# ETHNIC ASSERTIONS AS A CHALLENGE TO DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN RUSSIA (1991-2001)

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## MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled, **"Ethnic Assertions as a Challenge to Democratic Consolidation in Russia (1991-2001)"** submitted by me in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** has not been submitted for any other degree of this or any other university.

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We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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*Woods are lovely dark and deep,*

*I have but promises to keep,*

*And miles..., miles to go before I sleep.*

My mind is captivated by the above lines of Robert Frost and every time I see her I feel that she personifies these immortal lines and I truly aspire to emulate her. This work is my first 'Archana Upadhyay to whom I am deeply indebted for her invaluable advice and guidance, unfailing patience, critical observation and support without which this study could not have been completed.

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AMIT KUMAR

*Amit Kumar*

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# ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| EU | European Union |
| FSRs | Former Soviet Republics |
| NGOs | Non-Governmental Organisations |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| FSU | Former Soviet Union |
| NIS | Newly Independent States |
| CEFTA | Central European Free Trade Area |
| RSFSR | Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic |
| CIS | Commonwealth of Independent States |
| CPSU | Communist Party of Soviet Union |
| ASSR | Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic |
| IDPs | Internally Displaced Persons |
| RNS | Russian National Assembly |
| OSCE | Organisation for Security and Economic Cooperation |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |
| PACE | Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe |
| EBRD | European Bank for Reconstructionm and Development |

# CHAPTER-I

# INTRODUCTON: CONCEPTUALISING ETHNICITY

## 1.1 An Overview

Though the term ethnicity is recent, the sense of kinship, group solidarity and common culture to which it refers is as old as the history of mankind itself. Ethnic communities have been omnipresent and transcended spatio-temporal dimensions,[1] playing important role in all societies. Though their significance and impact have varied considerably, they have always constituted one of the basic modes of human association and community.

Ethnic community and identity are more often than not associated with conflict, and more particularly political struggles in various parts of the world. We should note, however, that there is no necessary connection between ethnicity and conflict. Quite apart from some examples of ethnic conflict relations between ethnic communities and categories may be and frequently are peaceful and cooperative (Hutchinson and Smith 1996).

Ethnicity manifests itself in many ways. For the purpose of this study we are mainly concerned with the political impact of ethnicity, and conversely, the impact of political conflicts on ethnic community and identity.

There are many sources of ethnic conflict. Economic inequalities and transformations are in particular important. The perennial struggle for scarce resources embitter cultural differences, when economic inequalities are 'superimposed' on 'ranked' ethnic groups, severe conflict often results, especially when societies are undergoing rapid industrialisation. In addition to economic factors, cultural, particularly linguistic and religious differences are other major sources of ethnicity. Also, with the distribution of political rewards within poly-ethnic states, ethnicity aggravates.

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[1] Spatio-temporal means – of space-time or space and time together.

## 1.2 The Concept of Ethnicity

The term 'ethnicity' first appeared in the 1950s in the English language. It is first recorded in a dictionary in the Oxford English Dictionary of 1953. It was first used by David Riesman in 1953[2] (Hutnik 1991). Many definitions of ethnicity emphasise a common cultural pattern which separates the ethnic group from other immediate groups. Gordon (1964) viewed ethnicity as a sense of "peoplehood" created by common race, religion, national origin, history or a combination of these. Similarly Brass (1991) defined ethnic groups in terms of distinct social and cultural category. Theodorson and Theodorson (1969) defined an ethnic group as:

> ... a group with a common cultural tradition, a sense of identity which exists as a sub- group of a larger society. The members of an ethnic group differ with regard to certain cultural characteristics from the other members of their society.

Francis (1947), however, pointed out that although every ethnic group has a distinctive culture, this distinctive culture or a common cultural pattern doesn't automatically constitute an ethnic group.

Barth (1969) highlighted the limitation of such an approach which regards 'sharing of a common culture' as the sole criterion or the exclusive factor in the constitution of an ethnic group. Barth argues strongly that the cultural features of the ethnic group may change over a period of time due to contact and exchange of information with other groups, yet the sense of separateness, of distinctive ethnicity, the "we" feeling, more often than not continues to persist. Barth suggests therefore, that the focus of research on ethnicity should shift from the cultural factors exemplified by the group to the process of persistence and maintenance of 'ethnic boundaries' and 'the continuing dichotomisation between members and outsiders'.

Shibutani and Kawn (1965) gave an authoritative definition which subsequently established the lines of enquiry into research on ethnicity. They observed that:

> ... an ethnic group consists of those who conceive of themselves as being alike by virtue of their Common ancestry, real or fictitious, and who are so regarded by others.

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[2] The word 'ethnic', however is much older. It is derived from the Greek ethnos (which in turn is derived from the word ethnikos), which originally meant heathen or Pagan.

This definition focuses on the ascriptive elements of ethnicity emphasised by Barth rather than on cultural content.

The new approach that distinguished ethnicity from culture, witnessed a shift of relative emphasis from ethnicity as an aspect of social organisation to ethnicity as consciousness, ideology or imagination, during the eighties. It doesn't mean however that such a conception is totally new as the definition of ethnicity given by Max Weber (1968) demonstrates:

> We shall call 'ethnic groups' those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely it doesn't matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists.

The new emphasis on consciousness implies a definition of ethnicity in terms of 'Subjective States'. This type of a definition of ethnicity in terms of subjective states differs from definitions which also include objective features, like sharing the same language, religion, territory or history. The reason for using such a subjective definition is not to deny the relevance of 'objective features' such as language. Rather, it assumes that it is important to distinguish such features clearly from their 'ideological representation'. It is in order to study this variable relation between the objective reality and its representation and "use" that a subjective definition, a definition in terms of consciousness is to be preferred (Vermeulen and Govers 1997). They further argue that a subjective definition puts us in a better position to understand the historicity of ethnic categories and representations.

*Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* by F. Barth marked the transition to a new era of ethnic studies in the late sixties and early seventies. *The Invention of Tradition,* by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) and *Imagined Communities,* by Anderson (1983) played a similar role in paradigm shift in the early eighties. While Barth's approach focused on 'the social organisation of ethnic differences', as the subtitle of the book indicates, in the Hobsbawm and Ranger's work and Anderson's book, topics like the creation and transformation of ethnic identities are addressed. Since the ethnic group from the early eighties was conceived of as an imagined community, the study of ethnicity became above all, a study of ethnic-consciousness.

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There is however, a tendency of sometimes equating the notion of ethnicity with almost any kind of distinction between "us" and "them" or any kind of social identity. The criticism of Barth's position by Roosens (1994) relates to this issue. According to Roosens, the concept of boundary is the central if not defining element in Barth's notion of ethnicity. He argues that however useful that concept may be, it doesn't get at the heart of the matter: boundary may create identity but not necessarily ethnic ones. In Roosens' view the boundary metaphor should be supplemented by the kinship metaphor, adding a genealogical dimension. This is in consonance with the view of others like Horowitz (1985), who considers a myth of collective ancestry and Wolf (1988), who emphasized that 'imputed', 'stipulated kinship' and an 'ideology of common substance' are the distinguishing markers of ethnicity.

## 1.2.1 Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity is a complex subject. The sense of personal identification with the ethnic group and the identification by others as being a member of the ethnic group explains in part the concept of ethnic identity. The above attempt to understand the concept of ethnic identity by focusing on the psychological aspects of ethnic identity makes it possible to embrace the second and third generation whose overt manifestations of life-style may be identical with the dominant group but who may yet maintain varying degrees of identification with the ethnic group. Taylor and Simard (1979) define ethnic identity as:

> ... that component of a person's self-definition which is derived from an affiliation with a specified group.

In the past, this process of self-definition in relation to one's group affiliation was an unproblematic issue for the individual. Self-definition was derived directly from what was given at the time of the birth: a race, a language, a culture, a tribe, a history of the group's relationship with other groups in society. However, with rapid modernization, technological advancement and increased mobility, it is now possible to choose one's ethnic identifications in a self conscious way.

Most people today have multiple group affiliation which may be emphasized or minimized according to the situation. For example, a person serving in defense forces

is bound by the commitments to his fellow members in the organization both for his own survival as well as the survival of the group itself. At the same time he could be the member of an ethnic group. The situation would further be complicated if he is posted in a region witnessing ethnic turmoil involving his own ethnic group. Here he has to choose between his professional group commitment and commitment to his ethnic group. Thus as Wallman (1983) points out ethnic identity is not a fixed, inflexible commitment, steadfast and once for all. Neither it is necessarily singular: multiple ethnic identities may co-exist. Perhaps most importantly, ethnic identity is only one of many identity options.

However Vermeulen and Govers (1997) argue that ethnic identity can be distinguished from other social identities. They view ethnic identity as an identity which can be distinguished from other social identities by a belief in a common origin, descent, history and culture. Though, they also acknowledge the difficulty in distinguishing an ethnic identity from other type of identities. The authors have proposed a way out of this problem by viewing ethnicity as a variable, rather than in dichotomous terms.

After explaining the concept of ethnicity we would now try to situate them theoretically and thereby arrive at a theory[3] or set of theories which can be helpful in understanding the concept of ethnicity, particularly in the context of transitional democracies.[4]

The world today can be characterized by two simultaneous processes fundamentally opposite to each other. The first process leads us towards unification and integration of states at international level and of centralization at the national level. It is exemplified by the unification of Vietnam, Yaman and Germany as also by the

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[3] The word 'theory' is widely, even somewhat loosely, used in academic discussions and it certainly carries a wide range of connotations. This should be clear from the way a standard dictionary defines it. Theory means 'speculation', the analysis of a set of facts in their ideal relations to one another; "the general or abstract principles of any body of facts; pure as distinguished from applied science or art"; "a more or less plausible or scientifically acceptable general principle offered to explain phenomenon"; "loosely, a hypothesis, a guess" (For details see: ShriRam Maheshwari (1998) *Administrative Theory: An Introduction*).

[4] Transitional democracies are countries that are relatively democratic but show incomplete signs of democratic consolidation. They fall midway between an established democracy and non-democracy. Countries of this nature include Mexico, Chile, Turkey, most of the East-European countries, and the former soviet republics (FSRs).

existence of supranational organisations like the European Union (EU). At the national levels, driven by the compulsions of globalization national or central governments have assumed more de facto powers.[5]

The second process is of fragmentation and demands for autonomy and decentralization.[6] This trend broadly called "ethnicity" – emphasizing the right of a community to maintain its cherished identity, of pluralism, of return to the roots of life and culture, has become a source of instability of state frontiers as has been rightly pointed out:

> If any one form of violence has been more prevalent than any other, it
> seems to have been ethnic conflict (Ryan, 1990: X).

The upsurge of ethnic movements in the contemporary world couldn't be anticipated by the earlier assimilationist, primordial models of ethnicity. Similarly, Ardent (1973) felt that revolutionary wars will be at the centre stage of the world politics and will be a major source of political violence. Both the modernization theorists as well as the Marxist adherents of the Political-Economy School saw ethnic cleavages as remnants of a moribund capitalist and feudal age.

The worldwide upsurge of ethno nationalism in recent years, a resurgence of ethnic identification as the basis of political action in different societies, and the continued assertion of ethnic pluralism, not only in the third world, but also in the industrially advanced democracies have made it clear that, assumptions about modernization and assimilation were unfounded. Similarly the Marxian proposition that the market place would integrate the diverse identities of ethnicity, caste, language, etc. in the form of class has not been validated.

The increasing manifestation of ethnicity in its various forms has led to a re-examination of the role of ethnicity in developed as well as the developing societies.

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[5] The dictionary meaning of 'de facto' (Latin) is "existing as a fact although it may not be legally accepted as existing" (See – Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of English 2009). It is true in the Indian and Russian context particularly, where the central authority has exercised enormous powers, especially in economic sphere, on the pretext of economic reforms in India since 1991, and in Russia under President Putin since1999.

[6] Pakistan, the erstwhile Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia have already disintegrated. There are more and more demands for autonomy and decentralisation in various parts of the world; viz. from Russia in Europe to India and Sri Lanka in Asia.

The failure in developmental tasks has now increasingly been attributed to the ethnic phenomenon, besides factors such as financial, technical, administrative, or political shortcomings.

As a social phenomenon, ethnicity has evolved from historical and socio- territorial specificities which vary from country to country, situation to situation. However, there are some common structural sources, which can be derived from the common underlying trends in different societies and which can be held responsible for the upsurge of ethnicity. Accordingly, the ethnic phenomenon which includes issues such as, 'ethnic identity,' 'ethnic mobilisation,' 'ethnic assertions,' and 'ethnic conflict,' has become the subject of much theoretical enquiry in social sciences under different disciplines in the last five decades.

## 1.3 Theorizing Ethnicity

Over the last few years scholars have been asking pertinent questions: what are the politico–socio–economic and cultural factors that contribute to the phenomenon of ethnic revivalism in the modern world?; what is it about modern life, about industrial culture that leads people to think of primordial identities?; what is the impact of the process of globalisation on the individual?; has it increased their sense of security or has made them more vulnerable? There has been considerable academic and social debate in the last five decades on the underlying causes of the resurgence of ethnicity. No doubt the debate has helped to broaden our perspectives on the subject. But at the same time it has created theoretical divisions. There is little consensus among social scientists regarding the nature and characteristics of the problem. Various theoretical approaches compare with each other and the field is clearly divided into several schools. However, this shouldn't be viewed pessimistically, insofar as the sciences (including the social sciences) advance in knowledge by competition between paradigms and the eventual replacements of one paradigm by another.[7]

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[7] Science historian Thomas Kuhn described how a single truth or *paradigm* dominates a field of science at any one time, and that serious change in science occurs as one paradigm competes with (and overcomes) another. For example Newton's laws held sway for many years until they were shown not to apply in sub-atomic situations. Quantum physics arose as an explanation of what happens in these microscopic situations. For details see: *changingminds.org*.

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These theories are wide ranging. Broadly speaking, the current theories of ethnicity can be divided into two categories: (i) those which emphasize on cultural and psychological elements and (ii) those emphasising on economic and political factors. Within these two broad categories, the models have been variously described as primordialist, cultural pluralist, modernist and developmental, political – economy approach, elite competition, Marxist and neo- Marxists etc.

A brief survey of various theories here is important to understand ethnicity in a way that can be useful in analyzing the ethnic scenario, particularly in the context of transitional societies, like Russia.

## 1.3.1 Primordialism

The term Primordialism was coined by Shils (1957) and further developed by Clifford Geertz (1973) who explained it as follows:

> By primordial attachment is meant one that stems from the 'givens' - or, more precisely, as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed 'givens' – of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom and so on, are seen to have en ineffable and at times overpowering coerciveness in an out of themselves.

The social psychological nature of the primordial perspective forms the basis for a generalized sense of group consciousness. Ethnicity becomes a powerful identity merging the individual with the group. It is important to note that the primordial approach doesn't conceptualize ethnicity in terms of immutable human characteristics.

Primordialism has come under severe criticism. Unlike analyses that focus on the importance of social class, the impact of modernization or increasing levels of global interdependence, the primordial approach at its best is static. It fails to explain why ethnicity disappears during one historical period and reincarnates during another. It is also criticized for being insensitive to the importance of social structure.Geertz himself says:

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In modern societies the lifting of such ties [Primordial] to the level of
political supremacy – though it has, of course occurred and may again
occur – has more and more come to be deplored as pathological (Geertz
1996: 42).

## 1.3.2 Cultural Pluralist Approach

The cultural pluralist approach evolved by Furnivall and Bocke and continued by
Smith, Schermerhorn, Kuper and Van Den Berge has a framework similar to one that
is used by primordialists. It views ethnic group and cultural communities as the
principal social formation in the contemporary states. The main theme of this
approach has been that ethnic groups are the basic or fundamental entities of the
social order, 'actors of politics rather than those acted upon'. It visualizes within a
single society the co-existence of various groups having institutional systems (e.g.
social structures, value systems, belief patterns), which are mutually compatible.
They, therefore meet only in a very limited way outside the market place. In such a
culturally divergent situation, the structural arrangement of a political order leads to
the subordination of one group by the other. The end result is that these societies are
plagued by dissents and are marred by conflict (Narang 1995).

## 1.3.3 Modernist and Developmental Theories

Modernisation means the attainment of relatively higher levels of variables; such as
education, per capita income, urbanisation, political participation, industrial
employment, media participation, secularisation, gender equality etc. In early
modernising theory, ethnic identity referred to traditional obstacles which were
supposed to disappear in the course of development. Karl Deutsch the most prominent
theorist of this school argued that people will loose their local, parochial identities and
loyalties in order to identify themselves with the larger economic and political unit,
the nation. Communication revolution that began in the nineteenth century has played
an important role in the process of nation building, Deutsch emphasized (Ibid.).

However, our experience has shown these theories of integration of peoples were
seriously flawed. The contradictions of modernization came to the fore with the
passage of time and both the developed as well as developing countries witnessed the
upsurge of mobilization of people on ethnic basis.

Modernization theory provides an insight into ethnic assertions in present times in terms of non material interests competing with the material interests in the post industrial societies. However, the predictions or projections made by the modernisation theorists have not come true as modernisation doesn't explain the ethnic phenomenon in its totality. For that we need to look into economic and political explanations, as no social process takes place in the absence of politico – economic factors. One such approach is the political-economy approach. This approach is generally considered to be either associated with or influenced by Marxism.

## 1.3.4 Marxist Theory

The protagonists of Marxism were more interested in the class struggle under capitalism than in the ethnic issues. The Marxist theory considered ethnic groups as an unnecessary distraction, if not inhibitors to economic and political progress. Marxism underscored the fundamental incompatibility between the appeal of ethno nationalism and the seemingly more powerful, persuasive and important command of class–based interests. Yet, says Stack Jr. that the history of ethno nationalism documents or proves the primacy of ethnic bonds (Stack Jr. 1986).

The neo-Marxists however, recognise that ethnic groups are in a state of constant flux. Ethnic groups can't be solely responsible for ethnic conflicts; the contradictions of the wider society in which ethnic groups may or may not be significant actors should also be probed in. Smith (1981) argues that the emerging 'new orthodoxy' (neo-Marxists conflict theories) ultimately conceptualizes ethnicity as a 'transitional phenomena'.

In addition to Marxists, a section of liberal scholars also believe in political-economy explanation of ethnic assertion.

## 1.3.5 Political-Economy Approach

The political economy approach has both liberal and Marxist interpretations. However, within both these schools there are differences with regard to emphasis or preferences for one or the other aspect of economic activity. The high-sounding or lofty promises made by the liberal scholars became instrumental in escalating individual wants and 'channeling' into political processes excessive demands, which

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it couldn't satisfy. Arising out of inequalities and nonfulfilment of aspirations is also the feeling of relative deprivation, which some scholars view as a significant cause for ethnic assertions (Narang 1995).

## 1.3.6 Relative Deprivation

Ted Robert Gurr, in his classical work *Why Men Rebel,* explained relative deprivation as a gap between the expectations and perceived capabilities of a person vis-a-vis his economic situation, political power, and social status in relation to others in the society. The psychological aspects of agitation are implied here. It conveys the meaning that it is the feeling of being exploited rather than the actual exploitation itself that makes a person rebel. The theory of relative deprivation is a significant contribution towards an understanding of ethnicity, as the uneven development in many parts of the world adds fuel to the fire, by further antagonizing an already disenchanted group of people, which can be easily mobilised against the state or any other source of their perceived misery, viz. the dominant ethnic group (Ibid.).

Some observers therefore believe that ethnicity is being used primarily as an instrument in resource competition.

## 1.3.7 Resource Competition

The problem of ethnicity arises due to unequal distribution of resources, benefit and influence between different ethnic groups (Upreti 2002). Glazer and Moynihan state that:

> The strategic efficacy of ethnicity as a basis for asserting claims against government has its counterpart in the seeming case whereby government employs ethnic category as a basis for distributing its rewards (Glazer and Moynihan 1975: 10).

Resource competition model however has been criticized by Paul Brass on the basis that treating an ethnic group as just another type of interest group is an error. Brass, instead suggests the elite-competition theory (Narang 1995).

## 1.3.8 Elite Competition

Ethnic communities are created and transformed by elites in the respective ethnic groups, in modernising and in post-industrial societies undergoing dramatic social change. This process of social change invariably involves competition and conflict for political power, economic benefits, and social status between competing elite, class and leadership groups both within and among different ethnic categories. Ethnic self-consciousness, ethnically-based demands and ethnic conflict can occur only if there is some conflict either between indigenous groups and external elites and authorities, or between indigenous elites (Brass 1996).

Elite theory which rejects the resource competition theory, as the later neglects the importance of the cultural values and identities, itself ignorers those to a great extent by emphasizing that the ethnic idioms are mere expressions of basic elite competition for power-struggle.

The upsurge of ethnic assertions can be related to the economic consequences of the pursuit of the strategy of colonisation or internal colonialism, which leads to inequalities, stagnation or differential mobilisation.

## 1.3.9 Internal Colonialism and Labor Market Models

The essence of internal colonialism theory, first advocated by Latin American writers, is that the relationship between members of the dominant or core community within a state and members of the minority or peripheral communities are characterised by exploitation. It believes that ethnicity becomes revitalised as a means by which the periphery may break out of the bondage from internal colonialism; in sharp contrast to the belief that modernisation would lead to cultural homogenisation which would eventually render ethnic ties ineffective (Narang 1995).

Labor Market explanation likewise dwells on the issue of labor market segregation which sometimes is based on the cultural division of labor. A culturally divided economy which promotes job-competition on the basis of ethnicity is likely to result in an increased ethnic self and other feeling. It initiates the process of ethnic solidarity, antagonism and mobilisation. This approach combines both economic and

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cultural approach hence goes a long way towards helping us understand the ethnic phenomenon. But this model like the internal colonial model has a limited salience, explanatory only in some places and in specific situations (Ibid.).

The significance of ethnic and cultural loyalties and identity is not always dependent on economic factors. It may have its own independent basis. Cultural deprivation throws light on this aspect of ethnic phenomenon.

## 1.3.10 Cultural Deprivation

According to this view, one of the significant inducements to ethnicity emanates from the feeling of insecurity among ethnic minorities of their fear of getting lost in the culture of majority. The democratic system provides enough space for minorities to assert their culture-specific rights. Many ethnic groups mobilise themselves politically against the state of which they are part, if they feel they are discriminated or dominated. Of late this view has been accepted by scholars including the Marxist scholars, though not as an exclusive case.

## 1.3.11 External Factors

The spurt of ethnic conflict all over the world owes its sustenance to external involvement and support in some cases. The use of small and medium weapons by the ethnic groups, the large financial requirements for sustenance, and media access cannot be explained merely in terms of internal factors. However, the roots of ethnicity lie in the internal milieu, though external factors provide the much needed thrust to it (Ibid.).

## 1.3.12 Realistic Group-Conflict Theory

One of the best known theories of inter-group conflict has been leveled as "Realistic Group Conflict Theory". According to this position, inter-group hostility arises because opposing groups are competing for scarce external resources and group action is instrumental in winning the zero-sum game. This theory is applicable to situation where one group is acting to deny another group, access to valued resources, and commandeering these resources for its own group members (Sherif 1958).

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## 1.3.13 Rational Choice Theory

Situated far from primordialism is the rational choice approach adopted above all by Michael Hechter and Michael Banton. This theory reflects both, normative and structuralist explanation because both ignore the role of individual preferences. Hechter and Banton built models on the basis of individual pursuit of public goods. Ethnic organisations, the repository of information are joined by members of the group as long as the members are individually benefited (Hutchinson and Smith 1996).

After surveying the various theories and approaches of ethnicity, we can say that no single theory is complete in itself and a combination of various theories only can help us understand better the phenomenon of ethnic assertions. Studies on ethnicity fall into two major categories - (i) primordialism and (ii) instrumentalism, and as Gurr (1993) states:

> ... the first treats ethnic nationalism as a manifestation of persisting cultural identity based on a primordial sense of ethnic identity, the second regards ethnicity as an exercise in "boundary maintenance" (Gurr 1993: 167).

The primordialist approach takes ethnicity as a fixed characteristic of individuals and communities. Whether rooted in inherited biological traits or centuries of past practice now beyond the ability of individuals or groups to alter, one is invariably and always perceived as a Serb, a Zulu, or a Chechen. In this view ethnic divisions and tensions are "natural". Although recognizing that ethnic warfare is not a constant state of affairs, primordialists see conflict as flowing from ethnic differences. Conflict is understood to be ultimately rooted in ethnicity itself (Lake and Rothchild 1998).The most frequent criticism of the primordialist approach is its assumption of fixed identities and its failure to account for variations in the level of conflict over time and space.

The instrumentalist approach, on the other hand, understands ethnicity as a tool used by individuals, groups, elites to obtain some larger, typically material end. In this view, ethnicity has little independent standing outside the political process in which collective ends are sought. Ethnicity is primarily a label or set of symbolic ties that is

used for political advantage – much like interest-group membership or political-party affiliation. Critics of instrumentalism points out that ethnicity is not something that can be decided upon by individuals at will, like other political affiliations, but is embedded within and controlled by the larger society.

However, there is another view to understand the phenomenon of ethnicity, i.e. the constructivists approach. In the constructivist view, ethnicity is not an individual attribute but a social phenomenon. A person's identity remains beyond the choice or control of that individual. As with instrumentalists, constructivists do not see ethnicity as inherently conflictual. Constructivist accounts of ethnic conflict are generalisable, but only to other conflicts that are also based on socially constructed groups and cleavages (Ibid.).

But one fundamental question is left unanswered by these schools. How does culture, which forms the core of 'ethnie,' according to the primordialists, seemingly begin to metamorphose into a conscious group demanding a nation? Similar is the case with the instrumentalists who are unable to explain as to how certain cultural variables become autonomous agents for political transformation at such a large scale. The broad theoretical issues on ethnicity were required to be reexamined therefore, and the preceding discussion has tried to answer the 'cultural' question.

On their own, none of these theoretical approaches can explain all cases of ethnic political mobilisation. Our discussion has revealed the importance of diverse factors – cultural, economic, and political – for the politicisation of ethnicity. Attempting to combine these factors in one explanatory framework may allow for a better understanding of the reasons for the awakening and politicisation of various ethnic groups in the world today, including the ethnic groups in the Russian Federation.

The Russian social science tradition with respect to interpreting ethnicity is dominated by the primordial approach. The policies adopted by both, president Boris Yeltsin and his successor, Vladimir Putin demonstrate the importance attached to the primordial ties (Tishkov 1997).

Finally, the effects of ethnic cleavages and ethnicity on political systems and processes vary with the pattern of cleavages and nature of political structures. All

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ethnic movements do not aspire for complete independence or statehood. Nor do they always result in violent conflicts. To be precise, ethnic demands or aspirations can be of four types:

**(i)** for affirmative discrimination;

**(ii)** for greater autonomy and unquestioned power;

**(iii)** autonomy demand related to systemic change and

**(iv)** secession.

Similarly, ethnic movements can take various shapes ranging from peaceful constitutional protests to civil war, with ethnic or communal rioting and terrorism in between (Narang 1995).

The theoretical understanding of the concept of ethnicity, particularly in the context of transitional societies has been done in the preceding pages. The effect of ethnic assertions on the process of democratic consolidation, in transitional democracies, with special reference to their security concerns, which is an important attribute of democratic consolidation, will be dealt with in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER-II

# ETHNIC ASSERTIONS AS A SECURITY CHALLENGE IN TRANSITIONAL DEMOCRACIES

## 2. 1 Introduction

Ethnicity has many dimensions, but the question which remains central to ethnicity is ethnic self-consciousness. While attempting to conceptualise ethnicity in the previous chapter, the important role of ethnic self-consciousness in shaping ethnicity was underlined. In the present chapter we will try to understand how ethnicity impacts upon the process of democratic consolidation in transitional democracies. The focus here will be on the security concerns of these democracies, as security constitutes an integral part of the process of democratic consolidation.

Ethnic self-consciousness manifests itself either in the demand for the right to cultural survival or for political sovereignty (Das 2007). The challenge to the security of the transitional democracies emanates from these demands, particularly from the demand for political sovereignty. Before discussing, how the security scenario of these countries has been affected by ethnicity, it is pertinent to understand the notion of security and the meaning of transitional democracy.

## 2.2 Security

Post cold-war era is witnessing an expanded view of security. The old narrow view which dealt with military issues only, is giving way to a broader and comprehensive understanding of security that entails vast concerns of social, political, economic and environmental sectors leading to human security.

The concept of security is ambiguous and flexible in meaning (Jackson and Sorensen 1999). Generally, security is taken as to be free from threats. Garnett (1980) asserts that security means 'freedom from insecurity.' Similarly, Korani (1992) argues that security in broader sense covers everything that guarantees a life without fear. As he points out, "economic security" can be accompanied as it was in Eastern Europe before 1989, by intense fear and political insecurity. The military security of nation-states can be accompanied, similarly, by intense insecurity of individuals within the state. Thus, security is a complicated and contested concept. It is iridescent and manifold if seen in different perspectives or from different angles. Broadly speaking, the concept of security can be divided into two categories; (i) traditional concept of security, that stresses the importance of state security, and (ii) non-traditional or broadened concept of security that seeks social security. Before we delve into the

details about what constitutes traditional concept of security, and non-traditional concept of security, and their implication in the transitional democracies, let us briefly look into the theoretical evolution of these two concepts.

## 2.2.1 Traditional Concept of Security

In the 1940s emerged the Realists – the traditionalists who dominated the international relations. They believed in 'power-politics' with states as the main actors, laying stress on the attainment of more and more military power (Sutch and Elias 2007). Throughout the cold-war[1] the traditional concept of security remained a dominant paradigm as both policy-makers and experts strongly adhered to the conviction that international relations are essentially conflictual and that war is the only solution, a bitter reality that cannot be avoided or overlooked. State security remained primary concern and objective of the followers of the traditional concept of security. For them, state is the pre-eminent actor in world politics and all other actors such as individuals, international organisations, NGOs, etc. are either secondary or unimportant. The core values of traditional concept of security are territorial security and state survival. According to the traditional concept of security the foreign policy of any state is formulated around these two priorities or values.

## 2.2.2 Non-Traditional Concept of Security

A growing number of contemporary writers have sought for an 'expanded conception' of security, including a wide range of considerations (Kreiger 1993). After the end of the cold-war, the concept of security became a hot subject of debate, dissection and discourse not only among the scholars but also among strategists, policy-makers and economists. The traditional concept of security that had emphasised the 'centrality of state as pivot of political life' (Hough 2004), or state-centric security throughout the cold-war was questioned and the post cold-war realities rendered it somewhat implausible and untenable (Baylis and Smith 2001). The fast pace of globalisation and immense interaction amongst states demonstrated that security stakes of states are interlinked and interdependent, thus requiring role and contribution of all leading to collective action for the fulfillment of the goal of human security.

Now the concept of security is not confined only to military threats. Non-military threats have gained much more importance and attention, thus leading to the emergence of the concept of non-traditional security rather than the traditional security which prevailed during the cold-war era. Non-military issues such as,

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[1] The Cold War (Russian: Холо́дная война́, *Kholodnaya voyna*, 1947–1991) was the continuing state of political conflict, military tension, proxy wars, and economic competition existing after World War II (1939–1945), primarily between the Soviet Union and its satellite states, and the powers of the Western world, particularly the United States. Although the primary participants' military forces never officially clashed directly, they expressed the conflict through military coalitions, strategic conventional force deployments, extensive aid to states deemed vulnerable, proxy wars, espionage, propaganda, a nuclear arms race, and economic and technological competitions, such as the Space Race. For details see:*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_War*.

economy, trade, environment, and terrorism etc. have become part of non-traditional security, which is the current broader view, leaving behind the military issues only, coming under the narrow view in security studies. In the early 1990s, a new approach emerged as the 'Copenhagen School,'[2] led by Barry Buzan, which believed in a profound widening of the concept of security to non-military issues and also made an attempt to include sub-state groups into security analysis. Buzan (1983) argues for a view of security which includes, political economic, societal, environmental, as well as military aspects, and which is also defined in broader international terms. Further beyond this school is the 'deepening approach' led by Pluralists[3] and Social-Constructionists; these embrace the idea of human security arguing that the object of security should be individual people and not the state or sub-state groups (Hough 2004). In 1990s United Nations Development Program (UNDP) further developed this concept of human security. The concept of security must change from an exclusive stress on national security to much greater stress on people's security, from security through armament to security through human development, from territorial to food, employment, and environmental security (Ibid.).Nowadays governments are giving more stress on issues such as drugs, health and global warming which will fall under the comprehensive security.

## 2.2.2.1 Comprehensive Security

With the end of the cold-war not only new sources of threat and new trends emerged but the traditional notions of security also underwent changes. From traditional security we moved on to non-traditional security to comprehensive security. Etymologically, comprehensive security implies a satisfactory sense of security in all essential walks of life. To attain comprehensive security, we should initially identify and evaluate the incumbent threats emanating from varied external and internal

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[2] The Copenhagen School of security studies is a school of academic thought with its origins in international relations theorist Barry Buzan's book *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*, first published in 1983. The Copenhagen School places particular emphasis upon the social aspects of security. Theorists associated with the school include Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde. Many of the school's members worked at the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute. The most prominent critic of the Copenhagen School is Bill McSweeney.The primary book of the Copenhagen School is *Security: a new framework for analysis* written by Barry Buzan. For details see:*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copenhagen_School.*

[3] A tradition in international relations that argued that politics, and hence policy, was the product of a myriad of competing interests, hence depriving the state of any independent status. Pluralism can be seen to derive principally from a liberal tradition, rooted in Locke's 'Second Treatise of Government', and to pose an anti-realist vision of the centrality of the state in world politics. Pluralists make four key assumptions about international relations. Primarily, non-state actors are important entities in world politics. Secondly, the State is not looked upon as a unified actor, rather, competition, coalition building, and compromise between various interest groups including multinational enterprises will eventually culminate into a 'decision' announced in the name of the state. Thirdly, pluralists challenge the realist assumption of the state as a rational actor, and this derives from the second assumption where the clash of competing interests may not always provide for a rational decision making process. Finally, the fourth assumption revolves around the nature of the international agenda, where it is deemed extensive by the pluralists and includes issues of national security as well as economic, social and environmental issues. Hence, pluralists reject the 'high politics' 'low politics' divide characteristic of realism. They also contend with the predominance of a physical conception of power inherent in realism. For details see: *http://www.irtheory.com/know.htm.*

sources. Among the external threats, traditional threat to physical boundaries, injection of subversive ideas and insurgency movements , deprivation of essential goods upon which a nation is heavily dependent , through blockade or sanctions appear to be prominent. Similarly, the internal threats may emanate from economic, political, social ethnic and military sources (Cheema 2006).

Indeed, security is not only relational (relating to external environment and internal situation) but also comprehensive in nature. The comprehensiveness of security implies that national efforts aimed to attain an acceptable and satisfactory level of security must be directed simultaneously at various levels; (i) transformation of an overall international climate into a favourable one , (ii) a reasonable level of self-reliance, and (iii) a stable political system satisfying the sense of participation among the public in general, which in turn is likely to minimize the sense of deprivation , if not altogether eliminate it (Ibid.).

Many of the states today are grappling with the problem of security as they find it difficult to attain success at the above-mentioned three levels, particularly the third one i.e. working out a stable political system. Many of these states like, the Russian Federation, Mexico, Chile. Turkey and many East-European countries have embarked on a path to democracy, with varying degree of success. One thing is common about these democracies; they are branded as 'transitional democracies'. Most of these transitional democracies e.g. Russia, Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia etc. have another thing in common – the challenge to their security emanates from ethnic assertions. Before analyzing the security challenges emanating from ethnic upsurge in these countries, it is pertinent here to understand the meaning of 'transitional democracy.'

## 2.3 Transitional Democracy

A transitional democracy is a country that is relatively democratic but shows incomplete signs of democratic consolidations. They fall midway between an established democracy and non-democracy. Countries of this nature include, Mexico, Chile, Turkey, most of the East-European countries,[4] and the FSRs.[5] These are

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[4] The United Nations Statistics Division developed a selection of geographical regions and groupings of countries and areas, which are or may be used in compilation of statistics. In this collection, the following ten countries were classified as Eastern Europe, Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Ukraine. The assignment of countries or areas to specific groupings is for statistical convenience and does not imply any assumption regarding political or other affiliation of countries or territories by the United Nations. Rather than being geographically correct, United Nations' definition encompasses all the states which were once under the Soviet Union's realm of influence and were part of the Warsaw Pact. For details see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Europe.

[5] The post-Soviet states, also commonly known as the Former Soviet Union (FSU) or former Soviet republics, are the 15 independent nations that split off from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in its breakup in December 1991. They were also referred to as the Newly Independent States (NIS), notwithstanding that the Baltic states consider themselves to have resumed their pre-World War II sovereignty upon their separation from the Soviet Union. For details see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post-Soviet_states.

countries undergoing a political process of movement establishing a democratic political system, initiated either from above or below or a combination of both, allowing bargaining and compromise among different political forces for the resolution of social conflicts, institutionalising the pluralist structures and procedures by which different political forces are allowed to compete over the power, regularising the transfer of power, and engaging in the fundamental transformation of political structure.

In 1970 few American comparative political scientists were preoccupied by democracy and democratisation. Issues of development and dependency, political order and revolution were the main interest areas of the scholars. Dankwart A. Rustow's article, "Transition to Democracy" in *Comparative Politics* was a pioneering work of its kind (Anderson, 1997). Rustow (1970) pointed out:

> The factors that keep a democracy stable may not be the ones that brought
> it into existence; explanations of democracy must distinguish between
> functions and genesis.

Thus did Rustow open the conceptual space for considering democratic transition independently from democracy (Anderson 1997).

## 2.3.1 Transitions

The interval between an authoritarian political regime and a democratic one is commonly referred to as the transition period. The beginning is marked by the dissolution of the authoritarian regime, which is quite often identified with first signs of mass mobilisation, the end by the establishment of a new form of government that gains legitimacy through democratic elections (O' Donnell and Schmitter, 1986).Similarly, Bermeo (1997) views transition as the time between the breakdown of the dictatorship and the conclusion of the first democratic national elections. Munck and Leff (1997) defined transitions as "periods of regime change." It is reasonable to assert that transitions have beginnings and they must have ends, but their fluidity makes clear demarcation difficult (Welsh, 1994). Smith (1999) writes:

> However, there is an overall consensus that transition constitutes a process
> of change from beginning to end, a series of multi-dimensional, fluctuating
> and interdependent stages, embodying the remaking of institutions, social
> values and ways of doing things (Smith 1999: 2).

## 2.3.1.1 Characteristics of Transition

While there are individual, national variations with regard to the speed, methods, and players involved in transitions, they have a number of features in common (Welsh, 1994):

First, transitions periods are characterised by the need to address certain crucial issues within a stipulated timeframe. Some of the major issues in the process of transition are addressed in the table 2.3.1.1

**(Table: 2.3.1.1)Transition Processes in Central and Eastern Europe: Main Issues of Conflict Resolution**

| |
|---|
| Political: |
| Reform of electoral system |
| Reform of structure of government (including issues of decentralisation) |
| Selection of new political elite |
| Development of institutions of interest articulation and interest aggregation (e.g., political parties, interest groups) |
| Constitution writing |
| Prosecution and purge of communist party officials an members of security apparatus |
| Restitution of past injustices |
| Reform of media sector. |
| |
| Economic: |
| Macroeconomic stabilisation (e.g., reform of monetary and fiscal policies |
| Price reform (e.g., price liberalisation, currency convertibility) |
| Structural reform (e.g., privatisation, trade liberalisation) |
| Institutional reform (e.g., reform of legal and banking systems) |
| Educational reform (e.g., management training). |

Second, transition periods are characterised by great uncertainty with regard to both the process and the results. Disturbing signs of governmental instability, stalemates in decision-making, the emergence of violent protests, and war involving different ethnic groups, as in the former Yugoslavia, reinforce the notion, that the process of and the outcome of transitions from different forms of authoritarianism are not linear and are often marred by insecurity and uncertainty of all kinds.

Third, previously built authoritarian structures are altered or modified during a transition period, as it is not conducive for effective political communication among a host of political actors, which come into existence during this period.

Fourth, transitions are elite-centered. Irrespective of whether regime change has been initiated from above by the political elites, or from below by the masses, the terms of transitions are dictated by emerging elites and not by the public (Burton and Higley 1987).

Last but not the least, transitions involve bargaining. However, negotiations may take a variety of forms depending on the political environment.

In summation, we can say that that the periods of transitions are characterised by a number of specific features which aim at both change and consolidation. These features help us understand the complexities and challenges of transition but are also instructive in understanding the character of the process.

## 2.3.1.2 Transitions and Conflict Resolution

Generally, we distinguish among three major means of conflict resolution: command and imposition, bargaining and compromise, and competition and cooperation. Although these three models are present in all political systems, their relative significance varies considerably. In authoritarian political system conflict resolution is based largely upon methods of command and imposition, which take the form of rule by decree, force, or exclusion and the mutual denial of legitimacy. Alternately, competition accompanied by cooperation lies at the heart of pluralist politics (Schmitter and Terry 1994). Welsh (1994) suggested that bargaining and compromise lie at the heart of the transition process. Welsh argues that the transition to democracy is also a transition in the modes of conflict resolution and the examples drawn from Central and Eastern Europe are indicative of transition processes in other settings as well. The first stage in the transition to democracy is characterised by the switch from command and imposition to intense bargaining and compromise. Once the transition enters the phase of consolidation, bargaining and compromise decline in favor of more competitive modes of conflict resolution.

While bargaining and compromise contributed significantly to the peaceful and orderly transfer of power and the institutionalisation of pluralist political structures in Central and Eastern Europe, the desirable progress toward the process of consolidation of democracy in these countries has been hampered by unresolved issues of power distribution and, to some extent, by conflictual elite attitudes. Many of the current problems in the region- governmental instability, ethnic conflicts, and political apathy- can be traced at least partly to the premature eclipse of bargaining and compromise in conflict resolution. The progress toward democratic consolidation, however, is dependent on both competition and cooperation (Ibid.).

## 2.4 Democratic Consolidation

Democratic consolidation is the process by which democracy becomes so broadly and profoundly legitimised among its citizens that it is very unlikely to breakdown. It involves behavioral and institutional changes, which normalise democratic politics and narrow its uncertainty. Many scholars in advancing definitions of consolidated democracy enumerate all the regime characteristics, which would improve the overall quality of democracy. However, a narrow definition of democratic consolidation, which includes behavioral, attitudinal, and constitutional dimensions, will be a standard definition of the concept (Linz and Stepan 1996). Essentially, a consolidated democracy is a:

> ... political regime in which democracy as a complex system of
> institutions, rules, and patterned incentives and disincentives has become
> in a phrase, "the only game in town" (Linz and Stepan: 15).

*Behaviorally*, a democratic regime in a territory is consolidated when no significant national, social, economic, political, or institutional actors spend significant resources

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attempting to achieve their objectives by creating a non-democratic regime or by seceding from the state. *Attitudinally*, a democratic regime is consolidated when strong majorities of public opinion, in spite of all odds faced by them demonstrate their faith in the democratic procedures and institutions, as the most appropriate way of governance, and the pro-democratic forces have outnumbered the anti-democratic forces. *Constitutionally*, a democratic regime is consolidated when governmental and non-governmental forces equally become subject to, and accustomed to, the resolution of conflicts within the bounds of the specific laws, procedures, and institutions sanctioned by the new democratic process. It entails the supremacy of the rule of law (Ibid.).

We have discussed above the various facets of democratic transition and also, how and when the process of democratic transition culminates into democratic consolidation. Now we shall try to show how ethnic assertions pose security challenges in transitional democracies, which characterise great uncertainty with regard to both, the process and the result. As we have understood security as 'comprehensive security,' which implies a satisfactory sense of security in all walks of life, it will be worthwhile to analyse the security challenges posed by ethnic assertions in the transitional democracies, in a comprehensive manner, and thereupon, to evaluate the progress made by these transitional democracies toward democratic consolidation, which reduces, if not altogether eliminates uncertainty, by the institutionalisation of uncertainties. It will in a good measure, reflect upon the security challenges posed by ethnic assertions in transitional democracies. We will now proceed with an overview of the prevailing ethnic-scenario in these democracies.

## 2.5 An overview of Ethnic-Scenario in Transitional Democracies

Since the end of the cold-war the world has witnessed a growing number of incidents of ethnic violence. Gurr (1994) suggests that the post cold-war period did see an upsurge in ethnic conflict but this was the continuation of a trend that began in the 1960s. Although, almost every region of the world has its own Kosovo, and Chechnya, the frequency and the magnitude of such violence are most prominent in the transitional democracies of East Central Europe and the FSRs. As the countries in these regions are mostly multi-ethnic, and also most of the countries are new to democracy, the challenges have become manifold.
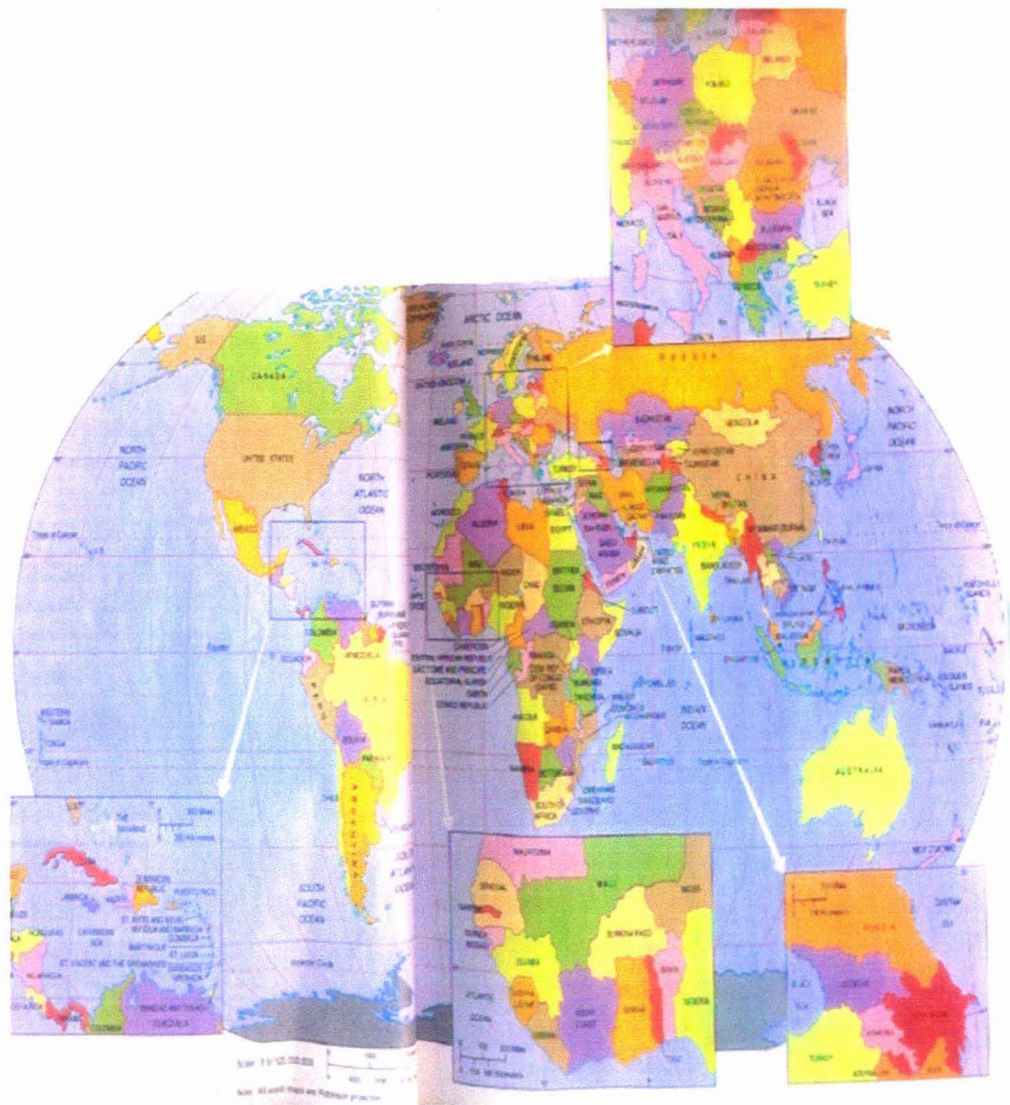
**Figure 2.5 World Map Depicting Transitional Democracies**

## 2.5.1 East Central Europe

Of the 122.4 million people present in 1991 (a total population similar to Japan), two-thirds spoke Slavonic language and 60 percent were western Christians, while 33 percent belonged to eastern Christian (Orthodox) churches and 7 percent were Muslims. The cultural contact-zone between the Orthodox and the western Christian nations correlates roughly with the Hungarian- Romanian and the Hungarian-Serbian ethnic boundaries in Transylvania and Vojvodina. In this area between the Baltic, Adriatic and Black seas the most populous nations are Poles (30.7 percent, 37.5 million), Romanians (16.7 percent, 20.5 million), and Hungarians (10.4 percent, 12.7 million), while Albanians Bulgarians, Czechs, Serbs and Slovaks each number 5-10 million. Albania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland are ethnically the most uniform (95-100 percent) with the greatest ethnic stability (see fig...), while Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia – with a high minority ratio of 34-47 percent

arising mainly from the Muslim Albanian population – show extreme instability. Elsewhere, the ratio of national minorities varies between 10 and 15 percent. In the north (Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine) there is an almost perfect coincidence of the state and ethnic borders, mainly due to the ethnic cleansing and forced migrations of 1944-1950. But in the Carpathian-Pannonian basin and in the Balkans a highly mixed population was inherited from the Hapsburg and Ottoman empires, and persisted despite repeated modifications of state boundaries after 1918 leading to severe economic crisis and war with some ethnic cleansing. At present the main minority groups are Hungarians (2.8-3 million), Albanians (2.2), Roma (1.2-4.5), Muslims (1.0), and Turks (0.9) and they remain potential sources of tension (Kocsis 2001).
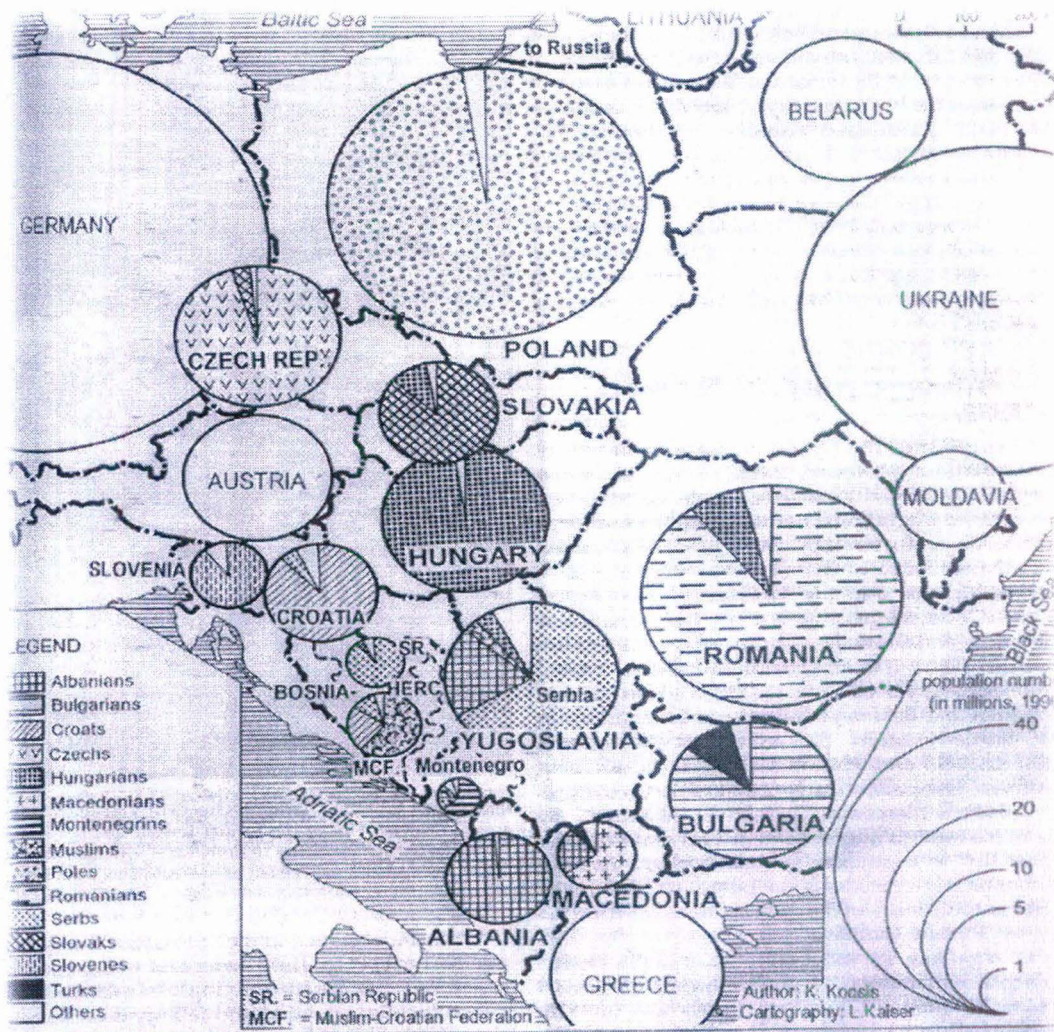


**Figure 2.5.1 East-Central Europe**

## 2.5.1.1 The Hungarian Question

Following the ethnic cleansing of most Jewish and German minorities, the most severe ethnic tensions have arisen from the presence of Hungarian minorities in areas lost by Hungary in 1920. The number of people involved estimated at 2.7-3.0 million

in early 1990s, is very considerable and exceeds the population of 87 countries in the world today. And this must be seen against the background of migration to post-1920 'Trianon Hungary' by some 720,000 Hungarians from the neighboring states of the former Czechoslovakia, Romania, and the former Yugoslavia due to various forms of discrimination, which sometimes amounted to total loss of civil rights. Today, a total of 52 percent of Hungarian minority populations, adding up to almost 3.0 million persons, live in areas adjacent to Hungary, (south Slovakia, south-western Transcarpathia in Ukraine, north-western Romania and northern Vojvodina in Yugoslavia-Serbia) and another 27 percent comprise the ethnically homogeneous Hungary-Szekely region in eastern Transylvania. These concentrations are important for ethnic identity because culture, including the purity of the mother tongue, can be preserved through permanent (and often exclusive) reliance on family ties with Hungary and access to Hungarian mass-media. However, from the point of view of the states concerned, frontier zones with a majority Hungarian population may be seen geopolitically as a threat to the ideal of a homogeneous nation-state and a potential source of instability associated with a 'fifth column' of Hungarian irredentism, which should be neutralised. They may also be seen, though less pervasively, as areas where inter-ethnic struggles could lead to the redrawing of frontiers in Hungary's favor (Ibid.). However, since 1994, Hungary with over 4 million co ethnics in the neighboring states has categorically rejected seeking border revisions in its favor (Gallagher 2003).

### 2.5.1.2 The Roma Question

The overwhelming majority of the world's seven million Roma live in Europe and nearly five million are in post-communist countries, where they are often referred to as Gypsies. Traditionally, the Roma have a mobile lifestyle and are also strikingly heterogeneous in terms of anthropological features (dark skin and hair), culture (while often speaking the mainstream language, however) and demography (with a high natural increase). However whereas in the past they have played a useful economic role as unskilled workers, their integration has been undermined during the current transformation through falling demand for their labor aggravated by their unsuitability for alternative work due to lack of qualifications. In response to prevailing labor market discrimination, many have turned to traditional occupations befitting their lifestyle and fostering their independence (retail trade, equipment repairs, entertainment – especially music-making- and a range of seasonal occupations).At the same time Gypsies have become primary targets of ethnic discrimination as part of the social aggression linked with the impoverishment of society in general (Kocsis 1994). With liberal border regimes they have become prominent in east-west migration, although the growth of political and social organisations among the Roma is fostering self-awareness and a willingness to play a constructive role in the civil society. But groups like the Roma which have not developed a national consciousness have few supporters outside the international human rights community (Gallagher 2003).

## 2.5.2 The Balkans

In a geographical and cultural sense, the Balkan Peninsula, with a population of 57 million South of the Danube and Sava rivers, and the mountains of the southern Carpathians, has acquired an infamous reputation over the past century as an unstable region of ethnic and religious conflict, national fragmentation and economic backwardness over the past 100 years following six centuries of Ottoman-Turkish rule between the fourteenth and twentieth centuries (Kocsis 2001). The area is complicated not only in terms of ethnic, national and religious diversity, but it is also politically very complex (Uzgel 1998). Social, cultural and socio-anthropological factors such as the prevalence of patriarchal values and a popular tradition of heroism are held responsible for the assumed inclination of Balkan people for violence. Calic (2003) asserts that the Balkan people's attachment to war contains a strong emotional component which is also central to modern nationalism and folk tradition. Balkan epic poetry is well known for its glorification of acts of revenge like torture and killing committed by warlords, e.g., the 'hajduks.'[6]Nevertheless, the frequent use of historical and cultural symbols during the war does not mean that the roots of violence in the Balkans can be traced back to the folk tradition. To explain the Bosnian war as a result of misguided folk tradition will be a folly.

The prospect of peace in the Balkans, however, has become brighter in recent times. In central Europe, ethnic nationalism is being challenged by the formation of the Central European Free Trade Area (CEFTA) which is being encouraged by the West. The prospect of ethnic peace in the Balkans would be strengthened by its extension to Southeastern Europe. In November 1997, the leaders of all the Balkan states met for the first time in Greece. The outcome of the meeting in terms of practical cooperation however remains to be seen (Gallagher 2003).

## 2.5.3 The Russians and the Russian Federation

Of 149 million Russians living around the world, 123 million (82.5 percent) are citizens of the Russian Federation while 7.8 percent live in Ukraine, 4.0 percent in Kazakhstan and 1.0 percent in Uzbekistan; while around 1.0 million of the 1.3 million Russians living outside the FSU are citizens of the USA. Due to a dramatic decrease in fertility rate there was a considerable drop in the share of Russians within both the then Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) (83.3-81.5 percent) and the FSU (former Soviet Union) (54.6-50.8). But when the FSU broke-up in 1991, 25.2 million Russians (15.0 million in Asia, 9.4 in Central Europe and rest in the Caucasus) found themselves as minorities and lost their relatively privileged position. Many moved to Russia as the result of army withdrawal, economic crisis or ethnic conflict. A 2.0 million migration surplus in the RF during 1991-1995 arose through a

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[6]The 'hajduks' (an Arab word which means at the same time 'renegade' and 'robber') were local warlords who, throughout the centuries, fought against the Ottoman rule over the Balkans. Popular folk songs have cultivated a specific 'myth of hajduks, who, in the collective memory of the Balkan peoples, became heroes.For details see: Calic (2003).

combination of 4.5 million immigrants and 2.5 million emigrants; the latter comprising Germans and Jews as well as Russians. The majority of the Russian refugees settled in Moscow and the North Caucasus.

As a result of the ethnically selective migration waves, Russians now comprise 83.0 percent of the RF population of Russia and they are a majority in twelve of the twenty one constituent republics and eight of the ten autonomous areas (*okrug*), the highest concentrations arising in Khakassia (79.5 percent), Karelia (73.6 percent), Buryatia (69.9 percent). However, apart from the north Caucasus, no serious ethnic conflicts have arisen, in part due to a scattered spatial distribution of minorities (like the Bashkirians, Chuvash, Mordovians and Tatars) as heavily Russified ethno-linguistic pockets within Russian ethnic territory: 67-77 percent speak their own language, while 83-95 percent speak Russian. Meanwhile, the minorities in the border regions who might advance irredentist claims (Altayans, Karelians, Kazakhs, and Tyvinians) are numerically small and in Siberia the non-Russian population of several hundred thousand (including 380,000 Yakutians) are scattered over some 9.0 million square kilometers (an area the size of Brazil) of sparsely populated territory, where they are minorities in relation to Russians living in urban settlements, river valleys and maritime coastal areas (Kocsis, 2001). While inter-ethnic and religious violence has been a feature of some regions in the early years of the post-Soviet transition, it has not occurred on the scale or with the intensity witnessed in Yugoslavia from 1990 to 1999. If the cases of inter-ethnic violence are mapped over the period of the post-Soviet transition (see table 2.5.3), it is clear that the occurrence of new violent ethnic conflicts has declined sharply since the early 1990s.

Fig. 2.5.3 shows the start date of occurrences of inter-communal violence throughout the post-Soviet states in the period from 1985-1998. Only acts of ethnic violence, rather than peaceful ethnic protest, have been included. As the post-Soviet transition unfolded, the incidence of inter-communal violence rose gradually in the late 1980s, reaching a peak in 1991-1992. Since then the number of new occurrences has fallen dramatically, with no new incidents since June 1995.
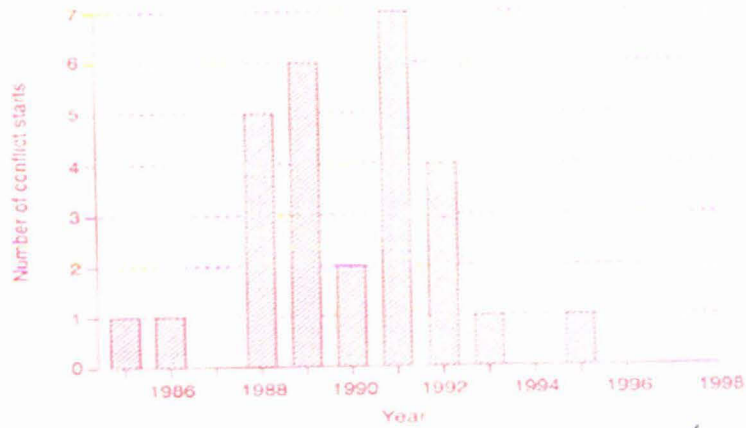
Figure 2.5.3 Start Date Of Occurrences Of Inter-Communal Violence In Post-Soviet States

The number of conflicts that have been resolved or have run their course, compared with those which remain unresolved and ongoing, is also revealing. These, along with the total incidence of inter-ethnic violence, are listed in Table 2.5.3.



Table 2.5.3 Occurrences Of Inter-Communal Violence In Post-Soviet States

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Many of the cases in table 2.5.3 such as the inter-ethnic riots in kazakhstan in 1986 or those involving the Soviet army in Georgia (1989) and Lithuania (1991) came to an end as a result of the Union republics' securing their independence from the Soviet Union.

However, Rubin (1998) from his observations regarding inter-communal tensions point out that while most of the conflicts of the post-Soviet transition are no longer violent, few have been resolved to the satisfaction of the parties, and tensions could reignite. By 1998, there were still 10 geopolitical flashpoints where inter-communal violence was ongoing, despite the fact that in some cases peace accords had been signed between the warring factions. Most of those conflicts involve secessionist or irredentist struggles. They are concentrated exclusively in the post- Soviet South, in Transcaucasia (Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia), Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan), Southern Russia (Chechnya, Dagestan, North Ossetia) and in the South-Western borderlands (Trans-Dniestria, Crimea) (Smith 1999).

Quite significantly, Russia has not undergone the Balkanization[7] which was widely predicted in the early 1990s. Since the formation of Federal Russia, only one republic, Chechnya, has militarily fought for secession from the federation (Ibid.). According to one study, important differences in the scale of secessionist movements were detectable amongst the other ethno-republics in the 1990-1994 period. The potentially most secessionist-minded was Tatarstan, closely followed by Bashkortostan and Shakha (Treisman 1997). While to varying degrees all the ethno-republics have continued to amass a variety of grievances against Moscow, the grievances alone cannot mobilize them behind the case of leaving the federation. Three possible explanations of why secessionism has not been the priority of the ethno-republics as was initially projected can be advanced (Smith 1996).

First, in order to engage successfully in secessionist activity an ethno-republic requires a regional political leadership willing and able to champion the cause of secession. Apart from, Chechnya political leadership has not called for outright statehood.

Second, a sense of communal self-identity- of a strong ethnic, cultural or linguistic affinity among the local population – is an important condition for an ethno republic to engage in secessionism. Russification has long since blurred clearly defined language boundaries, while any sense of a local division of labor – of the titular

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[7]Balkanization, or Balkanisation, is a pejorative geopolitical term originally used to describe the process of fragmentation or division of a region or state into smaller regions or states that are often hostile or non-cooperative with each other. The term has arisen from the conflicts in the 20th century Balkans. While what is now termed Balkanization has occurred throughout history, the term originally described the creation of smaller, ethnically diverse states following the breakup of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. For details see: *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balkanization.*

nation's occupying lower occupational positions within the ethno-republic – is becoming far less evident because of their increasing promotion to positions of power and status. Moreover, Russia's ethno-republics do not possess a pre-soviet period of statehood to look back upon, which could provide a powerful national symbol to mobilize the nation behind the cause of secession in the way it did for the Baltic republics and Georgia in their struggles to secure independence from the Soviet Union. In some ethno-republics, notably in Dagestan, the existence of a variety of indigenous ethnic groups with differing and often competing political interests also weakens the potential for secessionist mobilisation.

Finally, secession is unlikely to be supported without taking into account the probable economic costs of it for an ethno-republic and its population. For the poorer republics, their economic dependency on the federation is likely to continue to outweigh the greater and uncertain economic costs of secession. Even for energy - or resource-rich ethno-republics such as Sakha, Tatarstan, and Bashkortostan, which are less dependent on Moscow for economic subsidies, a potential secessionist leadership would face an uphill task convincing its constituents that the relative security of a federal market should be jettisoned for dependency on a global trading regime, in which the likelihood of securing its own market niches as a sovereign state would be fraught with dangers.

For the present at least it would seem that the ethno-republics are committed to obtaining as much as they can from the federation without losing completely those components of the federation arrangement that they value. However, the federation's inability to handle a series of ongoing political and fiscal crises could prompt the least economically dependent republics to re-evaluate their attitudes towards remaining part of Russia.
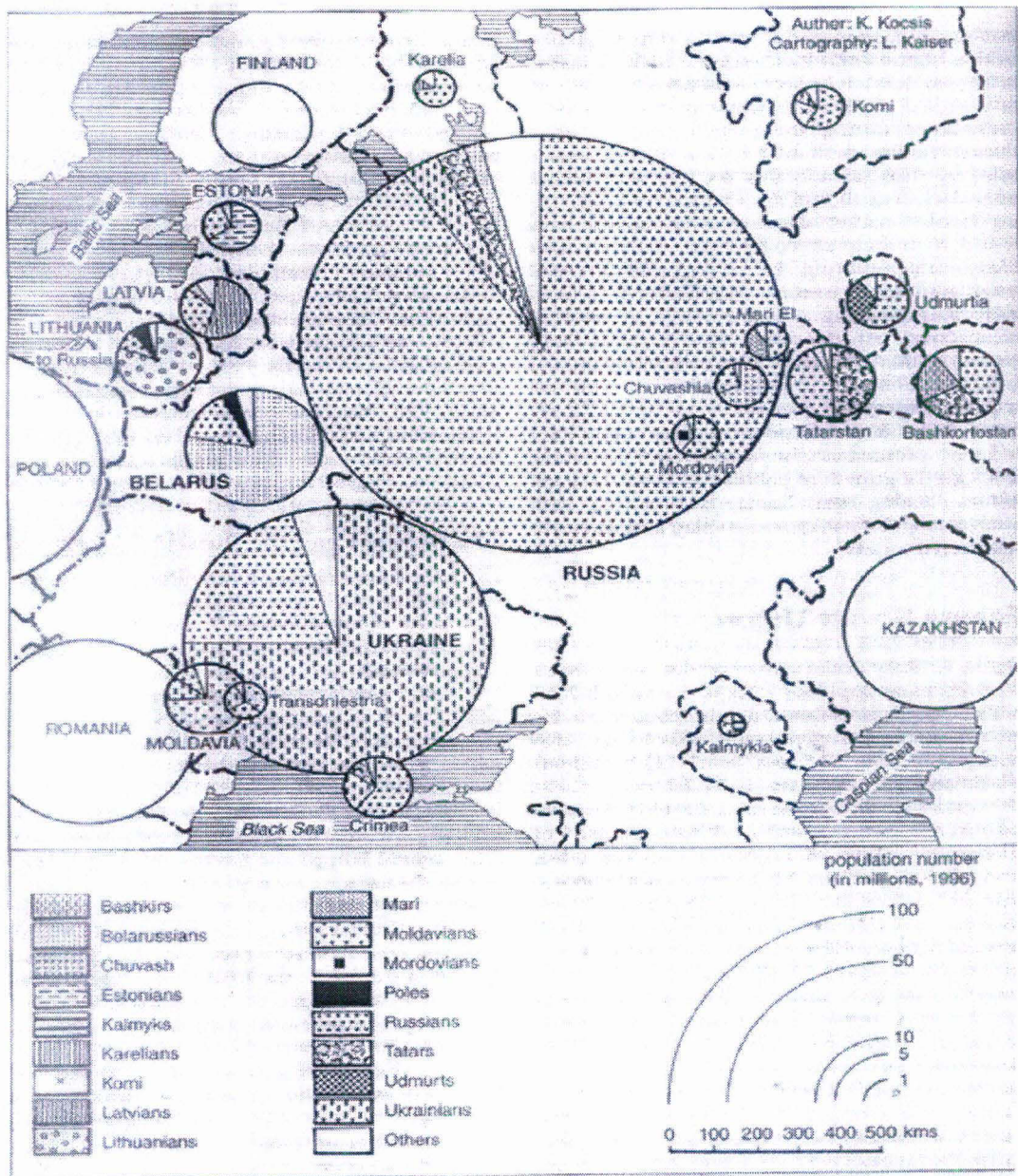
Ethnic map of the European part of the former USSR, 1996

**Figure 2.5.3**

## 2.5.3.1 Caucasia

The mountain region of 298,000 square kilometers and 22.2 million inhabitants, lying between the Black and Caspian seas acts as a continental bridge between eastern Europe (Russia), the Mediterranean, Central Asia and the Middle-East. Formerly, the borderland of the Ottoman- Turkish, Persian and Russian Empires in an area of great physical diversity, there is an extremely wide-ranging mix of ethnic groups, languages, religions and cultures. In the relatively inaccessible mountain regions small, spiritually independent communities were able to defend themselves, and since the annexation of Caucasia by the Russians between 1801 and 1864, people have

grasped each favorable moment to further their aspirations for independence (as in 1918, 1942 and 1991). In spite of invasion, deportation and genocide carried out by Russians, Soviets and Turks over the past 150 years, the ethnic mix of the population has hardly changed. At the same time state borders (and international frontiers) inherited from the soviet-era – and often cutting across ethnic territories – have led to inter-ethnic conflicts requiring Russian influence and, in some cases, intervention, even into the affairs of independent republics of the region (Kocsis 2001).

The most populous ethnic group are the Azerbaijanians (16.3 million), 58.3 percent of whom live in Iran ('South Azerbaijan'), while 35.8 percent are inhabitants of the Independent Republic of Azerbaijan ('North Azerbaijan'). Since the nineteenth century severe tensions have emerged with their western neighbors, the Christian Armenians (with a total population worldwide of 5.9 million, of whom 52.3 percent live in Armenia.). On top of this Christian – Muslim antagonism, there was also a contrast in development (with the Armenians more urbanized and entrepreneurial) and an Armenian territorial claim to Nagorno-Karabakh: a cradle of Armenian culture ceded to Soviet Azerbaijan in 1923. Following the proclamation of secession of Nagorno-Karabakh and unification with Armenia (in February 1988) a war broke out between ethnic Armenians and Azerbaijanians that culminated in hostilities during 1993-1994. Karabakh was occupied by the Armenian army and most minority populations (both Armenian and Azebaijanian) surviving massacres fled to their respective home countries. The Caucasus region has been a highly volatile region witnessing frequent wars, involving both the local actors as well as the outside stakeholders. Smith (199) points out:

> Just as the so-called Balkan 'Great Game' involved both local states and continental powers in a geopolitical rivalry that eventually became continental in scope, the mix of local politics actors and neighboring states with interests in the Caucasus, whose cultural heterogeneity and ethnic geography have already fuelled a series of territorial claims by states and ethnic groups, threatens to plunge the Eurasian region into further geopolitical instability (Smith 1999: 225)

Due to ethnic cleansing and forced migrations, Armenia and Azerbaijan are the most homogeneous political units of Caucasia with the mainstream nations accounting respectively for 96 percent and 90 percent of the total population in 1996 (see fig. 2.5.3.1).

Meanwhile, Georgia – which provides Armenia with a solution to blockades by Azerbaijan and Turkey - is a small multi-ethnic empire burdened with serious ethnic problems. Georgians themselves comprise 70.1 percent of the 5.4 million total population of Georgia, but they are divided between several mutually antagonistic ethnic groups with a tendency for extreme political behavior: Imeretians, Kakhetians, Kartvelians, Mingrelians and Svans – as well as the Muslim Georgians of Adjaria who enjoy territorial autonomy. The marginal areas of the country are populated by nationalist minorities and have been affected by secessionist activities; some have now separated: 96,000 Abkhazians, 437,000 Armenians, 308,000 Azerbaijanians and 164,000 Ossetians. After Georgian independence wars between the army and

separatists broke out in South Ossetia (December 1989 to July 1992, involving 0.1 million Ossetians supported by the north-Caucasian people) and in Abkhazia (July 1992 to May 1994, involving 0.5 million Abkhazians supported by Russian Cossacks). Both wars ended with the withdrawal of Georgian troops and the appearance of Russian peacekeeping forces. Once again, because of the forced migrations of national minorities, the homogenization of the population has increased and one aspect of this has been the migration of some 230,000 people (overwhelmingly Russians) from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to Russia between 1990 and 1996.

However, in the north Caucasus, belonging to Russia, there were deportations to Central Asia in 1943-1944 (affecting 52,000 Balkars, 410,000 Chechens, 92,000 Ingushetians and 76,000 Karachays), while many Russians arrived in the course of Soviet industrialization. Russians remain very prominent (e.g. 68.1 percent in Adygeia, 42.4 percent in Karachai-Cherkessia and 32.0 in Kabardino-Balkaria) and 76-87 percent of the population speak Russian, whereas in Transcaucasia ethnic Russians comprise only 1.6-6.3 percent of the population while Russian is spoken by 35-55 percent. The Chechens were one of the last ethnic groups to fall under Russian supremacy (1859), and this predominantly Muslim nation of 0.8 million proclaimed independence in 1991 and accommodated a Confederation of Caucasian Mountain Republics in its capital (Grozny) the following year. Hostilities continued until 1995, accompanied by the departure of 50,000 Russians from Chechnya. Ingushetians, living with the Chechens in the Republic of Chechnya-Ingushetia, also proclaimed independence (1992), leading to an immediate conflict with the Chechens, which remains unsolved. In contrast, the most peaceful and ethnically stable areas are those with Russian demographic dominance (e.g. Adygeya and Karachai-Cherkessia), as well as Dagestan with an extreme multi-ethnic and multi-lingual character comprising a range of Muslim groups (Avars, Dargians, Kumyks and Laks), making up over 80 percent of the population with a Russian minority of only some 9.0 percent (Kocsis 2001).

Ethnic map of Caucasia, 1996
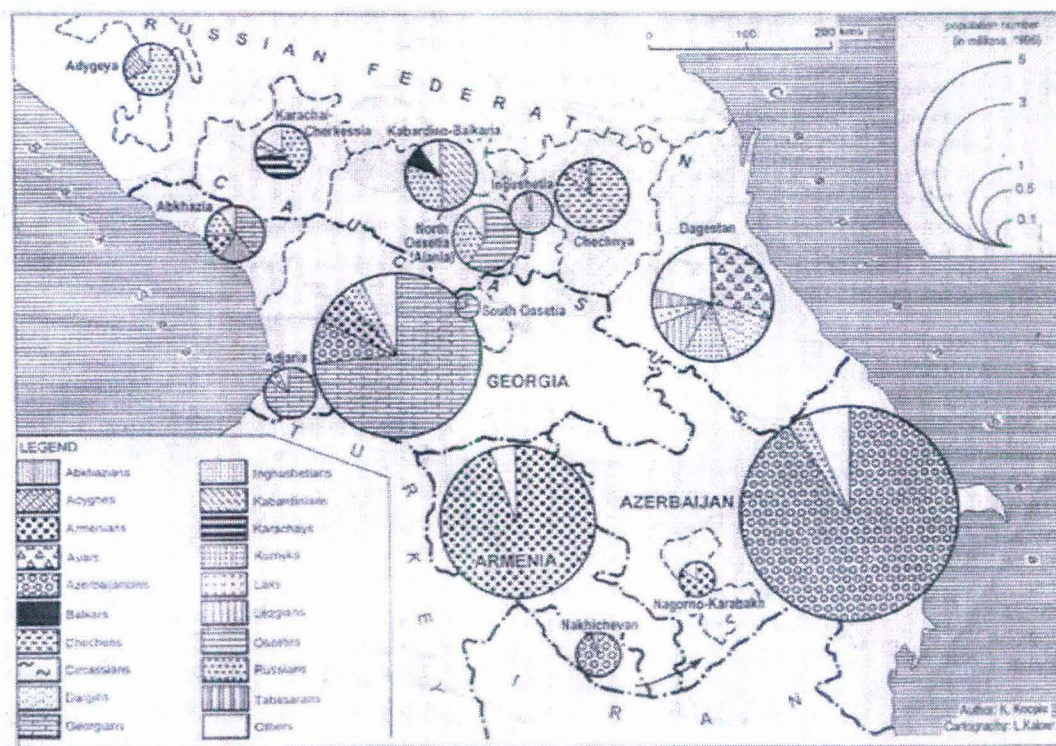
**Figure 2.5.3.1**

## 2.5.3.2 Turkestan

The landlocked countries of Turkestan, the former Soviet Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) form a territory of 3.95 million square kilometers with 55 million inhabitants. Autochtonous Altayic, Turkic-speaking people comprise 70 percent of the population: mainly 33.7 percent Uzbecks, 15.2 percent Kazakhs, 8.5 percent Tajiks, 5.4 percent Turkmens, and 5.0 percent Kyrgyzians. In the 1989 Soviet census the most significant groups of immigrants (including many deportees) lived in the Northern-border zone and in the most urbanized areas: Russians (9.5 million), Tatars and Ukrainians (each 1.2 million) and Germans (1.1 million). The political divisions on the region were imposed only in the late 1920s through a soviet 'ethnic-territorial delimitation', based on dialects, which tended to divide uniform ethnic areas. Following the disintegration of USSR (1991) these internal boundaries have become international frontiers and serious economic and ethnic tensions have resulted. In the countries gaining independence in 1991 and becoming members of the CIS, the privileged position of Russians (most of whom spoke only their mother tongue) ceased to exist where the languages spoken by the dominant local ethnic group became official. Consequently, many Russians moved to Russia where 185,000 of them were registered in 1994 (mostly from areas of political and ethnic conflict in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan), rising to 565,000 by early 1996. For economic and political reasons there has also been emigration by Germans (whose ancestors had earlier been deported to the region, especially Kazakhstan) who number 1.1 million and normally speak only German and Russian.

As a result of these migrations and the extremely high natural increase among the Sunni Muslim, autochtonous Central Asian nations, there has been a continuous growth in the shares of these people within the total population of the respective republics: Kazakhs 39.7-42.8 percent (1989-93), Uzbeks 71.4-73.0 percent (1989-91) and Tajiks 62.3-63.8 (1989-91). But although there has been a high probability of hostility between some 7.0 million Kazakhs and 6.0 million Russians in Kazakhstan there is much interdependence in economic and military matters and the local authoritarian-populist leadership has taken great care to ensure that tensions do not develop into open ethnic conflict (Kocsis 2001).

### 2.5.3.3 The Baltic States

The total population of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania combined (176,116 square kilometers) was 7.6 million in 1997 of whom 70.5 percent were constituted the mainstream nations (Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians), while 24.1 percent were mostly recent Belorussian, Russian and Ukrainian settlers connected with administration, defence and industrial development in territories of great economic and strategic importance.

Following secession from the Soviet Union in 1991 and legislation to protect the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian languages, there was heavy emigration by Belorussians, Russians and Ukrainians who could not speak the new official languages and regarded the Baltic as merely a place of temporary residence without citizenship. During 1990-96, 105,000 people left Estonia while 77,500 left Latvia between 1991 and 1996, with 67 percent and 55 percent respectively going to Russia. There is now a gradual ethnic homogenisation, although Russians still constitute 32.5 percent of the population in Latvia and 28.2 percent in Estonia despite the change in status and their 'imperial self-awareness', reflected in their dependence on the Russian language. So despite liberal legislation there have tensions between Russians and the Baltic states, which remain highly dependent economically. And in Lithuania some 250,000 Poles represent a source of conflict burdened with historical reminiscences in addition to the Russian minority predominantly in the urban areas. With around 660,000 Poles living around Vilnius and in the border areas in south-east Lithuania and north-west Belarus, there is a danger of secessionist movement that could threaten the territorial integrity of both Lithuania and Belarus (Ibid.). However, there are some positive developments in the region also which can thwart the danger of ethnic animosity. In the Baltic States a vibrant civil society is in the making. Here, voluntary associations, business organisations and pressure groups are contributing to the democratisation of political life at a variety of levels, from national to local politics (Smith 1999).

### 2.5.3.4 Ukraine

Of the 45.8 million Ukrainians living around the world, 37.4 million people are citizens of Ukraine, which gained independence in 1991. Ukraine is the second largest

country (603,700 square kilometres) in Europe and one of the youngest on the continent since it has never previously existed as an independent state, only as a semi-autonomous Soviet 'constituent republic' between 1919-41 and 1944-91. But there is along historical continuity of settlement reflected in a very long regional self-awareness on the part of groups like the Cossacks of Zaporizhya and the Ruthenians. However, Ukraine also possesses the greatest number of national minorities in Europe; the main groups being Russians 22.1 percent, Jews 0.9 percent, Belarussians 0.9 percent, followed by Moldavians, Bulgarians, Poles, and Hungarians, with particular diversity in the east and south: 'New Russia' and the Black Sea coast (Kocsis, 2001). On the other hand, ethnic cleansing between 1939 and 1945 (through the liquidation of the Jews by German Nazis, followed by the repatriation and deportation of Poles by the Soviet authorities), and relatively light industrialisation and Russification have left the western regions (Galicia, Podolia, and Volhynia) the most thoroughly Ukrainian, with the capacity for an ethnic revival. Finally, there is a multi-ethnic pattern in Transcarpathia (the western bridgehead of Ukraine. Part of hungary until 1918 and again during 1939-44), where Hungarians and Ruthenians (Carpatho-Ukrainians) could campaign for local autonomy and even secession. Despite the potential for inter-ethnic conflict, the threat of civil war between the Ukrainians and the Russian minority has so far been contained by linguistic and cultural similarities, a common (Orthodox) religious affiliation and a lack of very serious historical grievances; also by Ukraine's considerable military strength and high levels of dependence − especially with regard to energy − by both the predominantly Russian populated Crimea or Ukraine and Ukraine on Russia (Ibid.). Ukraine is further restrained by the prospect of antagonising a powerful neighbor (Russia) whose coethnics make up a large portion of the minority population in Ukraine (Gallagher 2003).

## 2.5.3.5 Moldavia

Following the proclamation of independence in August 1991 the Russian and Ukrainian population (currently a majority of 54 percent) in a strip of territory along the eastern side of the Dniester (Transdniestria 4,160 square kilometres), never part of Romania and the 185,000 Turkic-speaking Gagauz of orthodox religious affiliation in the south both declared their territories independent: as the Transdniestrian Moldovan Republic and Gagauz Yeri respectively. A serious ethno-political conflict ensued and war broke out in May/ June 1992 between the central Moldavian armed forces, and militias defending the Russians and Ukrainians of Transdniestria. A ceasefire was negotiated following the intervention of the Russian 14th Army, based at Tiraspol (Troebst 1998) but there were about 1000 casualties and 100,000 refugees. Although arrangements for autonomy have been worked out, the area continues to exist as a de facto state given Russian support (with reluctance, especially in the Russian Parliament) to take decisive action, and a substantial industrial establishment (40 percent of Moldova's total industrial capacity). Moldova's claim is supported by the West and also by Ukraine, which would not want an independent Transdniestria

setting a precedent for similar developments in Russian areas of Ukraine, although Russia has resisted from action to normalize the situation. Meanwhile, the Gagauz avoided war and eventually accepted autonomy within Moldovia in 1994: the territory of Gagauz Yeri is 2,500 square kilometers with a population of 182,000 (78.7 percent Gagauz in 1997) (Kocsis 2001).

## 2.6 Ethnic Assertions as Security Challenge in Transitional Democracies

In the preceding section, we acquainted ourselves with the prevailing ethnic scenario in the transitional societies in general, and the transitional democracies like Russia, Turkey, Hungary, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia in particular. Now we will try to analyse the security challenges of the transitional democracies in the light of the prevailing ethnic scenario in the region.

Most political observers regard the post-Soviet states[8] as undergoing 'a dual' or 'double transition'. According to this viewpoint, what makes the transition in the post-Soviet states more complex and different from those experienced elsewhere, such as Latin America and Eastern Europe in the 1990s, is that Russia and most of the other post-soviet states are undergoing for the first time in their history the processes of democratisation and the introduction of a market economy simultaneously. This argument can be taken further by suggesting that what the post-Soviet states are undergoing is a 'triple' transition: from colonialism to post-colonialism (*decolonization*[9]); from totalitarianism to post-totalitarianism (*democratization*); and from the command to a market economy *(economic liberalization)* (Smith 1999). The progression from colonialism to post-colonialism and the consequences of such changes on national identity and the redefinition of national homeland has been a major source of instability, in the post-soviet states, as is evident in the frequent clashes on the issues of identity and territorial jurisdiction. Similarly, the transition to market-economy has been full of hardships for these states. It has been suggested that in the early stages of transition to democratic capitalism, commitment to reform in former communist regimes is shaken by economic chaos (Duch 1995). The problems associated with the process of decolonisation coupled with the economic hardships suffered by most of the post-Soviet states, has not augured well for democratic

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[8] Russia, the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), Ukraine, Belarus, Moldovia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia, and the Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) are regarded as the post-Soviet states. The collapse of communism in the former Soviet Union has seen a strong assertion of national identity, together with an affirmation of national boundaries. Since the disbanding of the Soviet Union, most of these states still have a colonial relationship with Russia, and all have felt the benefits of globalization and the adoption of a market economy. They have also suffered the drawbacks: life expectancy has fallen by about eight years, and income inequalities have risen dramatically. For details see: *http://www.answers.com/topic/post-soviet-state.*

[9] The process of decolonization entails the transition from a Soviet multi-ethnic empire to the establishment of post-colonial sovereign states. Most significantly, it is a process that has involved the post-Soviet states' attempting to fashion a national identity out of polities that consist of multi-ethnic communities. For details see: Smith 1999.

consolidation. Successful democratisation has certain preconditions. As Przeworski asserts:

> ... if democracy is to be sustained , the state must guarantee territorial integrity and physical security; it must maintain the conditions necessary for an effective exercise of citizenship, it must mobilize public savings, co-ordinate resource allocation, and correct income distribution (Przeworski 1995:12).

However, if one looks at the ethnic scenario of the transitional democracies, the prospect of democratic consolidation does not look very bright. Ethnoradicalism has shaped the pace and character of the transition from communist regimes to hybrid systems approximating to a greater or lesser extent to liberal democracy across the former Soviet Bloc. Political systems of left and right have emerged in which ethnicity is a major organising principle. Minorities have regularly been depicted as a threat by nationalist leadership (Gallagher 2003). Ethno-politics and ethnic insecurity interact, each reinforcing the other as the preferences of potential constituents, and thus the preferences and strategies of politicians, are shaped by their perceived security. Moreover, a state's ethnic security depends crucially on what the politicians are doing: if the politicians take radical stands favouring some ethnic groups at the expense of others, the security climate deteriorates. On the other hand, if politicians downplay ethnic identities, building multiethnic constituencies and developing civic or other non-ethnic ideologies, then ethnic groups feel more secure (Saideman 1998). However the role of the political leadership has not been very positive on this count. As Linz and Stepan points out:

> ...if nationalist politicians do not force polarization, many people may prefer to define themselves as having multiple and complementary identities (Linz and Stepan 1996 27).

Some ethno-political contenders use the opportunities provided by democratic openings to justify protest and rebellion as struggles for individual and collective rights, to be achieved and protected in the political framework. Some ultranationalists who have been elected to power in the Soviet and Yugoslav successor states use similar kinds of rhetoric to justify restrictions on the rights of minorities in the name of the "democratic will" of the dominant nationality (Gurr 1994).

Under conditions of extreme scarcity, political competition and conflict can act as magnifiers of a people's uncertainty about its future. Individuals understandably fear the consequences of modernisation and the application of programs of structural adjustment, anticipating the loss of jobs and status, and the need for massive adjustments in terms of new values, outlooks, and orientations (Rothchild and Groth 1995). Under such circumstances, ethnic identities are more likely to become suffused with belligerent stereotypes, as hostility toward ethnic adversaries, fanned by the mass-media, provide an outlet for exaggerated fears and suspicions (Lake and Rothchild 1998). The emotional power of ethnic attachments is increased by the unifying effects of what are perceived to be external threats. People who have little in common with others may unite when they feel threatened by external enemies. Thus,

in Chechnya, when very disparate interests felt threatened by the Russian power, they overcame their difference and made common cause in the face of Russian intervention (Ibid.). Much like the "rally round the flag" effect that takes place within states threatened by external aggression, ethnic leaders can mobilise their members against threats posed by other ethnic groups. Such mobilisation creates cohesion against internal group "traitors", national minorities (such as Russians living in Ukraine), and external state and ethnic enemies, and results in greatly strengthened collective capacities for good or evil (Brubaker 1995).

The collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, as well as the crisis of political identity in Czechoslovakia, demonstrated the universality of nationalist sentiments and impulses toward separatism in all multi-ethnic erstwhile USSR-type societies (Prasad 1997). The separatist tendency is further fuelled by the involvement of kin states. States that have close affective links with ethnic groups in another state will often not remain indifferent to the fate of these groups (Ryan 1990). Because political and ethnic borders seldom coincide (fig.2.6), appeals in the name of the nation have often jumped state borders (Connor 1998).
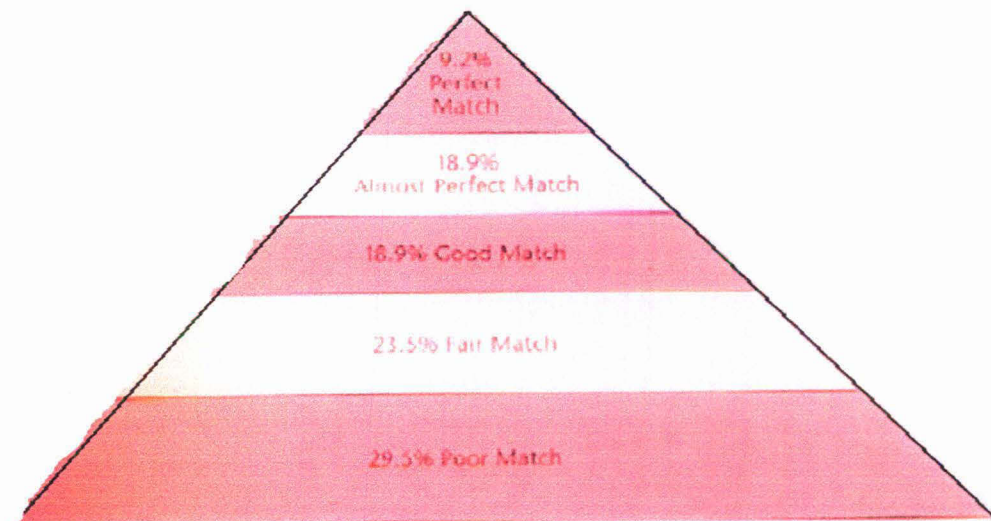


Figure 2.6

There seems to be considerable evidence that such intervention is more likely to escalate rather than de-escalate conflict (Ryan 1990).

The region is certainly one of ethnic diversity because, since the fall of communism, the region – where the majority of the world's Slavic and Finno-Ugric people live – has experienced an ethnic renaissance leading to the dissolution of all the federal units: Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Due to this ethnic fragmentation, with strong nationalist movements claiming sovereignty for their respective territories, many tensions and wars have arisen in the post-socialist world. Contrary to the official propaganda, ethnic identities have not been replaced by working-class solidarity, 'socialist internationalism' and communist modernisation

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(kocsis 2001). Ethnic identity still remains a very potent force. There is enough evidence to show that the primary or terminal loyalty of many people is to the ethnic group and not the state (Ryan 1990).

However, it would be wrong to suppose that ethnic tensions are high throughout the region because, for the most part, there is awareness of the need for accommodation to enhance political stability and enhance the prospects for economic growth. Institutions like the Council of Europe have tried to establish norms that should help to create a situation where ethnic diversity can be seen as a source of enrichment rather than a constraint on modernisation. However, the potential for crisis remains, as the Chechnya and Kosovo problems indicate, and the region will continue to be a critical laboratory for the testing of new systems of regulation.

# CHAPTER – III

# ETHNICITY AND THE RUSSIAN EXPERIENCE

## 3.1 Introduction

The Russian state continues with one important legacy of the Soviet Union: the ethno-territorial structure. This has consolidated ethnic identity and chauvinism in some cases, and it also means that all problems invariably assume ethnic overtones. Nevertheless, this legacy also has the potentiality of keeping inter-ethnic problems in controllable limits. More often than not consolidation of small group identities prevents the formation of any larger identity that can match the Russians or pose a serious threat to the Russian Federation. In the previous chapter, we have discussed the security challenges posed by ethnic assertions in transitional democracies. In the process, we briefly acquainted ourselves with the prevailing ethnic scenario in Russia. In this chapter, we will try to narrate the Russian experience with ethnicity by focusing on the prominent ethnic assertions that have made their presence felt on the ethnic landscape of Russia.

## 3.2 The Russian Experience

Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, ethnicity as a phenomenon has posed challenges to the integrity of the Russian state and its efforts to build a viable democratic political and federal system in a variety of ways. *First*, among a group of republics the clamouring for greater autonomy and desire to declare independence or sovereignty or secession started gaining momentum. Prominent among such republics were Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Checheno-Ingushetia and North-Ossetia. Secondly, there were an increasing number of cases related to border disputes between the republics and regions. Thirdly, in a new development, broad regional coalitions started emerging in opposition to the central authority, e.g., Confederation of the peoples of the Caucasus, the Volga-Urals movement consisting of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, the Fino-Ugric movement of Komi, Udmuartia, Mordova, Khanti-Mansi and Kerelia and a movement to unite regions of the Russian Far East (Jha 1999). These challenges, seems to have seriously affected the democratic consolidation process in Russia. The clamouring for greater autonomy and

secessionist demands in particular, pose the most formidable challenges as is evident in the ethnic assertions in Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Checheno-Ingushetia and North-Ossetia. Our study will particularly focus on this aspect of ethnic assertions in Russia that seems to threaten the unity and integrity of the Russian Federation and its democracy-building efforts. The other challenges to democratic consolation that we have mentioned above will be discussed while dealing with the prominent cases of ethnic assertions that have unfolded in post-Soviet Russia. We shall now discuss the prominent ethnic events that have unfolded inside Russia since the demise of the Soviet Union.

## 3.2.1 The Ingush-Ossetian Conflict.

The first openly violent ethnic conflict in the territory of the Russian federation involved two peoples of the North Caucasus region, the Ossets and the Ingush in late October 1992. They inhabited the Central part of the North Caucasus region, in the territory made up of two administrate districts of the former USSR and the present Russian Federation: the North Ossetia Republic and the Checheno-Ingush republic. Ossets form the majority of the population in north Ossetia[1] (53 percent). The Ingush, who numbered about 215,000 for the entire USSR in 1989, lived mostly in the Checheno-Ingush Republic (where they numbered 164,000 and constituted 13percent of the republic's population) and in north Ossetia (33,000 people or 6 percent of the population). Ingush settlement was concentrated in the three Western *raions* of the former Checheno-Ingushetia (Nazranovskii, Malgobekskii, and Sunzhenskii) where 140,000 Ingush had been living, comprising about 75 percent of the population of this region, as well as the Prigorodny *raion* of North Ossetia, where the official number of Ingush stood at around 18,000 but in reality was approximately twice that figure. In several villages in this region, Ingush comprised from 50 percent to 80 percent of the entire population. Significant number of Ingush had also settled in the capitals of both republics, Grozny and Vladikavkaz. Vladikavkaz and the surrounding Prigorodny *raion* were the most densely populated part of north Ossetia where the majority of the population lived (Tishkov 1997).

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[1] North Ossetia is the only Christian and traditionally pro-Moscow republic in the North Caucasus. See Adelphi paper 330 (1999)

In both the republics, the Ingush Constituted an ethnic minority and the third largest group by number (Russians total 30 percent of the population of North Ossetia and 23 percent of the population in Checheno-Ingushetia) lived with a humble status in the political and Socio-economic spheres. The predominant majority (Chechens and Ossets) has controlled the power structures. In 1992 there were only seven Ingush in the Supreme Soviet of North Ossetia and not one was among the members of the presidium or the government of the republic. Ingush had been barred from prestigious and influential positions in public office and elsewhere, and Ingush youth had experienced various obstacles with respect to enrolment in institutions of higher education. Ingush activists made complaints to the Russian government in which they claimed that young Ingush found it impossible to enrol at the universities in Vladikavkaz and Grozny. In the Prigorodny *raion* of North Ossetia, a total of only five Ingush were to be found among the 53 leading positions in party and Soviet organisations and the economic and socio-cultural institutions (as of October 1989) (Ibid).

In Checheno-Ingushetia, access to power-positions was totally controlled by Chechens and Russians in a similar way. In January 1990, there were only four Ingush out of 73 persons of authority working on the republic committee of the CPSU, only five Ingush secretaries among the 19 cities and regional committee of the CPSU, four Ingush among the 56 leading officials in the state apparatus; and only three Ingush of the 21 ministers and chairmen on the government committee. On the other hand, until 1990 the highest position in the Republic's Supreme Soviet was occupied for 17 years by an ethnic Ingush, Khazbikar Bokov, who left Grozny for Moscow to work as Deputy-Minister of Nationalities in 1991. According to Bokov's assessment - real political power in the republic was concentrated more and more among the ethnic Chechens, with Ingush representation increasingly symbolic (Ibid).

Underrepresented in the power structure at the republic level, and with no possibility of gaining a voice within the existing political system, many militant Ingush activists opted for a way out of the existing system. What they sought was the creation of a polity where their representatives could dominate. In September 1990, the Supreme Soviet of the North Ossetian ASSR suspended the right of the Ingush population to live in the ASSR.

In March 1991 the situation took a violent turn when armed Ingush sought to forcibly seize Ossetian homes in the disputed Prigorodny region. In the Ingush city of Nazarani, thousands took to streets demanding restoration of the Ingush land and vowed to take up arms if required. The situation deteriorated when a group of armed Ingush seized a bus and took the Ossetian passengers as hostages and the Ossetians responded by imposing a curfew and forming a National Guard in November 1991 (Patnaik 1999).

Among the Ingush there was the firm conviction that historically North Ossetia was in a more privileged position because Stalin was an Osset by nationality, and having unlimited power, he naturally supported all measures directed at the eminence of the Ossetian people over other peoples (Tishkov 1997).

The Ossets also had their own myths about the incapability of the Chechens and Ingush to establish a good life in their own republic and their excessive passion for seasonal work outside Checheno-Ingushetia. However, there had been an undisputable lag in the social development of the Ingush regions of the former Checheno-Ingush Republic and the Ingush settlements of the Prigorodny *raion* of North Ossetia. On the eve of open conflict, one of the most pressing problems was the extraordinary high unemployment rate. As of 20 August 1992, in the territory of the newly created Ingush Republic[2] (Nazranovskii, Malgobekskii, and the Sunzhenskii *raions* minus three predominantly Chechen villages), 204,036 residents were registered, of whom 50,577 were unemployed - about half the entire adult population. It was the jobless young men who constituted the most explosive material for the provocations and criminal actions that ensued. Older generation Ingush leaders repeatedly expressed concern and raised alarm at this volatile situation in an attempt to restrain the Ingush youth from extremism.

In the Ingush-Osset case, if adequate measures to ensure the rights and cultural aspirations of the Ingush in North-Ossetia - not only in the Prigorodny *raion,* but also at the level of the Republic's centre, had been taken, the problem could have been tackled.

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[2] Ingushetia, the smallest and poorest of the new Russian republics, was created in June 1992 out of the Checheno-Ingush Autonomous Republic following the Chechens declaration of independence in November 1991 without Ingush participation. It is still not clear why the Chechen nationalist movement and its leaders expelled a people with a related language and culture along with part of the former territory of their republic, preferring to create an independent Chechnya instead of a Separate Vaynakh state (Vaynakh is the common name for Chechens and Ingush) (For details see: Tishkov 1997).

However, it was not to be so as the prevailing opinion among the North Ossetian leadership, including members of the presidium of the Supreme Soviet, was that it was impossible to grant any kind of preferences for the Ingush minority in the cultural-language sphere unless accompanied by parallel preferences for Ossets. Programmes in support of Ingush language and culture in the republic were lacking. Distance and alienation between the two communities were ensured by restricting certain social rights of the Ingush population, like the policy of limiting Ingush residency in the Prigorodny *raion*, hindering access to plots of land, and numerous cases of prejudiced treatment of the Ingush minority by the internal police and local courts where Ossets dominated, especially in the period of state of emergency imposed in Prigorodny in April 1997. The later circumstance was extremely demoralizing to local Ingush because the emergency measures often took forms which insulted personal and collective worth (Ibid).

The influx of large numbers of Osset refugees from Georgia after the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict posed an additional threat to the Ingush minority status in North Ossetia. The overall number of refugees reached 60,000-70,000 concentrated mainly in Vladikavkaz. Social tensions increased, also in the sphere of inter-ethnic relations. Many of the South Ossets moved to the Prigorodny *raion* showed hostility towards the Ingush settlers, many of whom had a semi-legal status (without official registration). It is not easy to determine whether the considerable number of refugees who found themselves in Prigorodny, which could boast the most fertile agricultural land of the republic, landed there by choice or through special measures. However, South Ossets, formally citizens of another state (Georgia) used their cultural kinship with the main population to lay a specific claim to rights in the Prigorodny *raion* and to provoke further anxiety within the Ingush community regarding the possible increase of ethnic 'aliens'. These concerns proved quite justified, as subsequent events were to demonstrate. During open clashes, South Ossets played the most brutal role in the expulsion of the Ingush. Representatives of authority, including the federal government, opted to support 'blood ties' instead of civic solidarity and protection. They distributed weapons to foreign citizens to enable them to repel 'aggression' on the part of their own citizens. The biased role of the

government[3] was a blot on the principles of civil society and governance. It rather, strengthened the ideology and practice of ethno nationalism (Ibid.).

The South Ossetian conflict with Georgia, and the mass emigration of Ossetians to North Ossetia had a major impact on this violent conflict in the Caucasus region. The Prigorodny conflict, a territorial conflict over the rights of Ingush to remain settled in the Prigorodny *raion* of what was then the Autonomous Republic of North Ossetia (and is now the republic of North Ossetia-Alania) (Krag and Funch 1994). Prigorodny *raion* had been a part of Ingushetia until the Ingush people in 1944, were collectively declared enemies of the soviet state and deported to Asia. Their republic (which they shared with the Chechens) was given away to others. On their return, their autonomous republic was reestablished, except for the territory of Prigorodny which remained with North Ossetia. In 1991, when Boris Yeltsin became the Russian leader, he issued a 'Decree on the Rehabilitation of the Repressed Peoples', including their right to lost land - a decree which was not implemented. In October-November 1992 following armed clashes and the intervention of Russian troops, almost all Ingush fled from the Prigorodny district to Ingushetia. This seems to be a case of political injustice, neglected for too long and which eventually turned ethnic (krag 2003).

The socio-cultural and political status of the Ingush minority in both republics was a sufficient condition for dissatisfaction, complaints and aspirations to change the status quo. The Ingush nationalist movement built its strategy on demands for the reinstatement of Ingush autonomy and return of the Prigorodny district to the Ingush people. The Ingush were facing two adversaries, simultaneously the Chechens and the Ossetians. Notwithstanding, the cultural similarity with the Chechens, the Ingush had been at loggerheads with the Chechens. As Tishkov (1997) rightly points out; the cultural similarity is no guarantee against the inter-ethnic tensions and conflicts. The diminished

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[3] Sergei Khetagurov, the North Ossetian Head of Government, who following his sectional role in the conflicts of October 1992 was appointed Federal Deputy-Minister for Emergency Situations in Moscow, in conversation with Valery Tishkov, an eminent scholar and an ex-Minister of Nationalities in the government of Russian Federation in 1992 told how 'inventively' Ingush homes had been destroyed: 'our men just opened the domestic gas system and then fired bullets inside from a distance, and the house blew up immediately' (For details see: Tishkov 1997:179).

status of the Ingush in Chechnya provided sufficient grounds for the anti-Chechen sentiments, as well as the backwardness of the Ingush regions which was used to justify the policy of 'excluding' them from aspiring to independence. On the whole, the diminished status of the Ingush in the former Checheno-Ingushetia seems to have created the fundamental reason for an ethno-political movement which advocated administrative separation so as to acquire the right to direct the distribution of resources from the centre and to establish its own ethnic administration. The reluctance of the dominant group of Chechens to ensure an appropriate and acceptable status for the Ingush minority strengthened the resolve of the Ingush. The movement was supported by the leader of the Ingush minority in North Ossetia, where political discrimination supplemented a policy of cultural oppression.

A major outcome of the Ingush-Ossetian conflict was the huge influx of refugees from the Prigorodny *raion* to the territory of the Ingush republic. Between 46,000 and 64,000 refugees have come to the small and economically deprived territory of Ingushetia, and about 70 percent of them are living with their relatives. President Ruslan Aushev expressed his helplessness to manage the situation due to lack of resources and the prevailing feeling of despair and apathy among the new settlers. The Memorial[4] report points to how the local population is increasingly becoming distrustful of the capability of the state to resolve their problem. All attempts to solve the problem of expelled people immediately after the tragic events proved fruitless. Akhsarbek Galazov, the North Ossetian leader made a statement in November 1992 on the 'impossible co-habitation', of both groups in the territory of one republic. This formula was accepted by the local public, and the Ossetian intellectuals also seemed to be in agreement with this as there was no protest or criticism from their side. Similarly, the Federal authorities showed no reaction to this speech of ethnic hatred. Political and criminal investigations undertaken by the Russian Security Council and the Prosecutor–General failed to generate any political conclusions or court cases, largely because the Ossetian authorities demonstratively blocked the work of Prosecutors sent from Moscow. Local prosecution personnel were completely corrupt and under the strict control of the top leadership (Ibid).

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[4] Memorial is a human rights organization, which monitored the situation after Ingush-Ossetian conflict in 1992.

It was only in December 1993 that Yeltsin summoned a meeting of all the leaders of the North Caucasus and afterwards issued a decision to return refugees to four villages of the Prigorodny *raion* and to disarm all illegal formations in North Ossetia and Ingushetia. It was agreed at this meeting that the Ingush would retract any territorial claims, and that the Ossets would change their stand on the impossibility of Ingush and Ossets living together in North Ossetia. Agreements regarding the return of the refugees to the villages of Chermen, Kurtat, Dongaron, and Dachnoie before spring 1994 were also reached. The emergency status for the region was prolonged several times and the acting provisional administration was assigned by President Yeltsin to implement this agreement in cooperation with the authorities of both Republics. However, the cooperation was not forthcoming as North Ossetia demanded to undertake reconstruction work and peacemaking procedures among citizens before allowing the expelled people to return to their villages. Viktor Polyanichko, Head of the Provisional Administration, was adamant in his insistence that the agreement and the presidential decree be enforced. This was to lead to his assassination under mysterious circumstances. A new agreement on the return of refugees was reached between Galazov, Aushev and Vladimir Lozovoi (new head of the Provisional Administration) in June 1994, but it failed again because of the obstructionism of the North Ossetian authorities. The latter mobilized the nationalist organization *Styr Nykhas* (People's Council) to call for public meetings to protest against the return of Ingush and demand they be allowed to live in only one village – Maiskoie, from which Ingush had not been expelled during the conflict. The local press continued to disseminate anti-Ingush materials and non-disarmed militants committed terrorist acts against those who dared to return to their nature places. All efforts of the provisional administration to organise resettlement to four villages yielded only meagre results (Ibid). In mid 1999, periodic violence was continuing in the disputed area. This conflict is still not resolved, so the possibility of another cycle of violence in the future remains open.

## 3.2.2 Chechen Crisis

The Chechen crisis is largely attributed to the oil and money factor. The role of ethnicity had been at times, underplayed by many scholars who see oil and money[5] at the root of the development of the crisis (Tishkov 1997). Edvard ozhiganov (1995) an expert at the Analytical Center in the Sate Duma explains:

> Today there exist only two lines for hauling strategic goods out of Russia-the Baltic route and the Caucasian one, which passes primarily through Chechnya. The entire struggle is for control over these two lines, or more exactly over the hauling itself. And therefore, any changes in leadership, personnel shifts and conflict situations are nothing more than an expression of this struggle... The roots of the conflict are not in Grozny but in Moscow. In the Baltic direction, the Russian state mafia had already felt out channels for carting out foods and raw materials, and big problems do not arise there. In Chechnya, however, the situation is fundamentally different. The Dudayev regime had not agreed to the role of 'client'. It fancies the role of patron, the more so since the money involved is truly fantastic. 'Business' developed in three directions: trade in weapons, in petroleum products, and in stolen automobiles. In addition, there was the opportunity for uncontrolled export of hard currency from the republic and its subsequent distribution to accounts in foreign banks. Therefore, at a certain moment Dudayev's crew simply declared its exclusive right to all this income and blocked the 'Chechen channel' to Russia. This caused the crisis.

Undoubtedly, the economic factor, including its criminal aspect did play an important role in the evolution of the Chechen conflict. Serge Shakhrai's (Deputy Premier of the Government of the Russian Federation) remark regarding Chechnya as a 'free criminal zone' became well known (Thishov 1997). In his speech to the Federal Council, Boris Yeltsin 1995 said:

> On the territory of the Chechen Republic as the result of an armed coup, there was established the most dictatorial kind of regime. The fusion of the criminal world and the regime - about which politicians and journalists spoke incessantly as the main danger for Russia - became a reality in Chechnya. This was the testing ground for the preparation and dissemination of criminal power to other Russian regions.

There seems to be a near unanimity in Russia on the criminal nature of the regime. Similar evaluation has been given by representatives of far-right nationalist forces in Russia. There is another approach, however, to understand the Chechen crisis. This approach is 'civilisational-ethnographic romanticism'. Its essence lies either in 'the clash

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[5] However, there are scholars like James Hughes who believe that Chechnya's importance owed less to its small oil output and more to its refining capacity and 'strategic straddling' of the main Baku-Novorossisk oil pipeline linking Russia to the energy resources of the Caspian Basin (For details see Hughes 2002).

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of civilizations'- Islamic and Christian, or in the basic incompatibility of ethnic systems. It also stresses on the lack of understanding on the part of the Russian politicians of the profoundly specific nature of Chechen Society (Ibid.). Alekesei Malashenko (1994), an Oriental specialist explains thus:

> The Chechens have their way of life; their thoughts their ideas of norms of behaviours and their faith. There a specific system of institutions developed, which is called by ethnologist Yan Chesnov, 'Vainakh democracy'... In the scheme of historical philosophical Juxtapositions, of two socio-cultural systems, their mutual and constant rejection is inevitable. There was never any peace in Chechnya under any of the political systems. Chechnya it seems will always be strikingly different from Smolensk oblast or Primorskii krai. And therefore, she will someday acquire her independence and God grant, there will be on Russia's borders one more friendly state.

It is this aspect of the problem that we are primarily concerned with as we are trying to assess the impact of ethnicity on democracy in Russia. We will try to understand the ethnic dimension of the Chechen problem in the following pages.

It is important to understand the historico-cultural aspect of the Chechen–conflict, although it has only limited applicability as far as the current Chechen crisis is concerned. History is often used in mobilisation to substantiate one's adopted stands and argumentation. References to history form the essence of the arguments of opposing sides. This is especially the case with ethnic conflicts, because the national/ethnic consciousness is primarily the mobilised collective memory shaped by intellectuals as 'the history of the people'. The commonly shared version of the past serve as a necessary resource for consolidating an ethnic group and is frequently one of the main arguments used in the formulation of new demands or claims. Members of a group will usually hold firm faith in the historical justice of their cause, even if each separate individual may recall only the history he himself has experienced. 'Historical memory' or mobilised past becomes powerful resource when 'dramatic collisions' occur in contemporary lives, touching the fate of all members of the group. This is precisely what happened to the Chechens who fifty years ago experienced the collective trauma of deportation[6], and

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[6] Deportation means the expulsion of a person or group of people from a place or country. The expulsion of nationals may also be called banishment, exile, or penal transportation. Deportation is an ancient practice: Khosrau I, Sassanid King of Persia, deported 292,000 citizens, slaves, and conquered people to the new city of Ctesiphon in 542 C.E. England deported religious objectors and criminals to America in large numbers before 1730 Article 49 of Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits the deportation of people into or out of

among whom almost the entire generation remembers the time of exile and humiliation (Ibid).

The actual origin of the Chechens is rather obscure. The Chechens and Ingushes were conquered by Russia in the late 1850s. In 1920, each nationality were constituted areas within the soviet mountain republic and the Chechens became an autonomous region on 30 November 1922. In January 1934 the two regions were united, and on 5 December 1936 constituted as the Checheno-Ingush Autonomous Republic. This was dissolved in 1944 and the population was deported en masse, allegedly for collaborating with the German occupation forces. It was reconstituted on 9 Jan. 1957; 232,000 Chechens & Ingushes returned to their homes in the next two years (Turner 2007).

The worst experience for the Chechens, and an important element of Chechen self-identification, was the collective deportation of all Chechens to Central Asia in February 1944 (Krag 2003). After their return from exile, many Chechens were socially and politically dissatisfied. The consequences of deportation resulted in a higher level of criminality among many Chechens. Chechnya and the Chechens along with the Ingush were paid special attention by the communist party organs, and also the KGB[7] and MVD (The Ministry of Internal Affairs) of the USSR, which continued to consider them insufficiently loyal to the regime and prone to 'nationalistic prejudices'. For example, on 30 April 1966, the Chairman of the KGB Vladimir Semichastny sent a document to the

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occupied territory under belligerent military occupation: During World War II, Volga Germans, Chechens, Crimean Tatars and others in the Soviet Union were deported by Joseph Stalin (see Population transfer in the Soviet Union), with some estimating the number of deaths from the deportation to be as high as 1 in 3. For details see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deportation.

[7] The KGB (КГБ) is the common abbreviation for the Russian: Комитет государственной безопасности (help·info) (Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti or Committee for State Security). It was the national security agency of the Soviet Union from 1954 until 1991, and its premier internal security, intelligence, and secret police organization during that time. The contemporary State Security Agency of the Republic of Belarus uses the Russian name KGB. Most of the KGB archives remain classified, yet two on-line documentary sources are available In a 1983 Time Magazine article it was stated that the KGB has been the world's most effective information-gathering organization. It operated legal and illegal espionage residencies in target countries where the *legal resident* spied from the Soviet embassy, and, if caught, was protected with diplomatic immunity from prosecution; at best, the compromised spy either returned to the Soviet Union or was expelled by the target country government. The *illegal resident* spied unprotected by diplomatic immunity and worked independently of the Soviet diplomatic and trade missions, (*cf.* the non-official cover CIA agent). In its early history, the KGB valued illegal spies more than legal spies, because illegals penetrated their targets more easily.

Central Committee of the CPSU about the revival of nationalistic and chauvinistic manifestations among the intelligentsia and young people of the Checheno-Ingush ASSR, and the increase in cases of inter-ethnic dissent, which frequently grew into group incidents and excesses. This document also cites several examples of the dissemination of anti-Soviet slanders against the communist party and the nationalities policy of the Soviet Union. Islam and its dogmatic tenets were blamed for such developments. The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) of the USSR sent information to the Central Committee of the CPSU on a Consistent basis on the same themes. On 7 May 1971, minister N. M. Shchelokov reported that for a long time criminal gangs from among the Chechens and Ingush have continued to operate in the territories of Checheno-Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Dagestan, Kazakhstan and Kirgizia. These informations were generally secret and designated for party organs and special state services. The analysis of problem was limited to ideological labels or criminal categories, and was not the subject of scientific study or public discussion. The deeper social and psychological reason for 'Chechen criminality' or 'disloyalty' was never thought fit to be investigated. However, it would be misleading to judge the general situation in the republic and the social behaviour of the Chechens solely on the basis of KGB and MVD documents. The years 1960-80 were a period of intense socio-cultural development for the Chechens and Ingush, who had experienced heavy setbacks from the years of deportation and political restrictions. Urbanization accelerated, and a significant part of the population acquired industrial skills, primarily in oil-extraction and processing and in the lumber and textile industries. On the whole, at the end of the 1980 the situation in the republic was quite stable at least at the surface level, which prompted local party and government leaders to give optimistic reports at various all union fora. However, Chechen society and the situation in the republic were considerably more complicated than was represented in official reports; the feelings of inter-ethnic tension and distrust persisted, on the level of the local population in the republic itself and in some border territories, especially among Chechens living in Dagestan and in North Ossetia. The employment situation was critical, as were the environmental and social problems in several areas, especially in oil-processing centers (Ibid). Thus, history provides part of the explanation for the conflict in Chechnya. Chechen nationalism, unlike that of Tatarstan and other republics was

mobilized around a much more recently ingrained and bitter historical memory of Russian imperialism notably the genocidal deportation of 1944. Historical grievances against Russia profoundly embedded in Chechen society later proved to be a major source of perpetuation of conflict with Russia (Hughes 2002).

The idea of self-determination [8] for the Chechen nation arose under Gorbachev's *perestroika*. However Checheno-Ingushetia was not a pioneer among republics in the political dialogue initiated by Union Republics. However it didn't lag far behind too. On 27 November 1990, the Supreme Soviet of the Checheno-Ingush ASSR adopted a declaration on sovereignty, and also established the conditions under which the Republic would agree to sign a new union treaty: the conditions were that the question of transfer of the territory of the Prigorodny *raion* and the right-bank section of Vladikavkaz 'back to the Ingush people' should be resolved (Tishkov 1997).

Like any nationalism, Chechen nationalism needed a charismatic and popular leader to express its will and interests in an articulative manner. The emergence of Dzhokar Dudayev[9] marks a milestone in the history of the Chechen conflict. His life exemplified the successful military career of a Soviet officer. The respect that he commanded by virtue of being a high positioned native General saw him soon as a consensus leader. At

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[8] According to scholars as well as the practice of a number of states, self-determination has many facets. It may be internal and external and its components range from simple self-government at one extreme to full self government at the other. According to walker Connor, the self-determination principle holds that any people, simply because it considers itself to be a separate national group, is uniquely and exclusively qualified to determine its own political status including, if it desire so, the right to its own state. However there is another viewpoint which states that self determination does not carry with it an unconditional right to political independence. Also, there is a continuing debate among international lawyers whether or not there exists a right to self-determination and if so, whether or not it is limited to colonial situations. While several authors have argued for the right to "self determination" for ethnic or nationality groups, most of them do not suggest that self-determination carries with it an unconditional right to political independence or secession. But the states in general perceive secession as the ultimate expression of the right to self-determination and therefore, in general, reject categorically any demand of "self-determination" for minority or ethnic groups within their jurisdiction (Narang 1995: 57-67).

[9] There were petitions from influential Chechens, including Doka Zavgayev, head of the old political elite, to the Russian leadership to make 'just one Chechen a Soviet General'. This demand was in fact accepted as in 1990, Dudayev received the rank of General. After becoming General, Dudayev visited the Republic where his relatives held a bountiful feast in honour of 'our own general'. At the same time, Zelimkhan Yandarbiev (leader of Bainakh Democratic Party and an ideologue of Chechen movement), Yaragi Mamodayev (head of the Checheno-Ingush construction department), Yusup Soslambekov (Chairman, National Congress of the Chechen People-OKChN) and other activists came out with the idea of inviting Dudayev into the leadership of the national movement (See Tishkov 1997).

the second National Congress of the Chechen People (OKChN) held in July 1991, Dudayev, was acting as the leader of the movement. At that time a declaration was adopted, proclaiming that Chechnya was not part of the USSR or the RSFSR. The executive committee of the OKChN, headed by Dudayev, was declared the only legal organ of power of this new republic named Nokhchi-cho. Dudayev's armed supporters forcibly seized the building of the government of the republic, the radio and television centre and on 6 September penetrated the building where the Supreme Soviet was in session and overpowered the resisting deputies. On 8 October 1991, OKChN declared itself the only power in the Republic after and on 27 October held elections for President and Parliament. Before that OKChN had declared the universal mobilization of all males between 15 and 55 years of age and the military readiness of its 'national guard' branding all opponents of an independent Chechnya as 'enemies of the nation'. In the elections turnout was only 10-12 percent and voting took place in only 70 of 360 electoral districts. General Dudayev received more votes than the three candidates and was declared President. By 1 November Dudayev had published a decree on the declaration of sovereignty of the Chechen Republic. With this act there appeared a new state entity within the boundaries of the former Checheno-Ingush ASSR, excepting two of the fourteen administrative regions, which were left for the Ingush state. The Chechen leaders felt that the Ingush were too loyal to Russia and that if the Ingush national movement wanted to create a republic within the RSFSR then it should do so by taking more territory from North Ossetia, including the Prigorodny *raion*, which had a very fertile agricultural land. Dudayev declared in an interview for Russian television: "The Ingush must travel their own path of hardships in the struggle for their statehood" (Tishkov 1997).

The Union and Russian authorities which were still existing now realized that they had lost control of Chechnya and Dudayev was not in a conciliatory mood. On 2 November 1991 the Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR declared the elections in Chechnya illegal; five days later, the President of the RSFSR issued a decree declaring a state of emergency in Chechnya. But the Union authorities were not prepared to bring troops into Chechnya and the decree was not confirmed by the Supreme Soviet on 11 November, to which Yeltsin agreed. In Chechnya this was taken as a significant victory

over Russia and de facto recognition of the republic's independence. For Dudayev, on the other hand, the fact that the decree was not implemented provided a very powerful impetus for acquiring additional popularity. He and his supporters now became masters of the republic. At the beginning of June 1992, Dudayev decided to expel Russian troops from Chechnya. On 6 June the commander of the military district gave General Sokolov an order to leave the territory of Chechnya. Dudayev continued to dominate the political area completely. However, initial euphoria after the presidential elections passed quickly and opposition to Dudayev and criticism of his policies began to grow in Chechnya. The parliament of the Chechen Republic set the date of 5 June 1992 for a referendum on the question of the form of power in the Republic. The parliament intended the dissolution of the presidential form of administration. In response, however, Dudayev Simply dissolved parliament and introduced direct presidential rule. His armed soldiers took the parliament building, killing several opposition deputies and arresting many. Opposition parties and newspapers were forbidden, and leaders of opposition became illegal. Political secession and Dudayev's action generated a profound economic crisis in Chechnya. The republic was transformed in two years into one of the most crisis ridden regions of Russia in the Socio-economic sense (Ibid.).

The Russian government, which had never recognized the Chechen declaration of independence of November 1991, moved troops and armour into Chechnya on 11 December 1994 (Turner 2007). Chechnya's bid for independence degenerated into civil strife. Moscow's clumsy and Violent response, Dudayev's 'hysterical rhetoric' and his inability to control organized crime which had assumed dangerous proportions, and his radical followers who were on a rampage against the non-Chechens led to war in 1994-96[10] (Nicholson 1999). Grozny was bombed and attacked by Russian forces at the end of December 1994 and the presidential palace was captured on 19 January 1995, but fighting continued. On 30 July 1995 the Russian and Chechen authorities signed a ceasefire. However, hostilities, raids and hostage-taking continued; Dudayev was killed in April 1996 and a ceasefire was agreed on 30 August 1996. The ceasefire of August

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[10] Estimates of casualties in 1994-1996 vary from a low of 4379 military dead and in excess of 20,000 civilian dead, with no accounting of wounded, to a high of 80,000 dead and 24,000 wounded, announced by General Aleksandr Lebed, Security Council Chief of Russia under Yeltsin, in *Izvestia*, 4 September 1996. For details see Hughes and Sasse (2002).

1996, followed by power-sharing treaty in May 1997, led to a Russia military withdrawal and the end of its effective sovereignty over Chechnya. In its place a special status of 'association' between the Russian Federation and Chechnya was established. It stipulated that a final decision on the status of Chechnya was postponed for 'up to' five years, while it remained part of a 'common economic space' with the Russian Federation. In practice Chechnya was left in a condition of neglect or oblivion, cut off from Russia, and without significant external support. The new president Aslan Maskhadov, under these trying circumstances which was further compounded by the radicalization and Islamicization of Chechen field commanders found it an uphill task to rule Chechnya as a de facto independent state. The Islamization aspect was clearly demonstrated by the introduction of Shariiat law in Chechnya in early 1999 in complete indifference to the Russian constitution. These acts of defiance, coupled with the electoral calculations of Vladimir Putin who reinterpreted the war into a war on international terrorism involving Muslim fundamentalists, led to the second Chechen war in 1999 (Hughes 2002; Krag 2003). Fighting broke out again, in September 1999 as Russian forces launched attacks on 'rebel bases'. More than 200000 civilians were forced to leave Chechnya, as the fighting intensified. Majority of them moved to neighbouring Ingushetia. By February 2000, the Russian forces had destroyed major part of Grozny and had taken complete control of it. In June 2000, Vladimir Putin, the new Russian President declared direct rule. The conflict continues, with estimates of the number of deaths varying from 6500 to 15,000. Over 4,000 soldiers (Russian) have been killed. However, on 18 November 2001 the first official meeting between negotiators for the Russian government and Chechen separatists since the renewal of hostilities in 1999 took place. The meeting reached no substantive agreement and no further high-level meeting took place.[11]

Chechnya has posed serious challenges before the Russian Federation and its unity and integrity since its very inception. The bloody military conflict in 1994-96, leading to the Russian defeat and forced withdrawal from Chechnya was a national humiliation for Russia that intensified inter-ethnic hatred and made politically stable relations between

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[11] For details see the *Europa World Year Book 2008:* Routledge.

Russia and Chechnya a near impossibility. The protracted, bitter and bloody nature of the conflict in Chechnya has radicalized positions on both sides and makes a political solution along the lines of Tatarastan[12] remote in the immediate future.

The Chechen crisis can be described as an intra-state war. This war was primarily the result of the efforts of Chechnya to secede from Russia. Usually such a program of separatism is born and its supporters are mobilized on the basis of the doctrinal and political practice of ethno nationalism. The essence of it, is that each people - understood not as a territorial association (*demos*) but as an ethnic community or ethno nation - has the right to self-determination, to 'its own' state. Even though this doctrine fails to correspond to international legal norms and contradicts the legislation of all the states in the world (except the text of the former Soviet constitution which recognized the right of the peoples of Russia to free self-determination up to separation and the formation of independent states), and despite the practical impossibility of achieving it, this is a doctrine which has been very popular and has many supporters in the contemporary world (Tishkov 1997). Dan Smith, director of the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo, has calculated that, of the 82 armed conflicts of varying size which took place in 60 states from 1989 to 1992, 41 had ethno national characteristics (Smith 1994: 224-225). In these conflicts at least one side could be identified as belonging to a definite ethnic group. The Chechen crisis belongs to this category.

Neither the truth that non-Chechen nationals and even foreign mercenaries and volunteers were among the leaders and rank and file participants of the conflict on Chechnya's side, nor the fact that on the opposite side there was a state with a multi-ethnic military personnel, can invalidate the above evaluation. This is the usual pattern of ethnic, conflicts in the world. Cases of ethnic conflicts in their 'pure form'- with one group acting against another because of some deep-rooted hostility are rare instances. Although, as violence escalates, ethnic affiliation can emerge as the sole elective principle in the

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[12] The signing of a treaty between Russia and Tatarastan in February 1994 led to the peaceful resolution of one of the two most serious conflicts of the Russian Federation. For details see: Hughes and Sasse (2002).

choice of victims, e.g., Nagorno-Karabakh[13], Rwanda[14], and North Ossetia [15] (Tishkov 1997).

In a doctrinal and political sense, Chechnya's 'national independence' was 'prepared' and legitimated by the Russian ideology and political practice of those years (early 90s), when it was the belief of many that to realize democratic transformations, along with improving government, there was a need to create sovereignty on ethnic basis (Ibid).

For many reasons, Chechnya became one of the first actors to implement such a radical scenario of sovereignty. *First,* the Chechens as one of the largest peoples in the Russian state and the least assimilated to Russian culture had experienced events in relatively recent history which generated feelings of collective humiliation and need for extreme forms of self-assertion. Neither the Russian state nor the Russian society managed to understand this. *Second,* Chechnya suffered from many social problems viz., surplus labour resources and unemployment, a relatively low level of standard of living and a general lack of modernisation. This provided the human material for mass political manipulation and latter supplied a sizable number of recruits for the ranks of professional soldiers and armed militias. As far as the ethnic factor was concerned, a situation developed in which the existing social, political and cultural injustices followed ethnic boundaries - or were perceived as doing so. *Third,* from the 1960s and through the 1980s some Chechens, especially the urban dwellers, moved on the path of modernisation. This new elite among Chechens demanded for sovereignty as it would meant priority access to resources for them. *Fourth,* the transfer of weapons from the arsenals of the Russian army was a crucial factor. This guaranteed Dudayev the opportunity to strengthen Chechnya's

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[13] Hostilities between Azerbaijan and Armenia which culminated in war over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh saw ethnic cleansing of Armenians and Azerbaijanians in Azerbaijan and Armenia respectively. As a result of the ethnic cleansing and forced immigration Armenia and Azerbaijan are the most homogeneous political units of Caucasia .For details see: Kocsis (2001).

[14] At the peak of the ethnic violence in Rwanda between Hutus and Tutsis in 1994, around 1 million Hutus and Tutsis were killed in a matter of three months. For details see: Turner (2007).

[15] In North Ossetia when Ingush-Osset conflict intensified, the North Ossetian Ossets were joined by South Ossetian Ossets, (the later were formally citizens of another state, Georgia) in the brutal expulsion of the Ingush from the North Ossetian Prigorodny *raion.* Alan Chochiev, vice-chairman of the South Ossetian Supreme Soviet wrote in Nezavisimaya Gazeta that the events in Prigorodny were the 'first mutual military-national display of the Ossets within human memory'. For details see: Tishkov (1997).

declaration of independence with threats of sheer force, and then to organize impressive resistance to federal armed forces (Ibid).

Krag (2003) has answered the question as to why Chechnya chose a path that none of the other Russian republics chose. He says, *first,* because Chechnya was one of the few ethnic republics with a simple ethnic majority and leadership after the peaceful separation from Ingushetia. *Second,* the 1.2 million size population was not unusual for independent states (e.g. Estonia). And *thirdly,* it was the leadership factor. In Dudayev Chechnya had a disciplined self-conscious and goal oriented leadership. Also, Chechens have a history of continuous opposition to Russian governance throughout the common Russian-Chechen history, beginning with the Russian conquest of the Caucasus at the end of the eighteenth century.

The Chechen crisis could have been resolved without using the army by various means and methods. Such possibilities continued to exist right up until December 1994 when the war actually begun. Tishkov (1997) asserts that the Russian President's assertion that war in Chechnya became inevitable as all other means of resolving the crisis were exhausted, was not credible. As far back as the autumn of 1991, the federal regime left undone many of those things which it ought to have done.

*First,* throughout the entire crisis, not one of the government top leaders contacted president Dudayev to get his viewpoint and propose ways of resolving the deadlock. The personal ego of Boris Yeltsin played a major role in this. It is reflected in Boris Yeltsin's statement of 2 May1996 quoted by Tishkov: "I could not negotiate with Dudayev. Dudayev was a man the president could not meet".

*Second,* a lot of necessary steps were not taken in the field of economics, control of the borders and of air space. These are measures that states usually take recourse to when faced with rebellious regions, in order to demonstrate the impossibility of forcible separatism.

*Third,* Russia did not inform about this internal crisis to the international Community. It should have made explicit that any support - even indirect - or establishment of contacts

with representatives of the rebellious regime would be viewed as hostile to relations with Russia.

*Fourth,* Russia was maintaining a double-standard as it was on one hand supporting separatist forces in Abkhazia, and on the other had been uncompromising to the Chechen nationalism (Ibid.).

There was a total sense of callousness on the part of the Centre towards Chechnya. Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev repeatedly claimed that all his attempts at discussing the issues at stake, with Russian officials, had been turned down. Not only did President Yeltsin and his officials, not wish to discuss peaceful solutions with President Dudayev, but even the democratic movement in the Russian capital, approached by democratic intellectuals in Chechnya was for a long time reluctant to listen to Chechen grievances (Krag 2003).

The Chechen crisis could have been averted had there been no clash between the person of Yeltsin and Dudayev. It was the personalization of the clash that was the main obstacle to an accommodation between Russia and Chechnya (Tishkov 1997). However, we cannot minimize the extent of mutual 'ethnic' hatred contributing to this 'deep-seated personal animus' between Yeltsin and his key advisers on the one hand, and Dudayev on the other (Dunlop 1998; Lieven 1998).

One very important aspect of the Chechen war was that there was considerable potential for the fighting to spread. Kalmykov (1993), (Russia's former Minister of Justice) who resigned from his post to protest his government's intervention in Chechnya also predicted that the whole Caucasus would rise up over a war in Chechnya in solidarity with the Chechnya. He said:

> It is impossible to frighten the Chechen republic with military preparations. If any actions are undertaken against this republic the whole North Caucasus will revolt. Nobody will politely ask permission from the leader of the republics for such actions.

Similarly, Hill (1995) also opined that the armed conflict had the potential to escalate to involve other republics in Russia as well as other countries:

> The North Caucasus is a tinderbox where a conflict in one republic has the potential to spark a regional conflagration that will spread beyond its borders into the rest of the Russian Federation and will invite the involvement of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Iran, and their north Caucasian Diasporas. As the war in Chechnya demonstrates, conflict in the region is not easily contained. Chechen fighters cut their teeth in the war between Georgia and Abkhazia, the Chechen and north Caucasian diaspora in Turkey is heavily involved in fund-raising and processing weapons and the fighting has spilled into republics and territories adjacent to Chechnya.

However, there were other experts and scholars who believed that the conditions did not exist for the spread of conflict. Felgengauer (1994) predicted in the early weeks of the war in Chechnya that it would not spark a repetition of the wars in Caucasus because: "Other mountain peoples would hardly help Dudayev and his supporters. Neighbors are not liked in the Caucasus, and many would, most, likely only rejoice if misfortune were to befall the Vainakh tribes".

Garb (1998) aptly summaries the whole situation:

> So far, a pan-Caucasian ethnic-identity is barely embryonic. The soviet and pre-soviet forces of division are still deeply ingrained. The boundaries that lie between these peoples are largely the same as they were under soviet government. Many of the key decision makers are also the same. The elites of the republics feel that Russia still provides them with more stability than they would have if they broke away from Moscow. Furthermore, even if this dependence were to decline and there were economic and political incentives for secession, Russia's demonstration of military might and of how far it was willing to go to quell the Chechen independence movement discouraged any North Caucasian group, alone or aligned with others, from launching a military operation against Russia.

## 3.2.3 Dagestan: Growing Crisis

Ethnic relations in Dagestan are extraordinary not only for their rich diversity but also for their relative tranquility. Dagestan is home to more than 30 national groups. Largest among these are Avars, Dargins, Kumyks, Lezgins, Russians, Laks, Nogais and Chechens, the last of which accounts for approximately 8 percent of Dagestan's 2 million people. Yet, despite its extreme heterogeneity, Dagestan is virtually the lone administrative unit in the Caucasus which has not recently experienced ethnic conflicts of dangerous proportions. This is remarkable not only in view of Dagestan's ethnic diversity but also in view of its economic deprivation. Despite subsidies from Moscow (providing up to 80 percent of the Republic's budget), Dagestan remains Russia's poorest region. However, a

more recent development in the region threatens to destabilize the republic. The population displacement in the aftermath of the Chechen conflict may undermine a complex political balance existing among the extraordinary numerous ethnic groups in the neighbouring Republic of Dagestan. The destabilization of Dagestan threatens to bring ethnic conflict to virtually the only state in the Caucasus to have avoided it thus far (Ware and Kisriev 1998).

The Chechen war seems to have complicated the political situation in Dagestan. The Chechens hoped that Caucasian solidarity would ensure the support of their neighbours and were disappointed when Dagestan remained loyal to Moscow. They seemed to have forgotten the long-standing territorial disputes between Chechnya and Dagestan, along with Dagestani resentment stemming from a tradition of livestock rustling across the Dagestani–Chechen border. Dagestanis were also upset when trains passing through Chechnya were robbed, and when passenger trains reportedly were shelled by Chechen separatists. Though Dagestan remained neutral and did neither help nor ever intended to assist Chechnya in her war efforts, Russian approach towards Dagestan was one of cynicism. Travel to and from Dagestan by rail, see and air (except to Moscow) was interrupted, and telephone communication was cut leading to a 40-50 percent increase in the cost of basic foods. At the same time, Russian investment in Dagestan was reduced. Though local authorities remained loyal, Moscow was viewed as high-handed in dealing with them. Similarly, the popular response of Dagestanis to the hostage situation in Kizlyar and Pervomaiskoae, initially, when Chechen separatists seized Dagestani hostages were call for revenge against the Chechens, but these quickly gave way to dismay when Russian artillery shelled buildings occupied by Dagestani hostages. The complexity of Dagestani position was highlighted by M.G. Aliev, Chairman of the Dagestan People's Assembly:

> For Dagestani ethnic politics the position concerning events in Chechnya is an enormous test. Chechen people have the same genealogical roots as Dagestanis. All our struggles for national existence have been historically intertwined. Moreover, Chechens (after Russians) form the largest non-Dagestani population in Dagestani territory. The Chechen ethnic group, known as Akkins, has historically inhabited Dagestan, and from this point of view they are certainly native Dagestanis. On the other hand, more than 40 thousand Kumyks, Avars, Dargins, Laks and other native Dagestanis are living in Chechnya. So everything motivated Dagestan to search for the policy, which on the one hand,

> assured the uncompromising observance of declared neutrality in military conflict and on the other hand, expressed our principal position of resolving the current conflict through our active involvement in peaceful efforts. We recognized that the preservation of the unity and integrity of the Russian Federation is a legitimate principle but we cannot accept its application by military methods and especially not by the ruthless destruction of cities and villages, industry and transport, homes, cultural centres and health services; nor by the deployment of rockets, bombs and artillery. The massive slaughter of civilians including children, women and old people; the ruin of their very meager property; the suffering of tens of thousands of people of different ethnicities lie on the conscience of those state authorities who unleashed the military operations before exhausting political methods of resolution (Aliev 1995).

A politically independent Chechnya can raise the issue of the Khasavyurtovskii and Novolakskii region which were occupied by ethnic Chechens prior to 1944. At present these areas are under Dagestan. A substantial size of Chechen population, comprising both Chechen ethnics and Chechen refugees inhabit those regions. Any effort on the part of an independent Chechnya to interfere with relations between Dagestan's Chechen–Akkins and other Dagestani ethnic groups would result in increased tensions. In December 1994, immediately after the beginning of the Chechen crisis, approximately 1, 50,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)[16] crossed the Chechen border into Dagestan. This ethnic influx inevitably amplified tensions in what were already disputed territories, as majority of the Chechen refugees got shelter in Khasavyurtovskii, and Novolakskii on which Chechnya stakes claim, and some other border regions. However, the number of IDPs in Dagestan decreased to around 30,000 - after April, 1995 when military action in Chechnya subsided and the Russian Government stopped providing financial support for IDPs and encouraged them to return to Chechnya (Ware and Kisriev 1998).

The influx of IDPs upsets the intricate balance of nationalities in numerous ways. For example, Kumyks who traditionally dominate the Khasavyurtovskii region have been particularly disturbed by the recent influx. As a consequence of this and other displacements, Kumyks have been reduced to be a minority in their own ethnic territory. The Kumyk People's Movement, *Tenglik* (Justice) has demanded an end to resettlement and has called for an autonomous 'Kumykstan'. Avars (and other mountains peoples) have formed the 'Imam Shamil Front in direct opposition to Tenglik. Similarly, an

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[16] The official designation of these refugees as IDPs was part of Russia's effort to demonstrate to the outside world that the conflict is not international. For details see: ware and Kisriev (1998).

independent 'Lezgistan' is an objective of some members of 'Sadval' (Unity), the Lezgin national organization. While none of these organizations results directly from the Chechen conflict the latter has contributed to tension among them. It is a matter of concern in Dagestan that the continued presence of IDPs is likely either to drag Dagestan into Chechen conflict or to create conflict situations within Dagestan. The Chechen conflict has raised serious challenges to Dagestan's fragile political stability and its displacement of local populations threatens to undermine Dagestan's intricate ethnic balance. If Dagestan is to remain exception to ethnic conflict in the region then it may require heightened sensitivity as well as concrete support from Moscow and from international relief agencies; the later can render humanitarian aid inside Dagestan to relieve Dagestan of its refugee crises. This is important in view of Dagestan's increasing geopolitical significance. Not only Dagestan is vital to the Russian strategy in the Caucasus, but also, it provides an important link in the pipeline that may bring Caspian oil to the West.

### 3.2.4 Secessionist Challenge in Tatarstan

Demands for secession are not widespread in Russia. Only two republics, Chechnya and Tatarstan, have since 1990, demanded independence from Moscow. The other ethno republics seek only greater autonomy (Treisman 1997). In Tatarstan the ruling elite employed Tatar ethno nationalism, radically expressed by ultra-nationalist organizations and local intellectuals to establish a firm and indisputable political order based on titular representation. About 85 percent of all key appointments at the republican and local level have been made to ethnic Tatars, though they comprise only about half the total population. Using the powerful slogans of national sovereignty and self-determination, the Tatarstan authorities defined their republic as a fully sovereign state and 'a subject of international law'. This provocative assertion had been used effectively with other popular slogans ('associated state' 'equal partnership with Russia') to defy both the Russian Constitution and the Russian authorities (Tishkov 1997).

In March 1992, the local authorities held a referendum on the question, ' Do you want the Tatarstan republic to be a democratic and sovereign state building its relations with Russia on a partnership basis?' The President of Tatarstan's statement which

accompanied the referendum clarified for the public that voting 'Yes' would not mean secession from Russia. The public passed the referendum by a slim margin of 1percent yet these results were projected as an expression of the people's will to an independent state. As a realization of this 'Will', the Tatarstan Supreme Soviet approved a new constitution in November 1992. Article 61 of the new constitution defines the republic as a Sovereign state associated with the Russia Federation. A confrontation appeared imminent with the centre. But the confrontation was averted, and after two years of intensive negotiations, Tatarstan and the Federal authorities signed a treaty in February 1994. It grants more responsibilities and rights to the republic and also demonstrates symbolically the possibility of peacefully accommodating even the most radical nationalist demands. By concluding this treaty with Moscow, the government of Tatarstan achieved at least three goals; strengthening the republic's position and legitimacy, easing potentially dangerous situation between the two major local ethnic groups (Tatars, Russians), and minimizing the political role of Tatar extremists (Ibid).

The Tatar and Chechen nationalist movement had one thing in common; both had refused to sign the Russian Federation Treaty in March 1992, but each took a different path there on. Ethnic leaders in Russia and other successor states are becoming more interested in avoiding conflict-generating confrontations unlike Chechnya, which chose a confrontationist path. They are following the path of Tatarstan and not the Chechnya. On 14-15 January 1995, at the Peace Palace in The Hague, a meeting took place to provide an opportunity for the top leaders of breakaway regions to engage in discussion with senior officials from the Central Governments of Russia, Ukraine, Georgia and Moldavia. The idea was to examine the factors that lead to successful avoidance of the use of force in dealing with regional conflicts in the former Soviet Union. It was agreed to present the case of Tatarstan as a model for resolving conflicts of separatist or irredentist nature. In the case of Tatarstan, the leadership of Tatarstan, especially President Mintimer Shaimiev, a former party bureaucrat originally from the countryside, opted for a technique of confrontation and compromise in a prolonged negotiation process. In 1992, a series of meetings took place with officials and experts from Tatarstan. At the beginning of the meetings, two mutually irreconcilable positions were presented by federal and regional representatives: the former insisted that Tatarstan was a subject of the federation, while

the latter maintained that 'Tatarstan is not Russia and it is a subject of international law.' on 15 February 1994, however, Tatarstan signed a treaty and 12 agreements with Moscow, affirming the republic's constitution and presidency, republican leadership, guaranteeing a significant degree of sovereignty over oil and other natural resources, granting special provisions for military service, as well as various other rights and powers. In The Hague, Shaimiev spoke his mind and provided the following explanation of his policy:

> In an effort to find non-violent ways to resolve the status of Tatarstan, we conducted negotiations for three years with President Yeltsin... We managed to arrive at a compromise and we signed the Treaty on mutual Delimitation and Delegation of Authority. As a basis for the Treaty, we agreed to acknowledge both constitutions although these constitutions still have contentious issues. At this stage, however, it is a matter of finding a compromise....We came to an agreement stating that Tatarstan is uniting with the Russian federation on the basis of the constitutions of both Republics and on the basis of the signed Treaty. We agreed to delegate the strategic issues (defense, security and some other issues) to the center and we think it is reasonable... The Treaty is a safe-guard, against a possible unitary development on the part of Russia. The imperial mentality unfortunately is still prevalent in Russia today. The main point now is to focus on building a democratic federation (EAWARN 1995).

Thus the Russian and Tatar Presidents signed a Treaty defining Tatarstan as a state united with Russia on the basis of the constitutions of both, but the Russian Parliament has not ratified it.

In the background of the failure of negotiations and compromise in Chechnya, the persistent non-violent nationalism in Tatarstan was seen as a model point of departure by many nationalist leaders in Russia's periphery; trying to strike a balance between violent and peaceful political methods.

## 3.2.5 Bashkortostan – Sovereignty Project

Bashkortostan is located between the Volga river and the Ural mountains, immediately south-east of Tatarstan. The Bashkir people are closely related to the Tatars and share the same religion. Their languages are also mutually intelligible. Bashkortostan's situation is complicated by its ethnic make-up, where ethnic Bashkirs form only 22 percent of the population, a smaller fraction than the Tatars (28 percent) and Russians (39 percent). In Bashkortostan rich natural resource and a strong industrial base fostered high degree of

economic self-sufficiency that could be used to press for sovereignty. But ethnic Bashkirs were in too weak a position to openly press claims for self-determination because of their demographic status as only the third largest ethnic group in the republic. These factors led leaders to a campaign that emphasized for economic sovereignty while virtually ignoring ethnic matters (Gorenburg 1999).

Like Tatarastan[17], Bashkortostan was one of the first autonomous republics to call for dismantling the Soviet Union's centralized economic structure. The leaders of Bashkortostan, however, did not forget altogether, the political demands that included republic status, treaty based relations with other republics, and the development of a republican legislative system based on a new republic constitution. The demands of the Bashkortostan's leaders focused on these same issues even after the break-up of the Soviet Union. Ethnic questions receded even further from the sovereignty discourse during this period. The leaders like Murtaza Rakhimov, Chairman of the republic's Supreme Soviet, called for the adoption of a State programme for dealing with ethnic problems that could lead to the formation of a civic identity in the republic (Ibid.). Bashkortostan signed a bilateral treaty with Russian Federal Centre in August 1994, which preserves the common legislative framework of the Russian Federation while defining mutual areas of competence (Turner 2007). Both Tatarstan and Bashkortostan signed treaty type agreements in 1994. However, the interpretation of the agreements remains different in Moscow and the republics, with the republics asserting that the treaties enshrine their Sovereign Statehood and Moscow asserting that the treaties enshrine the republics' status as member units of the Russian Federation (Graney 1999).

## 3.2.6 Chuvashia – the Quest for Sovereignty

Chuvashia is located on the Volga river, North West of Tatarstan. The Chuvash people are Turkic but predominantly Christian. They have no history of independent statehood and have been ruled by Moscow since the 1400s. They represent a clear majority of the republic's population (68 percent), with Russians comprising only 26 percent .Chuvash

[17] As early as 1989 the leaders of Tatarstan defined the three points that were to form the core of their ideology in the late 1980 and early 90s; (i) they wanted union republic status separate from Russia, (ii) they wanted Tatarstan laws to be supreme in the republic and, (iii) they wanted control over the republic's most profitable industries. For details see: Gorenburg (1999).

politicians tended to support the same ideas as Tatar and Bashkir leaders, but in a more moderate form. As in Bashkortostan, their main goal was economic self-government. The state building aspects of Sovereignty were less appealing to Chuvash leaders. Unlike leaders in Bashkortostan and Tatarstan, Chuvash leaders never threatened to leave the Federation, or to boycott elections or the signing of the Federative Treaty. A.M. Leontiev, the Chairman of the republic's Supreme Soviet noted that Sovereignty would not lead to a 'divorce' from Russia and that Chuvashia would continue to recognize the supremacy of both Soviet and Russian laws. Eduard Kubarev, who succeeded Leontiev after the August, 1991 coup attempt, when Leontiev was forced out of office for supporting the August 1991 coup, outlined the necessity for preserving Chuvash integration in the Russian Federation, and affirmed that the Federative Treaty gave Chuvashia sufficient room for economic and political development. The election of former Russian Federal Justice Minister Nikolai Fedorov as the first President of the Chuvash Republic in December 1993 further boosted the ties between Chuvashia and Russia. However, towards the end of his tenure, he suddenly supported the demand for greater sovereignty; the change can be attributed partially to the realities of working in his position, but partially to Moscow's war on Chechnya. Fedorov was one of the strongest opponents of the war, calling for resistance against immoral Moscow policies that amounted to genocide. Despite these modifications, Fedorov continued to eschew strong appeals for political sovereignty, preferring to bargain for concrete programmes instead (Gorenburg 1999).

Despite Chuvash numerical dominance in the republic, its leaders largely avoided confrontation with the Moscow Government; they preferred instead, the neighbouring republics to take the lead in defining centre-periphery relations. They were able to achieve many of the same advantages as the more vocal or louder neighbours, while maintaining good relations with Russia. They were also successful in taking concrete steps to promote Chuvash ethnic interests without alienating other ethnic communities; the most radical revival programmes were proposed in Bashkortostan, the region where the titular group made up the smallest proportion of the population, while the most moderate was proposed in Chuvashia, where the demographic balance ensured that titular political and cultural dominance would not be threatened.

| SUMMARY OF ETHNIC REVIVAL POLICIES | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Tatarstan | Bashkortostan | Chuvashia |

| | Tatarstan | Bashkortostan | Chuvashia |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sovereignty Declaration | August 1990 Tatar right to self-determination | October 1990 Bashkir right to self-determination | October 1990 responsibility for the fate of the Chuvash nation |
| Language Law | July 1992 Tatar and Russian have equal rights | None Controversy over status of Tatar language | October 1990 Chuvash and Russian have equal rights |
| New Constitution | November 1992 President must know Russian and Tatar | December 1993 (1) Bashkir right to self determination (2) State responsible for preserving Bashkir culture (3) President must know Russian and Bashkir | None Proposed constitution (1) State responsible for development of Chuvash culture (2) President must know Chuvash and Russian |
| Language or Cultural Development Programme | July 1994 (language) (1) Salary bonus (2) Publishing (3) Professions list (4) University | Spring 1996 (culture) (1) Quotas (2) Economic development | May 1993 (language) (1) Professions list (2) Chuvash courses (3) Publishing (4) Education quotas |
| Indigenous Preferences | Medium Administration only | High (1) Administration (2) Education (3) Industry | Low (1) Administration (2) Education |
| Language of Education | (1) Tatar required subject in all schools (2) Tatars study in Tatar | (1) Attempt to require Bashkir in all schools failed (2) Bashkir schools switching to Bashkir instruction | (1) Chuvash required subject in all schools (2) Chuvash study in Chuvash |

Table 3.2.6

In all these three republics the ethnic leaders took ethnic revival seriously and developed strategies designed to maximise the extent of ethnic revival that would be achieved without alienating non-titular ethnic groups threatening the central Government.

### 3.2.7 Russian Ethno Nationalism

Finally, there is the question related to the position of ethnic Russians in the Russian Federation. Although the Russians officially never had their own national system of government before the breakup of the USSR, and they still do not have it in today's Russia, in the political and cultural arenas of the Russian state, this group has the ruling status. They continue to control the power structure of the Federal Centre and the administrative regions. This dominating status over a period of time was so obvious that the Russians didn't feel threatened or under attack from any quarter of the population. However, the trend in today's Russia raises many relevant questions about the interrelationship between Russians and other peoples, particularly in the context of Russians being in the centre of entire system of inter-ethnic relations.

It is argued that the demographic situation is unfolding quite unfavourably for Russians. Despite efforts at increase, the population increase among the Russians has lagged behind the increase of population among the non-Russian ethnic groups of Russia. Under the present circumstances there has been a feeling among many Russians that the system of 'ethnic federalism' inherited from the soviet practice was unfair to them. The titular nationalities, enjoying special privileges in areas where they constitute a minority in comparison with Russians, have been resented by the latter. Similarly, whereas the titular nationalities have been given the ownership of the natural wealth of the republics like Sakha-Yakutia, a similar right has not been granted to the Russians in areas like Tiumen. Further, representation in Federal Parliament given to the republics like Altia, Tuva, and Ingushetia with smaller population than Moscow and St. Petersburg has been criticized. It is argued that apart from the cultural rights, any special economic and political privilege given to non-Russian republics is a legalized discrimination against the Russians. Therefore, since 1992-93, the Russian dominated Oblasts and Krais have been demanding for the same political and economic rights as the ethnic republics. They even resorted to a number of economic measures to pressurize the centre like, withholding the

tax revenues, export of consumer goods and agricultural products, assertion of ownership rights over land and natural resources, and bilateral trade agreements with other regions including foreign ventures (Jha 1999).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union non-Russians sought to end Russian dominance in their republics. Most of the new countries have deposed Russian as the language of official business in favour of the native tongue. Non-Russians also sought to remove Russians from their leadership positions. Therefore, Russians started migrating from the non-Russian states and on their return they didn't find adequate life chances for them in Russia and these Russians have added fervour to the hitherto dormant Russian ethno nationalism.

As a political movement, contemporary Russian ethno nationalism was born in the 1980s, with the Organisation *Pamyat* (memory) and its programmes for cultural, historic, and ecological preservation. According to the *Pamyat* doctrine all power in Russia must reside with ethnic Russians. Other groups should be represented proportionally in the institutions of politics, culture and science. After a series of internal crises, *Pamyat* lost its leading place within the Russian nationalist movement. However, since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, a series of Russian nationalist movements and organisations have emerged with much stronger and more cautious appeals. Responding to new social and political conditions, these groups have managed to mobilise considerable mass support.

In February, 1992 a group of Russian nationalist leaders including the writer Valentin Rasputin and Communist Party leader Gennadi Zuiganov, formed a new organisation called Russkii Natsionalnyi Sobor (Russian National Assembly - RNS) as an umbrella coalition for the many groups operating in Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia, the Baltic States, Moldavia and Georgia. RNS has called for unifying Russian and other indigenous peoples of Russia for the sake of reviving a united motherland, defending nation-state interests, and preserving the traditional moral and religious values of Russia's citizens. Its manifesto ends with the words: "We are Russians. God is with us" (Russkii Sobor 1994).

There are numerous groups of intellectuals and activists who subscribe to extreme forms of Russian ethno nationalism. One such organization has anti-Semitism[18] at the core of its doctrine (Tishkov 1997). Its leader, Nikolai Bondareek said:

> In Russia it is the Russians who should govern .... Russia must have Russian Government, a Russian parliament of ethnic Russians belonging to the Great Nation by blood and by spirit.... Everything is for the Nation and nothing against it - this motto must be in the brain and spirit, in the flesh and blood of every Russian, because we are all only cells of one great organism named the Nation.

There are apprehensions that the ultra nationalists in Russia can follow the path of the Nazis. Russian ultra rightists use the Nazi racial doctrine as their theoretical basis making the slight adjustment that ethnic Russians are the supreme embodiment of the Aryan race. From this it follows that the Russian ethno nationals should enjoy all privileges in the state and that various forms of racial and ethnic segregations are permissible. It is noteworthy that since the early 1990s, Russian ethno nationalism is on the ascendency. Vladimir Zhirinovsky, one of the most provocative and Charismatic propagandists of Russian nationalism and his party still enjoys support among urban intellectuals and a number of new financial groups. However, the mass media remains strongly opposed to any nationalistic stands and propaganda. More significantly, the Presidential campaign of 1996 was marked by the playing down of the Russian ethno nationalistic card and ended with a victory of the more liberal-democratic Boris Yeltsin.

## 3.3 An Evaluation of the Ethnic Assertions in Russia

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[18] Anti-Semitism (also spelled anti-Semitism or anti-Semitism) is prejudice against or hostility towards Jews, often rooted in hatred of their ethnic background, culture, and/or religion. In its extreme form, it "attributes to the Jews an exceptional position among all other civilizations, defames them as an inferior group and denies their being part of the nation[s]" in which they reside. A person who practices anti-Semitism is called an "anti-Semite."Anti-Semitism may be manifested in many ways, ranging from individual expressions of hatred and discrimination against individual Jews to organized violent attacks by mobs or even state police or military attacks on entire Jewish communities. Extreme instances of persecution include the First Crusade of 1096, the expulsion from England in 1290, the Spanish Inquisition, the expulsion from Spain in 1492, the expulsion from Portugal in 1497, various pogroms, the Dreyfus Affair, and perhaps the most infamous, the Holocaust under Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany.While the term's etymology might suggest that anti-Semitism is directed against all Semitic peoples, the term was coined in the late 19th century in Germany as a more scientific-sounding term for *Judenhass* ("Jew-hatred"), and that has been its normal use since then. For details see: *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Antisemitism#Racial_antisemitism.*

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, though the Russian state system has been profoundly transformed, the crisis of governance persists. The ethnic scenario in the Federation of Russia aggravated this crisis of governance further. One of the reasons to adopt a Federal system was to address the challenges emanating from ethnic assertions in different parts of Russia. Russia's federal system has evolved through a series of compromises between Central Government and regional administrations. With the exception of conflict in the North Caucasus, the new pattern of relationship between the Centre and the regions has emerged through negotiation rather than bloodshed. Despite their separatist rhetoric, regional leaders remain heavily dependent upon the centre for funds and political support and seek foreign investment and not recognition as independent states.

Russia faces no external threats to its integrity and its securities forces do not support ethnic separation. This short-term stability has however been bought at the cost of Russia's long term political and economic health. In the absence of a firm Constitutional framework, regional elites and the vested interests that back them have consolidated powers, hampering development of local democracy and obstructing attempts at grassroots economic- reform. The risk is not that Russia will follow the path of erstwhile Soviet Union and fragment but that the State will effectively cease to function as, Centre and the regions battle for control over the country's dwindling assets (Nicholson 1999).

In the early 1990s the Russian Federation encountered difficulties in attempting to satisfy the aspirations of many of the minority ethnic groups for self-determination. The Integrity of the new Russian state was therefore at risk from its inception and securing it was one of Yeltsin's most pressing tasks. He tried to do so on 31 March 1992, when all but two[19] of Russia's republics and regions signed the Federation Treaty.

The Federation Treaty was essentially a holding operation. It committed the signatories to accepting that they were part of the new Russian State. However, the more separatist minded republics appended qualifications to the Federation Treaty or were given special

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[19] The two dissenters, both predominantly Islamic and petroleum producing regions were - Tatarstan, which had voted for self-rule earlier in the month and the Chechen Republic, which had declared independence from Russia in November 1991 (For details see Europa World Yearbook 2008).

inducements to sign. Chechnya and Tatarstan refused to endorse it. For Chechnya, the treaty's rejection was a step on the road to the total repudiation of the Russia Federation. To a large extent this was the product of Chechnya's historical experience and contemporary political turmoil, and did not directly affect the overall pattern of relations between the centre and the regions. By contrast, Tatarstan's refusal to sign the treaty was a kind of brinkmanship aimed at securing a more fovourable arrangement with the Federal Centre. As such, it was a trendsetter for the aspirations of other republics and regions (Nicholson 1999).

Yeltsin's victory over the rebellious Parliament in October 1993 allowed him to push a hastily drafted Constitution through a referendum. It came into force on 12 December 1993, and remains the basic document defining relations between the centre and the regions. As with the Federation Treaty, the Constitution's compromises only perpetuated the rivalry between the republics and the regions because it refined rather than reformed the asymmetrical federal system which was inherited from the Soviet Union. Although the Constitution maintained that all components of the Russian Federation were equal in their relations with the Centre, the Republics retained their higher status, with their own Constitutions (Nicholson 1999). By the time the Federal Constitution came into force, several republics and regions had adopted their own Constitutions and Charters under which they gave themselves more rights than the new Federal Constitution granted them. Tatarstan adopted its own Constitution in November 1992, which proclaimed that the Republic was merely associated with Russia, rather than a constituent part of the country. Yeltsin and Tatar President Mintimer Shaimiev signed a power-sharing treaty on 15 February, 1994, according to which:

> Tatarstan as a State is united with the Russian Federation by the constitution of
> the Russian Federation, by the constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan and by
> the treaty on demarcation of subjects of competence and mutual delegation of
> powers between organs of State power of the Russian Federation and organs of
> State power of the Republic of Tatarstan (Guboglo 1997).

The power-sharing treaty with Tatarstan and a little more restrictive one with Bashkortostan in August 1994 set off a competitive bargaining process between the regions and the Centre. Treaties were signed with the Republics of Sakha (Yakutia), Buryatia and Udmurtiya in 1995. Regional leaders taking cue from Tatarstan learned that

challenging the centre could be much more effective and legitimate by raising ethno national demands. In confronting this challenge of political nationalism, the Federal authorities would have to negotiate more responsibly than in cases of mere regional separatism (as when Yeltsin simply dismissed the local Governor of the self-proclaimed Urals Republic in the Sverdlovsk administrative region). Moderate ethno nationalism thus became an appealing model for other ethno-territorial elites to emulate in the federal political arena. However, not all ethno nationalists on Russia's periphery have chosen negotiations rather than military confrontation. Separatist leaders in the Chechen Republic have opted for a coup d'état style of political behavior ever since the autumn of 1992, when the former Soviet General Dzhokhar Dudayev proclaimed an independent Chechnya. Here, nationalism has proven quite literally to be ethnicity plus an army. Tishkov (1997) feels that since the first war in Chechnya (1994), the 'periphery nationalism' in republics of Russia intensified:

> The Chechen crisis provoked manifestations of peripheral nationalism. The demands of nationalist movement in the republics were radicalized: from condemnation of military activity they proceeded to demands for non-payment of taxes, the abolition of universal military service, and even secession from Russia. Tatar party 'Ittifak' declared that it would not hinder the sending of volunteers to Chechnya, although there was no activity for the recruiting of mercenaries in Tatarstan. The Confederation of Peoples of the Caucasus made the sharpest declarations to the Russian leadership, while quietly aiding Dudayev's faction (Tishkov 1997:221).

However, Chechen militant nationalism has sent a clear message to its potential proponents. Its irresponsible strategy has had a sobering effect on other regions of the country where ethno nationalism is still strong. Ethnic leaders in Russia are becoming more interested in avoiding conflict-generating confrontations. They are more inclined to follow the Tatarstan path rather than the Chechen path. Russia's demonstration of its military might and how far it was willing to go to quell Chechnya's quest for independence has deterred other separatist leaders also.

Secessionist potential in Russia has been contained by five types of structural constraints. Four of the constraints were internal features of the Russian state: demographic composition, resource interdependencies, spatial location and historical assimilation. The fifth one was an external constraint. It was the non-recognition of secession by the international system. As far as the *first* of the four internal constraints, demographic

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composition is concerned it can be said that it is the presence of the strong and dispersed ethnic Russians throughout the Russian Federation that has been a major factor in containing separatist tendencies among the ethnic republics. At the time of the 1984 census Russians constituted a bare majority (50.78 percent) of the USSR's 286.7 million population. In contrast, in the RSFSR (renamed the Russian Federation in January, 1992), ethnic Russians were an overwhelming majority (81.5 percent) of the 147 million population. It is not only the overall numerical superiority of the ethnic Russian population[20], but also the spread[21] and strength of the ethnic Russian population throughout the vast majority of the 89 Federal Subjects that makes it a 'limiting constraint' on secession potential. The *second* constraint i.e. resource interdependencies is a major restraining factor. The demand for sovereignty was pursued vigorously in many republics and regions, but only those with significant economic assets had the leverage to bargain effectively with the Federal Government. Consequently, secession potential was driven by political-economy. For the poorer republics, their economic dependency on the Federation is likely to continue to outweigh the greater and uncertain economic costs of secession. Even for energy or resource-rich ethnic republics like, Sakha, Tatarstan and Bashkortostan which are less dependent on economic subsidies from Moscow, a potential secessionist leadership would face an uphill task convincing its constituents that the relative security of a federal market should be 'jettisoned' for dependency on a global trading regime, in which the possibility of securing its own market niches as a sovereign state would be fraught with problems and uncertainties. For the present at least it appears that the ethnic republics are pursuing the strategy of obtaining as much as they can from the federation without losing those components of the Federal arrangement that thy value. However, the federation's inability to handle a series of ongoing political and fiscal crises could lead to a situation where the least

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[20] According to the 2002 census population ethnic Russians were 79.8 percent, Tatars 3.8 percent, Ukrainians 2.0 percent, Bashkir 1.1 percent and Chuvash 1.1 percent. There are also small numbers of Armenians, Avars, Belorussians, Chechens, Germans, Jews, Kazakhs, Mari, Mordovians and Udmurts. For details see Turner (2007).

[21] By 1994 the Russian population in these republics was as follows: Karelia (73.6 percent), Buriatia (69.9 percent), Adygeia (67.9 percent), Mordova (60.8 percent), Altai (60.4 percent), Udmurtia (58.9percent), Komi (57.7 percent), Sakha (50.3 percent), Marii EL (47.7 percent), Karachai-Cherkess (42.4 percent), and Bashkortostan (39.3 percent). For details see: Hughes (2002).

economically dependent republics rethink about other possibilities, other than, remaining, part of Russia (Hughes 2002; Smith 1999). Regarding the *third* constraint spatial location it can be said that geography has an immense impact on the capacity of a federal unit to assert secession potential. Generally the more peripheral a unit the greater is its capacity for secession and the more difficult it is to control. If the location of such a unit places it at or near an international frontier, this increases the likelihood that it will be influenced by external factors, or linked to other states, thus strengthening secession potential. Likewise, if the location of a unit places it close to the core of the Federal State and encircles it with loyalist units, then the secession potential is severely constrained. Of the republics with strong secession potential, only the geography of Chechnya spatially favours its assertion of independence, as only it is located on an international frontier with Georgia. Of the others Tatarstan and Bashkortostan are landlocked by ethnic Russian regions in the heart of European Russia, while Sakha (Yakutia) is peripheralised and effectively landlocked in Siberia. The advantages of significant natural resource endowment in such republics is counter balanced by their geography which renders them dependent on Russia for refining, processing and transhipping their resources. When it comes to the *fourth* constraint-historical assimilation, it is important to note that neither Tatarstan nor Chechnya, nor, indeed any other Russia region or republic have had recent historical experience of independent statehood for any significant period.[22] Secessionism is acutely weak in the only republic with a prolonged experience of quasi-Independence, Tuva, which was an independent semi protectorate of the USSR between 1921 and 1944. The reason why secessionism has not been high on its agenda appears to be its high degree of economic dependency on Russia and therefore the economic cost that would result from becoming a sovereign state. As the Russian state expanded from the late sixteenth century, the distinction between the Russian core and its periphery became blurred. Concerted efforts at Russification blurred clearly defined language boundaries, whereas increasing promotion to positions of power and status of the locals within their ethno-republics has addressed the grievances of the titular nationals occupying lower occupational niches within the ethno republic. Thus the assimilation of the ethnic groups

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[22] The Russian Far-East was briefly an independent republic in 1919-22. For details see: Hughes (2002).

over a period of time has weakened their potential for secession. Finally the check in the form of external constraint; by the mid-1990s there is a return to the policy of non-recognition of secession in the international order. Whether secessionist governments were democratically mandated or not, in the interests of international order western states froze the recognition process and no new secessions were recognized[23] apart from the 15 union republics of the former USSR. This policy of recognition by Western states was justified by the need to maintain stability in the post-soviet space and conformed to previous international norms on recognition of secession. We also witness a shift towards a much more interventionist approach by a plethora of international organizations (UN, OSCE, NATO, EU, and PACE[24]) in the domestic affairs of 'sovereign' states which is primarily geared to manage the increase in intra-state conflict. This new interventionism is justified partly by the ideology of global governance and partly by the political rhetoric of ethical foreign policy among certain Western Governments like the UK and the US (Hughes and Sasse 2002; Smith 1999).

The Russian federation inherited a more complex ethno-politics than any other Soviet successor state. A large multi-ethnic entity very much like the Soviet Union, Russia today is a country where titular nationalism has got the potential for dismantling a highly centralized state structure and pluralizing a political and cultural realm dominated by one ethnic group i.e. the Russians. In virtually every ethnic enclave of this vast country, 'micro-nationalism is incubating'. In recent years nationalism in the periphery has moved from cultural revival to well-organized political movements that have placed their advocates into power positions in practically all autonomous ethnic regions of the

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[23] Kosovo and East Timor are exceptions. Kosovo is presently under interim international administration sanctioned by UN Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999. East Timor became an independent country on May 2002 and it has diplomatic relations with UK, US, and EU as well as with the UN. It was not a case of secession which got recognition rather a case of decolonisation. East Timor was first under the occupation of Portugal which abandoned it in 1975 when Indonesia occupied it claiming it as the province of Timur (For details see: Turner 2007).

[24] The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), which held its first session in Strasbourg on 10 August 1949, can be considered the oldest international parliamentary assembly with a pluralistic composition of democratically elected members of parliament established on the basis of an intergovernmental treaty. The Assembly is one of the two statutory organs of the Council of Europe, which is composed of the Committee of Ministers (the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, meeting usually at the level of their deputies) and the Assembly representing the political forces (majority and opposition) in its member states. For details see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliamentary_Assembly_of_the _Council_of_Europe.

Russian Federation. Ironically, radical nationalists have managed to bring to or to keep in power former Communist Party officials who have skillfully exchanged their Communist ideologies for nationalist doctrines and used such nationalism as a counterbalance in negotiations with the Center for control of local resources. The most striking example is the republic of Tatarstan. Here the ruling elite employed Tatar ethno nationalism, radically expressed by ultra-nationalist organizations and local intellectuals, to establish a firm political order based on titular representation. These elites are now acquiring access to resources from which they feel they had been alienated by the Unitarian state in the past. They have begun to exercise political & cultural control in their 'own' republics. Thus the post-soviet ethnic manifestations are a protest against the diminished status and discrimination suffered by members of non-dominant groups spearheaded by the elites of those groups (Tishkov 1997).

Here it is important to understand that the Tatarstan model of center-periphery conflict-resolution which was widely acclaimed could become possible, largely because Tatarstan which was initially demanding for itself the right to self determination had toned down its demand to a claim for sovereignty. Unlike Chechnya which was committed to the cause of secession, Tatarstan and Bashkortostan have successfully achieved new levels of autonomy without the violence which has characterized other autonomy conflicts in post-Soviet Eurasia. Their experience therefore implies:

> ....the constructed and contextual nature of the norms of sovereignty can actually provide the material and discursive spaces within which novel and peaceful resolutions for sub-state challenges to state authority may be negotiated (Graney 1999: 627).

The claim to and pursuit of sovereignty is not 'all or nothing' like the claim to secession or independence. The norms of sovereignty are flexible and imprecise by nature and thus it allows enough maneuvering space for sub-state actors, who can use it effectively in pursuance of their goals (Graney 1999).

Demand for secession is not widespread in Russia. Only two republics, Chechnya and Tatarstan, have, since 1990 demanded independence from Moscow. The latter since the

1994 Treaty with Federal Russia is widely acclaimed as a model of center-periphery conflict resolution. Although no referenda on secession have been held to test the ethno republic constituent democratic will, the weakness of other indicators of majority support for secessionism, such as secessionist nationalist organizations would suggest that most ethno republican constituents see their future best served as part of a federation. The reasons why secession is so weakly developed include perceptions of economic unviability and the prospect of being materially worse off outside the federation. On the basis of rectifying a past injustice of involuntary or forced incorporation into Russia, a criterion generally acknowledged as legitimate ground for secession, only one ethnic republic, Tuva would qualify. It was a sovereign state between 1921 and 1944 which was incorporated into the Soviet Union without the consent of its constituent majority. However, as one of the poorest republics of the federation, it is highly dependent on federal subsidies, one of the reasons why it has so little support for secession. What is notable is that Russia has not undergone the balkanization which was widely predicted in the early 1990s. Since the formation of Federal Russia, only one republic, Chechnya has militarily fought for secession from the federation (Smith 1999).

Russia today may not be falling apart, but it is faced with the serious challenge of managing ethnicity. There are already-ethnic political coalitions at the regional level, with the electorate split along ethnic lines. Ethnic intolerance, xenophobia, and violent manifestations in the form of territorial cleansing and communal clashes are found not only in the republics but elsewhere as well including large cites. Coercive methods used by the state to counter act ethnically mobilized rebellions and to impose order is bringing greater destabilization and ethnic alienation and hatred. Today the sovereignty and separatist projects in the territory of the Russian Federation are in mid-stream: none has been accomplished successfully: none has fully failed.

# CHAPTER-IV

## THE RUSSIAN STATE RESPONSE TO THE ETHNIC CHALLENGE: MILITARY AND NON-MILITARY DIMENSIONS

### 4.1 Introduction

The Russian state inherited more complex ethno politics than any other Soviet successor state. The fundamental measure of political stability in any state is the maintenance of its territorial integrity and in a federal state this is generally understood as the management of secession potential. By this measure the Russian Federation has been very successful. While there are nominally 21 'ethnic' republics out of a total of 89[1] federal subjects in Russia, since her independence in 1991, there has been only one significant secessionist conflict, i.e. Chechnya. Chechnya had seen a protracted conflict, which resulted in two devastating wars in 1994-1996 and 1999. It was very much an exception as secession potential and conflicts had either been non-existent or successfully managed in the 20 other ethno based republics, some of which also strenuously asserted demands for 'sovereignty' from the federal government after 1991.

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[1] For much of the 1990s and the first half of the 2000, the Russian Federation comprised 89 federal territorial units ('federal subjects'). From the mid-2000 a number of territorial mergers took place, comprising the absorption of nominally autonomous Okrugs into the territories of which they had hitherto formed part, while remaining as federal subjects in their own right. By March 2008, the number of territorial subjects had been reduced to 83, comprising 21 Republics, nine Krais (provinces), 46 Oblasts (regions), two cities of federal status, one autonomous Oblast, and four autonomous Okrugs (districts). For details see: The Europa World Year Book (2008).

*The Structure of the Russian State*

**FEDERAL INSTITUTIONS**
Presidency of the Russian Federation
Federal Assembly (Federation Council and State Duma)
Government of the Russian Federation
Courts of the Russian Federation

**COMPONENTS OF THE FEDERATION**

| 21 Republics | 6 Krais | 49 Oblasts | Moscow city |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | St Petersburg |

1 Autonomous Oblast[a]

10 Autonomous Okrugs[a]

**LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT**
(Towns, settlements, urban and rural districts)

Figure 4.1(a)

In the previous chapter, the prominent ethnic assertions that have made their presence felt on the ethnic landscape of Russia were discussed. In the course of this discussion we acquainted ourselves, although briefly with the Russian state response to these challenges. This chapter will give a detailed account of the various measures taken by the Federal Centre, including both military and non-military responses, to address the challenges emanating from ethnic assertions within the Russian territory.
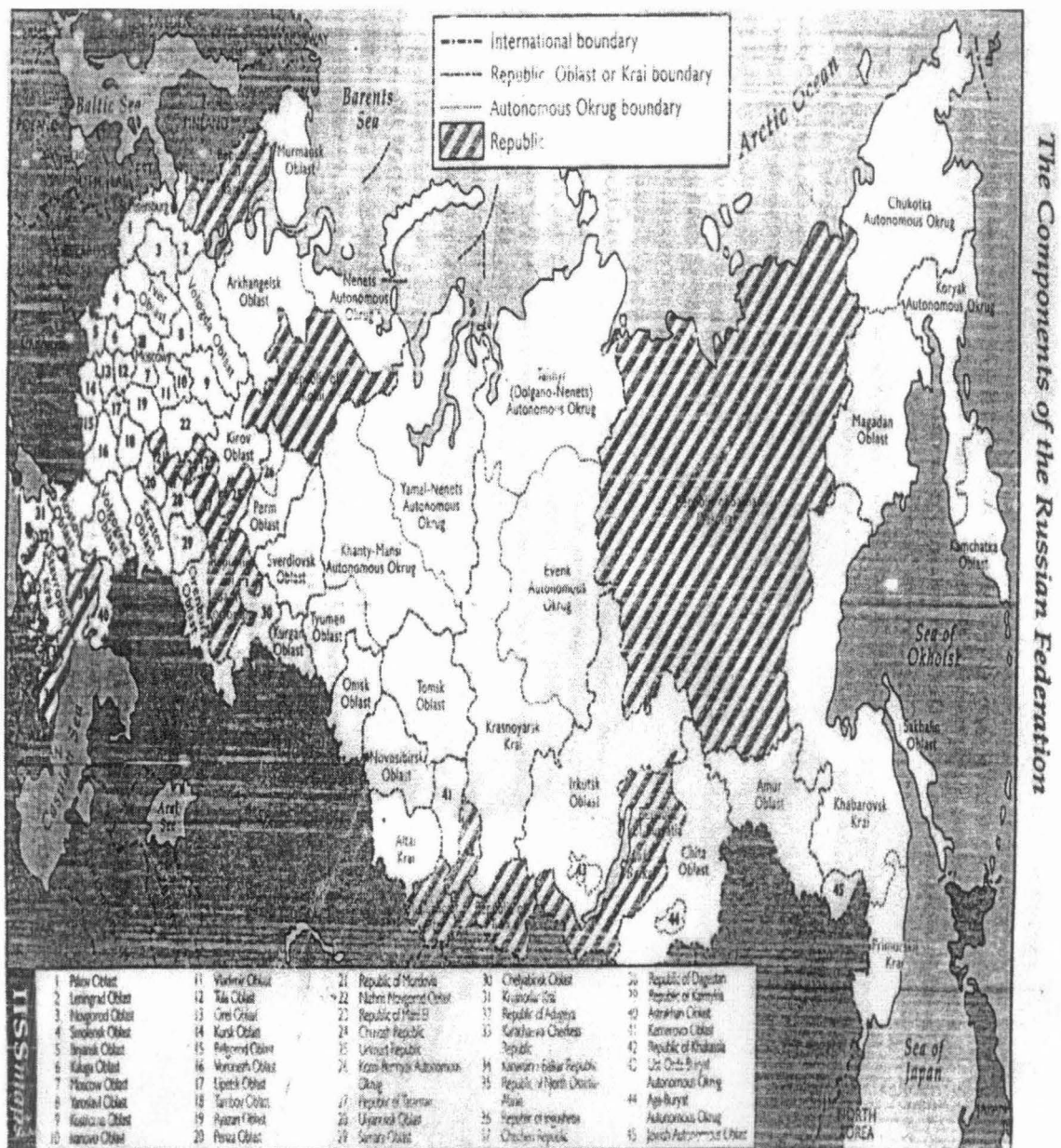


**Figure 4.1 (b)**

Russia is a multicultural, multiethnic society; a society which includes a variety of national and ethnic groups. The integral part of the governance thus has to be the management of multiculturalism. There are different strategies that the states generally adopt to tackle the challenge of multiculturalism. While some of the more democratised states have experimented with accommodationist strategies towards their minorities, (e.g. USA, UK) the governing elites of other polities tend to equate the dominant nation with the state and have shown little sympathy and concern towards minority and ethnic demands (e.g. Japan,[2] Pakistan). Consequently as Gurr (1993) asserts, "efforts at so- called nation building led by a dominant group almost invariably threaten minorities who regard themselves as separate people".

Minority and ethnic demands continue to take a multiplicity of forms. There are ethnic minorities that reject membership of the political territory to which they currently belong and engage in secessionist struggles (e.g. Chechnya), either to create their own national political territory or to be reunited with co-nationals in another common political homeland. There are other minorities that aspire to their own autonomous political spaces (e.g. Tatarstan, Bashkortostan) (Smith 1999).

As multiculturalism has been the common feature of the post-Soviet states, it will be worthwhile to familiarize ourselves with the strategies of governance that have been adopted to manage multiculturalism and their relative success in reducing ethnic tension and violence. It is also important to find out which strategies of governance can be regarded as a set of more socially just policies in which the political aspirations of the majority and minority alike are represented and respected. This chapter explores these themes. First, it identifies and examines the range of strategies of multicultural governance adopted by the post-Soviet states. It will then focus more closely at one of those strategies, federation[3] as adopted by the largest post-Soviet

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[2] Japanese society, with its ideology of homogenity, has traditionally rejected any need to recognize ethnic differences in Japan, even as such claims have been rejected by such ethnic minorities as the Ainu. Japanese Minister Taro Aso has called Japan a "one race" nation. However, there are "International Society" NPOs funded by local governments throughout Japan. For details see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiculturalism#Multiculturalism_as_introductory_to_monoculturalism.

[3] The term federalism is derived from the Latin Foedus meaning treaty.For details see: Elazar (1987).

multicultural polity, Russia. It explores the making of post-soviet federal Russia and the way in which the process of federalization has responded to the claims of ethnic assertions. Finally, the chapter considers the question of whether a democratic federation like Russia can provide an effective antidote to minority and majority nationalism manifested in ethnic accretions, which threaten to destabilise Russia and lead to its fragmentation.

## 4.2 Governance of Multicultural State

To govern multicultural polities, the post-Soviet states have drawn upon a variety of strategies from policies designed to eliminate multiculturalism by creating a more homogeneous national political space, to those aimed at managing the phenomenon.

### 4.2.1 Eliminating Multiculturalism

Eliminating multiculturalism is in one way or the other associated with attempts to make national and political space geographically congruent. Among the four ways, the most extreme variant involves acts of genocide (Ibid.).

### 4.2.1.1: Genocide

The term genocide[4] was invented at the end of the Second World War by the Polish academic Raphael Lemkin, whose family was murdered by the Nazis, and who was one of the three jurists consulted on the original UN draft of the Genocide Convention, drawn up by Emile Giraud[5] (Ryan 1990). Genocide is: "The intention to destroy

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[4] The most infamous example of genocide is the murder of six million European Jews by the Nazis. Other twentieth century examples of mass murder which experts claim can count as genocide include the assaults on ethnic groups in the Soviet Union, who became the victims of Stalinism through mass starvation, murder and forced relocation (20 million deaths), the Armenian victims in Turkey during the First World War, treatment of Tibetans by China following 1959; the murder of Bengalis by the west Pakistan army in Bangladesh in 1971 (1.2 to 3 million deaths); the massacres of Hutus by Tutsis in Burundi in 1972 (up to 200000 deaths ); the murder of a thousand Ache Indians following their invasion of East Timor in December 1975, after the territory declared its own independence in 1999, which resulted in 200000 deaths. For details see: Ryan (990).

[5] Emile Giraud, was member of the Division of Human Rights of the United Nations Secretariat. Giraud stresses the importance of creating a convention on genocide in an effort to overcome the difference of views regarding (i) the consideration of cultural genocide, (ii) the determination of the human groups entitled to protection, and (iii) the choice of forum to sanction the crime. For details see: http://untreaty.un.org/cod/avl/ha/cppcg/cppcg_audio.html.

physically a whole or substantive part of a group because they are members of that group and whose membership is defined by the perpetrator (Palmer 1998: 89).

While no part of the post-Soviet world has experienced systematic genocide or ethnic cleansing which characterised the break-up of Yugoslavia and none of the post-Soviet states have officially sanctioned such a policy, acts of genocide have been committed by one group against another. The most notable case concerns the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan. Large numbers of the enclave's Armenian settlers had to flee their homeland for Armenia following a series of pogroms in the region in the early 1990s (Smith1999).

## 4.2.1.2 Forced Expulsion

Another strategy for eliminating multiculturalism is the forced migration of one group from their place of settlement to another. Assimilation involves the rejection of cultural differences; expulsion involves the 'ejection' of those who are culturally different, e.g. in October 1991, some 34000 to 64000 Ingush settlers had been forced to flee the republic of North Ossetia for neighbouring Ingushetia as a result of clashes between the two communities (Ingushetians and Ossetians) in which more than 600 people had been killed.

However, cases of ethnic violence had been restricted largely to the post-Soviet south and were common during the chaotic early rather than the later period of political transition. The tactic of expelling a minority from its traditional homeland may not involve the crossing of an international frontier. Internal transfers of ethnic minorities have also been used to try and reduce group cohesion. Stalin used this method in his dealings with some of the Soviet minorities (Smith 1999; Ryan 1990).

## 4.2.1.3 Territorial Self-determination.

Article 1(2) and 55 of the UN Charter refer to the principle of the self determination of peoples. Ryan (1990) asserts that these provisions are applicable to ethnic groups also. In his words: "they do not refer to national or ethnic groups, though one could reasonably argue that such groups do constitute a people" (Ryan 1990: 168).

The UN Resolution 1514 (XV) on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Peoples states - that all peoples have the right to self determination (Art.2). However, the declaration goes on to restrict the application of this right by stating that any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the principles of the Charter (Art.6) (Ryan1990). Despite attempts to qualify such calls to peoples who are victims of colonialism and racialism, support for the right seems to have had a much wider demonstration effect. Mazrui (1969), for example has argued that it is not accidental that the ethnic revival in the West occurred soon after the attention given to the issue of self-determination during the post-war era of decolonization.

The number of cases of territorial self-determination has been less widespread than was originally predicted, although secessionist demands by ethno-regional groups continue to loom large on the political agenda in a number of states including Azerbaijan, (Nagorno–Karabakh), Ukraine (Crimea) and Georgia (South Ossetia and Abkhazia). In at least two cases, however, Chechnya (Russia) and Trans-Dniestria (Moldova), such demands have resulted in the emergence of new de facto sovereign borders, although in neither case has this led to the de jure establishment of new sovereign political spaces (Smith 1999).

This important principle of national self-determination seems to have two major effects, one on the ethnic group challenging the state and the other on the state itself. For the ethnic group seeking greater autonomy it will provide an increased sense of legitimacy and encouragement. For the state the principle is a double-edged weapon. On the one hand, the principle of national self-determination is so widespread and deeply entrenched as a legitimate right that it cannot be dismissed easily. On the other hand the state dominated by a particular ethnic group gets an opportunity to castigate the secessionist ethnic group as anti-national and treat them unfavourably in state policies. The states also makes the best use of the provisions of the UN Charter under which their territorial integrity is to be preserved; thus on one hand the rebel group's position vis-à-vis the state is weakened as it is seen as anti-national anti-state and thus suffers in terms of resource allocation and other state policies, on the other, the state

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finds itself in a position where its liability is less and dividend is more, as its territorial integrity is ensured.

### 4.2.1.4 Integration and/or Assimilation

The final strategy of eliminating multicultural differences, that of voluntary integration (or cultural assimilation), generally involves the creation of a common homeland identity that transcends ethnic or other forms of cultural differences. While many of the post-Soviet states proclaim their commitment to such a goal, there is little evidence to suggest that it has been realized in any of them. The chances for the success of this strategy are the greatest where ethnic difference have become depoliticised as a result of the overlapping identities, as in the cases of some ethnic Russian Ukrainophones in Ukraine, and where the incidence of inter-ethnic marriage is high, as in parts of Latvia and Lithuania (Ibid.)

### 4.2.2 Strategies for Managing Multiculturalism

Strategies for managing multiculturalism have been used more frequently. However, it cannot be said that these strategies necessarily commensurate with democratisation and democratic practices as is evident in the first strategy of managing multiculturalism.

### 4.2.2.1 Nationalizing State Tendencies

The most widespread of the strategies for managing multiculturalism is the nationalising state tendencies or state practices. Political elites in the post-Soviet states have often responded to the challenge of multiculturalism by attempting to ensure the cultural and even political dominance of the homeland nation by giving them a predominant position in the political, administrative and coercive apparatus of the state, making it difficult for those who either do not fully, subscribe to the homeland polity or believed so, to gain access to key socio-economic and political positions. The continued tension between a dominant nation and subordinate ethnic group, as well as outright conflict, has in many instances led to the adoption of the second strategy for managing ethnic differences - arbitration by a third party (Ibid).

## 4.2.2.2 Arbitration (Third Party Intervention)

Two mediators have played the role of arbiters in the post-Soviet states. Russia has played crucial role in peace deals is conflicts in Tajikistan, Moldova and Georgia. However, although Russian mediation has employed some success in securing a greater degree of stability in these countries; it has largely been perceived as an instrument for reasserting Russian control over the region (Macfarlane 1997). The efforts of the other major external actor – the OSCE (the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) – have also met with some success in reducing inter-ethnic tensions, for example in Georgia, Crimea, the Baltic States and Chechnya.

None of the above strategies, however, has laid the foundations for the coexistence of ethnic groups by institutionalizing multicultural democracy. The remaining two strategies – Consociationalism and Federalism – are generally seen as better strategies having the potential for ensuring stable coexistence.

## 4.2.2.3 Consociationalism or Power-Sharing

Multicultural management through consociationalism, or power-sharing between major ethnic groups, is usually seen as requiring the representation and accommodation of political elites from all the major ethnic groups within government; the right of each ethnic group to veto controversial legislation or policies; and the right of each ethnic group to cultural autonomy (Smith 1999). A. Lijphart's influential work on consociationalism *Democracy in Plural Societies* sets out the condition under which stable and democratic multi-ethnic states are possible. There are according to Lijphart, four main characteristics of consociationalism, one of primary importance and three of secondary importance. On the same issue Ryan says:

> The primary characteristic is the grand coalition of political leaders that represent all the significant communities. The secondary characteristics are the existence of a veto power for all communities on legislation that affects their vital interests; a system of proportionality in parliament, the civil service and other government agencies; and a high degree of segmental autonomy so that each community has a considerable degree of freedom to run its own internal affairs (Ryan 1990 : 16-17).

While some Western liberal theorists regard consociationalism as a possible solution to ethnic tensions in societies such as Kazakhstan and Latvia, based on power-sharing between their two respective major ethnic groups, the only State that has come close to adopting some elements of consociational politics is Ukraine. Though not institutionalized as part of a formal strategy, Ukrainian politics has entailed one aspect of power-sharing i.e. bringing representatives of both the West and East into national coalition governments (Wilson 1999).

The only post-Soviet State to use federation to manage its multiculturalism is Russia.

## 4.2.2.4 Federalization

With by far the largest number of ethnic groups (140) among the post-Soviet States, Russia faces the greatest multicultural Challenge. Russia has the task of resolving a series of ethnic conflicts in Chechnya, North Ossetia, Dagestan and Ingushetia, where demands for minority recognition are being played out with often tragic consequences. Yet while Russia's experiment with federalism is generally interpreted as an attempt to ensure the successful transition to democracy while retaining the state's territorial integrity, doubts have been expressed over Russia's claim to constitute a federation based on democratic principles. The Federal Constitution adopted in December 1993 proclaimed (Chapter 1, Article 1) that 'Russia is a democratic federative law-based state' but a state's claim to federal status must rest on more than an assertion that it constitutes a federation. The shift towards more authoritarian rule following the clash between the president and parliament in autumn 1993, and the increased powers of the President vis-à-vis the new Federal Assembly and regional and local government, cast doubts upon Russia's claim to democratic status (Smith 1999).

Nonetheless, Russia does contain some of the features generally associated with a federation:

1. Representation is preponderantly territorial. Russia comprises 89 'federal subjects', 21 higher status ethno republics formed on national territorial lines, and 68 lower-level subjects, formed on territorial lines, 49 regions (Oblasts), 6

territories (krais), 10 autonomous districts (okrugs), the Jewish autonomous oblast and 2 'federal' cities (Moscow and St. Petersburg).

2. Territorial representation is secured on at least two sub-national levels namely, local self-government, and regional government.

3. The constituent units of the federation are incorporated into the decision-making process of the federal centre by representation in both the upper chamber of the Federal Assembly (the Council of the Federation) and the lower house (the State Duma). The 178 member strong Federation Council comprises ex-officio the head's of the State of the ethno republics and regional governors, all of whom following a decree of 1999 are popularly elected, and the heads of the regional legislatures (Smith 1995).

The question of whether a multiethnic federation that seeks to accommodate some of its minorities by granting them ethno republican status will succeed in securing stability and social justice is hotly debated. Those who defend this polity hold that such an arrangement provides a means of managing inter-group conflicts that might otherwise develop into violence and lead to the proliferation of secessionist demands for independent statehood. Hence the argument goes; the introduction of such a form of special governance has helped to weaken the drive for secession amongst minorities by providing an institutional alternative to nation-statehood. Furthermore, it is argued, federalism can be defended as a means of accommodating minority demands on the basis of the social value of group liberty. The retention of group rights through federal supports is defended on the grounds that minority cultural self preservation as well as political representation is of fundamental importance for individuals as well as a counter weight to majority group (Russian) cultural assimilation. Any conception of citizen entitlement should therefore be extended to protecting the right of minorities to be culturally different. Such an arrangement is justified, it is contended, so long as the basic rights of citizens who have different identity commitments to those of the titular ethno-republic nation, or no such commitments at all, are protected.

Those opposed to federalism on national minority lines argue that it promotes an exclusivist – nationalism, which increases the likelihood of inter-ethnic violence and even the prospects of regional secession. The argument is that not only do such arrangements tend to solidify and make what might be temporary or partial group identities permanent, they also allow key policy areas to be hijacked by partisan ethno republican elites, and thus increase the probability of tyranny by the minority, in relation to federal politics in general as well as within the ethno republics, where in most cases the titular nation constitutes a demographic minority. B. Fedorov[6] notes, such ethno-republican elites have a tendency to use their status to obtain special privileges and rights through bargaining and political deals with the Centre. Thus, they are in a position to ignore basic federal obligations, which results in disproportionate contributions to the federal budget which are detrimental to the interests of both the federation and its poorer constituent units. The second argument is that by empowering particular ethno republican minorities, the Russian federal arrangement imposes limits on genuinely pluralist interests because the demands and concerns of other forms of identity politics are downgraded or marginalized. Thus the capacity of the federal system to represent forms of collective identity other than those of the dominant ethno republican minority is invariably disadvantaged. In short, for proponents of a more liberal variant of federalism, it is of utmost concern to counter domination by either nationalist minded minorities or the majority national groups (Russians) by prioritising the individual rights of citizens regardless of their ethnic or national affiliations. It is considered best, therefore, to confine ethnic or national identification to the private sphere. It should not be the function of the federal state, it is argued, to permit discrimination against the individual citizen by granting special privileges to particular national or ethnic groups (Ibid.).

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[6] Boris Fedorov was a prominent Russian economist, reformer and businessman and the first Minister of Finance of modern Russia. Together with Charles Ryan, Boris Fedorov founded United Financial Group in 1994. What began as a boutique investment bank in an apartment off Tverskaya Street, grew into one of Russia's leading financial groups. For details see: *http://www.ufggroup.com/about/fedorov/*.

## 4.3 Multi-Ethnic Politics and the Federal Process in Russia

Post-Soviet Russia's federal system has been shaped by three main tensions. *First*, conflict over the appropriate designation of powers between the ethno republics during the process of refederalising Russia, that is, during the construction of the present federal system after the collapse of the USSR. *Second*, tensions arising from federal asymmetry – the unequal distribution of powers among Russia's ethno republics on the one hand, and its regions, on the other - which raises questions concerning equality between the federation's constituent units. *Third*, the political debates within the Russian Federation and its constituent units on the issue of whether the federation should be structured on the basis of individual or ethnic group, for its citizens.

The problems multicultural Russia now faces are primarily a product of the way in which federal politics has evolved since 1990. Following the collapse of the Soviet Federation and Russia's declaration of state sovereignty in 1990, attempts at refederalising Russia have been shaped largely by tension between efforts to preserve Russia's territorial integrity and the ethno republics' drive for self-empowerment. The question of how best to divide powers between the Centre and Russia's constituent units, especially the more vocal ethno republics, was one that the Yeltsin administration faced right from the outset. The Russian leader initially offered the ethno republics 'as much sovereignty as you can stomach'; a strategy motivated in part by his desire to secure a political power base in the republics during his battles with Gorbachev. The first attempt to provide a building block for refederation was the Federal Treaty of March 1992, signed by 18 of the then 20 republics. Only Checheno-Ingushetia (which officially became two separate republics later that year) and Tatarstan refused to sign the treaty. The treaty permitted the ethno republics to adopt their own constitutions and laws, elect their own supreme courts, have their own symbols of statehood and control many of their own resources. While this treaty, which allowed the ethno republics a higher status than the other regions, did appease most of the ethno republics, it also encouraged them to enact legislation that brought them increasingly into conflict with Moscow. Indeed, the failure to reach a *fully*

workable compromise was one of the factors that led Yeltsin in 1993 to dissolve the Russian Parliament and to reclaim the initiative for the centre by putting a draft Federal Constitution, written by his supporters to a national plebiscite (Smith 1999; Nicholson 1999).

The provision contained in the Federal Treaty formed the basis of those parts of the new Federal Constitution adopted in December 1993 that dealt with the delimitation of powers between the ethno republics and the Federal Centre, although no mention of the treaty itself was made in the constitution. However the constitution fell short of providing the kind of sovereignty many of the ethno republics had envisaged. Although it accepts the principle of national self-determination, it does not confer the right to secede. Chapter 1, Article 4 of the Constitution, states that the Russian Federation 'ensures the integrity and inviolability of its territory'. This omission strikes at the heart of the Centre-ethno republican tensions. Some of the Constitution's drafters viewed the right of the ethno republics to secede as a violation of Russia's status as an integral 'primordial territorial' entity. The ethno republics, however, regarded the failure to include such a provision as the denial of a nation's right to self-determination. The 1993 Constitution also contravenes a basic principle of modern democracies that central authorities may not unilaterally redefine the powers of its constituent units. In the Russian constitution, the president has been given both powers of judicial review (i.e. the right to suspend acts issued by the executive bodies in Russian provinces) and of arbitration between federal and local bodies or between constituent members of the federation (Smith 1999).

Several ethno republics felt that the constitution violated many of the autonomous rights previously embodied in the Federal Treaty. In the referendum, held on 12 December 1993, the Constitution received support from only nine of the 21 republics. A majority of voters in the seven[7] republics rejected the Constitution; the plebiscite was declared invalid in Tatarstan, where less than 14% of the electorate voted; and

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[7] The seven republics were Adygeya, Bashkortostan, Chuvashia, Dagestan, Karachi-Cherkeria, Mordovia and Tuva.

Chechnya did not participate at all. Despite protests from a number of ethno republics that their consent had not been given to this pro-presidential constitution, Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Shakrai was adamant that its introduction was legitimate because it had been endorsed by 58.4 percent of those who voted (Smith 1999; Nicholson 1999).

With all 21 ethno republics introducing their own constitutions, a 'War of Sovereignties' was waged between the republics and the Federal Centre. According to the Yeltsin administration, by late 1996 no fewer than 19 of the 21 ethno republican constitutions were in breach of the Federal Constitution. Violations included declaring the republic a subject of international law, establishing illegal taxes and dues, proclaiming the right to decide questions of war and peace and the right to grant citizenship. In an attempt to reclaim the initiative, and prompted by fears that the pro-independence policies of the Chechen government would spur on other republics to push for secession, Moscow began to negotiate a series of bilateral power-sharing treaties while continuing to claim that the federation was based on equality between its constituent parts (Smith 1999).

### 4.3.1 Asymmetric Federalism

The evolution of an asymmetric federation in Russia is not unique. As in Spain and Canada, developments in Russia demonstrate that federalization may involve a post-constitutional process of reaching important agreements as much as it may rely on an original plan or scheme of things. However, what distinguishes Russia from other such experiments is the sheer extent of federal asymmetry. By March 1999, about 50 of its constituent units had successfully negotiated varying degrees of privileged status and more such claims are coming up (Agranoff 1997).

There has been considerable controversy surrounding the question of whether the federation should be based on equality or differentiation of federal subjects. Initially, many federalists had supported the idea of 'republicanisation' of Russia, in which Russia's constituent units, following the recommendations of a parliamentary commission in November 1990, would be based on 50 or so non-ethnic-based

constituent units similar to the German Lander[8]. Under this scheme the Russian oblasts were to be transformed into republics, which ensured that citizens, irrespective of their place of residence, would be entitled to equal rights. Although initially envisaged as a stop-gap measure, this system which was clearly designed to appease the more bellicose ethno republics formed the basis of the Federal Treaty and the constitution. However, it has attracted considerable opposition from the regions, which see it as creating two classes of citizens: those residing in the federation (the ethno republics) and those who have to abide by the rules of a unitary state (the regions). The regions have been critical of it because in this system the autonomy of the regions have been more restricted than that of the ethno republics. In an attempt to appease the regions and secure their support in the 1996 presidential elections, Yeltsin finally granted them the right to hold direct elections to the position of regional governor, a post that had hitherto been appointed by the president. This brought the regions closer to the status of the ethno republics and enhanced their position via-a-vis the Centre (Smith 1999).

The signing of bilateral power-sharing treaties - beginning in February 1994 with Tatarstan followed by agreements with a numbers of the other ethno republics, and from 1996, with several regions has reinforced differentiation between the federation's 'constituent units'. Designed to build bridges and an attempt to rectify what the ethno republics, in particular, saw as the inadequacies of the 1993 Constitution, the process has resulted in greater differentiation between individual ethno republics, but at the same time it has blurred the distinction between the ethno republics and some of the regions, to a great extent. Inter-republican differentiation is reflected in the language used in codifying the individual treaties. Tatarstan led the way in securing significantly more powers, concessions and advantages than the other subjects of the federation. The treaty it signed recognized the republic as a constituent

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[8] Germany is made up of sixteen *Länder* (singular *Land*, German for "land" or "country"), generally referred to in English as states. In official English translations, the term "land" is commonly used. A *Land* (colloquially but rarely in a legal context also called *Bundesland*, for "federated state") is one of the partly sovereign constituent states of the Federal Republic of Germany. For details see: *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/States_of_Germany.*

member of the federation, but did not acknowledge the primacy of the federal constitution or Article 4 of the constitution (the inviolability of Russia and the superior status of the Federal Constitution and federal laws). In contrast with Tatarstan, which is recognized as 'a state joined with the Russian Federation', neighbouring Bashkortostan is a 'sovereign state within the Russian Federation', Kabardino-Balkaria is described as only 'a state within the 'Russian Federation' while Udmurtia is merely deemed to be 'a republic' (Hughes 1996).

Rather than reflecting a decision to treat the ethno republics distinctively as part of a coherent nationalities policy, the federal asymmetry appears mainly to be an 'arrangement' to deal with the anarchical ethnic demands. The greater bargaining power of some ethno republics and regions compared with others, especially the resource-rich republics and regions, has been particularly evident in influencing political outcomes. In short, developments since 1996 have done much to fuel demands amongst Russian regions to extend the rights of the federation's constituent units by equalizing their status relative to that of the ethno republics. This scramble to create a more symmetrical federation, however, has not been without its problems.

Valentei (1996) notes: "Everyone knows what separating one's children into favorites and others can result in. The effect has been analogous [in relation to the Russian federation], a total lack of respect on the part of the children towards the parents and towards each other".

While elements of group rights have been incorporated into and recognized by both constitution - and treaty-framers, individual rights have taken priority on the basis of the premise that the rights of the minorities can best be safeguarded through promoting individual liberties. This principle is reflected in both the 1992 Federal Treaty, which emphasized above all the rights and liberties of individuals as paramount, and the Constitution, which is unequivocal in prioritizing the equality of all people and subjects of the Russian Federation. Thus the constitutional right to use a native language is informed largely by such liberal thinking. On the other hand, the federalizing process reflects important collectivist principles with regard to ethnic

minorities, not least the right of both sub-units and peoples to self-determination (Smith 1999).

Despite legitimate claims that Russia has still to perfect a coherent and viable nationalities policy, a series of laws and decrees have been introduced since 1996 that constitute an attempt to rethink the relationship between federation and diversity. The most important and wide-ranging of these was a presidential decree (No.909) issued in June 1996 approving the concept of the state nationalities policy of the Russian federation. Although a legally non-binding document, it represents the outcome of a compromise between the centre and constituent subjects on the most appropriate way of effecting a fairer and more equitable form of federal justice. Rather than simply looking towards a Western-liberal model or nationalist solutions, it is an attempt to develop a conception of distributive justice that encapsulates a variety of principles and solutions reflecting what might be more appropriately seen as Russia's efforts to find 'a third way' (Resler 1997). In addressing both equality and difference among the federation's subjects and in attempting to stake the federation's future on what might be best described as a mixed rights perspective on national minorities, it lays out a more integrated approach. One powerful normative conception of Russia that the decree proposes is the construction of the federation around a Eurasianist Vision.

## 4.3.2 A Eurasianist Vision of Multicultural Federalism

As Russia occupies a special and unique place within northern Eurasia, it is held that Russia must find its own particular niche and solutions to its cultural diversity. Accordingly, the goal of a multi-ethnic Russia is to ensure the cultural self-preservation and further development of national traditions and cooperation of Slavic, Turkic, Caucasian, Fino-Ugric, Mongolian and other peoples of Russia within the framework of Eurasian national cultural space. Both European and Asian experiments with state-building are therefore rejected as inappropriate to what is deemed to be a more viable Eurasian way of 'harmonizing' the development of nationalities. Embedded in the ambiguity of Eurasianism are two conflicting interpretations of a multicultural Russia. One interpretation conveys a sense of

federation working towards multicultural co-existence. Here the centuries-long intermingling of European and Asian cultures is seen as a positive, beneficial, and enriching force, providing the potential for national co-existence on a variety of spatial levels from the federal to the neighborhood - based upon mutual recognition of the equal value of all national and ethnic cultures. It is an interpretation which within the public sphere at least is generally supported by the political leaders of the ethno republics. The other interpretation which gives ethnic Russians 'a leading role' is more problematic. In its extreme form, it ascribes a special mission and identity to the Russian nation within post-Soviet Eurasian space. Herein lies much of the problem in reviving the conception of Eurasianism, which at least in terms of its original formulation holds that Russia's mission should be to promote the Russian language, culture and values as well as to reallocate a special role for the Russian Orthodox Church. This interpretation also reflects a crisis of national identity, of what it means to be an ethnic Russian in a territorially reduced and re-designated multicultural homeland. Thus, just as Soviet nationalities policy discouraged institutional, ethnic Russian nation-building within Russia proper (RSFSR) - with Russians instead being encouraged to think of the Soviet Union as their national homeland; so too is there a widespread feeling that Russia's post-Soviet federation has marginalized Russians and is designed exclusively to bolster minority nation-building institutions. Moreover, for many ethnic Russians, Eurasianism again raises the spectre of imperialist ambitions, of 'where the true boundaries of Russia should lie' (Smith 1999).

Besides emphasizing the federation's commitment to the preservation and national self-determination of the ethno republics, the decree also offers the prospect for farther regions to enter into power-sharing agreements with the centre, thus coming closer to Spain's model of offering autonomy to all constituent units that desire control over their affairs. However, it was made clear that the aim was not the "gubernization" (creating regions modeled on Tsarist guberniyas) of the republics or the "republicanisation" of the regions (oblasts) and districts (krais). Rather, the goal was to recognize 'the striving of people for self-determination and objective processes of integration into a Russian federated society'. It is a statement reminiscent of the

'dialectical policy' of the Soviet regime, which envisaged both the flourishing of the national cultures of its ethno republics through federal institutional supports and at the same time their moving closer together through the federation's commitment to greater socio-economic equalization between the constituent parts. The decree thus emphasizes the importance of 'equalizing the level of socio-economic development of federation subjects', of allocating resources according to need and developing measures to boost the economy of depressed regions, notably of Central Russia and North Caucasus. Thus, federation is about promoting the redistribution of wealth, in a manner reminiscent of the way in which the policy of 'moving closer together' purportedly functioned during the Soviet period (Chinyaeva 1996).

The goal of rectifying socio-economic inequalities embedded in this vision of federation raised an important issue that has become marginalized in Western discussions of the polities of multiculturalism. As Fraser (1997) argues, with regard to questions of social justice in late modern democracies, the dislodging of material inequalities from considerations of group rights has impoverished any coherent understanding of distributive justice; rather, justice today requires both redistribution and recognition (Fraser 1997). Hence in any consideration of multicultural federation, it is argued that group rights should be rethought so that attention is paid not only to the right to be culturally different but also to ensuring that such a politics of recognition does not exclude considerations of the economically and socially disadvantaged. As a number of federalists in Russia have argued, any understanding of the federal distributive justice should not lose sight of such inequalities; to do otherwise is likely to weaken support amongst the poorer ethno republics and Russian regions for recognition of the equal value of a multicultural federation.

The decree also attempts to broaden the remit of those who qualify for self-determination by addressing itself to those ethnic minorities who either do not posses their own administrative homeland or live outside the homeland claimed by their co-nationals (e.g. Tatars living outside Tatarstan). The concept of federation has been broadened therefore, by recognizing 'multiple forms of national self-determination', including acknowledging the rights of those not represented as

constituent federal subjects to national cultural autonomy. This concept draws inspiration from the ideas of the late nineteenth century Austrian Social Democrats Karl Renner and Otto Bauer, who proposed a schema for the recognition of the group rights of the territorially non-represented. Thus, the decree acknowledges that the national minorities, and especially 'the small scattered peoples' of the north should be able to decide questions concerning 'the preservation and development of their customs, language education, culture'. Accordingly the federal authorities proposed setting up an Assembly of the Peoples of Russia, which would include representatives of dispersed minorities. In addition in proposing a form of cultural subsidiary within the localities, national-cultural autonomy signals not only the potential role that local government might play in 'directly reflecting residents' interests and allowing a more flexible response to national needs, but also the participatory role that minorities and diasporas are encouraged to perform in creating 'self-governing public organisations in places of compact settlement' and in promoting their own 'local language media', which, it is intended would be buttressed through state financial support. So far, however the idea of national-cultural autonomy has had little success in capturing the imagination of the territorially dispersed. The minority that has perhaps enjoyed the greatest success in attracting resources to promote cultural autonomy and local self-government are the Germans, who are scattered throughout Central Russia and Southern Siberia. Two such culturally autonomous districts have been set up in the Omsk and Atlai regions, for example.[9]

While Decree 909 has generated a variety of debates concerning the balance to be struck between competing visions of a multicultural federation, a more recent government resolution, concerning the abolition of nationality from the new internal passports, has rekindled tension between liberalism and nationalism. In arguably, the most significant development in the federal nationalities policy since the introduction of the Federal Constitution in December 1993, a July 1997 government resolution,

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[9] It should also be noted that the Germans in these regions have been able to draw upon considerably more federal resources than many other groups thanks in large part to support from Germany, which has sought to stem the inflow of Germans from the post-Soviet states after the collapse of communism. For details see: Smith (1999).

following a presidential decree issued 4 months earlier, caused a major controversy by removing the nationality entry - 'line 5' *(py atyi punkt)* - from new internal passports to be introduced beginning in late 1997. Its aim was to bring the new passports into line with the Federal Constitution, which states that citizens should not be obliged to define or declare their nationality. In purporting to resecure the importance of individual over group rights, it has been hailed especially by supporters of a more liberalizing federation as refocusing on the importance of the individual over collective rights, and as central to weakening the manipulation of multiculturalism by nationalistically minded ethno republican elites. This argument is developed further by Starovoitova, who argues that 'line 5' is unnecessary in a civil society where individuals should be equal regardless of their nationality and other such considerations and that to retain such a designation would facilitate further discrimination within the ethno republics against the non-titular nationality. Opposition not surprisingly, has come from a number of ethno republics, especially Tatarstan, whose state council adopted a resolution in October 1997 halting issuance of the new documents in the republic. Regarded as a culturally assimilating resolution by Moscow, it has been widely interpreted in the republic as 'depriving ethnic groups of their identity' and as intending to destroy 'ethnic harmony'. In addition, it is also seen as representing yet another victory for those federalists who wish to replace the ethno republics with the 'gubernisation of Russia'. While compatible with the universal practice in other multiethnic federations, opposition to the proposed reform reflects the continued significance that many ethno republican leaders give to the importance of "line 5" as ensuring the formal reproduction of collective identities. (Ibid.).

### 4.3.3 Federation and Social Justice

There are a number of ways in which federalization and federal politics can act as a safeguard against extremist nationalisms and exclusivist politics and ensure social justice. *First*, there is the role that federal institutions can play in counteracting such practices. The Russian constitutional court, reestablished in 1995, has provided a means of curbing or reversing exclusivist practices. In June 1997, for example, it

ruled against the ethno republic of Khakassia for introducing a republican electoral law that required candidates to the republican legislature and the post of executive head to demonstrate a minimum of 5 and 7 year periods of residency in the republic respectively, while federal legislation stipulated that the minimum residency requirement could not exceed 1 year (all such residency requirement have now been outlawed by the Centre). As part of its 1996 power-sharing agreement, Krasnodar Krai managed to negotiate the right to regulate migration into its region. Although not based on issues of cultural protection but grounded in the desire to introduce a local admissions policy in a district that has received a disproportionately large share of refugees from the North Caucasus, it has triggered a debate about the role the federal centre should play in providing resources and employment opportunities in localities of emigration, thereby pre-empting protectionist actions by local political elites, who treat membership of their ethno republic or region as a 'private club'. *Second*, negotiating bilateral power-sharing treaties with the Centre has encouraged the promotion of a civic-territorial local identity rather than 'nationalizing' practices by political elites. In other words, there is evidence to suggest that, within some ethno republics, identities are becoming more territorially rather than ethnically focused, with local citizens increasingly identifying with their ethno republic, irrespective of their ethnic affiliation. For example, in Tatarstan, where the titular nation comprises only some 49 per cent of the republic's population and where both Russians and Chuvash constitute sizeable minorities, the fact that political struggles have been framed as centre periphery rivalries rather than inter-ethnic ones has contributed to a strong sense of Tatarstani civic identity (Hanauer 1996). Thus, the Russian minority may feel as strong a sense of civic loyalty to Tatarstan as it does to the Russian *(Rossiiskii)* state. Other studies of civic identities also show that ethnicity is not necessarily the 'community of fate' that exclusivist-nationalists would wish to portray. In a survey of four ethno republics (Tatarstan, Sakha, North Ossetia and Tuva) it was found that most Russians saw their identities as lying equally with either the ethno republic and Russia or just with the ethno republic, and only a small proportion just with Russia. Similarly in another survey more respondents placed themselves in the

category of citizen with equally shared loyalties (Russia and the republic) than in any other category. Somewhat paradoxically, the formation of such cross-cutting identities owes something to the legacy of the soviet nationalities policy, which promoted an inter-communal culture leading to high levels of inter-ethnic marriage and multilingualism (Smith 1999; Tishkov 1997). *Third,* Federation has required local elites to adopt a relatively balanced approach to language issues, especially between the titular nation and Russians. Most republics have endorsed both the titular language and Russian as official state languages (the latter as the language of federal communication), as mandated by the Federal Constitution. In some ethno republics, a special state programme exists outlining strategies for broadening the use of titular language in political, economic and cultural life, a policy that is defensible on the grounds of cultural survival and in reversing linguistic colonialism. In this regard from the standpoint of social justice and for practical everyday reasons, it would be morally right that Russians should speak the indigenous language, for despite high degree of multilingualism amongst the titular nations[10], Russians' knowledge of other federation languages is poor. At the same time, the federation has helped to protect the linguistic needs and sensitivities of Russians. In one of the most multicultural republics, Bashkortostan, where Turkic-speaking Bashkirs make up 22% of population, Tatars 28% and Russians 39%, the authorities purposely put off a decision concerning what languages should be adopted, and encouraged a public debate. Consequently ethnic group representatives agreed to promote what is called 'the cult of the native language' in which all vernaculars not just the three major spoken languages – 'deserve equal protection and development under the law'. Moreover, while it is acknowledged that the state has a role to play in promoting the equal worth of some 13 languages, the cult of the native language is also based on the assumption that the most vital work for linguistic revival should be delegated to the family, more specifically to the mother. By moving the focus of language politics and obligation for all languages from the state to the private sphere, political elites have attempted to

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[10] According to the 1989 census, 70% of the titular nations of the ethno republics could speak Russian. For details see: Tishkov (1997).

avoid making language a politically charged issue (Smith 1999; Graney 1999). Finally, international pressures have also played an important part in shaping a more democratic and less ethnic-conflict-ridden federation. Global economic institutions, such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the World Bank, have played a direct role in linking aid and development to ensuring Russia protects its minorities and works towards a more democratic federalism. More specific human rights organizations, notably the OSCE and the Council of Europe, have played an important role as mediators in ethnic tensions and in ensuring that Russia complies with recognized international human rights norms, while the European Union has been effective in using punitive trade measures to insist that Russia allows the OSCE access to monitor the volatile situation in Chechnya. In short, the price of international recognition and trade is linked to minority accommodation (Smith 1999).

For a democratic Federation to be realized in Russia, the usual components of a successful federation must be present - namely, toleration, respect, compromise and mutual recognition of the right to be different. In order to safeguard this right to be different, it must be understood that a democratic and stable federation requires space for promoting individual liberties as well as accommodating group rights. As part of the federal process in Russia, group rights are being realized primarily through asymmetric federalism. Provided that the federal process offers the opportunity for all constituent units- ethnorepublics and others- to renegotiate their federal status, and that no autonomy claims are ignored, there is the prospect of ensuring fulfillment of both - a politics of recognition and federal stability. In short, if federation is to succeed in acting as a counterweight to exclusive nationalism of either the cultural majority or minority, it needs to provide the conditions for creating a plurality of identities and political actors based upon guarantees of free association and access to public forums of the sort that a civic society and economic liberalization can help generate. Moreover, by redefining national self-determination to include the right to national cultural autonomy, the Decree 909 created the prospect of a potentially more democratic and flexible policy, similar to what some Western political theorists have

called elsewhere a culture-based non-territorial self-determination (Tamir 1993). Particularly in the present period of social flux, in which identities are especially fluid, a federation needs to be flexible enough to devolve powers to smaller autonomous national groupings. It could well be that working towards such a democratic federalism may provide the best solution to the perils of both Russia and minority nationalism. There is an element of flexibility in the constitution (Art.78) which makes it possible that through mutual agreement, the federal government and regions can exchange powers and jurisdictions between themselves. In this sense the federal relations in the Russian constitution is an evolving process (Jha 1999). However, as the constitutional basis of post-Soviet Russia evolved as a series of compromises reached amid continuous political crisis, it contains two underlying weaknesses. *First*, the country's asymmetrical structure is unstable because it perpetuates the distortions of the Soviet system. *Second* the division of powers between the centre and the regions is vaguely defined. These deficiencies underlie much of the maneuvering and bargaining that bedevils the economic and political relations between the centre and the regions (Nicholson 1999).

## 4.4 The Role of Yeltsin

The development of a post-Soviet federal institutional architecture in Russia was closely interlinked with the emergence of strong presidential rule under Yeltsin, to such an extent that we could refer to it as a type of 'presidential federalism'. Yeltsin's impact on the management of Russia's multi-ethnic diversity has been on the whole a crucial stabilizing factor, with the notable exception in Chechnya (Hughes 2002).

The impact of Yeltsin on Russia's federal development began with his efforts to thwart Gorbachev's New Union Treaty.[11] Yeltsin was one of the leading advocates for the break-up of the USSR, and as Chairman of the RSFSR Parliament during 1990-91

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[11] Gorbachev played on the aspirations of the autonomous republics in an effort to fragment his rival's (Yeltsin) power base in Russia. In July 1991, the autonomous republics were poised to sign Gorbachev's Draft Union Treaty, which attempted to preserve the Soviet Union in a looser form. However, the attempted coup against Gorbachev in August 1991 precipitated the break-up of the Soviet Union, and the Union Treaty was never signed. For details see: Adelphi paper (330).

he stirred up the ethnic republics to take 'as much sovereignty as you can stomach' during a visit to Tatarstan's capital, Kazan, in August 1990. Although all of the then existing autonomous republics, except for Chechnya and Tatarstan, declared themselves sovereign 'within the RSFSR', in his attempts to destroy the Soviet Union, Yeltsin incited centrifugal pressures and legitimized secessionist tendencies within the Russian Federation itself (Hughes 2002; Nicholson 1999).

Yeltsin used his great personal authority to pragmatically build pacifying patrimonial relations with the leaders of the ethnic republics throughout his tenure as Chairman of the RSFSR Parliament and then as Russian president in 1990-91. He played an instrumental role in securing the Federal Treaty of 1992, which empowered the ethnified asymmetric federalism inherited from the USSR. While enforcing the adoption of equality of status in the new constitution, Yeltsin astutely led the attempts to reach an accommodation with the key republics of Tatarstan, Bashkortostan and Sakha. He employed his extensive decree powers under the constitution to bypass the new nationalist and communist dominated parliament elected in December 1993, and to implement a federal design of partial asymmetry based on bilateral power-sharing treaties. Yeltsin's role was instrumental to the process in the face of strong opposition from many of his key advisors on bilateral power-sharing treaties. Yeltsin's pragmatic approach and his personal traits [12] were central to establishing a rapport with the leaders of the ethnic republics and eased the treaty making process. However, it was precisely these characteristics that were absent from Yeltsin's management of the secessionist crisis with Chechnya (Hughes 2002). As the most vocal secessionist republic Chechnya should have been the priority of the President in his search for an

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[12] During 1989-1990 Yeltsin's populist views made him a folk hero in Moscow, where crowds chanting "Yeltsin, Yeltsin" were a frequent sight. In the Supreme Soviet he served on the steering committee of the interregional coalition of deputies with Andrei Sakharov. Yeltsin was also elected to the Russian parliament, which in May 1990 selected him as chairman (president) of the Russian Republic. Yeltsin and Gorbachev never again achieved a sustained close working relationship, although at times they cooperated during the last 18 months of the Soviet Union. At the CPSU's 28th Congress in 1990 Yeltsin and other reformers within the party supported Gorbachev's leadership against the conservatives, led by Y.K. Ligachev. Although the Congress favoured the conservatives, Ligachev was forced into retirement. Yeltsin had the last word when, late in the Congress, he publicly resigned from the party. For details see: http://www.answers.com/topic/boris-yeltsin.

institutional accommodation. In fact, Chechnya was excluded from the bilateral power-sharing treaty process and instead Yeltsin and a 'war party' within his administration presided over a long-running dirty campaign of military subterfuge to undermine Chechen president Dzhokhar Dudaev (Dunlop 1998). The explanation of why Chechnya was excluded from the partial asymmetry of the power-sharing treaty process is complex and involves historical, politically-contingent, political economy and personal factors. The main obstacle to an accommodation between Russia and Chechnya was the 'personalization' of the clash between Yeltsin and Dudaev (Tishkov 1997). We should not minimize, moreover, the extent of mutual 'ethnic' hatred contributing to this 'deep-seated personal animus' between Yeltsin and his key advisers on the one hand, and Dudaev on the other (Dunlop 1998: 215-19; Lieven-1998: 76). The personalization of the conflict was evidently immensely important to its drift into war. Dudaev lacked the personal skills for integrating with an executive federalism constructed around Yeltsin's new patrimonialism and Yeltsin never wished to engage Dudaev at an appropriate level of respect. Consequently, Yeltsin never entered into negotiations with Dudaev, and left the task to Sergei Shakhrai (Deputy Prime Minister for Nationalities and Regional Policy). That Yeltsin personally was central to the continuation of the conflict is indicated by the fact that the war was pursued even after the removal from office of the key ministers who formed the so-called 'party of war'[13] by summer 1996. Much as Yeltsin personally contributed to the cause of the first war he was also instrumental in bringing it to a conclusion. With Dudaev killed by Russian Forces[14] and Yeltsin facing a difficult re-election campaign in spring 1996, he instructed key subordinates, at first Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, and later his Security Council chief, Aleksandr Lebed, to negotiate a settlement. The Khasavyurt Agreement of August 1996, followed by a power-sharing treaty in May 1997, led to a Russian military withdrawal and the end of its effective sovereignty over Chechnya. In its place a special status of 'association' between the

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[13] 'Party of war' or war party had the following figures: Grachev, Shakhrai, Yerin, Yegorov, and Oleg Soskovets.

[14] The Chechen leader was killed by a rocket that homed in on the signal emitted by his cellular telephone while he was conducting some important conversation - presumably with some Russian official or other, about a forthcoming truce. For details see: Kagarlitsky (2002).

Russian Federation and Chechnya was established, where a final decision on the status of Chechnya was postponed for 'up to' 5 years, while it remained part of a 'common economic space' with the Russian Federation. In practice Chechnya was left in 'limbo', cut off from Russia and without significant external support. The new president Aslan Maskhadov attempted, with great difficulty given the radicalization and Islamicisation of Chechen field commanders, to rule it as a de facto independent state. This was most obviously demonstrated by the introduction of Shariiat Law in Chechnya in early 1999 in complete indifference to the Russian Constitution (Hughes 2002).

## 4.5 Putin's Presidency

The highly patrimonial presidential federalism that had developed under Yeltsin was built on narrow institutional consensus and imprecision of meaning, being the outcome of non-transparent executive agreements between the president and heads of the republics and regions. Consequently they were not likely to be pursued by a future regime. Parliament passed a federal law on power-sharing treaties in June 1999 which stipulated that all of the existing treaties must be revised to comply with the Russian Constitution by 2002. While it was unlikely that Yeltsin would comply with this law, the shift to a more centralising policy began when Vladimir Putin became Prime Minister in August 1999. Putin had been deeply involved in the failed drive by Anatoly Chubais[15] to nullify the treaties and recentralize power in summer 1996. His intent to rebuild a strong central state in Russia became clear almost immediately on taking office when in September 1999 he took a leading role in the new war to re-establish Russian control in Chechnya. The renewed war in Chechnya turned out at first to be genuinely popular, unlike the first conflict in 1994-96. By the terms of the Khasavyurt Agreement of 31 August 1996, the republic gained effective independence. Russian troops were withdrawn and in February 1997, with Moscow's

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[15] Anatoly Chubais, Head of the Presidential Administration argued that the key treaties distorted compliance with the tight fiscal target set by the IMF. Chubais recruited Vladimir Putin, a former KGB officer and Deputy Mayor of St. Petersburg into the presidential administration to oversee relations with the regions and republics. However, Chubais had been forced to resign over a corruption scandal in 1996. For details see: Hughes (2002).

backing, a former guerrilla leader, Aslan Maskhadov, was elected President. However, in the face of growing lawlessness,[16] Russia had since early 1999 been preparing for renewed conflict. As head of the Security Council and of the FSB, Putin responded by meeting with Yeltsin on 19 May, 1999 and drafted the tough decree on Additional Measures to Fight Terrorism in Russia's North Caucasus. The second war was provoked by the infiltration by Chechen forces on 2nd August, 1999 in Dagestan. The bombing of apartment blocks[17] created a climate of fear and, to a degree retribution against Chechens, although the involvement of Chechens in these atrocities still remains a matter of controversy. The military intervention in Chechnya began on 30 September and was initially envisaged as a limited operation, but after the relatively easy occupation of the northern lowlands spread to the heartlands of Chechnya (Ichkeria) when Russian troops crossed the Terek river in late October. Two years before the 11 September 2001 destruction of the World Trade Centre in New York, the war was presented as a 'war against terrorism' laying the foundations for the later post-September alliance of Russia and the West. Putin was determined to resolve the situation in the North Caucasus. Putin's image as an Iron Chancellor was created and sustained by his uncompromising approach to the Chechen problem (Sakwa 2004).

The fear that the Chechen Zone of insecurity would move up the Volga and spread to other republics and the end result would be the Yugoslavisation of Russia had caused the second war. As far as Putin was concerned:

> ...the essence of the situation in the Caucasus and Chechnya was a continuation of the collapse of the USSR. It was clear that we had to put an end to it at some point... my evaluation of the situation in August [1999] when the bandits attacked Dagestan was that if we don't stop it immediately, Russia as a state in its current form would no longer exist. Then we were talking about stopping the dissolution of the country. I acted

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[16] The turning point was the abduction of Russia's Deputy Interior Minister, Major General Gennady Shpigun who had been dragged off a plane by Chechen rebels at Grozny airport on 5march 1999. His body was found in June 2000. It was clear that Maskhadov was conclusively losing control of the situation in the republic. For details see: Sakwa (2004).

[17] The casualty figures in the bombings were - in Dagestan, Bvinaksk (4 September, 62 dead), Moscow, Guryanov Street (9 September, 100 dead), Moscow, kashirskoe Highway (13 september,124 dead), and Volgodonsk (15 September, 19 dead). For details see Sakwa (2004).

The enormity of the perceived threat from Chechen insurgency in part explains the disproportionate use of force in the region. When faced by similar grave threats to national security, as after 11 September 2001, the West too has resorted to overwhelming force and infringement of civil liberties. Protracted warfare in Chechnya however clearly degraded the quality of Russian political and social life, especially since there was a tendency to dehumanize the Chechen insurgents, the Chechens as a people and Russian servicemen. This led to a shift in public opinion by 2002 towards support for a negotiated settlement from an early opinion that the problem required decisive action (Ibid.).

As the acting President from 31 December 1999, and as elected president from March 2000, Putin used recentralization as a 'key platform in his credo' to reverse the 'weakening of state power' that had occurred under Yeltsin. Putin viewed the treaties as contributing to the legal chaos in the country whereby thousands of legal acts at all levels of power contradicted the Federal Constitution and Federal Law. His response was to enact a 'dictatorship of law' though the precise meaning of this term was left vague, by a range of devices - institutional reforms, negotiation, the constitutional court, and in the case of Chechnya, coercion. After his election as president Putin implemented significant institutional reforms to Russia's federal architecture the goal of which was to strengthen the 'executive vertical' in order to 'cement Russian statehood'. In May 2000, he initiated a territorial administrative reconfiguration of the federation by dividing the subjects into seven new federal districts[18], each headed by a presidential 'plenipotentiary' representative, commonly referred to as 'governor-general' after the Tsarist military governors of the provinces. The new heads of the federal districts had ultimate authority for economic coordination and security in their areas. The control factor was evident from the strong military security bias in the appointments; two of the new presidential representatives were former commanders in the 1994-96 Chechen war, and two others were former senior officials in the internal

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[18] The districts are: Central, North West, North Caucasus, Volga, Urals, Siberia and Far East.

security apparatus. The reform suggests that Putin had opted for a simplistic military bureaucratic solution to the complex problems of centre-regional and federal relation.

Putin's next step was to radically restructure the upper house of the parliament, the Federation Council, to end the situation whereby it was composed of ex-officio republican and regional executives (presidents or governors), and heads of assemblies. Exploiting his enhanced authority from the successful (at that stage) military operation in Chechnya, and his victory in the presidential election, he easily pushed a new federal law through the parliament in August 2000, which removed the governors and replaced them with representatives nominated by the governors and approved by a republic's or region's legislative assembly for a four year term. The law also gave the president the power to remove and replace governors for repeated violations of federal law. The reform deprived the governors of their most important forum for organising collective action against the centre. Putin created a new State Council as an alternative consultative forum for the regional and republican leaders, but it meets in plenary session only four times a year. While its seven-member presidium meets monthly, its composition and agenda are decided by Putin. These are clearly substantially weaker bodies than the former Federation Council (Hughes 2002; Sakwa 2004).

In the late 1990s, Russian Prime Ministers and leading officials had tried without much success to modify the bilateral power-sharing treaties with the most powerful republics, Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, and Sakha. Federal fiscal flows (including non-budgetary funds) are distorted by the exceptions contained in the key treaties, thus constraining any federal policies of regional wealth distribution development. By 1998 only 26 of the 89 regions and republics were net 'donors' to the federal budget and the rest were dependent on federal transfers (East West Institute 1999).Putin exploited his new authority as president to renegotiate the treaties. He also had the advantage of a period of weakness of key republican leaders like Shaimiev, whose credibility had been damaged by their involvement in the Fatherland-All Russia Movement, formed to fight Putin's Unity Bloc in the Duma elections of 1999, and which had performed badly. Putin evidently felt institutionally constrained by the

treaties, since he did not unilaterally revoke them and had to engage in negotiations with the republics to reverse some concessions. From March 2000 Putin focused on the economic aspects of the treaties, forcing Tatarstan to relinquish back to the federal government some of the fiscal privileges that had been allocated by the 1994 treaty. Tatarstan, which contributed about $350 million in 2000, was already one of the key donors to the federal budget, but the centre wanted even more. It was now to return the same proportions of tax revenue to the federal budget as other regions, though Putin accepted a symbolic face-saving formula for Shaimiev whereby the revenues would stay in Kazan at the regional branch of the federal treasury and would be spent on federal projects in Tatarstan. Afterwards, Putin visited Bashkortostan and agreed similar 'forfeits of fiscal exceptions' with president Rakhimov. In 1999, for instance Bashkortostan was the only subject that did not transfer income tax revenues to the centre. The treaty revisions, therefore, strengthen the federal treasury and give the federal government greater control over tax collection in these wealthy resource-rich republics. In principle this should make for improved co-ordination of federal economic policy and a more equitable regional development policy. Putin appears to erode the partial asymmetry further, and perhaps remove it altogether and introduce a symmetric federal system. Shaimiev, in contrast, observed that without the power-sharing treaty the relations between Tatarstan and Russia have no defined constitutional basis, since Tatarstan did not sign the Federal Treaty of 1992, or ratify the 1993 Russian Constitution.

Putin used another avenue of attack on the treaties, judicial activism by the constitutional court. In a landmark test case on the status of the power-sharing treaties, in June 2000 the Constitutional court struck down Bashkortostan's electoral law. Bashkortostan argued unsuccessfully that its Constitution was protected by exceptions contained in its power-sharing treaty. The case established the important de jure precedent that the Constitutions of republics must comply with the federal Constitution. Subsequently, Sakha amended its constitution to comply with the court's ruling in August 2000. It remains uncertain how this process of judicial review of the treaties will be given effect, as in November 2000 Bashkortostan's parliament

approved a new law to bring the republic's Constitution into conformity with the federal Constitution, but concurrently included *verbatim* the text of the 1994 Power-sharing treaty in its new Constitution, a de facto non-compliance (Hughes 2002; Sakwa 2004).

Putin has radically transformed the nature of Russian federalism, by an ambitious programme of measures to recentralize power. The powers of the leaders of republics and regions have been seriously weakened, both institutionally and politically. Some of the important concessions made by Yeltsin to the key republics in the power-sharing treaties, principally in the fiscal domain, have been reversed. Chechnya has been reoccupied militarily, though how this problem is to be managed politically remains one of the greatest challenges facing Russian federalism. While, with some justification Putin can claim to have restructured executive power in the Russian state in a more 'Constitutionally united' system, the partial asymmetric federalism has been modified, not eradicated.

The success and failure of refederalisation as a management strategy for secession potential in Russia has also critically depended upon the rise of a strong presidency. Yeltsin and Putin pursued similarly ambivalent policies, preferring negotiation and accommodation with Tatarstan and other republics, and adopting a coercive strategy for Chechnya. The failure of refederalisation in Chechnya was largely a Centre's problem which was exacerbated by lack of institutional mechanisms for managing the conflict and embittered by historical enmities. The centre's failure was evident in both the 1994-1996 war and the renewed war in 1999, although the later conflict was marked by a radicalization that was a by-product of the first war. The process of federal institutional experimentation has continued under Yeltsin's successor, Putin, with even stronger centralising tendencies. Consequently, the benefits and limitations of the interaction of presidentialism and federalism during Russia's transition – what in essence was a kind of executive federalism – are evident in the contrast between the two most important cases of success and failure in the management of secession potential, Tatarstan and Chechnya. Post-Soviet federal development in Russia, the war in Chechnya apart, lends credence to the view that where there is a

territorialisation and politicisation of ethnicity, a strong presidency can promote stability by imposing institutional mechanisms to accommodate and manage ethnic and regional challenges. We can thus sum up in the words of Sakwa:

> What is Russian federalism for? Is it to provide a framework for the national development of ethnic minorities to act as a bulwark against what Lenin called 'Great' Russian chauvinism', to provide decentralised administration and tailored solutions for Russia's huge territory or to act as fourth pivot to guard against the possibility of the restoration of an authoritarian government in Moscow? We still do not have answers to these questions. Segmented regionalism threatened the rights of minorities and of individuals. It was in response to this that the countervailing universalistic agenda represented by the national state was asserted. This reassertion took two forms: the establishment of a direct presidential supervisory mechanism (the presidential 'vertical'); and a broader strategy of developing robust political institutions such as regional legislatures and competitive national political community. Although the success of his attempts to restore the 'vertical of power' remains contested, at the level of political theory Putin's 'new statism' is rooted in the Jacobian republican state building tradition, where citizenship is considered individual, universal and homogeneous. As in other spheres, Putin sought to establish the rules of the political game, and then left the actors involved to play it - although the referee was sometimes not averse to picking up the ball and running! In addition the assimilationist aspect of French (Unitary) nation building threatens the accrued rights of the ethno-federal formations on Russia's territory, and in particular the privileges of the 'ethnocratic' elites based on the titular nationalities at their heart. The tension between the reassertion of the prerogatives of the centre and federalism's promise of shared sovereignty is still not adequately resolved (Sakwa 200: 159-160).

# CHAPTER – V

# CONCLUSION

Though the term ethnicity is recent, the sense of kinship, group solidarity and common culture to which it refers is as old as the history of mankind itself. Ethnic communities have been omnipresent and transcended spatio-temporal dimensions, playing important role in all societies. Though their significance and impact have varied considerably, they have always constituted one of the basic modes of human association and community.

Ethnic community and identity are more often than not associated with conflict, and more particularly political struggles in various parts of the world. We should note, however, that there is no necessary connection between ethnicity and conflict. Quite apart from some examples of ethnic conflict relations between ethnic communities and categories may be and frequently are peaceful and cooperative.

The world today can be characterised by two simultaneous processes, fundamentally opposite to each other. The first process leads us towards unification and integration of states at international level and of centralisation at the national level. It is exemplified by the unification of Vietnam, Yaman and Germany, as also by the existence of supranational organisations like the European Union (EU). At the national level, driven by the compulsions of globalization national or central governments have assumed more de facto powers.

The second process is of fragmentation and demands for autonomy and decentralisation. This trend broadly called "ethnicity" – emphasising the right of a community to maintain its cherished identity, of pluralism, of return to the roots of life and culture, has become a source of instability of state frontiers. The upsurge of ethnic movements in the contemporary world could not be anticipated by the earlier models of ethnicity, viz. the Assimilationist, or the Primordial models. In this regard, Ardent (1973) had noted that revolutionary wars would be a major source of political violence and thus emerge at the centre stage of the world politics.

The worldwide upsurge of ethno nationalism in recent years, a resurgence of ethnic identification as the basis of political action in different societies, and the continued assertion of ethnic pluralism, not only in the third world, but also in the industrially advanced democracies, have made it clear, that assumptions about modernisation and assimilation are unfounded. Similarly, the Marxian proposition that the market place would integrate the diverse identities of ethnicity, caste, language, etc in the form of class has not been validated.

The increasing manifestation of ethnicity in its various forms has led to a re-examination of the role of ethnicity in developed as well as the developing societies. The failure in developmental tasks has now increasingly been attributed to the ethnic phenomenon, besides factors such as financial, technical, administrative, or political shortcomings.

As a social phenomenon, ethnicity has evolved from historical and socio- territorial specificities which vary from country to country, situation to situation. However, there are some common structural sources, which can be derived from the common underlying trends in different societies and which can be held responsible for the upsurge of ethnicity. Accordingly, the ethnic phenomenon which includes issues such as, 'ethnic identity,' 'ethnic mobilisation,' 'ethnic assertions,' and 'ethnic conflict,' has become the subject of much theoretical enquiry in social sciences under different disciplines in the last five decades.

The present study has explored the various theories on the subject of ethnicity in a comprehensive manner. These theories are wide ranging. Broadly speaking, the current theories of ethnicity can be divided into two categories: (i) those which emphasise on cultural and psychological elements and (ii) those emphasising on economic and political factors. Within these two broad categories, the models have been variously described as primordialist, cultural pluralist, modernist and developmental, political – economy approach, elite competition, Marxists and neo-Marxists.

The Russian social science tradition with respect to interpreting ethnicity has been dominated mainly by the primordial approach. The policies adopted by both,

President Boris Yeltsin and his successor, Vladimir Putin also, demonstrated the importance attached to the primordial ties.

Ethnicity has many dimensions, but the question which remains central to ethnicity is ethnic self-consciousness. While attempting to conceptualise ethnicity in chapter one, the important role of ethnic self-consciousness in shaping ethnicity has been underlined.

In the following chapter, the impact of ethnicity on the process of democratic consolidation in transitional democracies has been discussed. The focus has been on the security concerns of these democracies, as security constitutes an integral part of the process of democratic consolidation. What becomes evident is that ethnic self-consciousness manifests itself either in the demand for the right to cultural survival or for political sovereignty. The challenges to the security of the transitional democracies emanate from these demands, particularly from the demand for political sovereignty. In this regard, an understanding of the concept of 'Comprehensive Security' assumes relevance. The comprehensiveness of security implies that national efforts aimed to attain an acceptable and satisfactory level of security must be directed simultaneously at various levels: (i) 'transformation' of international climate into a favourable one, (ii) a reasonable level of self-reliance, and (iii) a stable political system satisfying the sense of participation among the public in general, which in turn is likely to minimise the sense of deprivation, if not its elimination.

Most of the states today are grappling with the problem of security as they find it difficult to attain success at the above-mentioned three levels, particularly the third one i.e. working out a stable political system. Many of these states like, the Russian Federation, Mexico, Chile, Turkey, and many East-European countries have embarked on a path to democracy to attain the goal of stable political system, with varying degrees of success. One thing that is common about these democracies is that they are known as 'transitional democracies'. Most of these transitional democracies such as Russia, Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia have another thing in common – the challenge to their security emanate from ethnic assertions.

Since the end of the Cold War, the world has witnessed a growing number of incidents of ethnic violence. There has been an upsurge in ethnic conflicts in almost

every region of the world. The frequency and the magnitude of such violence have been most prominent in the transitional democracies of East Central Europe and the FSRs. As the countries in these regions are mostly multi-ethnic and new to democracy, the challenges clearly are manifold.

The prevailing ethnic scenario in the transitional democracies of Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, and the Baltic States establishes beyond doubt that ethno radicalism has profoundly shaped the pace and character of the transition from communist regimes to hybrid systems approximating to a greater or lesser extent to liberal democracy, across nearly all the states of the former Soviet bloc. Political systems of left and right have emerged in which ethnicity is a major organising principle. Minorities are regularly being depicted as a threat by nationalist leadership. The collapse of the erstwhile Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia demonstrates the universality of nationalist sentiments and impulses toward separatism in all multi-ethnic societies.

However, it would be wrong to suppose that ethnic tensions were high throughout the region because, for the most part, there was awareness of the need for accommodation to enhance political stability and the prospects for economic growth. However, the potential for crisis remained, as the Chechnya and Kosovo problems indicate, and the region will continue to be a critical laboratory for the testing of new systems of regulation.

In chapter three, the Russian experience with ethnicity, has been narrated by focusing on the prominent ethnic assertions that had made their presence felt on the ethnic landscape of Russia during 1991-2001. Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, ethnicity as a distinct phenomenon has posed challenges to the unity and integrity of the Russian state and its efforts to build a viable democratic political and federal system in a variety of ways. *First*, among a group of republics the clamouring for greater autonomy and desire to declare independence or sovereignty or secession started gaining momentum. Prominent among such republics were Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Checheno-Ingushetia and North-Ossetia. *Secondly*, there were an increasing number of cases related to border disputes between the republics and regions. *Thirdly*, broad regional coalitions started emerging in opposition to the central authority, e.g., Confederation of the Peoples of the Caucasus, the Volga-Urals

movement consisting of Tatarstan, and Bashkortostan, the Fino-Ugric movement of Komi, Udmuartia, Mordova, Khanti-Mansi, and Kerelia and a movement to unite regions of the Russian Far East. These challenges seem to have seriously affected the democratic consolidation process in Russia. The clamouring for greater autonomy and secessionist demands in particular, pose the most formidable challenge to the Russian state, as is evident in the ethnic assertions in Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Checheno-Ingushetia and North-Ossetia. Our study has particularly focussed on this aspect of ethnic assertions in Russia that seemed to have threatened the unity and integrity of the Russian Federation and its democracy-building efforts.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, though the Russians state system has been profoundly transformed, the crisis of governance persists. The ethnic scenario in the Federation of Russia aggravated this crisis of governance further. One of the reasons to adopt a federal system was to address the challenges emanating from ethnic assertions in different parts of Russia. Russia's federal system has evolved through a series of compromises between central government and regional administrations. With the exception of conflict in the North Caucasus, the new pattern of relationship between the centre and the regions had emerged through negotiation rather than bloodshed. Despite their separatist rhetoric, regional leaders remained heavily dependent upon the centre for funds and political support and sought foreign investment and not recognition as independent states.

Demand for secession was not widespread in Russia. Only two republics, Chechnya and Tatarstan, have since 1990, demanded independence from Moscow. The latter since the 1994 Treaty with Federal Russia was widely acclaimed as a model of centre-periphery conflict resolution. Although no referenda on secession had been held to test the ethno republics' democratic will, the weakness of other indicators of majority support for secessionism, such as secessionist nationalist organisations would suggest that most ethno republican constituents saw their future best served as part of a federation. The reasons why secession was so weakly developed included, perceptions of economic unviability, and the prospect of being materially worse off outside the federation.

Russia did not undergo the balkanisation which was widely predicted in the early 1990s. Since the formation of Federal Russia, only one republic, Chechnya has militarily fought for secession from the federation. Chechnya has seen a protracted conflict, which resulted in two devastating wars in 1994-1996 and 1999. It was very much an exception as secession potential and conflicts had either been non-existent or successfully managed in the 20 other ethno based republics, some of which also strenuously asserted demands for 'sovereignty' from the federal government after 1991.

Chapter four unfolds with a detailed account of the various measures taken by the federal centre, including both military and non-military responses, to address the challenges emanating from ethnic assertions within its territory. As Russia is a multicultural, multiethnic society, a society which includes a variety of national and ethnic groups, the integral part of the governance has been the management of multiculturalism. There are different strategies that the states generally adopt to tackle the challenge of multiculturalism. To govern multicultural polities, the post-Soviet states have drawn upon a variety of strategies from policies designed to eliminate multiculturalism by creating a more homogeneous national political space, to those aimed at managing the phenomenon. Strategies for managing multiculturalism have been used more frequently. It is noteworthy that the only post-Soviet state to use federation to manage its multiculturalism is Russia. The development of a post-Soviet federal institutional architecture in Russia was closely interlinked with the emergence of a strong presidential rule under Yeltsin, to such an extent that we could refer to it as a type of 'presidential federalism'. Yeltsin's impact on the management of Russia's multiethnic diversity had been on the whole a crucial stabilising factor, with the notable exception in Chechnya. As the acting president from 31 December 1999, and as elected president from March 2000, Putin used recentralization as a key platform in his credo to reverse the 'weakening of state power' that had occurred under Yeltsin. After his election as the President of the Russian Federation, Putin implemented significant institutional reforms to Russia's federal architecture, the goal of which was to strengthen the 'executive vertical' in order to 'cement Russian statehood'.

Russia at the turn of the century may not be falling apart, but it cannot be denied that it is faced with the serious challenge of ethnic assertions. There are already ethnic political coalitions at the regional level, with the electorate split along ethnic lines. Ethnic intolerance, xenophobia, and violent manifestations in the form of territorial cleansing and communal clashes are found not only in the republics but elsewhere as well, including the large urban centres. Today, the sovereignty and separatist projects in the territory of the Russian Federation are in midstream: none has been accomplished successfully; none has fully failed.

However, the future stability of the Russian State greatly depends upon its ability to manage its ethnic assertions with wisdom and far sight. This clearly would involve the understanding of the security dynamics in the right perspective – i.e. the perfect balance between the military and non-military dimensions of security.

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# Russia's Administrative Units

| Name Principal City | ■ Area (km²) ▲ Population (Jan 1997) |
|---|---|
| Leader (term expires) | ● Treaty with Centre |
| Ethnic mix (1989 census) *Characteristics* | |

## European North

**Arkhangelsk Oblast** Arkhangelsk
Head of Administration Anatolii Yefremov (2000)
93% Russian *Naval base; forestry*

■ 410,700 ▲ 1,472,700
● None

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**Republic of Karelia** Petrozavodsk
Chairman of Government Sergei Katanandov (2002)
74% Russian 10% Karelian 7% Belorussian *Forestry; borders Finland*

■ 172,400 ▲ 780,100
● None

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**Republic of Komi** Sykhyvkar
Head of Republic Yurii Spiridonov (2001)
58% Russian 23% Komi 8% Ukrainian *Forestry, oil, coal, based on convict labour*

■ 415,900 ▲ 1,172,700
● 20 March 1996

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**Murmansk Oblast** Murmansk
Head of Administration Yurii Yevdokimov (2000)
83% Russian 9% Ukrainian *Northernmost ice-free port*

■ 144,900 ▲ 1,030,100
● 30 October 1997

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Note    Administrative units are listed by economic region

Sources    *Rossiiskie Regiony posle Vyborov – 96* (Moscow: Yuridicheskaya
Literatura, 1997); and Michael McFaul and Nikolai Petrov (eds),
*Politicheskii Almanakh Rossii 1997* (Moscow: Carnegie Center, 1998)

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**Nenets Autonomous Okrug** Naryan-Mar ◾ 176,700 ▲ 48,100
Head of Administration Vladimir Butov (2000) ● None
66% Russian 11% Nenets 10% Komi 7% Ukrainian *Formally subordinate to Arkhangelsk Oblast*

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**Vologda Oblast** Vologda ◾ 145,700 ▲ 1,344,100
Governor Vyacheslav Pozgalev (2000) ● 4 July 1997
57% Russian *Nucleus of the Russian North*

## North West

**Kaliningrad Oblast** Kaliningrad ◾ 15,100 ▲ 935,100
Head of Administration (Governor) Leonid Gorbenko (2000) ● 12 January 1996
79% Russian 9% Belorussian 7% Ukrainian *Russia's only ice-free port on Baltic; HQ of Baltic Fleet; separated from Russia by Lithuania*

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**Leningrad Oblast** St Petersburg ◾ 85,900 ▲ 1,677,200
Vacant (elections 19 September 1999) ● 13 June 1996
91% Russian *Borders Finland and Estonia*

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**Novgorod Oblast** Velikii Novgorod ◾ 55,300 ▲ 738,500
Head of Administration Mikhail Prusak (1999) ● None
95% Russian *Historic past as city-state; light industry*

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**St Petersburg** ◾ 600 ▲ 4,838,000
Governor, Chairman of Government Vladimir Yakovlev (2000) ● 13 June 1996
89% Russian *Capital, 1712–1918; gateway to Baltic; defence industry*

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**Pskov Oblast** Pskov ◾ 55,300 ▲ 827,000
Head of Administration Yevgenii Mikhailov (2000) ● None
94% Russian *Borders Belarus, Estonia and Latvia*

## Central

**Bryansk Oblast** Bryansk ◾ 34,900 ▲ 1,473,000
Head of Administration Yurii Lodkin (2000) ● 4 July 1997
96% Russian *Wartime partisan centre; borders Ukraine and Belarus*

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**Ivanovo Oblast** Ivanovo ◾ 21,800 ▲ 1,255,500
Head of Administration Vladislav Tikhomirov (2000) ● 20 May 1998
96% Russian *Depressed textile region*

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**Kaluga Oblast** Kaluga ◾ 29,900 ▲ 1,095,900
Governor Valerii Sudarenkov (2000) ● None
94% Russian *Artists' dacha country; science centres*

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**Kostroma Oblast** Kostroma ◾ 60,100 ▲ 805,700
Head of Administration Viktor Shershunov (2000) ● 20 May 1998
96% Russian *Outskirts of central industrial region*

**Moscow city**     ■ 1,200 ▲ 8,637,000
Mayor, Government Premier Yurii Luzhkov (2000)     ● 16 June 1998
90% Russian *Capital, region and municipality*

**Moscow Oblast** Moscow     ■ 47,000 ▲ 6,573,000
Head of Administration Anatolii Tyazhlov (1999)     ● None
94% Russian *High-technology industry*

**Orel Oblast** Orel     ■ 24,700 ▲ 914,000
Head of Administration Yegor Stroev (2001)     ● None
97% Russian *'Black-earth' agricultural region*

**Ryazan Oblast** Ryazan     ■ 39,600 ▲ 1,316,500
Head of Administration Vyacheslav Lyubimov (2000)     ● None
96% Russian *Food industry*

**Smolensk Oblast** Smolensk     ■ 49,800 ▲ 1,166,200
Head of Administration Aleksandr Prokhorov (2002)     ● None
94% Russian *Main route between Moscow and the West*

**Tula Oblast** Tula     ■ 25,700 ▲ 180,100
Governor Vasilii Starodubtsev (2001)     ● None
95% Russian *Historic centre for manufacture of guns and samovars*

**Tver Oblast** Tver (formerly Kalinin)     ■ 84,100 ▲ 1,652,900
Governor Vladimir Platov (1999)     ● 13 June 1996
94% Russian *Erstwhile rival to Moscow as capital; economically depressed*

**Vladimir Oblast** Vladimir     ■ 29,000 ▲ 1,636,900
Head of Administration Nikolai Vinogradov (2000)     ● None
96% Russian *Centre of Russian state between twelfth and fifteenth centuries*

**Yaroslavl Oblast** Yaroslavl     ■ 36,400 ▲ 1,443,000
Governor Anatolii Lisitsyn (1999)     ● 20 October 1997
96% Russian *Industrial; cradle of political reform*

## Volga Vyatka

**Chuvash Republic** Cheboksary     ■ 18,300 ▲ 1,359,000
President Nikolai Fedorov (2001)     ● 27 May 1996
68% Chuvash 27% Russian *Turkic; one of few titular majorities*

**Kirov Oblast** Kirov     ■ 120,800 ▲ 1,622,900
Governor Vladimir Sergeenkov (2000)     ● None
90% Russian *Politically quiescent*

**Republic of Marii El** Yoshkar Ola     ■ 23,200 ▲ 764,300
President Vyacheslav Kislitsyn (2001)     ● 20 May 1998
48% Russian 43% Mari 6% Tatar *Finno-Ugrian people*

**Republic of Mordovia** Saransk       ■ 26,200 ▲ 950,000
Head of Republic Nikolai Merkushkin (1999)       ● None
61% Russian 33% Mordva 5% Tatar *Finno-Ugrian people*

**Nizhnii Novgorod Oblast** Nizhnii Novgorod       ■ 76,900 ▲ 3,707,900
Governor Ivan Sklyarov (2001)       ● 8 June 1996
95% Russian *Formerly closed region of Gorky, now one of Russia's most open regions*

## Central Black Earth

**Belgorod Oblast** Belgorod       ■ 27,100 ▲ 1,477,500
Head of Administration Yevgenii Savchenko (2003)       ● None
93% Russian 6% Ukrainian *Relatively prosperous; iron ore and agriculture*

**Kursk Oblast** Kursk       ■ 29,800 ▲ 1,341,300
Head of Administration Aleksandr Rutskoi (2000)       ● None
97% Russian *Rutskoi is Yeltsin's former vice-president*

**Lipetsk Oblast** Lipetsk       ■ 24,100 ▲ 1,247,700
Head of Administration Oleg Korolev (2002)       ● None
97% Russian *'Donor' region thanks to metals exports*

**Tambov Oblast** Tambov       ■ 34,300 ▲ 1,310,600
Head of Administration Aleksandr Ryabov (1999)       ● None
97% Russian *Edge of 'black-earth' zone; far from industrial centres*

**Voronezh Oblast** Voronezh       ■ 52,400 ▲ 2,495,400
Head of Administration Ivan Shabanov (2000)       ● 20 May 1998
93% Russian 5% Ukrainian *Potentially rich agricultural region*

## Volga

**Astrakhan Oblast** Astrakhan       ■ 44,100 ▲ 1,029,300
Head of Administration Anatolii Guzhvin (2000)       ● 30 October 1997
72% Russian 13% Kazak 7% Tatar *Where Volga flows into Caspian Sea*

**Republic of Kalmykia** Elista       ■ 75,900 ▲ 318,500
President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov (2002)       ● None
45% Kalmyk 38% Russian *Buddhist outpost*

**Penza Oblast** Penza       ■ 43,200 ▲ 1,554,700
Head of Administration Vasilii Bochkarev (2002)       ● None
86% Russian 6% Mordva 5% Tatar *Agricultural; industrial backwater*

**Samara Oblast** Samara (formerly Kuibyshev)       ■ 53,600 ▲ 3,308,500
Governor Konstantin Titov (2000)       ● 1 August 1997
83% Russian 4% Chuvash 4% Mordva 4% Tatar *Leading reformist region; 'donor'; home to Moscow's industry during Second World War*

**Saratov Oblast** Saratov      ■ 100,200 ▲ 2,725,800
Governor Dmitri Ayatskov (2000)     ● 4 July 1997
86% Russian *Rivals Samara as 'capital of the Volga'*

**Republic of Tatarstan** Kazan     ■ 68,000 ▲ 3,763,200
President Mintimer Shaimiev (2001)     ● 15 February 1994
49% Tatar 43% Russian *Leading republic on Europe–Asia divide*

**Ulyanovsk Oblast** Ulyanovsk (formerly Simbirsk)   ■ 37,300 ▲ 1,490,000
Head of Administration Yurii Goryachev (2000)   ● 30 October 1997
73% Russian 12% Tatar 8% Chuvash 4% Mordva *Lenin's birthplace (Ulyanov)*

**Volgograd Oblast** Volgograd (formerly Stalingrad)   ■ 113,900 ▲ 2,701,600
Head of Administration Nikolai Maksyuta (2000)   ● None
89% Russian *Strategic region at Volga–Don confluence*

## North Caucasus

**Republic of Adygeya** Maikop     ■ 7,600 ▲ 450,500
President Aslan Dzharimov (2001)     ● None
68% Russian 22% Adygei *Enclave within Krasnodar Krai*

**Chechen Republic (Ichkeria)** Dzhokar (Groznyy)   ■ 15,000 ▲ 862,000
President and Government Chairman Aslan Maskhadov (2002)   ● 12 May 1997
66% Chechen 25% Russian *Break-away republic; riven with internal feuding*

**Republic of Dagestan** Makhachkala     ■ 50,300 ▲ 2,097,300
Chairman of State Council Magomedali Magomedov (2002)   ● None
28% Avar 16% Dargin 16% Kumyk 11% Lezgin 9% Russian *Unique in having no titular nationality, no direct elections for leader*

**Republic of Ingushetia** Magas (Nazran until Oct 1998) ■ 4,300 ▲ 303,500
President Ruslan Aushev (1999)     ● None
75% Ingush 13% Russian 10% Chechen *Smallest republic, until 1992 part of Chechen–Ingush Autonomous Republic*

**Kabardino-Balkar Republic** Nalchik     ■ 12,500 ▲ 789,500
President Valerii Kokov (2001)     ● 1 July 1994
48% Kabardinian 32% Russian 9% Balkar *Artificially unites Circassian Kabardinians, Turkic Balkars*

**Karachaevo-Cherkess Republic** Cherkessk   ■ 14,100 ▲ 436,300
Acting President Valentin Vlasov     ● None
42% Russian 31% Karachay 10% Cherkess 7% Abazin *Unstable mix of Turkic and Circassian ethnic groups*

**Krasnodar Krai** Krasnodar     ■ 76,000 ▲ 5,039,000
Head of Administration Nikolai Kondratenko (2000)   ● 30 January 1996
85% Russian *Bread-basket; deeply conservative*

**Republic of North Ossetia-Alania** Vladikavkaz ■ 8,000 ▲ 664,200
President Aleksandr Dzasokhov (2002) ● 23 March 1995
53% Ossetian 30% Russian *Pro-Moscow; only Christian republic in North Caucasus*

**Rostov Oblast** Rostov-on-Don ■ 100,800 ▲ 4,425,400
Head of Administration Vladimir Chub (2001) ● 11 June 1996
90% Russian *Most progressive Russian region in North Caucasus*

**Stavropol Krai** Stavropol ■ 66,500 ▲ 2,671,100
Governor, Government Chairman Aleksandr Chernogorov (2000) ● None
84% Russian *Agricultural; conservative*

## Urals

**Republic of Bashkortostan** Ufa ■ 143,600 ▲ 4,080,200
President Murtaza Rakhimov (2002) ● 3 August 1994
39% Russian 28% Tatar 22% Bashkir *'Donor'; autocratically ruled by minority Bashkirs*

**Chelyabinsk Oblast** Chelyabinsk ■ 87,900 ▲ 3,675,400
Governor Petr Sumin (2000) ● 4 July 1997
81% Russian 6% Tatar *'Rust-belt' industry predominates*

**Komi-Permyak Autonomous Okrug** Kudymkar ■ 32,900 ▲ 158,800
Head of Administration Nikolai Poluyanov (2000) ● 31 May 1996 (within
61% Komi-Permyak 35% Russian Perm treaty)
*Titular people form majority*

**Kurgan Oblast** Kurgan ■ 71,000 ▲ 1,112,200
Head of Administration Oleg Bogomolov (2000) ● None
91% Russian *Politically quiescent agricultural appendage to Urals*

**Orenburg Oblast** Orenburg ■ 124,000 ▲ 2,228,600
Head of Administration Vladimir Yelagin (1999) ● 30 January 1996
72% Russian 7% Tatar 5% Kazak *Former colonial outpost, frontier district once again*

**Perm Oblast** Perm ■ 127,700 ▲ 2,852,300
Governor Gennadii Igumnov (2000) ● 31 May 1996
86% Russian 5% Tatar *Highly industrialised 'donor'*

**Sverdlovsk Oblast** Yekaterinburg ■ 194,800 ▲ 4,667,800
Head of Administration Eduard Rossel (1999) ● 12 January 1996
89% Russian *Yeltsin's home; 'donor'*

**Udmurt Republic** Izhevsk ■ 42,100 ▲ 1,640,700
Chairman of State Council Aleksandr Volkov ● 17 October 1995
59% Russian 31% Udmurt 7% Tatar *Militarised economy, parliamentary political system*

## West Siberia

**Republic of Altai** Gorno-Altaisk ◼ 92,600 ▲ 202,100
Chairman of Government Semen Zubakin (2001) ● None
60% Russian 31% Altai 6% Kazak *Thinly populated mountainous republic – 'Russian Tibet'*

**Altai Krai** Barnaul ◼ 169,100 ▲ 2,690,100
Head of Administration Aleksandr Surikov (2000) ● 29 November 1996
90% Russian 5% German *Bread-basket of Siberia*

**Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug** Khanty-Mansiisk ◼ 523,100 ▲ 1,330,600
Governor Aleksandr Filipenko (2000) ● None
66% Russian 12% Ukrainian 8% Tatar *Produces half of Russia's oil; titular peoples form just 2% of population; administratively subordinate to Tyumen Oblast*

**Kemerovo Oblast** Kemerovo ◼ 95,500 ▲ 3,042,200
Head of Administration Aman Tuleev (2001) ● None
91% Russian *'Kuzbass' coal, metals heartland*

**Novosibirsk Oblast** Novosibirsk ◼ 178,200 ▲ 2,744,600
Head of Administration Vitalii Mukha (1999) ● None
92% Russian *Defence industry; scientific centre*

**Omsk Oblast** Omsk ◼ 139,700 ▲ 2,174,200
Governor Leonid Polezhaev (1999) ● 19 May 1996
80% Russian 6% German 5% Ukrainian *Oil refineries, defence industry*

**Tomsk Oblast** Tomsk ◼ 316,900 ▲ 1,071,800
Governor Viktor Kress (1999) ● None
88% Russian *Politically quiescent*

**Tyumen Oblast** Tyumen ◼ 161,800 ▲ 1,351,100
Governor Leonid Roketsky (2001) ● None
84% Russian 7% Tatar *Wealth derives from its autonomous okrugs*

**Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug** Salekhard ◼ 750,300 ▲ 488,400
Governor Yurii Neyelov (2000) ● None
59% Russian 17% Ukrainian 5% Tatar 4% Nenets *Produces 90% of Russia's gas; administratively subordinate to Tyumen Oblast*

## East Siberia

**Aga-Buryat Autonomous Okrug** Aginsk settlement ◼ 19,000 ▲ 79,400
Head of Administration Bair Zhamsuev (2001) ● None
54% Buryat 42% Russian *Enclave of Chita Oblast*

**Republic of Buryatia** Ulan Ude ◼ 351,300 ▲ 1,049,700
President Leonid Potapov (2002) ● 29 August 1995
70% Russian 24% Buryat *Centre of Russian Buddhism*

**Chita Oblast** Chita
Head of Administration Ravil Geniatulin (2000)
91% Russian *Overland gateway to China*

■ 412,500 ▲ 1,216,000
● None

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**Evenk Autonomous Okrug** Tura
Head of Administration Aleksandr Bokovikov (2001)
68% Russian 14% Evenk 5% Ukrainian
*Taiga; landing-place of Tunguz meteorite in 1911*

■ 767,600 ▲ 20,300
● 1 November 1997 (within Krasnoyarsk treaty)

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**Irkutsk Oblast** Irkutsk
Governor Boris Govorin (2001)
90% Russian *Largest oblast, rich in hydroelectricity*

■ 745,500 ▲ 2,65_,400
● 27 May 1996

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**Republic of Khakassia** Abakan
Chairman of Government Aleksei Lebed (brother of Aleksandr) (2000) ● None
80% Russian 11% Khakas *Aluminium-rich; formerly part of Krasnoyarsk Krai*

■ 61,900 ▲ 584,100

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**Krasnoyarsk Krai** Krasnoyarsk
Governor Aleksandr Lebed (2002)
88% Russian *Federation's second-largest component*

■ 710,000 ▲ 3,038,200
● 1 November 1997

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**Taimyr (Dolgano-Nenets) Autonomous Okrug** Dudinka ■ 862,100 ▲ 46,500
Head of Administration Gennadii Nedelin (2000)
67% Russian 9% Dolgan 9% Ukrainian *Home of the world's largest nickel concern, Norilsk Nikel*

● 1 November 1997 (within Krasnoyarsk treaty)

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**Republic of Tuva (Tyva)** Kyzyl
President, Chairman of Government Sheringool Oorzhak (2001)    ● None
64% Tuvan 32% Russian *Formally independent until 1944, still claims right to secede*

■ 170,500 ▲ 309,700

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**Ust-Orda Buryat Autonomous Okrug** Ust-Orda settlement ■ 22,400 ▲ 142,800
Head of Administration Valerii Maleev (2000)
57% Russian 36% Buryat *Enclave of Irkutsk Oblast, agrarian stronghold*

● 27 May 1996 (within Irkutsk treaty)

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## Far East

**Amur Oblast** Blagoveshchensk
Head of Administration Anatolii Belonogov (2001)
87% Russian 7% Ukrainian *Granary of Far East; defence industry*

■ 363,700 ▲ 1,031,700
● 20 May 1998

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**Chukotka Autonomous Okrug** Anadyr
Head of Administration Aleksandr Nazarov (2000)
66% Russian 17% Ukrainian 7% Chukchi *Isolated, easternmost region, officially separated from parent Magadan Oblast in 1992*

■ 737,700 ▲ 99,700
● None

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**Jewish Autonomous Oblast** Birobidzhan
Head of Administration Nikolai Volkov (2000)
83% Russian 7% Ukrainian 4% Jewish *Failed Stalinist experiment to create Jewish homeland*

■ 36,000 ▲ 206,700
● None

**Kamchatka Oblast** Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky  ■ 170,800 ▲ 411,100
Governor Vladimir Biryukov (2000)  ● None
81% Russian 9% Ukrainian *Isolated, volcanic; endemic fuel shortages*

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**Khabarovsk Krai** Khabarovsk  ■ 788,600 ▲ 1,555,500
Head of Administration Viktor Ishaev (2000)  ● 24 April 1996
86% Russian 6% Ukrainian *Defence plants in industrialised south*

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**Koryak Autonomous Okrug** Palana settlement  ■ 301,500 ▲ 32,800
Governor Valentina Bronevich (2000)  ● None
62% Russian 17% Koryak 7% Ukrainian *Subordinated to Kamchatka; only region with a female governor*

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**Magadan Oblast** Magadan  ■ 461,400 ▲ 251,100
Governor Valentin Tsvetkov (2000)  ● 4 July 1997
72% Russian 16% Ukrainian *Gold mines, forced-labour camps*

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**Primorskii (Maritime) Krai** Vladivostok  ■ 165,900 ▲ 2,238,800
Governor Yevgenii Nazdratenko (1999)  ● None
87% Russian 8% Ukrainian *Gateway to Japan, with the Far East's two major ports*

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**Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)** Yakutsk  ■ 3,103,200 ▲ 1,022,800
President Mikhail Nikolaev (2000)  ● 29 June 1995
50% Russian 33% Yakut 7% Ukrainian *Federation's largest component; monopoly producer of diamonds*

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**Sakhalin Oblast** Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk  ■ 87,100 ▲ 631,800
Governor Igor Farkhutdinov (2000)  ● 29 May 1996
82% Russian 7% Ukrainian 5% Korean *Comprises Sakhalin Island and Kurile chain*

# APPENDIX 2