legislature.[26]

The distribution crisis in ethnopolitical relations can be conceived, among other things, as being the problem of ensuring that the valued resources in society, such as material well-being and status are available on equal terms to all persons irrespective of their ethnic appartenance as individuals and to all ethnic groups irrespective of their ethnoterritorial status within the federation, yet checking at least most disproportionate and resented ethnoregional disbalances in the production, exchange and appropriation of the shares of the federal national wealth. Imbalances in redistribution of the USSR's national wealth were, among other things, also a consequence of Moscow's allocation of resources among republics.[27] Russia such imbalances persisted in differential politics towards ethnically-defined republics who tended to receive preferential treatment, unlike non-ethnically defined territorial units (Oblasts and Krais).

The penetration crisis in the plural society of the Former USSR posed the issue of extending the effective operation of both federal (central) and republican

25. Kux, S. (1990). ›Soviet federalism‹, *Problems of Communisn*. 39 (2): 1–20.

26. Tishkov, V. (1993). ›Russkiye kak menshinstvo‹ (›Russians as a minority‹), *obshestvennyje Nauki I Sovremennost (Social Sciences and Modernity)*, 1993, No.6: 13–14.

27. See in this regard, Bahry, D. (1987). *Outside Moscow: Power, Politics and Budgetary Policy in Soviet Republics*. New York: Columbia University Press.

(ethnoterritorial or otherwise ethnically defined local level) levels of government, placing these two levels of authority in ›contracted‹ relationship of shared sovereignty and institutionalizing the resolution of eventual disputes. The parade of sovereign declarations which began in the Baltics in the late 1988- mid 1989, by the late 1990 had embraced already all Union republics and most all Autonomous republics. The ›war of the laws‹ between USSR federal authorities and the republican parliaments was one of the most vivid examples of this kind of crisis in ethnopolitical development.

These five major problem areas have persisted after the disintegration of the USSR at the level of its former Union republics which have become independent successor states. Many observers agreed that in the early 1990s, the former republics were coming under many of the same pressures that destroyed the USSR. This is true, above all in Russia, the dominant power and the key to the region's stability. In this respect, Edward Walker (1992) has noted that like Gorbachev's Soviet Union before it, faces a host of extremely complex and difficult ›crises‹ that took centuries to overcome in the West. To Walker, these include:

1. the consolidation of the Russian state in the territorial-juridical sense — that is, the demarcation of the territory over which the Russian state exercises formal sovereignty and which the international community and the Russian peoples call Russia;
2. the restaffing, restructuring, and in certain respects creation ex nihilo of a Russian state in the institutional, Weberian sense – that is, a coherent administrative hierarchy that makes decisions backed by force and a division of responsibilities empowering it to carry out the tasks demanded of a modern state;
3. the establishment of a rule by law, both in the sense of a ›law above the state‹ that constrains even the highest political authorities;
4. the transition to a private-enterprise, market economy and the building of the public and private institutional infrastructure capable of sustaining a market economy;

5. the consolidation of democracy.[28]

Each of these crises was at issue in the struggle underway in post-Soviet Russian Federation over the adoption of a new constitution and restructuring of centre-periphery relations. Either directly or indirectly, this struggle touches upon the distribution of political power in the emerging political order, the territorial integrity of ›Russia‹, the consolidation of democracy, and the future of Russia's economic reforms (see overview in section 2).

1.3 Post-Communist Democratization and Ethnopolitical Conflict

The relationship between ethnopolitics and democratization remains unclear. One of the hypotheses about preconditions of democracy asserts that established national boundaries and identities are needed before democratization can proceed. The Rabushka and Shepsle (1972) argument contends that ›the (ethnically) plural society... does not provide fertile soil for democratic values or stability‹ (p.92) because of incompatible, intense ethnic feelings held by members of... ›communal groups‹ (p.186). A corollary suggests that democratization brings into question previously established identities and boundaries, both because ethnic and linguistic divisions are powerful tools in newly intensified political struggles among elites, and because previously suppressed groups are able to mobilize due to greater tolerance of opposition.

This argument has been contested on two grounds. First, it seems to imply that ›plural societies‹ the world over are condemned to an undemocratic rule simply because of their plural composition. If this is correct, it would appear that democratic aspirations are a futile fantasy for the vast majority of humankind because of the lack of respective pre-conditions. A major shift in the perspective occurred with the ›third wave‹ of democratization, beginning with Portugal in 1974,

28. Walker, E. ›The New Russian Constitution and the Future of the Russian Federation‹, in *The Harriman Institute Forum*, Vol. 5, Issue 10 (June 1992): 1.

which suggested that democratization is possible in almost any society and the focus has been shifted from pre-conditions to democratic crafting.[29] Second, the assumption of the essentially static, given, and intractable nature of ethnic identifications is by no means obvious. Many scholars (Enloe 1973, Rothschild 1981, Young 1976) argue, that to understand why and how such loyalties become salient and exclusive at a certain conjuncture, we must focus on the role of the modern state in such societies and, in particular, analyze the policies and actions of strategic elites, who control the state apparatuses. As put by Donald Horowitz (1985), »There is no cause to be made for the futility of democracy or the inevitability of uncontrolled conflict. Even in the most severely divided society, ties of blood do not lead ineluctably to rivers of blood«.[30] A corollary holds that ethnically divided societies can be altered to sustain democracy. Lijphart (1977) argues that the adoption of consociational constitutional rules may serve so effectively as a mechanism for conflict resolution that in the long term some of the basic divisive structural features of society can be changed.[31] Recent scholarship is currently discussing the capacities of power sharing as a viable mechanism of managing ethnic conflicts in modernizing and democratizing societies.

In the realm of post-communist modernization and political development, democratization itself can be viewed as both a manifestation and an consequence of developmental crises faced by post-communist systems.

For post-Soviet societies ethnic dimension is particularly salient in the task of resolution of identity and legitimacy crises.

Linz & Stepan (1992) treat the issue of ethnopolitical legitimation as the ›stateness‹ problem, a challenge of competing nationalism's within one territorial state. To them, the ›stateness‹ problem, i.e., the degree to which inhabitants accept the domain and scope of a territorial unit as an appropriate entity to make legitimate decisions about its possible future restructuring, is a key variable for

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29. See, Huntington, S. (1991). *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.

30. Horowitz, D. (1985). *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press: 684.

31. Lijphart, A. (1977) *Democracies: Democracy in Plural Societies*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

democratic theory.[32] In their comparative study of democratic transitions, Linz and Stepan (1996) suggested that consensus over the identity of the state (to be reached during the transition) is one of the minimal conditions that must obtain before there can be any possibility of speaking of democratic consolidation: »in a modern polity, free and authoritative elections cannot be held, winners cannot exercise the monopoly of legitimate force, and citizens cannot effectively have their rights protected by a rule of law unless a state exists. In some parts of the world, conflicts about the authority and domain of the polis and the identities and loyalties of the demos are so intense that no state exists. No state, no democracy.« [33] Since there is often more than one ›awakened nation‹ present in the state, a democratic transition often puts the question of the relation between polis and demos at the centre of politics. To Linz and Stepan, while this does not mean that consolidating democracy in multinational or multicultural states is impossible, it does mean that especially careful political crafting of democratic norms, practices, and institutions is required.[34] In our understanding, this constitutes another argument for the importance of issues of ethnopolitical legitimation under democratization of multiethnic states.

Democratic transition in the sphere of interethnic relations is manifold and means establishing democracy at different levels – as a set of functioning institutions, as a discourse, as a system of values.

From the *institutional* point of view, among other things, democratization is the process whereby many formerly autocratic states in the Second and Third Worlds are attempting to establish more participatory and responsive political

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32. The very definition of a democracy involves agreement by the citizens of a territory, however specified, on the procedures to generate a government that can make legitimate claims on their obedience. Therefore, if a significant group of people does not accept claims on its obedience as legitimate, because the people do not want to be a part of this political unit, however constituted or reconstituted, this presents a serious problem for democratic transition and even more serious problems for democratic consolidation. (Linz & Stepan 1992: 123).

33. Linz, J.J. and A. Stepan. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation.* Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1996: 27.

34. Ibidem, p. 32

systems. The Soviet and East European regimes relaxed coercive restraints on nationalism and intergroup hostilities at a time, when the institutionalized means for their expression and accommodation did not yet exist, or were fragile and distrusted. The successor republics of the USSR face the same uncertainties.[35]

Recent scholarship suggests that nationalism reflects a need to establish an effective state to achieve a group's economic and security goals. Today, nationalism is flaring up where old states have collapsed and where mobilized populations are consequently demanding the creation of effective new states. The problem is that many of these new states lack the institutional capacity to fulfill popular demands. Their borders and sovereignty is in doubt; their armies are in disarray; their economics are out of control. These shortcomings redouble the intensity of nationalist sentiments, as militants demand the creation of effective national states to manage social problems. Managing post-soviet nationalism, therefore, hinges on improving the effectiveness of post-soviet state.[36]

Another broad range of factors that characterizes post-communism concerns the relationship between the individual and the state, the nature of citizenship (Schopflin 1994). Indeed, as the experiences of almost all post-communist federations' successor states have shown, once democratization poses the issue of the definition of the people a clustered set of issues automatically follows: the most important of which are the definition of citizenship, the possession of the franchise, the state's boundaries and the organizational structure of the state. The communist legacy of incomplete nation-building means that the issue of who is included in the nation and who is not included [37] is now on the new political agenda in most post-Communist societies. To the extent that the issue is not resolved, politicians may be tempted to construct institutions that exclude minority groups or weaken their political power to appeal to certain exclusive constituencies. The institutions they construct will make minority groups politically vulnerable and fan the flames of

35. Gurr, T.R. (1993). *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts.* Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace.

36. Smith (1991), Snyder, J. (1993). ›Nationalism and the Crisis of the Post-Soviet State‹, in: M. Brown (ed.) *Ethnic Conflict and International Security.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

37. Haas, R.N. (1990). *Conflict Unending.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

ethnic or sectarian resentment and conflict by forcing minorities to live under political systems that they have not chosen and that do not represent them. In these conditions, counter-elites may feel that either their personal political aims or those of the group they represent, will be better served by exacerbating tensions or raising the level of violence.[38] In multiethnic post-communist societies politicians may often be tempted to privilege the members of one ethnic group over those of any other residents of the state in exchange for votes. Geddes (1995) argues that when ethnic divisions become politicized, they are likely to remain so if they become enshrined in new political institution. Illiberal democracies are the likely result.[39]

In this relation, other scholars point out at the problem of accommodating ›majority rule‹ and the ›minority rights‹ in states that do not have tradition of tolerance and eventuality of a system of hegemonic control in those states. Democracy in its most primitive meaning can be understood as sheer ›majority rule‹. Where political ›majorities‹ constantly fluctuate, as people change their minds on the key policy or political issues of the day, then majority rule is a sensible decision rule, infinitely preferable to the kind of minority rule practiced by military dictators or one-party regimes. However, where there are two or more deeply-established ethnic communities, and where the members of these communities do not agree on the basic institutions and policies the regime should pursue, then ›majority rule‹ can become an instrument of oppressive hegemonic control.[40]

Keys to conflict prevention and mitigation lie in creating an environment in which political moderation prevails in the public discourse and in values shared by leadership and their ethnic constituencies. Leaders of all the relevant ethnic groups must perceive that it is in their interest to avoid adopting extremist rhetoric or

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38. Horowitz (1985), see also Horowitz, D.1990. ›Ethnic Conflict Management for Policymakers‹, in Montville J.V., *Conflict and Peacekeeping in Multiethnic Societies:* Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

39. Geddes, B. (1995). ›A Comparative Perspective on the Leninist Legacy in Eastern Europe‹, *Comparative Political Studies,* Vol. 28, No. 2 (July 1995): 239–274.

40. McGarry J. & B. O'Leary (ed.) (1993) *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation.* London: Routledge:23

policies in the search for solutions to potential or existing problems. Role of elites in democratic transitions through political elite pact-making have been emphasized by scholars because it has most consistently produced stable democracies.[41] Power-sharing and securing minority rights have come to be viewed as important[42] techniques of managing protracted ethnic conflicts and a lesson has been that no salient group should be prohibited from a share of effective power. The potential of federalism, where powers and responsibilities are allocated between central and regional authorities for managing ethnic conflict needs further assessment in the perspective of post-Soviet democratization and the Russian Federation is one of most intriguing case.[43]

Democracy as discourse and shared values. Other explanations for the saliency of ethnic politics pertain to the nature of nationhood and nationalism. Eriksen (1991) notes that, in order to function successfully, nationalism must legitimize the power of the state and it must simultaneously make the living citizens seem inherently meaningful. Conflicts between nation-states and ethnics can be considered along this dimension. If the state fails to persuade its citizens that it represents the realization of (some of) their dreams and aspirations, the power may appear illegitimate.[44]

Nationalism and legitimacy of the modern state are related concepts, both historically and logically. Nation-states consist of those who belong together by birth (genetically, linearly, through familially inherited language and culture). States consist of those who are fully subject to their sovereign legal authority. Nations are a modern development, dating by and large from the late 18th century, and their saliency can be located at the moment when loyalty to the nation became the primary cohesive force to cement the relationships between rulers and ruled. Prior

41. see O'Donnell, G. & Schmitter, Ph. (1986) *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracy*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
42. Lijphart (1977).
43. Gurr (1993), Slocum (1995).
44. Eriksen, Th. H., ›Ethnicity versus Nationalism‹ in: *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 28, No. 3, 1991: 263–278: 265, 266.

to this, various ethnic phenomena with political consequences did, in fact, exist and influence political actors, but they were secondary to religion or dynasticism or late feudal bonds of loyalty.[45] It was only in the modern period that nationhood emerged as the most important legitimating principle. While previously states were legitimated by reference to loyalty to a secular ruler or by religion, after the end of the 18 th century in Europe, states claim to be authentic states only if they were the expression of the aspirations of a particular nation. The modernization theory of nationalism links culture to nation and nation to state. The modernization thesis has been further developed by Gellner (1983). In his view, nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent.[46]

45. Schopflin, G. (1995). ›Nationalism and Ethnicity in Europe, East and West‹, in Charles A. Kupchan (ed.) *Natio-nalism and Nationalities in the New Europe*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995: 37–65: 39.

46. Gellner, E.: *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983: 34; To Gellner, nationalism has its roots not in human nature but in pervasive social order of industrial societies. The functional prere-quisites of the latter include universal literacy, numeracy and technical sophistication in an age of universal high culture. The transition to industrialism is bound to be violent and conflict-ride, with competing nationalism's. Not all will prevail and Gellner considers that cultural pluralism ceases to be viable under modern conditions. There is a convergence of life-styles and a diminution of social distance. He develops a typology of nationalism-engendering and nationalism-thwarting situations. ›Ethnicity enters the political sphere as ›nationalism‹ at times when cultural homogeneity or continuity (not classlessness) is required by the economic base of social life.‹ (ibid., p. 94).

Another linkage between the modern state, nationalism and ethnopolitical conflict in the former Soviet Union concerns state effectiveness. Jack Snyder argues that people look to states to provide security and promote economic prosperity. Nationalism, he maintains, reflects the need to establish states capable of achieving these goals. Thus, it is not surprising that nationalism has flared up in parts of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union where state structures have weakened or collapsed altogether.[47] New state structures have been or are in the process of being established, but in many cases they are not yet able to provide for the security and well-being of their constituents.[48] In some cases, ethnic minorities feel persecuted by the new states in which they find themselves. More generally, many in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union feel that they are not being adequately protected from unregulated markets. Inflation and unemployment are high, and economic prospects are often dim. Ethnic minorities frequently find themselves being blamed for these economic difficulties. These problems are compounded by the fact that, when state structures are weak, nationalism is likely to be based on ethnic distinctions, rather than on the idea that everyone, who lives in a country is entitled to the same rights and privileges. »By its nature, nationalism based on equal and universal citizenship rights within a territory depends on a framework of laws to guarantee those rights, as well as effective institutions to allow citizens to give voice to their views. Ethnic nationalism, in contrast, depends not on

47. Snyder 1993: 79–103 passim.

48. In this respect, an interesting point has been made by Cirtautas 1995: 372–392 (Cirtautas, A. M., ›The Post-Leninist State: A Conceptual and Empirical Observation‹, in *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4, 1995: 379–392.): ›On the political side, the new rulers in the East will hopefully have learnt that this new experiment will only be successful if they are capable of generating enough legitimacy and political support. In that process the transition from inefficient central planning to a liberal and social market economy is crucial. But nobody knows how both, liberty and wealth, can be achieved simultaneously.‹

institutions, but on culture.«[49] It is not surprising, therefore, that there are strong currents of ethnic nationalism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, where state structures and political institutions have diminished capacities, and in those parts of the developing world where state structures and political institutions are inherently fragile.

Therefore, contemporary scholarship holds that nationhood needs to be viewed as functioning in two dimensions – ethnic and civic.[50] Where the civic dimension, identification with the institutions of the state and society, is weak, ethnicity inevitably assumes a stronger role. While the civic aspect of nationhood can generally be regarded as appealing to material interests in political and economic life, ethnicity resonates in the cultural and affective spheres. Political stability in a state depends on a balance between the two.[51]

Communism largely destroyed the civic dimension; reconstructing it was bound to be slow and laborious. In the interim, ethnicity was called upon to mediate between the rulers and the ruled, something it could hardly do effectively, because that was not its political function.[52] The discourse of nationalism in Eastern Europe and Former Soviet Union is particularly problematic for the future of democracy. The legacies of imperialism and the varieties of nationalism that emerged in its wake in the East do not have their origins in the more liberal and inclusive European nationalism's of France and England, where membership of the nations was a function of civic behavior. Nor were these nationalism's born in societies that depended on immigrants, a dependence that demanded the acceptance of settlers as equals in the nation-building process.[53] Collective solidarity within that tradition

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49. Snyder (1993): 89.

50. See, e.g., Smith, 1991.

51. Kertzer, D.I.(1988) *Ritual, Politics, and Power.* New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press; see also Kupchan (1995): 3–12, see also Verdery, K. (1993). ›Whither Nation and Nationalism?‹, *Daedalus*, 122(3): 37–46.

52. see on this, e.g., Schopflin, G. (1994) ›Post-Communism: The Problems of Democratic Construction‹, *Daedalus, 123* No.3 (Summer 1994), 127–143.

53. Greenfeld, L. (1993). *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

precluded the development of a strong sense of individualism and solid norms of civic nationalism.

As the dynamics of postcommunism become clearer, the roles of nationhood and interplay between civic and ethnic nationalism's are likewise emerging as central to the functioning of the new political system. This phenomenon has far-reaching implications for the operation of democracy, which presupposes tolerance and compromise as conditions sine qua non. In this connection, some very important points have been made by George Schopflin (1995), who stresses that it is the weakness of the former that has allowed the latter to play an excessively influential role:

»Democratic stability, involving the distribution of power and contest over the allocation of resources – normal stuff of everyday politics in liberal democracies – can only come into being in the absence of constant explicit or implicit reference to questions of identity and survival as a community. Civic nationhood has to be so rooted as to permit the institutional framework to operate in authentic forms... The tragedy of postcommunist Central and Eastern Europe is precisely that the civic institutions and the identities derived from them are weak to fill the public sphere, with the result that ethnic nationhood is called upon to decide issues of power, a process which is profoundly destructive of democratic principles and the institutions adopted after 1989. Thus precisely because institutions are weak, compensatory mechanisms have begun to emerge. These reactions are likely to make institutions weaker still...

Where institutions are not available to mediate the relationship between the individual and power, the codes of behavior appropriate to persons – patron-client networks; personal coteries and loyalties; exploiting state resources for personal again; corruption; and nepotism and family networks – will be used to structure power. This has tended to lead to a highly fluid and unstable approach to politics, in which virtually all significant actions are understood in terms of personal gain or loss. The feebleness of the civic sphere means, at the same time, that reference to nationhood can be used to legitimize propositions or to deligitimize opponents – indeed, in this connection they become ›enemies‹, ›traitors to the nation‹, rather

than political opponents who share the same basic commitment to the state as citizens«. (pp. 60–61)

Actually, post-Communist states have become notorious for the difficulty they have in coping with diversity. The proposition that ›otherness‹ may have positive functions is completely alien to large sections of the elite and society. The reasons for this intolerance can be found in the absolute values propagated by communism, with its emphasis on the negative stereotype of the enemy (i.e., ›class enemy‹), together with the way in which the anticommunist elites have had to construct their strategies in accordance with the ground rules established by communism. The postcommunist elites were themselves unable to deal with challenges and criticism; they tended to regard the normal workings of democracy as a hostile conspiracy rather than a fairly routinized process of give-and-take. The inability to deal with the diversity is particularly acute when there are ethnic cleavages.[54]

Therefore, the last but not the least important approach to understanding dynamics of ethnopolitical conflicts and factors of Ethnic Peace involves a politico-psychological focus on the interplay between ethnic and civic values , the modes they are perceived and the proportions they are shared by various segments of ethnically divided civil populace.

Successful post-communist democratization, then, implies the imperative to find an adequate balance between civic and ethnic political legitimation of the new political regime and community. In each of the cases of ethnically divided republics within Russian Federation, the issue arises as to whether a political community can be said to exist. The term political community in this context seems to suggest an inclusive code of political understanding, a shared political culture, commonly respected symbols of statehood and, most critical, a shared view that the outcomes of the political processes (most notably, elections) are legitimate. The crucial issue includes whether, in spite of ethnic divisions, democratization succeeds to forge a transcending bond of national unity which would be based prevalently on values of

54. Kolankiewicz, G. 1993. ›The Other Europe: Different Roads to Modernity in Eastern and Central Europe‹, in Soledad Garcia, ed., *European Identity and the Search for Legitimacy*. London: Pinter.

civic and not ethnic nationhood. As put by one peace researcher: depending on the social context, »nationalism may have socio-culturally integrating as well as disintegrating effects; it sometimes serves to identify a large number of people as outsiders, but it may also define an ever increasing number of people as insiders and thereby encourage social integration on a higher level than that is current«.[55]

Zartman (1991) argues that regional conflicts can be thought of in three different ways, each suggesting a different approach to their resolution. One of such ways, to Zartman, is to consider a conflict as an event in a process of change, requiring the negotiation of a new regime to replace an old one that previously embodied certain expectations and behaviors. In this perspective, conflict management and resolution are viewed as a process of regime change.[56] In our opinion, it is relevant to note that such perspective on conflict management converges with the theory of political development as a series of sequential change through resolution of developmental crises which we discussed above. Institutional innovation becomes, thus, not only a means of resolving political developmental crises, but also an important macro-political approach to conflict management. Federalism can be considered as exactly the one of such constructive macro-political instruments of managing ethnopolitical disputes and strife, particularly, in countries where political systems are undergoing a profound change. In this respect, the experience of post-communist Russian Federation appears both riveting and intriguing.

In the next section the author intends to consider the dynamics of ethnopolitical conflict in Russia of the early 1990s, focusing prevalently on the interplay between processes of federalization and different waves of nation-state disintegration (sovereignization) and consolidation as this can be observed in the evolution of the country's centre-periphery relations.

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55. Eriksen 1991: 266.

56. Zartman, I. (1985). *Ripe for Resolution*. New York: Oxford University Press.

2 Dynamics of Conflict between the Federal Center and Ethnic Republics in Russia in the Early 1990s: Processes of Federalization and Ethnopolitical Legitimation

A preliminary observation, concerning ethnic and administrative composition of the Russian Federation may be in order before proceeding further. Until December 1990 the national-territorial units of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR, since 1992 – Russian Federation – RF) consisted of a number of national-territorial units, considered subjects of the federation, namely: 16 Autonomous republics, 5 Autonomous Oblasts, and 10 Autonomous Obkrugs. According to the 1978 Constitution, RSFSR also included 49 non-ethnically defined regions (Oblasts) and 6 non-ethnically defined territories (Krais) which were considered just administrative-territorial and not ›subjects of the federation‹. Since then, in response to the declarations of sovereignty of the Autonomous territories, the formal status of all the Autonomous republics and four out of five of the Autonomous Oblasts has been changed. Some of the erstwhile Autonomous republics and Oblasts have also altered their names. The Russian Federation today consists of twenty-one republics, six Krais, forty-nine Oblasts, and two federal cities.

- *Republics*. When the Soviet Union was formed in 1922, republics were delineated to recognize strong ethnic groups. Present-day republics within Russia are former Autonomous republics within RSFSR, one of the former Union republics of the Soviet Union. Republics typically have their own legislatures and most have their own presidents. The federal constitution grants republics the right to formulate their own constitutions and basic laws.

- *Oblasts (Regions).* Oblasts do not have titular ethnic minorities but predominantly are composed of Russian ethnics. Oblasts are locally governed by legislative and executive bodies. Until recently executive leaders (heads of administrations or governors) were appointed by the president of Russia.

- *Krais (Territories).* originally, Krais were an arbitrary hybrid between republics and Oblasts, delineated by containing one or more ethnically defined subgroups. This subunit could be an Autonomous Oblast, Autonomous Okrug, or both.

- *Autonomous Oblasts and Okrugs.* These administrative units were designed in the Soviet period to give small ethnic groups a political identity. Autonomous Oblasts and Okrugs are found in sparsely populated regions, such as Siberia and the Russian Far East.

All the above mentioned provincial units are further subdivided into raions (counties). According to the constitution adopted in December 1993, all provincial components as well as the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg are considered ›subjects of the federation‹ and are equal in their relation to the centre. The previous and present official titles of the republics are reported in tables 1 and 2. The table 3 reports on the ethnodemographic composition of ethnically-defined republics.

Table 1: Constituent Units of the RSFSR (as of 1978 Constitution)

Territorial-administrative units:

49 Oblasts

6 Krais:	Altai	Maritime
	Krasnodar	Stavropol
	Krasnoyarsk	Khabarovsk

National-territorial units:

Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics – ASSRs

Bashkirian ASSR	Komi ASSR
Buryatian ASSR	Marian ASSR
Daghestan ASSR	Mordovian ASSR
Checheno-Inghush ASSR	North Ossetian ASSR
Chuvashian ASSR	Tatar ASSR
Kabardin-Balkar ASSR	Tuva ASSR
Karelian ASSR	Udmurt ASSR
Kalmykian ASSR	Yakutian ASSR

Autonomous Oblasts (Regions) – AOs

Adygeyan AO	Jewish AO
Gorno-Altai AO	Karachai-Cherkess AO
	Khakass AO

Autonomous Okrugs (Areas) – AOs

Aga Buryat	Ust-Orda Buryat
Komi Permyak	Khanty-Mansi
Koryak	Chukchi
Nenets	Evenk
Taimyr	Yamal Nenets

Table 2: Constituent Units of the RSFSR (as of 1993 Constitution)

Autonomous Republics within Russia	
Adygheya	Karachai-Chirkassia
Altai	Komi
Bashkortostan	Marii El
Buryatia	Mordovia
Chuvash	North Ossetia-Alania
Daghestan	Sakha (Yakutia)
Inghush	Tatarstan
Kabardin-Balkar	Tuva
Karelia	Udmurt
Kalmyk	Khakassia
	Chechnya
Autonomous Oblasts (Regions) — AOs	
Jewish AO	
Autonomous Okrugs (Areas) — AOs	
Aga Burya	Ust-Orda Buryat
Komi Permyak	Khanty-Mansi
Koryak	Chukchi
Nenets	Evenk
Taimyr(Dolgan Nents)	Yamal Nenets
Krais (Territories)	***Oblasts (Regions)***
same as in the former USSR	same as in the former USSR

Amendments were made to the Constitution of the Russian Federation on 15 December 1990 deleting the word ›Autonomous‹ before ›republic‹. The 16 Autonomous republics of the RF thus became simply ›republics forming part of (vkhodyashiye v sostav) the RF‹. On 3 July 1991 the Russian Supreme Soviet adopted decrees under which four of the five Autonomous Oblasts (Adyghei, Gorno-Altai, Karachai-Cherkess, and Khakass) also became republics and ceased to be under the jurisdiction of the Krais to which they were formerly subordinate. This

brought the total number of republics to twenty. It rose to 21 on 4 June 1992 when the Russian Supreme Soviet adopted a law ›On the formation of the Ingush Republic within the RF‹, thus sanctioning the splitting into two of the Chechen-Ingush republic. the only Autonomous Oblasts whose status has not been raised by the Russian parliament is the Jewish Autonomous Oblasts. There has been no official change in the designation of the Autonomous Okrugs.

Table 3: Ethnic Composition Of Republics Within Russian Federation (based on the 1989 census)

Republic	*Total population 1000s*	*% titular population*	*% ethnic Russian population*	*% other minorities*
Adygea	432	22	68	10
Bashkortostan	3,943	22	39	39
Buryatia	1,038	23	70	7
Chechnya	1,270	58	23	19
Chuvash	1,338	68	27	5
Daghestan	1,802	80	9	11
Gorno-Altay	191	31	60	9
Kabardino-Balkar	754	48	32	20
Kalmykia	323	45	38	17
Karachai-Cherkessia	414	31	42	27
Komi	1,251	23	58	19
Mari-El	750	43	48	9
Mordovia	963	33	61	6
North-Ossetia	632	53	30	17
Tatarstan	3,642	49	43	8
Tuva	309	64	32	4
Udmurtia	1,606	31	59	10
Sakha (Yakutia)	1,094	33	50	17

2.1 Conflict Dynamics

An important constituent part of Russian Federation's ethnopolitical development in the early 1990s has been the unfolding process of federalization, i.e., reforms of the country's federal structure. Federation reform can be viewed as attempts by the central state to apply the methods of federalism to cope with the ethnopolitical dimension of the legitimacy crisis which resulted as a consequence of the post-communist political development.

Recent scholarship on conflict resolution regards power-sharing in general, and federalism in particular, as important mechanisms for regulating protracted ethno-political conflicts. Federalization, then, can be viewed as a mechanism through which the political system of a multi-ethnic state strives to achieve an adequate balance between the imperatives of creating or sustaining a common national identity for the citizens in a federal state, and the pluralism of ethnic and cultural identities of the distinctive ethnic groups within it. The aim is to provide continuity and, if possible, to increase the political system's legitimacy.

Several major stages can be seen in the evolution of ethno-political conflict between Russia's federal centre and its ethno-territorial republics since the early 1990s.

- *The first stage (summer of 1990–August, 1991) can be defined as the period of effective decentralization and as the first wave of sovereignization within Russian Federation. It was also the period of delegitimation of the previous federation regime in Russia.*

The time limits of the first stage can be attributed to the interval between the proclamation by Russia of the sovereignty within the USSR in summer 1990 and the failed coup in August 1991. The adoption of the Russian Federation's Declaration of Sovereignty within the USSR (June 12, 1990) resulted in the adoption of similar declarations by virtually all of the former Autonomous republics within the Russian Federation itself.

During the month prior to the August coup, the Autonomous republics (ASSRs) within Russia had also issued their declarations of sovereignty within Russia. These declarations lagged behind those of the union republics by a year or more but made similar claims for the priority of local legislative acts and control over natural resources and local economy. The so-called ›parade of sovereignties‹ within Russia began with the North Ossetian ASSR on 20 July 1990 and culminated with that of the Kabardino-Balkaria ASSR on 30 January 1991. In this brief period, 14 of the 16 ASSRs declared their sovereignty and the remaining two republics issued somewhat milder statements upgrading their political status. All of them dropped the designation ›Autonomous soviet socialist republic‹ and renamed themselves as either a soviet socialist republic, a socialist republic, or simply a republic.[57] Somewhat later, 4 out of 5 Autonomous Oblasts (AOs) of the Russian Federation also declared their sovereignty, and were recognized as SSRs within the Russian Federation by the Russian Supreme Soviet on 3 July 1991.[58]

In this period the institutions, identities and realms of justification associated with nationality politics and centre-periphery relations underwent massive transformation, as a previously stable set of institutional relations was disrupted by

a) the end of the Communist party's monopoly of power in the face of processes of Gorbachev liberalization;
b) the deep economic crisis of the country and inconsistent attempts to introduce market mechanism within the still prevailing system of ›real socialism‹; and
c) the dissolution of the Soviet Union into 15 independent states, a process accompanied by proclamation of sovereignty by subunits of the Russian

57. Abdulatipov, Boltenkova, and Iarov (1993) a, 82–3

58. The four Autonomous Oblasts elevated to the status of republic were Gorny Altai (later renamed Altai), Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Khakassia, and Adygei; these had previously been administrative subunits of the Altai, Stavropol, Krasnoyarsk, and Krasnodar territories (Krais), respectively (Slider, D. (1994). ›Federalism, discord, and accommodation: Intergovernmental relations in post-Soviet Russia‹, in *Local Power and Post-Soviet politics*, ed. Th. Friedgut and J. Hahn. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 241).

republic, thus threatening the territorial integrity of the emerging independent Russian state.

The main contents of the period was the unfolding ›parade of sovereignties‹, i.e., of sovereign definitions of the former Russia's autonomies which catalyzed widespread anxiety about Russia's future and the main question on the political agenda became : ›Will Russia Repeat the Path of the Union?‹. The society was faced with the necessity to undergo a profound ethnopolitical change within Russia and significant reform of its federation structure.

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

Not accidentally, this first wave of decentralization was accompanied by the weakening of the central authorities in both FSU and Russia. Among the ASSRs, the process of ›sovereignization‹ was partly inspired by the separatist movements of the union republics, but its immediate political context was the intensification of the power struggle between Gorbachev and Yeltsin. On 12 July 1990, the Russia's Congress of People's Deputies, chaired by Boris Yeltsin, issued a declaration of Russia's state sovereignty. Notably; shortly thereafter, during a three-week visit to Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, and the Komi Autonomous republic in August-September 1990, Yeltsin encouraged local elites to ›take all the sovereignty you can swallow‹, while simultaneously admonishing the autonomies to stick with the Russian government, in opposition to Gorbachev and the odd centre. Gorbachev had already sought to channel the separatist ambitions of the ASSRs to his own purposes; with a decree of 26 April 1990, he granted them the right to participate as equal partners

with the union republics in negotiations for the new Union Treaty. Such a move threatened the territorial integrity of the union republics – Russia in particular – and Russia's leaders were faced with the threat that, under a future Union Treaty, the former ASSRs contained within the borders of Russia might evade the control of Russian authorities and answer only to the Union government.

- *The second period (Autumn 1991–Spring 1992) can be defined as a period of the first wave of consolidation of the new Russia's statehood and the legitimation of a transformed federation structure of the country by the overwhelming majority of the republics within Russia.*

The beginning of the period is marked by the disintegration of the Former Soviet Union and by a serious destabilization of the whole of post-Soviet space.[59] At the same time, this was the period of intensive negotiations within the Russian Federation with the ample use of ethnopolitical bargaining and searches for a mutually acceptable compromise through concessions made by both the federal centre and the republics. The other margin of the period is constituted by the stipulation of the Federation Treaty in March 1992 which founded a treaty-based federation in Russia. On March 13, 1992, representatives of 18 of the 20 republics within Russia initiated a treaty of federation with Moscow; a separate agreement was signed by representatives of the Federation's Oblasts and Krais the same week, followed by a third treaty with the Autonomous Okrugs. Then, on March 31, 1992, the three treaties, constituting the grand Federation Treaty, were formally signed into law.

The political status of the former Autonomous Republics apparently reached its zenith between March 1992 and October 1993, a period that began with the signing of a series of agreements – collectively referred to as the Federation Treaty

59. Among the works focusing on the thesis that the disintegration of the Soviet Union had re-generated the problem of consolidation of the Russian statehood, see the assessments of scenarios of Russia's political development after the collapse of the USSR in Pugachev 1992: 27–35.

(Federativny Dogovor) – which outlined the division of authority between the federal government and the so-called ›subjects of the federation‹.

An important institutional change directly affected the nature of local executive authority in the non-ethnically defined regions (Krais and Oblasts). In July 1991, the regional executive committees (ispolkomy) were eliminated, and new local executive posts – heads of administration (glava administratsii) – were instituted in their place. There followed several years of struggle over whether the heads of administration (also called governors) should be locally elected or appointed from the centre. Yeltsin claimed the right to appoint governors in November 1991, but this right was challenged by the localities. In early 1993, the Russia's Supreme Soviet stripped Yeltsin of his power to appoint heads of administration, and governors were subsequently elected in Krasnoyars and Primorski Krais and Amur, Bryansk, Chelyabinsk, Lipetsk, Orel, Penza and Smolensk Oblasts.[60]

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

A final development of late 1991 helped define the extreme limits of centre-periphery relations in the first years of the post-Soviet period. This involved Checheno-Ingushetia, the former Autonomous republic in North Caucasus run by the volatile and nationalist general Dzhokar Dudaev. The Chechen-Ingush republic had issued a declaration of state sovereignty as early as November 1990, but its independence movement gathered momentum with General Dudaev's election as president in November 1991. Without the approval of the Russian parliament, President Yeltsin declared the state of emergency in the rebel republic but, several days later, denounced the decree and abstained from application of military force.

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60. Teague, E. ›Center-Periphery Relations in the Russian Federation‹ in:*National Identity and Ethnicity in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. R. Szporluk. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1993: 7 ff.

Working out the new federative arrangement was a lengthy process that began in late 1990.[61] In discussions over the treaty's final form, one of the prime sticking points was the unequal legal status of regions and republics. Four divergent solutions were debated.[62] One suggestion was to combine all Russian-majority regions into one ethnic Russian (i.e., Russkaya) republic, with a juridical status equal to that of the other republics within the Russian Federation. Depending on one's point of view, this would either elevate Russians by finally giving them their own ethnic territory or denigrate them by making their political status equal to that of the small nationalities. At any rate, the complexity of Russian settlement patterns made this solution highly problematic.[63] A second idea, one of enduring popularity among Russian statists, was to eliminate the national-territorial principle altogether and transform Russia into a new federation based on the ›economic-geographic regionalization of the country‹.[64] This solution, however, was seen as impossible to implement in a climate of highly politicized and conflictual interethnic relations. A third idea was to equalize the status of regions and republics by increasing the rights and privileges of the regions, but this idea was seen both as an attack on republican sovereignty and as a step toward the disintegration of Russia into feuding principalities. Finally, some suggested that the best idea might be to change almost nothing and that the Russian federation should retain a soviet-style structure with various levels of autonomy.[65]

The Federation Treaty in its final form, as signed in March 1992, came closest to the last of these four proposals. The treaty consisted of three separate documents, each establishing the relationship between a given category of ›subject‹ and

61. In more detail, see Boltenkova, 1992: 33–35, Iljinsky, Krylov & Mikhaleva 1993: 28–29.

62. Abdulatipov, Boltenkova and Yarov, 1993: 81–85.

63. Juridical arguments against the idea of formation of Russian Republic and proposals of creation an efficient mechanism of constitutional equality of the subjects of the federation see exposed in Ebzeyev and Karapetyan, 1995: 3–12.

64. See, e.g., interview with O. Rumyantsev, president of the Russia's Supreme Soviet Constitutional Group in *Moscow News*, 1991, No. 10: 5; interview with G. Popov in *Izvestiya*, 3 October 1991, also in Cheshko 1993: 29–45.

65. Iljinskij, Krylov and Mikhaleva, 1993, 28–29.

the federal government. The three types of subjects established by the treaty are: (1) sovereign republics within the Russian Federation; (2) Krais, Oblasts, and the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg; (3) Autonomous Oblasts and Autonomous Okrugs.

The Federation Treaty can be regarded as a first serious sign of evident legitimation of new Russian regime and central authorities, including ethnopolitical legitimation of the central authorities and the country's territorial integrity on behalf of the overwhelming majority of republics-members of the federation (not only from predominantly Russian regions). It is important to stress the positive content of the Federation Treaty. First, there have been created a new federation-type, a treaty-based federation. Second, the Federation Treaty was signed not only by republics, but also by regions (Krais, Oblasts, federal cities). In its specifics, the treaty outlined the powers to be exercised by the federal government, the functions under the joint jurisdiction of federal and provincial (regional and republican) governments, and the functions left to the sole jurisdiction of the regions and republics. The federal government was assigned responsibility for a number of governmental functions, most significantly foreign policy, defense and security policy, and citizenship and border issues (including the power to approve internal boundary changes). Joint centre-provincial competencies included health, education, welfare, and protection of the minority rights. Although the real status and volume of competence of the regions and cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg have been significantly extended (they have become subjects of the federation for the first time officially), still, the treaty preserved and reinforced the legal distinction between regions (Krais and Oblasts, mostly predominantly ethnically Russian) and the non-Russian ethnically-defined republics. Republics enjoyed greater residual powers than regions; both regions and republics were given the right to conduct foreign economic relations, but only republics had a say in tax collection, and approval of federal declarations of states of emergency. Most problematically, republics (but not regions) were granted formal ownership of the natural resources on their territory. More importantly, the treaty described the republics as ›sovereign‹, yet it said nothing about a right to secession, which was present in the USSR's constitution for the Union republics – but absent for the Autonomous

republics. Thus, while legitimizing further the notion of ›sovereignty‹, the treaty left unclear what specific rights this entailed.

At the same time, the result of the period was only relative and not absolute stabilization and consolidation of Russia's statehood, since the Federation Treaty legitimized the structure which permitted for one sovereign unit (republic) to be constituent sub-units of another sovereign unit (Russian Federation as a whole). Neither practically nor theoretically there has been determined any relation between those two types of sovereignties. Clearly, there were contradictions inherent in the idea that a sovereign republic could exist as a sub-unit of another sovereign republic. What was meant by the republics' ownership of land and natural resources, for example, was left unclear. The distribution of profits from exports between the centre and the provinces, relative tax burdens, and the extent and distribution of subsidization of local budgets from the federal treasury were left to future negotiation or enacting legislation.

- *The third period (Spring 1992 – Autumn 1993) can be characterized as a period of the second wave of sovereignization, which created a kind of dual sovereignty situation: ›dual authority‹ in the federal Centre, combined with political parity between the federal centre and the republics. This was a period of intense struggles for redistribution of power arrangements between, on the one hand, the branches of federal authority and, on the other hand, between the federal Centre and the provinces (regions and republics).*

This period became the prologue to the subsequent consolidation of Russia's statehood and involved multiple negotiations over the contours of centre-periphery relations. The relative strength of the periphery (regions and republics) over the centre peaked during this period as peripheral units of the Russian Federation mobilized new sets of political identities and claims to rights against the centre. The time margins of the period are constituted, on the one hand, by the conclusion of the Federation Treaty and, on the other hand, by the dramatic events of autumn

1993 which culminated in the civil violence in Moscow in October. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Yeltsin no longer needed the Autonomous republics as allies against Gorbachev, but he still needed regional support as long as he continued to face a stalemate with the Russian Supreme Soviet.

Ethnopolitical legitimacy of the Russian federation structure was challenged during this period and underwent erosion because of the declined support, coming this time not from ethnic minorities, but from the ethnic Russians. The challenge posed by the claims of regional (Krais, Oblasts) elites to the federal centre might have been politicized and mobilized which, obviously, posed a serious threat of potential delegitimation of ethnopolitical arrangements by the ethnic (Russian) majority of the country's citizenry. Some ideologues of ethnic majority, particularly, those of right-wing, so-called ›patriotic‹ orientation, in the conditions of high political instability in the federal centre, which had resulted out of the power contention between the President and the Parliament, could mobilize the political support on the ideas of preservation the territorial integrity of Russia, its indivisibility as a country, and effectively outplay the incumbent authorities in the centre. Since the legitimation of the incumbent power holders by the country's majority has much more important significance for the stability of concrete incumbents in their governing offices and ruling positions, than legitimation by ethnic minorities, the crisis situation, created during this period, vehemently awaited for its resolution and the federation principles awaited for their re-structuring.

The period between the signing of the Federation treaty in March 1992 and the political crisis of September–October 1993 was marked by two sets of grievances regarding the status of subjects of the federation: regional leaders resented the higher status given the republics by the Federation treaty (which became a part of the much-amended Russian Constitution of 1978, then still in force), and two republics – Chechnya and Tatarstan – remained unwilling to sign the Federation Treaty. During this period, President Yeltsin tended to side with the republics to the extent that he defended their privileges vis-a-vis the regions and blocked regional attempts at self-promotion to the status of republic. This made the regions the natural allies of the Speaker of the Supreme Soviet, Russian Khasbulatov, in his

escalating power struggle with President Yeltsin. Centre-periphery issues thus became interwined with struggles for supremacy between the president and the parliament. In April 1993, the results of a nation-wide referendum appeared to give Yeltsin the upper hand over parliament and Khazbulatov.[66] Now the site of the power struggle switched for a few months to the constitutional arena, where both Yeltsin and Khasbulatov sought to win over the regions and republics to their competing drafts of the constitution. This prompted the latest (and, so far, last) wave of sovereignization. Yeltsin was willing to make deals with the republics in order to win their support for his constitutional draft, a move that ›detonated action in the regions‹.[67] A number of regions made tentative steps in the direction of unilaterally declaring themselves republics, in order to take advantage of the higher status guaranteed the republics by the Federation Treaty and apparently to be enshrined in the new constitution. The Constitutional Assembly settled on a compromise draft constitution on 12 July, but as of mid-August, no subject of the Federation had yet agreed to the compromise draft.[68]

With the aim to reach a consensus over the draft constitution, the Constitutional Assembly was settled. And at the commissions of the Constitutional Assembly the regions (Krais and Oblasts) for the first time acted as a mobilized force against the republics. Some of the power-holding officers in the centre tried to use this dissent between the subjects of the federation with the aim to increase the

66. The referendum had four questions. The exact wording and nationwide vote totals for each question were: question 1: »Do you have confidence in the President of the Russian Federation, B. Yeltsin?« (58.7% yes, 39.2% no); question 2: »Do you approve of the social and economic policy carried out by the President of the Russian Federation since 1992?« (53% yes, 44.6% no); question 3: »Do you consider it necessary to hold an early election for the President of the Russian Federation?« (49.5% yes, 30.2% no); question 4, »Do you consider it necessary to hold early elections for the Congress of People As Deputies of the Russian Federation?« (67.2% yes, 19.3% no). The overall turnout was around 64% (Clem and Craumer 1993, 482).

67. see Pain (1994), E. ›Stanovleniye gosudarstvennoj nezavisimosti i natsionalnoj konsolidatsii Rossii: Problemy, tendentsii, alternativy‹ (›Establishment of state independence and national consolidation of Russia: Problems, tendencies, alternatives‹) *Mir Rossii*, 1994, No. 4: 58–90: 84 and also Moscow News, 23 June 1993, p. 2.

68. Moscow News, 20 August 1993. See also Kononenko 1993: 1.

actual power of the federal centre over the periphery. But since the federal authority was disrupted by internal struggles between the legislative and the executive branches of power, the regions and republics acquired large bargaining power in playing their support for the brach of the central authority that was promising them more advantageous future. By August 1993 the conflict between the President and the Parliament reached its stalemate and, in order to get the upper hand over the parliament through marshaling the support of the subjects of the federation, the presidential team proposed the institutional innovation, specifically, the creation of a new mini-parliament. On 12 August, in a play for regional support, Yeltsin announced the formation of a ›Council of the Federation‹, conceived of as a governmental body composed of the leaders of the regional and republic administrations and legislatures (soviets).[69] This Council of Federation was thought to be able to adopt the Presidential draft Constitution, should the parliament refuse to accept it. One month later with his decree N 1400, the President dissolved the Supreme Soviet, setting in motion the events that led to the final, bloody events of 3-4 October in Moscow.

Once the parliament was defeated and the President emerged the clear victor, the federal centre wasted no time in asserting his authority over the regions and republics, and, in the process, reinventing, reconstructing and, eventually, rediscovering the rules and identities of Russian federalism.

During the crisis of late September and October, many local leaderships were divided in their loyalties, with local executives tending to support Yeltsin, and local soviets tending to support Khasbulatov, chairman of the besieged Supreme Soviet. The same was paralleled in regions where the president commanded the loyalty of most of the regional heads of administration (governors) and the parliament tended to command the loyalty of the local legislative bodies (soviets).[70] Once the president achieved the military victory over the Supreme Soviet, one of his first moves was to

69. Moscow News, 15 October 1993: 6; Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 21 September 1993: 1.

70. See a detailed analysis of regional (in *Krais* and *Oblasts*) aspect of the September–October 1993 crisis and its impact upon the principles of federalism in Russia in Kasimov and Senatova, 1993: 183–187.

dismiss those regional heads of administration who had remained loyal to the parliament. With disloyal local executives out of its way, the presidential authority turned its attention to the provincial legislatures. The regional and republican soviets were ›invited‹ to dissolve themselves, while the dissolution of elected councils at the city and district level was absolutely demanded.[71] Finally, new legislative elections were suggested be held in all of the regions (but not in the republics) by March 1994. The principle of direct presidential appointment of regional governors was reinforced; Yeltsin replaced some governors, and decreed that these appointed regional executives were to retain veto power and budgetary authority over the reconstituted regional soviets for a 2-year period.[72]

Along with calling for new elections in the regions, the President moved to disengage himself from his earlier accommodations to republican-level claims to sovereignty. In announcing that an elective Federation Council would form the upper house of the new parliament (Federalnoye Sobraniye), while at the same time dissolving the regional parliaments, Yeltsin effectively destroyed the existing Council of Federation. Regional interests were dealt a further blow by a change in the organizational structure of the Constitutional Assembly, which was reshuffled to place both federal and regional working groups in a single state chamber under the control of pro-presidential advisors.[73]

As the final form of the constitution took shape, it became increasingly clear that the President's team had scrapped the Federation Treaty. When, in late October, Sverdlovsk Oblast attempted to unilaterally raise its status by declaring itself the ›Ural's Republic‹, a Yeltsin supporter characterized that move as ›the last

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71. See the presidential decree on the reform of representative legislatures and bodies of local authority in the Russian Federation of 9 October 1993 and the Decree on Legal regulation during the period of stages of constitutional reform in Russia of 11 October 1993, published in *Sobraniye Aktov Prezidenta i Pravitelstva RF (Collection of Acts by the President and the Government of the Russian Federation),* No. 41, Moscow: Government of the Russian Federation Press, 1993.

72. See analysis of local elections at different levels during 1993–94 in Russia as a means of legitimation of local elites in Afanasyev, 1994: 59–66.

73. RFE/RL *Daily Report*, 13 October 1993.

manifestation of regional separatism‹, a phenomenon ›which has lost both its role in the political game and its base of support‹, and declared that ›localism under a nationalist sauce interferes with the activities of the new economic structure‹.[74]

At about the same time, Leonid Smirnyagin, a member of the presidential council, wrote that »by the middle of 1993 the words ›sovereignty‹ and ›Federation Treaty‹ … had become synonyms for a striving towards the disintegration of the state«. Smirnyagin revealed the text of a declaration that had been agreed to by most of the president's representatives to the Constitutional Assembly back in mid-July 1993, a text which firmly rejected confederalism or treaty-based federalism and called for a constitution-based federalism with the ban on secession (exit from the federation) and supremacy of the federal legislation.[75]

- *The fourth period (December 1993–Autumn 1994) can be characterized as a period of the second wave of the consolidation of Russia's statehood and of the change in the priorities of the federation principles and policies.*

With regard to the evolution of federalism, this period was marked by the rejection of the treaty-based federalism, but also by a return to the constitution-based federalism at a new level. The asymmetricity and diversity of the federation's subject had been preserved, but it had been legally introduced and constitutionally guaranteed the principle of absolute legal equality of all subjects of the federation in all their rights. This meant a considerable elevation of the status of regions (Krais, Oblasts) and extension of their rights. On 8 November, Yeltsin presented a draft constitution that incorporated the principles of constitution-based federalism.[76] It was announced that this constitution would be submitted to the voters in December in a referendum to be held concurrently with elections to the lower chamber (Duma) of the new national legislature. In the final draft of the

74. Nezavisimaja Gazeta, 2 November 1993, p. 2

75. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta,* 30 October 1993; *Izvestiya,* 2 November 1993.

76. *Izvestiya*, 10 November 1993.

constitution any mention of the Federation Treaty or republic-level sovereignty was absent.

The margins of the period can be determined by the referendum on the new Constitution of Russia (12 December 1993), on the one hand, and November 1994, when, in the Chechnya case, the limits of modes of conducting conflict between the centre and periphery were extended to include the application of military force. Another important event in the practices of ethnopolitical conflict management of the same period, was the stipulation of the bilateral treaty between the central authorities and the authorities of the Republic of Tatarstan.

It can be inferred that, at this stage, the consolidation of the country's statehood and territorial integrity received its civic legitimation by the majority of the country's population. At the same time, ethnopolitical legitimation of the new arrangements and of the regime remained limited, and ethnopolitical legitimacy remains a problem area which awaits for an adequate institutional innovation.

On 12 December 1993, voters across the Russian Federation were asked to select deputies to the new legislature and to accept or reject Yeltsin's draft constitution. The Constitution was passed with 58.4 % of the vote.[77] While not encompassing the text of the Federation Treaty, Art. 11.3 and Art. 1 in Section II make it clear that the Federation Treaty is still in force to the extent that it does not contradict the Constitution. The largest of these contradictions would appear to be the issue of republican sovereignty. Whereas the Federation Treaty had referred to the republics as ›sovereign republics within the Russian Federation‹, the Constitution states that »the sovereignty of the Russian Federation extends to the entirety of its territory«, implying that sovereignty claims by sub-units of the federation are invalid.

Examining the Russian Federation's efforts to establish a new political system since the early 1990s, one can conclude that ethnopolitical legitimacy and legitima-

77. See the official results of the referendum in *Bulletin of the Central Election Committee of the Russian Federation*, Vol. 1, No. 12, Moscow, 1994; the map of the election results published in the newspaper *Segodnya* of 21 December 1993, p. 2; the regional and republican distribution of the election results see in Guboglo 1994: 29–34.

tion of the central state, has emerged as a serious problem in governmental decision-making. Though this does not yet seem to present a serious threat to the political stability in RF at large, it raises several apprehensions. The problem of ethno-political legitimation was most obvious in the results of the December 1993 referendum on the adoption of the new federal constitution. Official returns indicated 58.4 % of those voting had supported the new Constitution, and the official turnout was 54.8 % of the registered voters, slightly more than the 50 % needed for a quorum. Opposition to the constitution was stronger in the ethnic republics than in the regions. In the regions, the majority of the electorate voted for the constitution, while only 23.6 % supported it in the republics. Among all those voting in the republics, only 47.9 % voted for the constitution, compared with 60 % in the regions. Polling did not take place in Chechnya, where it was officially prohibited by local nationalist elites. In Tatarstan overall turnout was under 15 %. Turnout was also below 50 % in three other republics – Udmurtia, Khakassia, and Komi – while for 21 republics as a whole, turnout was 49.2 %. In the 16 republics where turnout exceeded 50 %, a majority rejected the constitution in 7 (Adygeia, Bashkortostan, Dagestan, Karachai-Cherkessia, Mordova, Tuva, and Chuvashia).[78] Ratification was based solely on the federation-wide vote, however, and as 1994 began only two republics – Tatarstan and Chechnya – refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the new constitution.

While the referendum on the new constitution legitimates it in the civic sense, it shows both progress and, simultaneously, the serious disequilibrium in its ethnic legitimation. In many (though not all) ethnic republics the constitutional federal reform, undertaken by the central government at the end of 1993, was met with limited trust and insufficient moral support.

The two conflicts that made centre-periphery relations so tense in 1993 (relations between Yeltsin and parliament, and constitution-making) have greatly diminished in importance. In 1992 and 1993, conflict between Yeltsin and parlia-

78. For instance, the results of the referendum show that the draft constitution received ›no‹ in Adygeia – 61.1 %, in Bashkortostan — 57. 99 %, in Daghestan – 79, 14 %, in Karachaevo-Cherkessia – 72 %, in Mordovia – 62.86 %, in Chuvashia – 58.4 %, see the data reported in Bartsis 1995: 56–59.

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

- *The fifth period (December 1994–up to present) can be characterized as the period of partial stabilization of the centre-periphery relations and the attempts aimed at searching for more or less successful forms of managing ethnopolitical conflict and tension.*

This is a contradictory period. Its beginning is marked by a crisis in the relations between the federal centre and the Chechnya republic which later entailed escalation of both state and insurgent ethnopolitical violence. The tragic developments in Chechnya definitely signify new pattern in the relations between the federal centre and ethnic periphery, for it was for the first time in the after 1991 period when Russian authorities applied military force not with the aim to suppress interethnic warfare at the periphery and to divide the conflicting parties, as it was in the case of Ossete-Ingush conflict in 1992, but as one of the main modes of conducting political conflict with one of the disloyal subjects of the federation. On the other hand, the same period saw examples of constructive ways of managing

ethnopolitical conflict within the Russian Federation, specifically, through the diffusion of the practice of stipulating bilateral treaties between the central authorities and the authorities of subjects of federation which give grounds to speak of elements of ethnopolitical conflict institutionalization in Russia. On the general plane, the focus of disputes over centre-periphery relations within Russian Federation has moved from political to economic issues. The example made by Chechnya shows the limits of separatist political claims; the political identities of the regions and republics seem to have coalesced around an understanding that the political disintegration of the Russian Federation would be an unlikely, unfeasible, and probably undesirable outcome. Thus, future centre-periphery disputes are likely to revolve around economic issues – most importantly, on devising a working system of fiscal federalism.[79] In general, it appears ever more evident that political developments at the centre, rather than the periphery – are more likely to be the source of any future deterioration or amelioration in the overall shape of centre-periphery relations.

Outright separatism has remained confined to Chechnya. Tatarstan – which, apart from Chechnya, was the only holdout from Russia's new federal and constitutional order – finally came on board in early 1994. Sovereignty claims have by no means disappeared from the scene, but, from late 1993 onwards, these claims are increasingly put forth by pragmatic local leaders seeking to enhance their locality's economic standing within an evolving system of fiscal federalism, and hard-core political separatism has become a politically isolated phenomenon in nearly every republic. As Walker (1995) argues, the very flexibility and indeterminacy of the constitutional ordering of centre-periphery relations may be a necessary response to the uncertainty and institutional flux characterizing the Russian polity.[80] Lingering references to ›sovereignty‹ by politicians in a number of republics may signal more than anything else a desire to bypass Moscow in forging international trading links. Certainly, the preservation of the republics' special status remains a bone of

79. See the assessment of models of economic nationalism and budgetary federalism in Gonchar and Goreglyad 1995: 52–54.

80. Walker, E. (1995).

contention for some regions, and the elimination of ethnically-defined units remains on the agenda for national advocates of strong Russian statehood, but the Yeltsin government has held firm in consistently rejecting any further ›self-promotions‹ by subjects of the Federation. Indeed, the regime has never contenanced the transformation of any non-ethnic region into a republic. In a sense, the window of opportunity for self-promotions has closed; in another sense, a sovereignty claim, while perhaps useful as a means of mobilizing political support within a republic, has proved not to be a particularly fungible political commodity. As the experience of the December 1995 election campaign showed, the sovereignty for the republics as a claim has not been placed even among electoral promises by neither of all-Russian political parties. That is not surprising, since the votes of ethnic non-Russians countless than even one fifth of the total electorate. At the same time, the election results, specifically, the leadership of the Our House is Rossiya block in Tatarstan, Tuva, Oseetia and amid many other republics seems suggests that there is a growing trend of diffusion of civic identities in ethnically-defined republics (Rossiyane) and the growing self-awareness of unity on the basis of values of civic nationalism and mutual interethnic interests in preserving the fragile stability and continuation of the reform process and democratization without the syndrome of ›great changes in short time‹.

The constitutional status of republican sovereignty is unclear. Most republic leaders maintain that the Federation Treaty – which guarantees their sovereignty status – is still in force. But rather than lodge further protestations of sovereignty, the trend in 1994 and 1995 was for republics to consolidate their gains by entering into bilateral agreements with Russia, Tatarstan being the most prominent example.

Until early 1994, Tatarstan's political leadership held back from participation in Russian federal structures.(this overview of the Russia-Tatarstan treaty is adapted from teague 1994b) President Shaimiyev called for a boycott of the December 1993 elections for the new Federal Assembly and the simultaneous referendum on Yeltsin's proposed constitution. A small percentage of Tatarstan's population did go to the polls in December, but the low turnout was not enough to validate the election results for the republic. Within two months, however, Shaimiyev had changed his tune, arguing that Tatarstan's citizens were being

disenfranchised by their lack of representation in the upper chamber of the Russian parliament, the Federation Council. In February 1994, after lengthy negotiations, Shaimiyev announced that he was ready to sign a special treaty that specified the mutual relations between Tatarstan and the Russian Federation. The treaty in effect healed the rift that had been created by Tatarstan's refusal to sign the Federation Treaty in 1992; within Tatarstan, the Tatar nationalist opposition to Shaimiyev split over the issue of support for the treaty, thus further consolidating the power base and authority of the president.

The significance of the Russia-Tatarstan treaty is subject to varying interpretations.[81] For most political observers at the centre, the treaty signified that Tatarstan had at last agreed to join the Federation and renounced its prior claims to sovereignty. Many Tatar nationalists in effect accepted this interpretation, seeing the treaty as a betrayal by Shaimiyev of Tatarstan's sovereignty and their own hopes for the republic's ultimate political independence. Shaimiyev himself insisted that the agreement was a treaty ›between two sovereign states‹, and that henceforth the Constitution of Tatarstan and the treaty with Russia would serve side by side as the basic law of Tatarstan.[82] Following the signing of the power-sharing treaty, Tatarstan held special elections to fill its seats in the Federal Assembly. When Tatarstan, the penultimate holdout among Russia's republics, thus agreed to play by the rules of the game, an important phase in the consolidation of the Russian statehood had come to an end. Before the end of 1994, Yeltsin provided vivid demonstration in Chechnya of the price for refusing to join the federation.

Just as the ambiguity surrounding the relationship between the Federation Treaty and the December 1993 Constitution seems to have served as a stabilizing factor in the overall pattern of centre-periphery relations,[83] similar ambiguity surrounding the implications of the Russia-Tatarstan treaty added a degree of stability in the relations between these two entities. Shaimiyev appears to have

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81. See critique from the Russian side in Lysenko, 1995: 119–120, from the Tatarstan side in Iskhakov 1995: 23.

82. Sabovyi, A. ›Primirit li dogovor dve konstitutsii‹ (interview with M. Shaimiyev). *Literatirnaya Gazetal,* 30 March 1994: 12.

83. see Walker (1995).

skillfully manipulated the local debate over the treaty, marginalizing hard-core separatists within Tatarstan and shifting the focus of efforts to negotiations over concrete economic interests, rather than more abstract conflicts over Tatarstan's political status. What remains of Tatarstan's ›sovereignty‹ is in the eye of the beholder.

Although the treaty actually granted Tatarstan few real rights beyond those granted to republics in the new constitution, the move satisfied Kazan's long-standing demand to be treated as an equal by Moscow. Having just concluded a protracted exercise in constitution-drafting, Yeltsin thus reopened the door for other subjects of the federation to demand special treatment. Despite repeated avowals that no more bilateral treaties would be signed, by the end of 1995 Moscow had signed similar documents with six other republics: Kabardino-Balkaria, Bashkortostan, North Ossetia, Sakha-Yakutia, Buriatia, and Udmurtia. While Tatarstan's 1994 treaty offered the republic few new privileges, the prestige of the treaty itself prompted other republics (and Oblasts) to demand their own ›special‹ treatment. The treaty with Bashkortostan made greater concessions to the republic, both symbolic and substantive. It reaffirmed the discarded federation treaty (including the special annex that was a condition of Bashkortostan's signature), affirmed the ›independence‹ of the republic, and gave the republic control over its own budget, judiciary, and prosecutor.

Through 1995 only ethnic republics were offered treaties with the centre, thus deepening the perceived inequality between republics and regions. In January 1996, however, the tide seemed to turn. Moscow began signing bilateral treaties with a series of Oblasts and Krais, beginning with Sverdlovsk, Kaliningrad, Orenburg, Krasnodar Krai, and Khabarovsk Krai. The Sverdlovsk treaty among the first to be concluded in January 1996 granted the Oblast important concessions in the area of personnel appointments and fiscal administration. Thus, for republics and Oblasts alike, the bilateral treaties represented real shifts of jurisdictional authority from the centre to the signatory region or republic. The pace of concluding bilateral treaties accelerated through the June presidential election campaign. A seemingly real flurry of treaties was signed in the final weeks of the presidential campaign. Signatories included Omsk, Irkutsk, Perm, Nizhnii-Novgorod, Rostov, St. Peters-

burg-Leningrad Oblast, and Tver. Treaties were also signed with the republics of Komi and Chuvashia.

The existence of these treaty arrangements demonstrate that constitutional mechanisms by themselves have not been enough to regulate centre-periphery relations. Still, the Constitution, by providing regular, institutional channels for articulation of regional interests, has helped defuse the extra-parliamentary, extra-legal expression of such grievances – which is in itself a positive development. This trend towards constitutional regulation of federal relations and attempts at institutionalizing federation conflict management through the practice of bilateral treaties are all more impressive when one considers the background of the dramatic developments in Chechnya.

Thus, on the one hand, these treaties provide a constructive alternative to the use of brute force and the possibility that constructive techniques in management of ethnopolitical and centre-periphery disputes can be applied, while, on the other hand, this practice treaties instead of constitutional amendments means that, obviously, the federalization process and the search for a centre-periphery balance in power arrangements is far from complete. Moscow's strategy in pursuing ad hoc regional treaties might be seen as serving a dual purpose. In addition to placating restive regions, the centre may have also weakened the coordinating mechanism that permitted the republics to act collectively since 1990. If Tatarstan or sakha (Yakutia), for instance, derives special benefits from its bilateral treaty rather than from its constitutional status as a republic, then perhaps it will be less likely to defend the interests of other republics. If this perspective is accurate, the federal centre is likely to engage in tailoring concessions or sanctions even more precisely to individual regions and republics in 1997, without extending identical treatment to an entire set, or even a subset of territories. In fact, treaty negotiations with Oblasts and Krais are likely to accelerate after in late 1996 the majority of Oblasts and Krais finally held gubernatorial elections. Elected governors are more likely to demand

and to be able to negotiate bilateral deals with Moscow then Moscow-appointed governors.[84]

The complex, evolving sets of politico-economic relations between centre and periphery defy simple characterization; perhaps, the most useful way of looking at the situation is as a group of nested, interconnected bargaining games. Bargaining over economic issues has been a core feature of centre-periphery conflicts since the inception of the reform period; behind the demands for political autonomy that characterized the earlier phases of centre-periphery relations lay entrenched local economic interests and actors for whom the symbolics of sovereignty were less important than the bottom line – greater local control over resource flows. Whereas the political and economic demands of Russia's regions and republics have always been intimately linked, since 1993 a qualitatively new stage in centre-periphery relations has emerged, marked by a change in the nature of the bargaining process.

This argument may be illuminated by an examination of some game theoretic explanations of centre-periphery relations in the Russian Federation. D. Kempton (1995) argues that the constitutional struggle for enhanced status by the subjects (regions and republics) with respect to central authorities was a multilateral, positive-sum game – a more decentralized constitutional and economic order meant political and economic gains for all subjects.[85] »The players in this ›status game‹ were the centre versus all the subjects of the federation. If one accepts the idea that constitutional issues have been laid to rest (at least, for the time being) by the events of September through December 1993, subsequent centre-periphery relations may be seen as predominantly characterized by a series of ›resource games‹ – separate bilateral agreements (on taxation, subsidies and other economic issues) between the centre and individual regions and republics, in which each subject seeks to ›minimize its financial contribution to the centre, while maximizing the subsidies it receives in return«.[86]

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84. see on this more in Solnic, S. ›The Political Economy of Russian Federalism: A Framework for Analysis‹, *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 43 (6), 1996: 13–26.

85. Kempton 1995: 14.

86. Ibidem.

Trying to assess the process of political legitimation of the Russia's federation structure and regime in 1990-94, it can be observed that ethnopolitical legitimacy as a problem area in governmental decision-making has manifested at every new stage of socio-political transformation of the country and the changing patterns of relations between the central and sub-federal levels of authority. The problem manifested as a dilemma for the central government to acquire legitimation from both ethnically Russian regions (Krais and Oblasts which account for some 80% of the total population) and ethnically-mixed republics (which account for some 18% of the country's population). At every stage of the socio-political change, the central authority managed to find more or less satisfactory solution to the ethnopolitical legitimacy crisis through institutional innovation, which did provide for a dynamic stability of the political system (at least until the next stage of transformation process). This gives grounds to think that, as of to date, the process of federalization and democratization has not yet exhausted its potential for moving ahead on the road of development.

3 Republican Variations In Political Attitudes Concerning Trust In Government: Some Surveys' Data

The data of the sociological survey conducted by the Ethnosociology Department of the Russian Academy of Sciences's Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology in 1994 also show the existence of the problem areas in ethnopolitical legitimation and identification. In particular, this survey showed varying attitudes towards different levels of the government among various ethnic and social groups of the populace in the four republics surveyed. The survey was conducted in spring-summer 1994 in the republics of North Ossetia, Sakha (Yakutia), Tatarstan, and Tuva, with the sample consisting of slightly more than 1,000 respondents in each of the republics.

The range of the present paper does not allow a detailed discussion of all the results of the survey; thus only the major aspects of the data as they are related to legitimacy are discussed here. Tables 4 and 5 report survey results on the perceived level of trust towards republican vs. central authorities.

Table 4: Which Government Authority Do You Trust Most? (Titular Republic Nationality, %)

	Ossetes in North Ossetia	*Yakutians in Sakha (Yakutia)*	*Tatars in Tatarstan*	*Tuvinians in Tuva*
Republic's Government	40.8	39.8	41.2	43.1
Equal Trust in republic and Russia's governments	15.7	16.5	8.8	20.5
Russian federal government	4.0	2.1	4.2	4.1
Neither one	21.6	31.7	26.6	17.3
Hard to say	17.9	9.9	19.2	15.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

	Russians in North Ossetia	*Russians in Sakha (Yakutia)*	*Russians in Tatarstan*	*Russians in Tuva*
Republic's Government	11.1	18.7	20.8	8.5
Equal Trust in republic and Russia's governments	29.5	15.5	17.7	22.5
Russian federal government	13.6	15.2	11.2	14.6
Neither one	29.5	36.6	28.7	34.8
Hard to say	16.3	14.1	21.6	19.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5: Which Government Authority Do You Trust Most? Several Summarized Features (Titular Republic Nationality, %)

	Ossetes in North Ossetia	*Yakutians in Sakha (Yakutia)*	*Tatars in Tatarstan*	*Tuvinians in Tuva*
Expressed some degree of confidence in republic's government, including:	56.5	56.3	50.0	63.6
• those who have more trust in republic's government	40.8	39.8	41.2	43.1
• those who trust both governments equally	15.7	16.5	8.8	20.5
Express some degree of confidence in Russian federal government, including:	19.7	18.6	13.0	24.6
• those who have more trust in Russian federal government	4.0	2.1	4.2	4.1
• those who trust both governments equally	15.7	16.5	8.8	20.5

	Russians in North Ossetia	*Russians in Sakha (Yakutia)*	*Russians in Tatarstan*	*Russians in Tuva*
Expressed some degree of confidence in republic's government, including:	40.6	34.2	38.5	31.0
• those who have more trust in republic's government	11.1	18.7	20.8	8.5
• those who trust both governments equally	29.5	15.5	17.7	22.5
Express some degree of confidence in Russian federal government, including:	43.1	30.7	28.9	37.1
• those who have more trust in Russian federal government	13.6	15.2	11.2	14.6
• those who trust both governments equally	29.5	15.5	17.7	22.5

First, the data show a lower level of trust in the all-Russian Federation authority than in republican authorities. In all the republics surveyed, the number of respondents who gave a greater degree of support to the republican authorities was higher than the number of those who placed greater trust in the federal level 8–10 times as many among the titular nationalities and 1–1.2 times higher among the non-titular Russians, with the exception of Tuva). Interestingly, the majority of those who showed a higher degree of trust in the republican authorities also positively evaluated the political and economic consequences of the proclamation of republican sovereignty. The percentage of ethnic Russian respondents in Tatarstan and North Ossetia who expressed equal trust in both Russian and republican authorities is considerably higher than among the titular ethnicities in these two republics.

Second, the relatively high level of ethnopolitical legitimacy enjoyed by the republican authorities among the representatives of both the titular and non-titular (Russian) ethnic groups suggests considerable inter-ethnic consensus. This may provide a basis for interethnic civic dialogue and integration and consolidation of civic republican identities at the level of republics. Tatarstan provides an obvious example (see tables 1 and 2). Summing up the results, in all four republics, the share of respondents among the titular nationalities that places a high degree of trust in the republican authorities is above 50 per cent (ranging from 59 % among the Tatars in Tatarstan to 63 % among the Tuvinians in Tuva).

The picture is different among the ethnic Russians in these republics. Notably, among Russians the level of trust prevalently in republican governments is lower, ranging from 5 % to 8 % depending on whether a rural or urban area is being polled. The highest level of trust among ethnic Russians is found in Tatarstan where about 20 % trust the republican government. Tatarstan is a telling example: because the republican government there was very effective in reaching an interethnic consensus, it now enjoys the trust of the Russians living in Tatarstan. Here, then, is a basis for an interethnic consensus, incipient civic identifications and a way for federalism to succeed in resolving interethnic tensions.

Third, the data indicate that there are many politically alienated respondents, both among the Russian respondents living in the republics and among the titular nationalities. These respondents place trust in neither the republican, nor the federal authorities. The ratio of such respondents among the titular ethnic groups ranges from 17.3 % in Tuva to 31.7 % in Sakha (Yakutia); among the ethnic Russians this ratio ranges from 28.7 % in Tatarstan to 36.6 % in Sakha (Yakutia). The eventual behaviour of this section of citizenry of both ethnic groups will have a strong impact on future ethno-political conflicts.

The data in Tables 1-2 represent respondents' answers to the general question of trust in government, and can be used to assess the level of diffuse support for the system and the legitimacy of the regime at different levels. At the same time, it is important to be able to assess performance legitimacy, our data give this possibility, as regards the extent of specific support so long as the authorities

promote the material interests of the population. Table 6 contains the respondents' views on whom they personally can count on to realize and protect their interests.

*Table 6: Whom Do You Count On Most To Realize and Defend Your Interests?***

	Ossetes in North Ossetia	*Yakutians in Sakha (Yakutia)*	*Tatars in Tatarstan*	*Tuvinians in Tuva*
on myself	71.4	64.3	66.5	55.6
On my friends and relatives	56.5	46.0	47.1	41.6
On my national or religious community	1.1	5.6	7.2	7.6
On local (city or district) government	7.2	11.8	7.4	13.7
On republic's government	40.8	38.0	22.9	38.9
On the Russia's federal government	17.3	3.2	1.8	10.9

	Russians in North Ossetia	*Russians in Sakha (Yakutia)*	*Russians in Tatarstan*	*Russians in Tuva*
on myself	71.3	71.7	63.9	60.9
On my friends and relatives	35.1	22.2	31.1	31.2
On my national or religious community	2.6	1.7	0.3	1.1
On local (city or district) government	14.5	7.2	7.1	9.2
On republic's government	27.8	19.9	23.1	18.2
On the Russia's federal government	29.4	13.5	15.9	29.2

** Question posed: »As a Tatar living in Tatarstan (Tuvinian in Tuva, etc.) whom do you count on most to realize and defend your interests?« (NB: answers do not always total 100%)

The answers given by respondents belonging to both the titular and the Russian nationality in each republic show that, as regards hopes about material interests, republican authorities score almost two times higher than the central government. This suggests the existence of significant potential of interethnic consensus in material interests of republican population in the ›centre-periphery‹ bargaining game. The divergence of perceived interests is noted only in Tuva which may be due to the fact that it is the only republic of the sample that have experienced interethnic violence between the titular and the Russian groups.

Finally, an important dimension of ethnopolitical legitimacy is the moral support yielded to the government for its use of coercive functions and its right to a monopoly on the use of force. Table 7 contains evaluations of the admissibility of using the federal army to resolve violent interethnic conflicts.

Table 7: Is It Necessary to Use Army if Interethnic Conflicts Erupt?

	Ossetes in North Ossetia	*Yakutians in Sakha (Yakutia)*	*Tatars in Tatarstan*	*Tuvinians in Tuva*
Inside Russia				
• Yes	39.5	10.1	7.7	4.7
• No	10.7	45.4	49.2	49.9
• Depends on the circumstance	43.7	35.3	26.5	26.6
• Hard to Say	6.1	9.2	16.6	18.8
Outside Russia				
• Yes	13.0	7.6	6.5	4.8
• No	23.6	44.7	53.5	43.1
• Depends on the circumstance	50.1	29.9	22.0	30.5
• Hard to Say	13.3	17.8	18.0	21.6

	Russians in North Ossetia	*Russians in Sakha (Yakutia)*	*Russians in Tatarstan*	*Russians in Tuva*
Inside Russia				
• Yes	35.3	11.3	12.1	13.7
• No	16.4	35.7	42.2	36.4
• Depends on the circumstance	38.3	39.4	31.4	39.8
• Hard to Say	10.0	13.6	14.3	10.1
Outside Russia				
• Yes	9.5	8.0	7.0	5.8
• No	38.0	41.6	44.7	42.2
• Depends on the circumstance	39.8	33.2	28.5	39.2
• Hard to Say	12.7	17.2	19.8	12.8

This table 7 shows that differences observed among republics are correlated with the actual intensity of interethnic conflicts underway in each of these republics. These differences exist not only within the republics, between respondents belonging to different ethnic groups, but also between the republics themselves. In this regard, a striking difference can be observed between respondents in North Ossetia, which is the only republic in the sample that has experienced interethnic violence between the Ossetes and the Ingush, on one hand, and the other three republics where ethnopolitical conflict has been predominantly non-violent. In North Ossetia about one half to two-thirds of the respondents considered the use of the army to be justified. This is probably because these people live in conditions of overt violent conflict with a neighbor ethnicity (and not constitutional conflict with the federal centre) and saw that the army can be utilized to obtain peace. To the contrary, in the other republics, Tatarstan, Tuva, Sakha (Yakutia), anywhere from 73 to 80 percent of the respondents have a very skeptical attitude regarding the use of

the military subject to the federal centre. Between 30 to 40 percent rejected categorically the use of the army in interethnic conflicts. One can presume from this that there is no trend within Russia towards justifying the use of state violence to manage interethnic conflicts.

Perceptions of the government's legitimacy also include beliefs about state arbitrative functions, that is, the state's role as of one of regulators, mediators, and enforcers of conflicting interethnic relations. Table 8 contains data reflecting the hopes of the respondents on the likelihood of improving interethnic relations in the future, and the actors who are likely to promote this.

Table 8: Hopes for Improving Interethnic Relations and Regulating Conflict Depend Upon ... (Several answers were possible, total will not always be 100%)

	Ossetes in North Ossetia	*Yakutians in Sakha (Yakutia)*	*Tatars in Tatarstan*	*Tuvinians in Tuva*
Government protection of individuals	45.1	44.8	40.9	37.3
Activities of the republic's government	29.6	31.8	30.2	30.1
Activities of the Russia's President	25.0	21.8	11.2	15.0
Activities of the republic's president	49.3	42.4	37.9	26.8
The wisdom of the people	65.3	55.1	54.5	50.1
Other	0.8	1.8	2.4	1.6

	Russians in North Ossetia	*Russians in Sakha (Yakutia)*	*Russians in Tatarstan*	*Russians in Tuva*
Government protection of individuals	40.4	34.6	36.0	35.4
Activities of the republic's government	24.6	16.5	22.3	15.1
Activities of the Russia's President	30.2	23.1	20.1	26.9
Activities of the republic's president	38.6	26.0	28.9	24.4
The wisdom of the people	73.2	59.5	60.3	44.6
Other	0.5	1.7	2.4	4.2

To conclude, ethnopolitical legitimation appears to constitute an important factor in two larger issues of political concern in post-Soviet Russia: securing ethnopolitical stability within the Russia's space and the successful democratization of Russia's political system. The latter, among other things, requires consistent democratic reform of the country's federal structure, ethnopolitical arrangements and efficient guarantees of the rights of ethnic minorities.

A successful, stable and long-term resolution of the crises of post-Soviet modernization appears impossible unless both the federal and republican governments in the Russian Federation acquire a sufficient degree of ethnopolitical legitimacy. The problem of legitimacy is closely related to the problem of forging national political identity. Successful ethnopoltical legitimation implies positive identification with the federation system and federal authorities as reflecting the identities of diverse ethnic groups constituting the country's citizenship. They must feel that the authorities and the system reflect not only general interests, but also are responsive to their specific ethnopolitical interests. The progress of civil society-building in Russia will depend on the extent to which the federation can create citizenship that embraces the existing ethno-cultural plurality of the population.

The basis for a successful overcoming the crises of ethnopolitical legitimacy and identity should be sought in striking a balance between the values of ethnic nationalism and the values of civic nationalism. The stability of Russia's federal system will be increased by forging democracy not only as a discourse but also as a set of viable institutions of a historically multiethnic society. This relates to the twofold problem of ethnic legitimation of, and political identification with the federal system and its sub-units by all ethnic groups constituting Russia's population.

4 Conclusions: Issues of Ethnopolitical Legitimation and Constructive Ethnic Conflict Management in Present-day Russia

In this section, by way of conclusion, we would like to express some considerations on the linkage between the issues of ethnopolitical legitimation and constructive management of political ethnic conflicts in democratizing Russian Federation.

Democratization has been described as »a complex, open-ended, dynamic process leading from a democratic transition marked by uncertainty over the ›rules-of-the-game‹, to relatively stable, consolidated political systems«.[87] Building democracy can mean a large number of different things. We have already discussed above some of ethnopolitical implications concerning two levels: democracy as a discourse and democracy as a set of viable institutions (see section 1).

Among other things, political democracy means democratic bargaining and its affirmation both in public discourse and in political institutions. In this respect, constructive conflict management can be viewed as a necessary condition and, simultaneously, an important means (instrument) of democratic transition and subsequent democratic consolidation in all spheres of political life. Considering the matter in a larger vein, contemporary scholarship in conflict management and resolution distinguishes among three major means of conflict resolution: command and imposition, bargaining and compromise, and competition and cooperation.[88] Although these modes are clearly present in all political systems, their relative significance varies considerably. In authoritarian political systems conflict resolution is

87. Schmitz, G. and D. Gilles, *The Challenge of Democratic Development*. 1992: p. xii, see also O'Donnell and P. Schmitter (1986).

88. Welsh, H. A. 1994. ›Political Transition Processes in Central and Eastern Europe‹ in: *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 26, July 1994: 379–393: 381.

based largely upon methods of command and imposition that take the form of rule by decree, force, or exclusion and the mutual denial of legitimacy. Alternatively, competition, accompanied by cooperation, lies at the heart of pluralist politics.

Recent transition periods suggest that the ends of extrication of authoritarianism and the institutionalization of polyarchy are delimited by the dramatic decline of command and imposition and the increase in bargaining and compromise; the introduction of democracy is as much a matter of procedure as it is a matter of substance. Contemporary scholarship holds that bargaining and compromise lie at the heart of the transition process. Actually, all modes of transition entailed the element of negotiation.[89] We find it very interesting, the point made by Welsh that the transition to democracy is also a transition in the modes of conflict resolution from imposition to bargaining. This implies, respectively the necessity of salience in constructive ways of managing conflicts alongside with the progress of successful transitions.

For present-day democratizing post-Soviet polities, the importance of constructive conflict management appears to be particularly salient in the sphere of ethnopolitical relations. It has been noticed elsewhere that certain types of issues are less conducive to constructive conflict resolutions than others; they lead the participants to define the conflict as a zero-sum or win-lose conflict. Such issues as ›power or control over the other‹, having ›higher status than the other‹, ›victory or defeat‹, ›exclusive possession of something for which there is no substitute or possible compensation‹ are the kind that are apt to lead to a win-lose definition of the conflict.[90] Horowitz (1990) suggests that ethnic conflict is intractable, partly because it is highly conducive to zero-sum outcomes – I win, you lose. It has high symbolic content. In addition, ethnic conflicts have an ascriptive character; that is, they relate to birth.[91] By their nature, ethnic identities are exclusive and, thus,

89. Ibidem: 381.

90. Deutsch, M., ›Constructive Conflict resolution: Principles, Training and Research‹, *Journal of Social Issues*, 1994, Vol. 50, No. 1: 13–32:14.

91. Deutsch, M., ›Constructive Conflict resolution: Principles, Training and Research‹, *Journal of Social Issues*, 1994, Vol. 50, No. 1: 13–32: 115.

cannot possibly constitute the matter of bargaining. Disputes over them are almost absolutely certain to result in zero-sum outcomes. At the same time, civic identities and civic conceptions of nationhood, again, by their very nature, are inclusive and permit positive-sum bargaining and negotiations of a mutual gain type.

Therefore, social engineering, the construction of an adequate balance between civic and ethnic values, between shared civic and ethnic conceptions of nationhood and infusing this balance into the new institutions can be viewed as the major challenge of constructive conflict management in democratizing multiethnic societies. The contest between the civic and the ethnic definition of the nation is of crucial importance for the future of post-communist Europe, not only for the stability of the borders of the post-communist states, but also for their transitions to democracy.

Institutions of incipient civil society in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union will be viable and functional only to the extent that they acquire adequate measures of both civic and ethnic political legitimacy. One of the pivot practical issue is: Must democratization be accompanied by ethnic unrest, or might the process of democratization actually can provide an opportunity to prevent ethnic conflicts from defining the political debate in newly democratizing states? How can ethnopolitical moderation be promoted through using the advantages of the negotiating process associated with democratization?[92] The process of building democratic institutions and diffusion of the culture of democratic bargaining of the ›give-and-take‹ relationships should be regarded as the main constructive products and indicators of success in conflict management. In this respect, there seems to be

92. De Nevers, R.(1993) ›Democratisation and Ethnic Conflict‹, in M. Brown (ed.) *Ethnic Conflict and International Security.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

an important relationship between democracy and internal ethnic peace.[93]

Managing ethnopolitical legitimacy in multiethnic post-communist polities equals managing democratization constructively. The overview of the developments in the ethnopolitical conflict in Russian Federation in early 1990s that we gave in the section 2 of this paper seems to suggest that dynamics of ethnopolitical conflict management and dynamics of ethnopolitical legitimation are closely interrelated. The state of ethnopolitical legitimation at a given time appears to be one of the best indicators of what was going on the country's political life and of the effectiveness of conflict management process. We would argue, that in the middle- and long- run the major goal of constructive ethnic conflict management in post-Soviet Russia at the macro-level will be the attempts to create conditions for the transformation of patterns of ethnopolitical legitimation, infusing them with civic contents.

With regard to the Third World states, Shieth (1994) argues that a completely different form of political arrangement is called for in democratizing multiethnic societies, if they are to survive and function effectively in the modern world. In her view, probably, the solution lies in conceiving a new relationship between the state and the society unmediated by the idea of a nation. A state within and in command of civil society, i.e., a civil state and not a nation-state seems to be an appropriate state for multi-ethnic societies also of the former Second World. Accordingly, the building of a civil society, and not nation-building – the concept which has contrib-

93. Peacekeeping in the 90s requires short-middle– and long-term measures for war prevention, for peace maintenance and for the development of social structures in post-conflict peace-building. In this respect, Democracy as a variable is not to be discounted. Contemporary political scientists feel that the absence of wars between democracies comes as close as anything we have to an empirical law in international relations (Russett, B. 1993. *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for the Post-Cold War Era*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press). In the conditions of present-day global processes, a more adequate understanding of the relationship between Democracy and Peace (which at the international level involves, particularly, testing the hypothesis that democracies do not wage wars against each other, see. e.g., Ember, C.R., Ember M. and B. Russett, ›Peace Between Participatory Polities: A Cross- Cultural Test of the ›Democracies Rarely Fight Each other‹ Hypothesis‹, in *World Poltics*, Vol. 44, No. 4, July 1992: 573–599) receives an important additional (and not exclusively domestic) facet – probing into the relationship between democratization and ethnic peace within newly democratising countries.

uted to ethnic conflicts and to various forms of maldevelopment – should become a primary task of social movements and of politics in these societies.[94]

The goal, for what is hoped to be a long-term peaceful post-Soviet transition period, is to carve out new political and legal territory in creative, negotiated federal relations. The war in Chechnya has forced painful reassessments of the nature of the Russian Federation. Far from enhancing ›stability‹, it has increased the danger of polarization that many in Russia's republics want to avoid. Yet, assumptions of the an inherent contradictions between various nationalism's and federalism may be premature. When definitions of nationalism and federalism remain flexible, room for negotiation is still possible in the Russian Federation and can constructively provide for mitigation of ethnic tension and functional management of conflicts.

Given the situation, dynamic and sometimes volatile nature of post-Soviet republic politics, Russian (and a few non-Russian) authorities in the centre face a delicate dilemma of balancing general legal principles with highly specific negotiated compromises. The best antidote against virulent forms of nationalism can be a well-managed federalism. Leaders of the ethnically-based republics openly complain that the Federal Treaty and various bilateral agreements are not being honoured. Yet the trend toward refined bilateral agreements can help to ameliorate the fear, anger and polarization that have been exacerbated by the Chechnya war and to become building bricks on the road to institutionalizing ethnopolitical conflict.

Of course, it is very difficult to foresee what direction events in Russia will take at the end of the day. But without going into great detail, it is highly improbable that any of the extreme options will materialize. On the one hand, reforms in Russia, notwithstanding all the difficulties and even backlashes, have gone far enough to allow us to conclude that the threat of the return to communism is practically impossible. But Russia is and, at least in the near future, will remain rather unstable. The competition between the various political forces in Russia as well as between the federal authorities and its different regions is not yet over and

94. Shieth, D.L. ›Nation-Building in Multi-Ethnic Societies: The Experience of South Asia‹, in *Alternatives*, Vol. XIV, 1989: 379–388: 388.

it will certainly create enormous problems, not only for the country itself, but for many other states as well. Therefore, the need for constructive macro-political management of conflict is badly needed.

To summarize, negotiations over power-sharing institutions and democratizing federalism in Russia are the main avenues of constructive conflict management in Russia's ethnopolitics. Federalism implies a commitment to a contractual arrangement between political units that decide to create a new political space. In this sense, it can function as a conflict-solving mechanism or, in other words, as a shield for minority groups that would otherwise feel threatened. Federalism is also seen as an expression of democratic practices encouraging innovation in policy preferences and political choices at the territorial level.

Democracy in the field of ethnic relations, like elsewhere, is consolidated to the extent that in-system responses become institutionalized. This would mean that increasingly long-term domestic Ethnic Peace cannot successfully avoid fundamental human and minorities rights questions and the ways they are addressed by democratic institutions whose construction is currently underway in post-communist modernizing states. Political institutions should be designed on the principles of true power-sharing to ensure that minorities' rights and interests – political, cultural, and economic – are heeded. Ethnopolitical conflicts can be regulated by various means: rules of autonomy and enforcement of the right of self-determination and minority rights. Democratic Federalism is not an alternative to these means, but it offers the advantage of creating an institutional framework which helps to get these mechanisms accepted with a maximum amount of certainty of the law and political balance of power. Practices and principles of Western democratic federations do apply to the Russian experience but need be tailored to accommodate the realities of Russia's current situation of assymmetric federalism of both ethnically and non-ethnically defined territories. Ethnopolitical feeling of belonging and resulting civic identity plays a decisive role. Then, as stated in the Charter of Basel,[95] federation politics are more likely to create a win-win situation, not all-or-

95. Charter of Basel, adopted at the International Conference of Experts ›Federalism Against Ethnicity?‹, Basel, Switzerland, September 1990.

nothing contests in which there can be only winners and losers. Provided the goal be negotiated compromises which are acceptable and advantageous for all members, post-Soviet democratizing federalism will be able to fudge as a system of intrastate collective security which can find its international extension in the system of CIS and broader regional and international unions.

Thus, federalism can be viewed as an institutional method of resolving interethnic conflict, a method of constructive, negotiated in the conditions of ethnopolitical interdependence, even-handed regulating identity and legitimacy. The problem here is to strike a balance between new, politicized identities and the newly emergent legitimacy, because in new states, legitimacy is very low. It is based not on tradition, but on the efficiency of the government. In this situation, it is possible that the governments of the republics will function more efficiently because they are closer to the citizenry of the republics; while for the central government, especially in the case of Russia with its imperial traditions, establishing democratic federal institutions is an acute problem. It can only be resolved by concise action by the central government under the control of incipient civil society.

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