THE MAKEUP AND BREAKUP OF ETHNOFEDERAL STATES:

Why Russia Survives Where the USSR Fell

Henry E. Hale
George Washington University
hhale@gwu.edu

Why did the multiethnic Russian Federation manage to survive the transition from totalitarian rule intact where the multiethnic USSR that preceded it dramatically disintegrated less than three years after its maiden competitive elections? While Russia was just one of 15 constituent parts of the Soviet Union in 1991, its post-Soviet incarnation strongly resembled the late USSR in that as of mid-2004 it contained some 32 ethnically defined regions that covered a total of 53 percent of the country's territory. Furthermore, as the largest part of the USSR, Russia also experienced the same severe socioeconomic crises that accompanied the Soviet Union's transition from communist rule. This puzzle is all the more striking since every other federal state that emerged from communist dictatorship between 1989 and 1991 also broke apart, Czechoslovakia peacefully and Yugoslavia with violence of devastating proportions.[1] Indeed, many observers in 1991 and the first few years afterwards *did* in fact expect the Russian Federation to break up along ethnic lines just as the USSR had done.[2] Some perceived a single process of "ethnic disintegration" that would not stop with the 15 union republics of the USSR but would overcome Russia and its minority-nationality subunits as well. Chechnya was widely

expected to be the norm, not the exception. Yet, as is well known, Russia has survived as a state for more than a full decade after Gorbachev finally resigned in December 1991.

The answer to this puzzle has important implications for social scientists and policy makers alike. Ethnofederalism, a federal political system in which component regions are intentionally associated with specific ethnic categories, has frequently been recommended by policy makers as a way to combine democracy with ethnic difference.[3] Many of the world's most geopolitically important states have thus adopted ethnofederal structures, including Canada, India, and Nigeria, not to mention Russia itself. China and Pakistan, while not democracies, also have nascent ethnofederal structures. The Soviet Union's demise, combined with the nearly simultaneous breakups of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, have led many to suspect that ethnofederalism itself may be responsible since they occurred almost immediately after each of these countries became ethnofederal.[4] This is a worrying possibility indeed: might these crucial states effectively be sitting on an institutional time bomb, a set of political structures that inevitably heats up ethnic tensions until they are ready to explode? Thus, while a loose ethnofederal system was adopted for troubled Bosnia with the Dayton Accords, many in the international community have shied away from calls for ethnofederal solutions to the state-building problems facing both Afghanistan and Iraq in the wake of the "war on terrorism."[5]

Social scientists, facing enormously complex patterns of events, remain divided. Some, usually focusing on cases like Czechoslovakia, the Nigerian First Republic, the USSR, and Yugoslavia, have highlighted the state-dissolving potential of ethnofederalism, at least in these particular contexts.[6] Others, usually calling attention to such countries as India, Switzerland, and Spain, dwell more on what they see as ethnofederalism's potential to support democracy in divided societies.[7] A few have advanced explanations for variation, but none purport to have

entirely solved the puzzle.[8] In this regard, the Russia-USSR comparison has the potential to be particularly revealing of broad patterns because the cultural, political, social, and economic contexts of the two cases are so similar, allowing us to rule out a wide range of hypotheses.

This paper argues that the critical distinction between the USSR and Russia lies in the way ethnofederal institutions were designed in each case. Specifically, the USSR contained a *core ethnic region*, a single ethnofederal region that is clearly dominant in terms of population. This was the "Russian Republic," which was one of the 15 constituent regions of the USSR but which contained a majority of the union's citizens. Core ethnic regions tend to promote state breakup because they facilitate situations of dual sovereignty, exacerbate the security fears of minority-group regions, and promote the "imagining" of core-group identifications independent of the federation. For the USSR, this proved to be a deadly combination. In Russia, on the other hand, there has been no core ethnic region. While ethnic Russians constitute a majority of the country's population, they have no single region that they dominate but are instead divided into 57 different provinces that coexist with the 32 regions designated as ethnic minority homelands. This design feature has given Russia's central government a great deal of institutional capacity to cope with the centrifugal forces that can be associated both with ethnicity and federalism.

The Puzzle of Russia's Survival in Light of the USSR's Breakup

Researchers have put forth a wide variety of case-specific explanations as to why Russia survives where the USSR disintegrated. A brief survey of the literature highlights these factors:

- *Levels of Regional Autonomy*. Bunce, Alexseev, Lapidus, and Walker have suggested that Russia was more survival-prone because its ethnic regions (called "republics" and

"autonomous regions/districts") were endowed with fewer institutional resources and formal rights than were the 15 Soviet "union republics" that became independent states in 1991. Stepan, however, posits that nearly the reverse might be true, that Russia may have survived precisely because the *dispersion* of power in Russia created vested interests in the emerging federal order.[9]

- *Ideology*. Hanson argues that the key difference was that the USSR, unlike Russia, was indelibly tainted by the discredited ideology of Marxism-Leninism, thereby (a) leading Gorbachev (still an adherent to this ideology) to fail to take the ethnic problem seriously; (b) uniting "ethnic" and "civic" nationalists against the Soviet regime; (c) making conceptually possible a distinction between "Russia" and the ideologically defined USSR, thereby facilitating a Russian secession; and (d) encouraging anticommunist Western states to support separatist movements, albeit not always fully or openly.[10]

- *Payoffs*. A number of scholars have argued that Russia has managed to hang together thanks in part to an explicit policy of either rewarding loyal regions, paying off troublemaking regions, or undermining interregional cooperation by buying off strategically placed provinces through economic transfers or special bilateral treaties.[11] The USSR did not attempt such policies.[12]

- *Foreign Borders*. Lapidus and Walker have noted that a higher share of the USSR's constituent ethnic minority regions than Russia's had foreign borders.[13]

- *Size of Minority Populations*. Lapidus and Walker observe that 85 percent of Russia's population is ethnically Russian, which they argue makes secession less likely in Russia than the USSR where just over 50 percent were Russian. They point out that non-Russians make up a majority in only five of Russia's current 21 ethnic republics.[14]

- *History of Independence*. Several have pointed to the experience that some Soviet republics (specifically, the three Baltic states) had as independent states during the 20th century as an explanation.[15] Among Russia's republics, only Tuva was a separate state for close to the same amount of time, also between the two world wars.

- *Patterns of Economic Development*. Hale and Taagepera also cite economics as one of many factors differentiating Russia from the USSR. Russia's ethnic minority regions tended to be less economically developed, on the whole, than were the most important ethnic regions of the USSR (notably Ukraine).[16]

While each of these solutions to the puzzle of Russia's survival highlights important differences between Russia and the USSR that have implications for state survival and collapse, it is critical to note that all but Hanson's locate their explanations in factors determining the level of *demand* for independence or autonomy on the part of ethnic minority regional governments. Dissatisfaction with a discredited central ideology, the resultant increase in Western support for independence movements, strategic central payoffs of certain regions, the presence of minority regions with foreign borders, the size of minority populations, histories of national independence, and patterns of ethnic province wealth are all things that are said to increase or reduce minority regions' propensity to try to secede. The explanations thus virtually all boil down to a claim that the level of minority-region demand for state collapse (as expressed through desires for independence) was higher in the USSR than in Russia. Such explanations may be *part* of the answer we seek since it is hard to imagine the Soviet state finally breaking apart if all of its component units had been fully committed to maintaining it.

None of these minority-demand factors, however, can be sufficient explanations in and of themselves or in combination because none of them captures the actual mechanism by which the USSR broke up. As a host of leading specialists on the Soviet collapse have documented extensively and with little controversy, the Soviet Union fell only after the *core* Russian Republic conspired with two of the 14 ethnic minority "union republics" to dissolve the union.[17] Theories of ethnic *minority* separatism cannot fully explain the collapse of the USSR, therefore, since it was the core region that made the decisive union-destroying move and that lent it sufficient force to be effective. Moreover, far from all minority Soviet regions desired the union's collapse; many, such as Belarus and the Central Asian republics, conceded to the idea only after the Russian Republic had taken the lead and essentially thrust it upon them. Even Ukraine, Russia's key co-conspirator in undoing the union, had been seen by most experts prior to 1990 as a relatively prounion region[18] and declared sovereignty only *after* the Russian Republic did so.[19] This *active*, even *primary*, Russian role in the destruction of the Soviet Union thus confounds the "minority-demand" explanations and indicates that a majority-demand theory is likely to be much more consistent with actual patterns of events. Indeed, many of the aforementioned theories assume that ethnic Russians tend to be a force for union, not dissolution, contrary to the facts of the Soviet case. Thus while it might make sense at first glance to attribute Russia's survival to the fact that ethnic Russians constitute a far larger share of the overall union population as well as that of individual minority-designated regions in the Russian Federation than in the USSR, the following question is begged: If "Russians" generally act as a union-preserving force, then why did "Russia" drive the final stake through the heart of the USSR?

The only one of the above explanations to capture core-region antiunion activity, Hanson's, is also insufficient by itself. While it is highly plausible that Gorbachev's adherence to

Marxist-Leninist ideology led him to pursue inept nationality policies and that delegitimated Marxist ideology facilitated Russian opposition to the central government, there is no particular reason why such factors would not simply *weaken* the Soviet regime or lead to a more run-of-the-mill regime change instead of actually destroying the whole union state.

At this point it is very important to note that a theory need not deny the validity of other theories in order to be accepted as the primary explanation of an event. Such a theory might instead be more fundamental than other theories, in essence explaining other explanations in a way that also accounts for additional observed events. These "additional observed events" might simply be outcomes in other case countries or, critically, they might also be a wide range of important and directly relevant behavior within the original case countries themselves, in this case Russia and the USSR. Such a theory might also represent an advance by being more elegant or parsimonious than those that went before it. The present paper thus proffers an explanation that does not necessarily deny the strongest "minority demand" explanations but that points to simple institutional design features that account for critical differences in core-group behavior that, in turn, elegantly *explain* why these other factors had the impact that theorists have attributed to them. As such, this paper's explanation is able to account not only for the bare facts of Russia's survival in the face of the USSR's breakup, but also for a wide range of activity on the part of core-group (Russian) representatives that remains at best a mystery for virtually all previously published theories.

Core Ethnic Regions and the Breakup of Ethnofederal States

For three main reasons, designing an ethnofederal system to include a core ethnic region tends to create a higher risk of state breakup than would be the case if a core ethnic region were avoided.[20]

(1) *Dual Power*. Social scientists have long noted that situations of "dual power" tend to be midwives of revolution.[21] When a "second" center of power makes a claim to sovereignty that rivals that of the state over its people, and when that rival center is not immediately quashed, that state faces a serious danger of collapse. In ethnofederal systems that unite the dominant ethnic group into a single core ethnic region that far outweighs other regions in terms of population, that core ethnic region is a natural, preformed, and powerful potential rival claimant to the sovereignty of the state. When this same demographically dominant ethnic group is instead divided into multiple regions, its members then face important barriers to engaging in the kind of collective action that could pose a significant dual-power threat to state survival.

(2) *Security Threats*. A core ethnic region is also likely to generate more acute security fears among minority ethnofederal regions. Such a region, which can be expected to have more narrowly group-oriented interests than the central government, is likely to be perceived by minority-region groups as having disproportionate potential influence over the central government. Core ethnic regions tend also to be seen as having the capacity to take unilateral actions that can both threaten minority-group regions directly and undermine central government efforts to accommodate their interests. Breaking up a core ethnic region assuages these fears by bringing to the fore cross-regional differences of interest within the core group and by creating barriers to core-group collective action aimed at influencing the central government or directly harming ethnic-minority regional interests.

(3) *Community Imagining*. When a core ethnic region exists, it becomes much easier for members of that community (as well as outsiders) to imagine the existence of a separate "ethnic" state coinciding with those boundaries and their associated institutions.[22] Dividing up a core ethnic region denies political entrepreneurs key institutional resources that stretch across this territory, thereby greatly complicating the process of constructing an identification limited to the set of core-group regions. In this latter case, such political entrepreneurs also face an enormous task in creating entirely new "central" institutions for any newly independent state for the core group.

In attempting to evaluate this basic argument, we are immediately confronted with the challenge of counterfactual reasoning. *All* attempts to assert causality rest on counterfactual claims; to say "A caused B" is to say that if one had removed A and had held *everything* else constant, B would not have occurred.[23] While we can never "re-run history" to actually test such a claim, we gain a great deal of leverage by comparing cases that are highly similar in environmental factors, allowing us to come as close as possible to a perfectly controlled experiment. In this light, the Russian and Soviet cases provide a great deal of leverage on the above argument because they do control for so many environmental factors, including geography, culture, and historical and transitional context, while presenting variation in the key factor of interest: the USSR contained a core ethnic region whereas Russia did not.[24] The combined facts that the USSR collapsed and Russia has survived, then, are suggestive indeed. This simple observation alone, however, is not likely to be much more than suggestive because while the situation is *highly* controlled, it is not *perfectly* controlled.

The comparison between these two countries becomes quite compelling, however, if we can show not only that the ultimate outcomes of interest correspond with the theoretical

argument, but also that myriad details in the flow of observable events in these two countries match "microhypotheses" that can be derived from the theoretical argument.[25] It is thus important to clearly formulate expectations about what *else* we should see happening in these two ethnofederal states if our causal claim is correct. One important subset of such microhypotheses is defined by the three causal mechanisms described above: dual power, security fears, and community imagining. Others include multiple implications of these hypothesized mechanisms that can be seen as consistent or inconsistent with observable events. To begin thinking more systematically about such tests, it is helpful not only to recognize that a counterfactual claim is involved but also to break it down into case-specific counterfactual components. These, in turn, can spawn concrete important microhypotheses that can then be tested.

In this particular case, the theory sketched above implies the following case-specific counterfactual propositions:

1. Had the Russian Republic of the USSR been broken up into a large number of smaller units, the USSR would have been less likely to collapse.

2. If the Russian Federation had itself contained a single republic representing ethnic Russians in place of the 57 "nonethnic" regions (oblasts and krais) that it actually has had, Russia would be much less stable and more likely to have collapsed.

By testing the detailed microhypotheses that these propositions generate below, we gain much more confidence that the logic of the theory is precisely what has led to the important contrast between the fates of the USSR and the Russian Federation.[26] The following two sections undertake such a research strategy.

The USSR

This section mobilizes detailed historical evidence to demonstrate that the USSR's core ethnic region (the Russian Republic) was intimately and causally involved in the collapse of the USSR. Critically, however, it is also meticulously shown that the actions by which this core ethnic region subverted the Union *would not have been union-threatening* had they been undertaken by a divided set of Russian regions (*oblasts*[27]) without a unifying "Russian" institutional structure (a claim that becomes even stronger in the subsequent case study of the Russian Federation, which approximates such a condition). Specifically, it is shown that, had the Russian Republic been broken up into a number of Russian regions:

- *Gorbachev's hardline opponents would have felt less of a threat to Soviet and Communist authority and would have been less likely to attempt the August 1991 putsch. The coup, assuming it occurred in the first place, would also have been more likely to have succeeded, preserving the union, without the resistance of a united Russian Republic.* (Dual Power)

- *It would have been easier for Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to avert the union-breaking secession of key restive republics (notably Ukraine) through accommodation while still staving off the threat of a hardliner coup. Key republics would also have been more likely to have agreed to a reconstituted USSR after August 1991.* (Security Threats)

- *Russia's leader Boris Yeltsin would have had a much harder time creating a vision of an independent Russia that could threaten to supplant the USSR.* (Community Imagining)

While Russian Republic actions are widely held responsible for ultimately bringing down the USSR, they were intended not to promote the collapse of the union but rather its restructuring

in a way that benefited Russia. It is important to note that the USSR had in fact "disadvantaged" Russia in key ways in an effort, essentially, not to frighten away other nationalities whose support Soviet leaders considered important.[28] Russia thus lacked its own distinct branch of the Communist Party, had no Academy of Sciences, and wanted for other key Soviet institutions, unlike the remaining union republics. Most significantly, however, reliable analyses based on market valuation of transfers show that Russia was in fact a net *donor* to the rest of the union despite the other republics' claims of exploitation, primarily because it supplied oil and gas to them at far-below-market prices.[29] This effective subsidization, among other things, allowed the Kremlin to transfer wealth to the least developed Central Asian republics, producing a rapid rise in development there relative to immediate neighbors across Soviet borders. Much of Yeltsin's activity as Russian Republic leader can be understood as an attempt to permanently rectify this disparity between Russia's dominance in population and territory and its perceived disadvantages in terms of economic policy.

The critical reform that launched the Russian Republic on its challenge to Soviet sovereignty was the introduction of republic-level elections in March 1990. This voting suddenly rendered Russian leaders accountable to their own population rather than to the Communist Party leadership (which, as just noted, did not have a separate Russian Republic organization). Institutionally, the newly elected Russian parliament, led by Yeltsin, almost immediately started adopting a series of measures designed to replace the authority of Soviet institutions with that of its own on the republic's territory. On June 12, 1990, the Russian Congress issued a "declaration of sovereignty" that laid claim to all resources located in the republic and stated that Russian laws were to take precedence over any contradictory Soviet ones.[30] This document was certainly not the result of Yeltsin's personality or combative character—instead it stemmed from real

incentives facing Russian leaders of the kind noted above. Yeltsin himself had only narrowly been elected leader of the Russian parliament the previous month, and even then on a third ballot. He was thus not in a position to ram through legislation that did not already have broad support. In fact, Yeltsin's *conservative* Communist predecessor as Russian leader, Vitaly Vorotnikov, was the one actually to propose the first draft sovereignty declaration to the parliament. Vorotnikov declared in this speech that Russia could only hope to thrive if it had the real attributes of independence, albeit still in the framework of the USSR.[31]

The declaration of "Russian" sovereignty, as distinct from that of the USSR, as well as the holding of *Russian* elections and later actions going along with the sovereignty drive, were critical elements in forging a Russian identity separate from that of the USSR.[32] Yeltsin was aggressive in adopting and adapting non-Soviet symbols of Russia in his campaigns and official actions as head of the Russian Republic.[33] The change that took place in Russia is well rendered by Dunlop, who notes that as late as 1989, a Russian nationalist writer and member of the Soviet parliament, Valentin Rasputin, had attracted attention by exclaiming at one session of the legislature: "perhaps it is Russia which should leave the Union." Writes Dunlop:

> These words had been uttered carpingly, and their intention had been to underline the absurdity of such a development. One year later, Russia had declared its sovereignty and a separate political existence for Russia no longer seemed such an absurdity.[34]

Meanwhile, the Spring 1990 elections had given nationalists new voice in many other union republics. Gorbachev responded by proposing to conclude a new "Union Treaty," the foundational treaty that constituted the USSR. While Gorbachev proved willing to go to great lengths to appease the minority-group republics in this process, he found himself constantly

hampered in these union-saving efforts by the majority-group republic, Russia. Russia initially demanded that the republics negotiate this treaty amongst themselves, without any interference from the central government. Its leaders generally wanted to relegate to the union such responsibilities as defense, energy, transportation, and communications infrastructure.[35] Russia produced its own plan of economic reform, the 500-Day Plan, which notably called for giving a great deal more autonomy to the republics than Gorbachev wanted to give.[36] When Gorbachev ultimately rejected this, the Russian leadership essentially sought to create a situation in which the Soviet "center" had no choice but to let the republics administer economic reform themselves by presenting Gorbachev with a *fait accompli*. In this process, Russia destroyed the Soviet banking system and provided a credible challenge to Soviet property rights over economic resources on Russian territory.[37] This greatly undercut Gorbachev's ability to effect transfers to or from restive minority republics, severely hamstringing him in his union-saving efforts and undermining the credibility of his promises. Needless to say, the fact that "Russia" was a single, immense administrative unit rather than a plethora of uncoordinated regions made such large-scale Russian moves possible and Russian threats credible and damaging to the authority of central institutions.

The Russian Republic played its most union-destructive role during and after August 1991. For one thing, it is clear that an important factor motivating hardliners in their coup attempt was the vision of Gorbachev effectively ceding power to Yeltsin's Russia, which they indeed saw as an institutional challenge to the USSR. Justifying his actions after joining the failed putsch, Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov cites myriad examples of the Russian Republic's destructive behavior and the challenge that it, by virtue of its size and economic power, posed to USSR institutions. Not only did the Russian Republic undermine the Soviet government's

authority in the economy by, for example, destroying the country's financial infrastructure, but: "In essence, talk was about the replacement of the Soviet government with the Russian one on all questions," he wrote.[38] Likewise, Anatoly Lukianov, widely held to be the behind-the-scenes mastermind of the putsch, argues that Russia's declaration of sovereignty put the USSR decisively on the road to collapse.[39] Indeed, several Western analysts have also noted that such a declaration from the republic at the core of the USSR dramatically reduced the risks for other republics in declaring sovereignty themselves by gutting Soviet authority, triggering a whole series of such acts known as the "parade of sovereignties."[40] Russia, under Yeltsin, was also clearly using its institutional resources to pressure Gorbachev to take harsher measures against hardliners, making it more difficult for Gorbachev to pursue his trademark delicate political maneuverings[41] designed to reform the system without either losing the faith of reformers or provoking hardliners into attempting to remove him. Because of its immense size, its status as the single institutional representative of the dominant group, and its centrality for the entire Soviet economy, the Russian Republic and its leaders had tremendous influence that constrained Gorbachev's union-restructuring strategy in ways that individual oblasts in place of the Russian Republic simply could not have.

In addition, the institutional platform provided by the Russian Republic's magnitude and authority, as well as the legitimacy conferred by the republic's direct presidential elections in June 1991, allowed Boris Yeltsin to mobilize resistance to the coup and essentially to split the Soviet military, ultimately fatally incapacitating USSR.[42] Immediately after receiving news of the coup on August 19, Yeltsin issued an appeal "To the Citizens of Russia" branding the coup illegal and calling on local organs to follow the *Russian* (rather than the Soviet) Constitution and *Russian* presidential decrees. He mobilized anticoup forces in and around the Russian "White

House" (then seat of the Russian Republic government), issuing a series of decrees and appeals to take control of all units of the army, the KGB, the Interior Ministry and Defense Ministry on Russian territory and to call on military servicemen and officers to obey the new Russian military leader, General Kobets.[43] He also managed to get radio airtime and to issue an appeal through one of the USSR's largest newspapers, *Izvestiia*.[44]

These efforts, credible coming only from a core republic leader, failed to produce a nationwide strike but had sufficient success not only to subvert the coup, but to split the Soviet military in the process. The coup-plotters quickly recognized that their success would hinge on defeating Yeltsin's Russian base of resistance and drafted a plan, Operation Thunder, to storm the White House, now surrounded by tens of thousands of pro-Yeltsin protesters.[45] Critically, Yeltsin's challenge led key parts of the military, Interior troops, and even crack units of the KGB to disobey (or even preempt) central orders to seize Yeltsin and to attack the resisting Russians. One top military commander, General Aleksandr Lebed, even advised Yeltsin that he should claim control of the whole Soviet army in Russia rather than promote "insubordination" by calling on soldiers to disobey the coup-plotters—a legitimation strategy simply unavailable to an oblast leader, however prominent.[46] While few of the disobedient officers appeared to submit themselves to Yeltsin's complete control, their defection from the central Soviet command structure essentially undermined the institutional coherence of the Soviet state since there was no longer anyone who could clearly control the whole Soviet military in the event of a controversial violent action. While Russia repealed most of these coup-time decrees on September 9, 1991, the damage to union coercive authority had been done.[47]

Moreover, not only did the Russian Republic create a fatal situation of dual power and forge a Russian identity newly distinct from Soviet structures, but its leadership also issued a

series of inflammatory statements and took certain steps that threatened Ukraine, accelerating the latter's move to secede, which ultimately triggered the final dissolution of the USSR. The August coup had confirmed Ukrainian fears that Gorbachev's promises of security and equality were not reliable. As Ukrainian president Leonid Kravchuk made clear in his memoirs, there was no guarantee that hardliners might regroup and force a more successful crackdown in the future.[48] While the coup had given Ukraine the opportunity it needed to secede by incapacitating the Soviet military thanks to Yeltsin's bold resistance, Ukraine chose not to declare immediate independence but to make such a declaration contingent on a referendum to be held on December 1 of that same year.

Yeltsin's waxing and Gorbachev's waning during this time did not calm Ukrainian worries; in fact, the opposite occurred. Boosted by new power realities and the moral authority deriving from Yeltsin's heroic stand, Russia's representatives dominated the temporary institutions set up to govern the USSR. To take the most prominent example, Yeltsin's Prime Minister, Ivan Silaev, became the head of the new provisional government. While Ukraine's president did not put much faith in Gorbachev, these events gave cause for him to trust the seemingly unpredictable and volatile Yeltsin even less. Thus, at a press conference on August 30, 1991, the Ukrainian leader called attention to the post-putsch "euphoria" in Russia and the attendant "exaggeration of the merits of some one individual or one people." He pointedly questioned whether the Russian-dominated transitional structures could "defend the interests of other republics."[49] Furthermore, two days after Ukraine called a referendum on independence, Yeltsin's press secretary and then his vice president threatened to make territorial claims if Ukraine followed through on secession.[50] Ukraine's leaders used these incidents to build support for a proindependence referendum vote.[51] As Kravchuk writes in his memoirs, he regarded

Yeltsin's Russia as an imperialist threat in its own right, a threat only temporarily sidetracked by its struggle with the Soviet central government.[52] Clearly, had there been no Russian republic and had there been in its place a large number of small regions, "Russia" would not have had in place the institutional means to take over union functions in the way that it did, effectively cutting out other republics and supporting their separatist inclinations. Moreover, territorial claims voiced by leaders of even several small regions would not have posed nearly the same level of threat to Ukraine as did those coming from a core Russian Republic that possibly enjoyed the loyalty of much of the Soviet military and that had considerable other nationwide mobilizational resources at its disposal.

Finally, it was the Russian Republic that made the final choice not to try and preserve a "rump USSR" even after Ukraine had seceded. When Ukraine did declare independence in its December 1, 1991, referendum, there is strong evidence that a "severely pruned" Soviet Union could still have been saved. Central Asian leaders, led by Kazakh Republic leader Nursultan Nazarbaev, continued to call for a union and, indeed, pressed for tighter integration even after the USSR dissolved. But Russia, in a last-ditch effort to salvage some form of voluntary union with Ukraine, opted instead to join with Ukraine and Belarus to found the nebulous and nonbinding Commonwealth of Independent States, supplanting the Soviet Union and effectively establishing the complete independence of all 15 Soviet republics, whether they wanted this or not. Given the controversial nature of this decision at the time and the conservative nature of many Russian regional leaders at the time, it is extremely unlikely that a large number of Russian oblast chiefs, in place of the Russian Republic, could ever have coordinated agreement on this act, not to mention have lent the effect of finality that the Russian Republic's authority bestowed on this move.

Overall, then, close examination of the events leading to the Soviet collapse strongly suggests that the existence of a unified Russian core republic was a critical factor in the USSR's dissolution. The Russian Republic, by virtue of its institutional resources and authority, consistently sapped Soviet state capacity and constrained Gorbachev's autonomy in forging a workable new federal arrangement while staving off would-be rebels on both the left and right. The Russian Republic's institutional unity enabled Yeltsin to eat away at Soviet structures, to successfully challenge Gorbachev's legitimacy, to undermine Gorbachev's political balancing act with hardliners, to split Soviet military and police structures, to frighten Ukraine away from a restructured union after the August coup, and to prevent the formation of a rump Soviet Union once Ukraine had actually seceded. Yeltsin also proved able to forge a Russian identity distinct from that of the USSR through these actions, in part by defining it against an ideologically "tainted" Soviet Union, as Hanson argues.[53] It is highly unlikely that any of this would have occurred with such success had there been only a series of oblasts in place of the Russian Republic. This will become even more clear when we consider the case of the post-Soviet Russian Federation, which in fact *does* contain a series of oblasts in place of a "Russian Republic" and which has been much more stable despite facing otherwise very similar pressures.

The Russian Federation

We can, of course, point simply to the fact of Russian survival and contrast it with the Soviet collapse to show that these cases are consistent with the theoretical logic elaborated above. Indeed, the Russian Federation lacks a core ethnic region, instead consisting of 32 minority ethnic regions (*republics*, *autonomous districts* and *autonomous regions*) together with 55 *oblasts* and *krais* and two major cities considered federal units in their own right (Moscow

and St. Petersburg).[54] These latter 57 units, the set of which we call "oblasts" for simplicity's sake, lack any particular ethnic designation but are dominated by ethnic Russians. But to further lock in the causal claim, this paper goes a step further. It mobilizes strong evidentiary support for the following hypotheses:

- *Had a core ethnic region united Russians in the Russian Federation, it would have challenged Yeltsin's authority in much the same way that the Russian Republic had challenged Gorbachev's rule, preventing him from successfully using the strategies that he in fact used. Such a core-ethnic-region challenge to Federal authority would have been likely to have been more effective than any challenges that have in fact taken place.* (Dual Power)

- *Had a core ethnic region existed, it is likely to have represented more narrowly "Russian" interests than the federal government and would have posed a much greater perception of threat to minority region populations than did the separately expressed views of 57 oblast leaders. Moreover, without Russia's institutional division of the core group into many regions, Russia's presidents would have found it much more difficult to employ both accommodative tactics toward key minority regions and divide-and-conquer methods vis-à-vis oblasts so as to address potentially threatening minority-region security concerns.* (Security Threats)

- *With a core ethnic region in place of Russia's 57 oblasts, Russia would have been much more likely to experience a challenge to the vision of territorial Russian identity propagated by both Yeltsin and his successor Vladimir Putin, a challenge in the form of an identification with the narrower particular territory that the oblasts now occupy, excluding the ethnic minority republics.* (Community Imagining)

To demonstrate this, the current section establishes that the Russian Federation's oblasts, since the collapse of the USSR, have in fact *issued many of the same kinds of challenges to the post-Soviet Russian Federation as the Russian Republic once did to the USSR*, particularly in the 1990s. There have even been significant attempts to unite oblast forces in this endeavor. Nevertheless, it is shown that due to the lack of coordination, these challenges have not posed a real threat to the existence of the Russian Federation. Moreover, the federal government has proven adept at exploiting the collective action problems described earlier in a classic example of "divide and rule." That is, *the institutional division of the core ethnic group gave the Russian Federation's central leadership a great deal of autonomy to respond effectively to ethnic challenges* either by accommodation or by coercion, autonomy that the USSR's Gorbachev could only envy.

Initially, just as Yeltsin's Russian Republic sought to rectify a situation in which it was subsidizing other union republics under the Soviet regime, so too did oblast leaders of the Russian Federation consistently argue during the 1990s and beyond that they were getting the short end of the federal stick relative to the ethnically defined republics.[55] Republics were said to have been given unfair economic advantages and more political autonomy and power than the oblasts. Thus Yegor Stroev, then both Governor of Orel Oblast and chairman of the Federation Council (which until 2001 contained all Russian provincial leaders), repeatedly spoke out during his tenure against these "double standards" for Russian regions, admonishing that the Constitution guarantees equal rights to all regions. He went on to declare that "All peoples should get what they deserve, what they have earned, and not gain at each other's expense."[56] Some oblasts even took this complaint to the point of declaring themselves "republics" or

claiming "sovereignty" as had the ethnic republics during the late Soviet period. The most notable such attempt was the drive by Sverdlovsk Oblast to declare itself the "Urals Republic" in 1993.[57]

Individual oblasts, like the Russian Republic in the USSR, also frequently challenged the authority of the Kremlin in a wide range of policy areas in the 1990s, as has been thoroughly demonstrated by Stoner-Weiss. While these challenges sometimes were meant to fill voids created by central inaction on crises like wage arrears or social welfare, often the oblasts just did what they wanted regardless of federal authority.[58] A number of regions also issued declarations calling for Yeltsin to resign or be impeached, much like Yeltsin himself periodically did in his struggle with Gorbachev.[59] A leading Russian newspaper estimated that as much as 30 percent of all regional legislation, including that regulating property rights, tax, and customs policies, was in violation of federal law as of the year 2000.[60]

Such episodes tended to peak during moments of crisis, as in August 1998 when a financial collapse caused Russia's gross domestic product to shrink some 18 percent in just two months, forcing a protracted political crisis at the center that included the resignation of the Prime Minister.[61] Strongly reminiscent of Yeltsin's efforts to bring the Russian economy under Russian Republic control in the face of the late Soviet economic crisis, many oblasts were prompted by the August 1998 crisis to impose local price restrictions, to institute controls on the "export" of goods outside their territories, and even to introduce their own crude forms of currency.[62] The leader of one of Russia's largest regions (Sverdlovsk), also known as the initiator of the idea of the Urals Republic, even reported considering the adoption of a Urals "franc" to serve as local money in the wake of August 1998.[63] In mid-September 1998, while the economy

was still in decline, Russia's Ministry of Finance noted that over 60 of Russia's 89 regions had adopted their own austerity measures.[64]

While all of these actions, as well as efforts to turn oblasts into republics, were seen as threats to central control, the fact that the oblasts were divided meant that there was no immediate threat to Russian Federation rule as a whole. That is, there was no credible alternative to the central government as a provider of the kind of nationwide goods and services that these regions wanted but felt they were not getting in sufficient measure from the Kremlin authorities of that period. Indeed, had a core Russian ethnic region existed in the Russian Federation, it is not hard to imagine that it might have come directly to challenge the authority of the federal government, especially in times of crisis like the August 1998 financial collapse.

In fact, these oblasts did attempt to act collectively to redress the perceived wrongs during the 1990s. One of the earliest attempts to unite oblast leaders ("governors") in order to lobby for their particular interests was the formation of a Union of Governors after the USSR had collapsed. They succeeded in getting some lip service from Yeltsin's government and may have had a role in encouraging Yeltsin to adopt a Constitution in 1993 that appeared to establish the legal equality of republics and oblasts.[65] The Yeltsin Constitution even created an upper house of parliament, the Federation Council, that was explicitly to represent regional interests. After initially holding elections for Federation Council seats, the law was amended so that regional leaders themselves, along with the chairs of their regions' legislatures, were automatically members of this organ. Solnick's research has shown that the leaders of republics and oblasts frequently divided over issues of center-periphery relations.[66] Sverdlovsk Oblast, noted above for its attempt to transform itself into the Urals Republic, at one point went even further and brought many of its neighboring oblasts together to form a "united Urals Republic."[67]

As the theory elaborated above also expects, however, oblast leaders found the barriers to collective action too high to hurdle, for the most part. One of the biggest reasons for this failure to unite involved the active policies of central authorities. While they disagree on exactly how this was done, Treisman and Popov concur that throughout the 1990s the Russian government sought to preserve the federation, in part, through some combination of buying off troublesome regions and rewarding loyal ones through transfers of resources.[68] Moreover, Filippov, Shvetsova, Solnick, Stoner-Weiss, and others have long noted the vital importance of the Kremlin's effort to conclude "bilateral treaties" with individual republics and oblasts as a means of striking specialized deals to preserve the federation, a strategy Yeltsin himself has credited with helping preserve the federation.[69] Between February 1992 and the year 2001, Russia's central governments concluded 42 such bilateral treaties and some 200 related "agreements," many with oblasts as well as with ethnic republics.[70] Each treaty represents a tailor-made delimitation of powers, resources, and obligations between center and region, and Moscow used them skillfully during this period to defuse potential collective regional threats to its authority and policies even if this sometimes meant giving sanction to violations of the Constitution. For example, Solnick reports that the strategic use of bilateral agreements managed to undermine the united Urals Republic project by "buying off" Orenburg Oblast and to ensure that Krasnodar would not use the chaos on its Chechnya border to threaten central authority.[71] Thus, not surprisingly, regional leaders that might have been in a position to aspire to unite the Russian regions, notably 1996-2001 Federation Council Chairman Yegor Stroev, spoke out against bilateral treaties in principle, although few regions appeared to be willing to refuse a lucrative payoff when offered.[72] Yeltsin was also able to exploit the division of Russian territory into oblasts through electoral politics by supporting a key governor's reelection bid (such as

Stroev's), for example, in order to encourage that governor not to "bandwagon" around other governors that might be attempting to block important central initiatives, such as economic reforms.[73]

In addition, it should not be overlooked that carving out the oblasts that now exist in the Russian Federation created a wide range of particularist economic and political interests that have frequently been at odds with each other. Often these internal conflicts have overpowered attempts to forge common stands on nationwide issues, providing yet another barrier to Russian-region collective action that could potentially challenge the Russian Federation.[74] One such cleavage has involved large, economically powerful regions that have been net donors to the federal budget and those that have been net recipients.[75] For example, big regions blocked a bill in 1997 that would have strengthened the Federation Council and instead approved a much weaker law in 1999.[76] When political entrepreneurs competed to form powerful "governors' blocs" for the 1999 Russian parliamentary (with an eye to the 2000 presidential) elections, none succeeded in attracting all governors and all major such attempts contained both republics and oblasts since the basis for cooperation involved other issues like federal transfer policies, autonomy, and even personal or business ties. Indeed, the Yeltsin government had, through its policies of bilateral treaties and transfer payments, successfully broken potential coalitions of oblasts that could challenge its authority by actively changing some of their positions (and hence interests) in union structures. Needless to say, had these oblasts already been united in a core Russian Republic, the expression of "oblast" interests would not have been so severely hampered by sub-group disagreements on other issues.

This diversity of institutional frameworks and regional interests, in the absence of an overarching "Russian" core ethnic region, has also served to undermine any effort that might

have sought to forge an identification with a "core Russia" that consisted only of the set of oblasts, excluding the ethnic-minority-designated republics. So powerful has this effect been that extensive reading of both original and secondary source material has not encountered a single conceptualization of a "Russia" existing in "united oblast" borders. This strongly suggests that such a notion during the 1990s and the first half of the next decade has been even more "absurd" to Russian minds than was the idea of "Russia" seceding from the USSR as voiced ironically by the writer Rasputin in the Soviet parliament in 1989, as described above. Of course, a number of commentators have suggested that Russia might shed Chechnya or perhaps a few other troublesome regions, but it remains striking that even in the face of Chechnya's challenge no political entrepreneur has managed to advance prominently the kind of proposal suggested here. Instead, "Russian identity," when not based on purely "ethnic" criteria, has tended to be conceptualized primarily in terms of the boundaries of the Russian Federation as a whole or perhaps even the USSR,[77] while in some cases identification with individual oblasts has also been strong.[78]

The tactics of "divide and rule" and the barriers to the forging of a "united oblast" Russian identity not only spared Yeltsin the kind of dual power situation that he himself had created for Gorbachev, but also directly enabled him to reach cooperative agreements with ethnic minority regions (republics) and to reduce the security fears of their leaderships. The oblast complaints noted above were in many cases correct; republics were in fact getting better "deals" in the union than were many oblasts and the reason for this was that the republics demanded this special treatment (including resources and autonomy) as the price for restraining separatist activism.[79] Granting special autonomy to the ethnic minority regions also increased the credibility of central promises to respect republic interests by actually reducing the institutional

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capacity of the central government to renege and by increasing the institutional capacity of the republics to resist encroachment. By playing one oblast off the other, Yeltsin was able to ensure that a critical mass of oblasts was never able to block these transfers and inequalities as he himself had blocked many of Gorbachev's union-saving efforts. Strikingly, even given the August 1998 collapse of the country's financial system, the only republic in post-Soviet Russia to mount a serious separatist challenge has been Chechnya, but Chechnya had already declared its independence in the Soviet period, in November 1991, before Russia had become an independent state capable of pursuing these policies without interference from Soviet central institutions. In any case, Chechnya's secession attempt has never seriously threatened the breakup of the Russian Federation.[80]

All of this set the stage for the rise of President Vladimir Putin, who shortly after his election in 2000 launched an elaborate series of reforms designed to recentralize power. While Yeltsin' bilateral treaties and divide-and-conquer methods had averted the collapse of the state, they had many negative side effects, including a highly uneven legal space wherein seemingly every region participated in the federation on different terms. Thus, with the threat of national disintegration successfully contained during the tumultuous 1990s, Putin was able in the early 2000s to gradually roll back much of the de facto autonomy enjoyed by the regions that had originally been granted the most concessions, securing the mutual renunciation of many bilateral treaties and creating a new level of presidential oversight over the regions. This latter reform included the appointment of seven new presidential envoys to oversee the work of federal agencies—including such powerful institutions as the prosecutors and police—in seven new federal districts, each of which contained several regions. Importantly, Putin also cajoled and pressured enough governors to end the practice whereby regional leaders were automatically also

members of the Federation Council, thereby eliminating one of the few forums where regional leaders could easily gather for collective action. His administration has also strategically intervened in gubernatorial elections so as to eliminate or weaken troublesome governors, often using strong-arm tactics or finding ways to disqualify an opponent on the basis of a technicality. While the Kremlin has not always won, it has won enough to make most governors think twice about opposing central authorities too openly. The fact that there are many such regions and hence many such contests reduces the stakes for the Kremlin considerably in these machinations and means that no single challenge to a popular Russian-region leader will generate a nationwide backlash powerful enough to threaten the state.[81]

Overall, therefore, there is strong evidence that Filippov, Popov, Shvetsova, Solnick, Stoner-Weiss, Treisman, and others are right that strategic federal transfer and treaty policies played a large role in keeping Russia together during the 1990s, setting the stage for further consolidating moves by Putin.[82] But in comparative perspective, *this policy was only possible because of the particular institutional structure of the Russian Federation*, a structure that was not in place in the USSR. From this comparative vantage point, we can see that Gorbachev was in fact severely constrained in his activity by the constant challenge coming from a unified core ethnic region, the Russian Republic. Gorbachev did not have as many options for strategically placed payoffs as, and faced greater limits in his policymaking scope than, did Yeltsin and Putin in the post-Soviet period. The kinds of issues over which the core ethnic group clashed with the central government were essentially the same in the USSR and the Russian Federation—what critically differed was the institutional capacity of the core group to overcome problems of collective action to push for its collectively preferred outcomes independently of the Kremlin. Ironically then, it has been the very divided nature of the Russian nation in the Russian

Federation that has helped ensure the survival of its "empire," whereas the institutional unity of the Russian nation in the USSR led to its union's demise.

Implications

The preceding pages have argued that the most important reason why Russia has survived through the 1990s whereas the USSR broke apart is that the latter contained a core ethnic region as part of its ethnofederal structure whereas the former did not. While it is left to other work to determine how well this basic argument fits global patterns, a brief survey of some important cases that are frequently discussed in the literature on federalism and ethnicity is highly suggestive. For the purposes of this cursory survey, let us assert that one ethnic region can be considered "clearly dominant" in terms of population (hence constituting a core ethnic region) if it contains at least 20 percent more of the unionwide population than the next largest region or makes up an outright majority of the country's population.[83] By this simple criterion, the three cases that seem to be most frequently cited in major works as "successes" for ethnofederalism, notably India, Spain, and Switzerland, each lack a core ethnic region.[84] Moreover, those ethnofederal states that are most frequently cited as the clearest cases of "failure," including not only the USSR but also Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and the Nigerian First Republic, each possessed a core ethnic region.[85] While the "portability" of this argument will have to be established through rigorous comparative scholarship in other work, this summary survey of key cases, when combined with the careful comparison of Russia and the USSR presented above, constitutes at least a *prima facie* case that the logic highlighted here is important generally, deserving of further investigation in other world cases.[86]

What are the implications of this analysis if the conclusions are borne out by intensive comparative study? In the most general terms, when considering the likelihood of ethnofederal state survival or collapse, the present paper argues for a shift from an almost exclusive focus on the behavior of *minority* ethnic groups to at least equal concentration on the determinants of the behavior of *majority* or other *dominant* ethnic groups and, crucially, their interaction with central federal governments and minority regions. At least in the cases of Russia and the USSR, it was the behavior of key elements of the core group independently of the central government that made the critical difference between the survival of the former and the breakup of the latter.

The strong policy implication is that avoiding a core ethnic region might prove to make ethnofederalism a viable option for many divided societies seeking to establish working democracy while maintaining state unity. Ethnofederalism should not be ruled out for such countries due to the bad experience with it in the USSR and even Yugoslavia and the Nigerian First Republic. What *should* be ruled out, this study suggests, are ethnofederal designs containing core ethnic regions. Furthermore, rather than denying their minorities autonomy and instituting repressive policies for fear of losing their unions, federal authorities might do better to adopt the alternative of "pluralizing" the federal representation of the dominant group.

To be sure, this study makes no claim that core ethnic regions are the whole story. One can certainly find some cases of ethnofederal states with core ethnic regions that have nevertheless hung together, including Belgium, arguably due to complex power-sharing arrangements. One can also find cases of ethnofederal states without core ethnic regions that, while having avoided state breakup, continue to experience isolated secessionist challenges (as in Russia with Chechnya). In fact, the evidence is quite convincing that ethnofederalism does generally serve to reinforce ethnic difference by institutionalizing it.[87] Even if ethnofederalism is

adopted and a core ethnic region omitted, therefore, it would seem prudent for policy makers aiming for state unity to undertake additional strategies to promote peaceful intergroup relations. These might include institutional crafting of the kind advocated by Horowitz or Lijphart, the people-to-people initiatives supported by Kaufman, or reforms aimed at promoting the development of intercommunal civil society organizations, as Varshney recommends.[88]

This study does, however, help us refine our understanding of the *conditions under which the best effects of ethnofederalism can be realized and the most destabilizing dynamics minimized*. While ideally we would indeed avoid political systems that favor ethnic over civic or individual identities, the world sometimes presents us with situations where group politics cannot be avoided because ethnically charged conflict has already become rife. While some would suggest partition in such circumstances, this is a deeply problematic alternative that almost always involves great human cost since communities are rarely completely segregated and are seldom separated by easily defensible boundaries.[89] Furthermore, there are often quite compelling international interests that militate against partition. Many fear that carving an independent Kurdistan out of Iraq, for example, would greatly destabilize the region due to the presence of Kurdish populations in Iran and Turkey and to these latter governments' virulent opposition to Kurdish independence. The present study suggests that it may still be possible to preserve state unity without outright repression in such a situation. While far from ideal, when implemented without a core ethnic region, ethnofederalism may prove to be the best solution where ethnic identifications are already battle-hardened and where there is an international premium on continued state unity.

This study also suggests some important implications for many of the most pressing concrete issues facing policy makers as well as social scientists today. For example, if

Afghanistan's difficulties continue and if its leaders opt for a federal solution as some suggest[90], the present study would warn against creating a single region for the plurality Pashtun group alongside regions for other groups (such as Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Hazaras) since such a region could constitute a core ethnic region. Minorities within Iraq, as well as some in the Bush Administration, have indicated a preference for ethnofederalism as a way to manage ethnic diversity and histories of conflict among regional groups in post-Saddam Iraq.[91] This study would strongly advise resisting the temptation to play to the sympathies of that country's majority (or near-majority) of Shiite Arabs by carving federal territories with the aim of giving them a single region that would isolate the Sunni group in which Hussein has his roots. Such a Shiite region could well constitute a core ethnic region and could thus set in motion many of the problems identified above in the case of the USSR, if not a more disastrous chains of events akin to those witnessed in Yugoslavia.

Policy makers can also draw crucial lessons for other potential specific problems that are only now appearing on the horizon. For one thing, the study warns that the delicate Bosnian confederation, bifurcated between the Serb Republic and the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, might be in danger of eventual collapse once NATO troops disappear.[92] It also implies that China (in which the dominant Han Chinese are divided into multiple administrative regions alongside China's ethnic minority regions) would have a much better chance of surviving democratization intact than did the USSR if it indeed devolved significant democratic authority to these regions, making the country truly "federal"; a democratic federal China is more likely to resemble Russia than the perestroika-era USSR. Turning to the case of the Russian Federation with which we began, the logic developed here would disabuse President Putin of following Russian nationalist calls to dramatically reduce the number of oblasts since this would make collective action (and

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hence a collective challenge to federal sovereignty) from the core Russian ethnic group easier rather than harder, endangering the federation.[93] Furthermore, while institutional theory typically holds that integration projects are more difficult the greater the numbers of states involved, this theory counterintuitively suggests that the European Union will be more likely to *survive* the *greater* the number of other members it attracts since this will reduce the probability that Germany will come to act like a core ethnic region. While much more research must be done before we can have full confidence in these speculative exercises, the path of study outlined here would appear to be fruitful.

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[1] Bunce 1998, 1999; Leff 1999.

[2] For example, Kapuscinski 1994. Many other examples of such views are cited by Lapidus 1999; Alexseev 1999; and Treisman 1999.

[3] A federal state is any state with (A) a federal constitution, as specified by Riker 1964 to be "federal if (1) two levels of government rule the same land and people; (2) each level has at least one area of action in which it is autonomous; and (3) there is some guarantee (even though merely a statement in the constitution) of the autonomy of each government in its own sphere"; *and* (B) at least the minimum level of democracy needed such that the concept of regional autonomy has some meaning, including some kind of direct popular election to state organs of the highest level of territorial governance unit underneath nationwide state organs.

[4] While the USSR, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia each endured for decades as dictatorships, each was an ethno*federal* state (see definition in footnote 3) for just a few years, that is, only after minimal democracy and autonomy were granted to their main provinces in 1989 and 1990.

[5] Calls for ethnofederalism for Afghanistan can be found in Shahrani 2001 and for Iraq in Makiya 2002; Rubin 2002; and Slevin 2002.

[6] On the post-communist cases, see: Brubaker 1996; Bunce 1998, 1999; Crawford 1998; Laitin 1998; Lapidus 1992; Leff 1999; Roeder 1991, 1999; Slezkine 1994; A. Smith 1992; and Suny 1993. On African cases, see: Mozaffar and Scarritt 1999; and Wamala 1994. On Canada, see

Meadwell 1995. For a treatment of important problematic incentives generated by ethnofederalism generally, see Snyder 2000a.

[7] Brass 1992; Gurr 1993; Kohli 1997; Lijphart 1977, 1995; G. Smith 1995.

[8] Bunce 1999; Hechter 2000; Horowitz 1985; Jalali and Lipset 1992-93; Kohli 1997; Leff 1999; Lemco 1991; Linz and Stepan 1992, 1996; Watts 1994.

[9] Bunce 1999; Alexseev 1999; Lapidus and Walker 1995; Stepan 2000.

[10] Hanson 1999. See also Lapidus 1999 and Alexseev 1999.

[11] Alexeev 1999; Filippov and Shvetsova 1999; Lapidus 1999; Popov 2002; Solnick 2000; Stoner-Weiss 1999; Treisman 1999.

[12] Treisman 1999.

[13] Lapidus 1999; Lapidus and Walker.

[14] Lapidus 1999; Lapidus and Walker 1995.

[15] Lapidus 1999, 75-6; Lapidus and Walker 1995.

[16] Hale and Taagepera 2002.

[17] Dunlop 1994; Hough 1997; Kotkin 2001; McFaul 2001; Suraska 1998.

[18] See Subtelny 1994.

[19] The fact that such a seemingly moderate province as Ukraine could become the most important separatist region in the USSR within a couple years also warns us not to underestimate the separatist potential of ethnic provinces in the Russian Federation; the ongoing conflict in Chechnya at a minimum suggests that this potential exists.

[20] For a more elaborate theoretical treatment of these dynamics, see Hale 2004. Some other authors have advanced related theses. For example, Lemco 1991 and Watts 1994 note that size disproportionalities matter, but for mostly different reasons than those that are here argued to be

decisive for union survival. Elazar 1987 notes in a sentence that federalism tends not to work well when one region dominates. Horowitz 1985 develops similar logic in his analysis of Nigeria (p.620), but his theoretical elaboration takes him elsewhere.

[21] Brinton 1965; Tilly 1975.

[22] On "community imagining" and its importance for state survival, see Anderson 1991 and Beissinger 2002.

[23] Fearon 1991; Keohane, King, and Verba 1994. See also: Tetlock and Belkin 1996; Elster 1978.

[24] This, in effect, is the basic method of "most similar" countries discussed by Przeworski and Teune 1982 and later elaborated by Keohane, King, and Verba 1994.

[25] Expanding the set of countries would also add leverage in testing the hypothesis. For an initial effort in this direction, see Hale 2004.

[26] This strategy is a variant of what Keohane, King, and Verba 1994, 217-8, call "making many observations from a few." Accordingly, the empirical discussion that follows does constitute the reporting of a "test" since it reports the results of empirical investigation not only of the originally observed divergence in country outcomes and country measurements on the key independent variable, but also on additional observable implications of the initial hypothesis, as Ross 2003, citing Daniel Posner, has observed.

[27] For convenience sake, this term refers to all regions within the Russian Republic and the current Russian Federation without explicit ethnic designations even though other categories (with no substantially different current meaning) are also used: *krais* and the two major *cities* of Moscow and St. Petersburg.

[28] Pipes 1964; Slezkine 1994.

[29] Bahry 1991; Hogan 1993; Watson 1994; Dmitrieva 1992.

[30] Bagramov 1991.

[31] *Izvestiia*, 23 May 1990, 4; 24 May 1990, 2. On the ambiguity of "sovereignty," see Walker 2003.

[32] Linz and Stepan 1996; Szporluk 1992; Tuminez 2000.

[33] Tuminez 2000.

[34] Dunlop 1993, 52.

[35] See, for example, *Vedomosti RSFSR* 1990, no.4, 81-3; and *Izvestiia* 2 August 1990, 2.

[36] *Izvestiia*, 27 August 1990, 3.

[37] See *Vedomosti RSFSR* 1990, no.6, 142; Hellmann draft; Johnson 2000; *Vedomosti RSFSR* 1990, no.7, 147, 149; *Vedomosti RSFSR* 1990, no.10, 173-4; *Izvestiia* 21 August 1990, 2; *Vedomosti RSFSR* 1990, no.11, 188-9.

[38] Pavlov 1993, 84. See additionally pp.24-6, 79, 83-4, 90-2.

[39] Person familiar with the thinking of Anatoly Lukianov. Interview with author, 23 April 1993.

[40] Lapidus 1992; Hale 2000.

[41] Roeder 1993.

[42] Taylor 2003.

[43] Gorshkov and Zhuravlev 1992.

[44] Remnick 1994, 471.

[45] Stepankov and Lisov 1992, 160-2.

[46] Stepankov and Lisov 1992; Gorshkov and Zhuravlev 1992, 111; Yeltsin 1994; Grachev, Pavel. Interview, *Sobesednik*, September 1991, no.36, excerpted in Gorshkov and Zhuravlev 1992, 113-5.

[47] *Vedomosti RSFSR* 1991, no.37, 1458.

[48] Kravchuk 2002, 106.

[49] Solchanyk 1993, 350-1.

[50] Solchanyk 1993, 351-3.

[51] Masol 1993, 72-4. Masol, Ukrainian prime minister during 1987-1990, was a member of parliament during these events.

[52] Kravchuk 2002, 120-1.

[53] Hanson 1999.

[54] As of the time of this writing, plans were underway to merge a few of these regions.

[55] Solnick 2000.

[56] *RFE/RL Newsline*, 18 September 1997; 18 July 2001.

[57] Herrera 2000; Startsev 1999.

[58] Stoner-Weiss 1999.

[59] For example, see *RFE/RL Newsline*, 1 July 1998.

[60] *Reuters* (Moscow), 14 May 2000, David Johnson's Russia List (hereafter DJRL).

[61] *RFE/RL Newsline*, 20 October 1998.

[62] For details on such actions in Kaliningrad, Kemerovo, Khabarovsk, Krasnodar, Krasnoiarsk, Kursk, Omsk, Samara, Smolensk, Stavropol, Vologda, and Voronezh oblasts, see *RFE/RL Newsline*, 9 September 1998; *Boston Globe*, 9 September 1998; *Boston Globe*, 10 September 1998; *RFE/RL Newsline*, 8 September 1998; *RFE/RL Newsline*, 22 September 1998; *RFE/RL Newsline*, 26 October 1998; and *Wall Street Journal*, 16 October 1998, A1, A11.

[63] *Interfax-FIA*, 9 October 1998, DJRL 2432.

[64] *RFE/RL Newsline*, 22 September 1998.

[65] See *RFE/RL [Daily Reports]* 13, 1993.

[66] Solnick 2000. On the Federation Council more generally, see Remington 2001.

[67] Herrera 2000; Solnick 2000.

[68] Treisman 1999; Popov 2002.

[69] Filippov and Shvetsova 1999; Solnick 2000; Stoner-Weiss 1999. See, for example, *RFE/RL Newsline*, 31 October 1997.

[70] *Polit.Ru*, 26 June 2001, 13:44.

[71] Solnick 2000.

[72] Filippov and Shvetsova 1999; Solnick 2000.

[73] For an example, see *RFE/RL Newsline*, 19 September 1997.

[74] For example, see statements by Aleksandr Lebed, then Krasnoiarsk Governor, in *Delovoi Vtornik*, from RIA Novosti, 18 August 1998, DJRL 2317.

[75] For example, some donor regions have sought to coordinate policy in some areas: *RFE/RL Newsline* 29 October 1997. For one list of which regions these are, see the East-West Institute's *Russian Regional Report* 4 (20), 27 May 1999.

[76] Solnick 2000.

[77] Tuminez 2000.

[78] Herrera 2000.

[79] Treisman 1997.

[80] Evangelista 2002.

[81] On Putin's federal reforms, see Reddaway and Orttung 2003 and Reddaway and Orttung 2004, which includes a chapter by the present author on the envoys and elections.

[82] Filippov and Shvetsova 1999; Solnick 2000; Stoner-Weiss 1999; Treisman 1999.

[83] This operational specification of "core ethnic region" is defended and elaborated, along with other key concepts, in Hale 2004. To summarize, the greater the preponderance of the core region, the more the dynamics described above can be expected to operate; 20 percent is an arbitrary threshold that is helpful in demonstrating the point.

[84] On their "success," see Brass 1992 (India); Kohli 1997 (India); Leff 1999 (Spain); Lijphart 1996 (India); Linz and Stepan 1992 (Spain); G. Smith 1995, 3 (Switzerland); Snyder 2000b, 274 (India).

[85] Bunce 1998, 1999; Crawford 1998; Leff 1999; Roeder 1991, 1999; Wamala 1994; Horowitz 1985.

[86] A first cut at empirically establishing global patterns is undertaken in Hale 2004.

[87] Bunce 1999; Crawford 1998; Leff 1999; Meadwell 1995; Roeder 1999; Snyder 2000a.

[88] Horowitz 1993; Kaufman 2001; Lijphart 1995; Varshney 2001, 2002.

[89] One leading advocate of partition in such extreme circumstances is Kaufmann 1996, 1998. An important criticism of partition can be found in Sambanis 2000.

[90] Shahrani 2001.

[91] Makiya 2002; Rubin 2002; Slevin 2002.

[92] Precise population estimates for Bosnia, however, are elusive.

[93] I am grateful to Rein Taagepera for suggesting this implication.