
Peter Söderlund

The Dynamics of Federalism in Russia

A Study of Formal and Informal Power
Resources of the Regional Chief Executives
in Russian Centre-Region Relations





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Förord

Hösten 1998 kunde jag inte i min vildaste fantasi tro att ett intresse för Rysslands federala politiska utveckling skulle komma att spela en så central del av mitt liv de följande åren. Jag var då en vilsen studerande som inte hade en aning om vad ämnet för en mycket nära förestående proseminarieuppsats skulle vara. Några aspirationer på att bli forskare fanns heller inte. Ödet ville annat. Ett kapitel om separatism i ryska regioner i Stefan Hedlunds bok *Hur många Ryssland efter Sovjetunionen?* blev inkörsporten till ett ämne som fascinerat och upptagit så mycket av min tid sedan dess.

Nu är det så småningom dags att sätta punkt för en period som storligen berikat mitt liv. Utan att överdriva så har mina mer än fyra år som doktorand vid Samhällsvetenskapliga institutionen vid Åbo Akademi i Vasa varit mycket angenäma (även om stunder av frustration och vanmakt naturligtvis förekommit). Ett tecken på att man alldeles snart når målnöret, att doktorsdisputationen är nära förestående, är att man sätter sig ned vid sin mest trogna kompanjon, personatorn, för att författa ett förord. Fördelen med detta är att man bereds tillfälle att minnas och tacka personer som på olika sätt bidragit med de pussebitar som varit betydelsefulla under den process som föregått förfärdigandet av en akademisk avhandling.

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kafferum med dess ”kaffekvarnar” och ”pratkvarnar” har varit en avkopplande oas. Och vad skulle lunchrasten ha varit utan vår dyrkade espressokokare...

Jag tillhör en viss krets som gärna använder ett tillfälle som detta till att minnas de givande forskarseminarier (inbegripande såväl akademiska seminarier som balkongseminarier) som vi hade fördelen att bevista 2002 i Antalya, Turkiet. Till saken hör att vid det tillfället medverkade de allra flesta kollegor jag haft ett närmare utbyte med under doktorandtiden. Hit hör, förutom ovannämnda Lindberg och Djupsund, PD Tom Carlson, PL Jim Eriksson, PM Camilla Nordberg, PD Mikael Nygård, PL Ari Nykvist och PD Axel Rappe. PL Kim Strandberg var inte med vid nämnda tillfälle, men han är en annan kollega som här bör ihågkommas. Därutöver vill jag nämna vår kanslist Thea Helsing som kommit med en hjälpande hand i ett otal ärenden i det dagliga livet på vår institution.

Professorer, forskare och doktorander vid Åbo Akademi, Helsingfors Universitet och Mitthögskolan som deltagit i de finlandssvenska doktorandseminarier åren 2001–2005 är vidare värda särskild aktning. Våra seminarier i Vasa, Åbo, Kasnäs och Helsingfors har utgjort nyttiga och trevliga tillställningar som fört samman folk från olika orter och institutioner under några hektiska dagar varje år.

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Vasa den 12 december 2005

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Chapter 1

General Framework for Analysis

1.1 Introduction

In Russia, the ability of regional governments to challenge the central government became possible during and after the demise of the Soviet Union. The final stages of the Soviet period saw the weakening of centralized and communist power structures and the regional authorities managed to procure greater levels of power and authority. The central authorities still played a major role, but the political representatives of the regions—especially those in charge of ethnically defined administrative units—were by no means insignificant political actors. The activation of federalist structures in the beginning of the 1990s created incentives for political actors at the regional level to gain greater political independence. In a less centralized and more electorally competitive environment, the regional chief executives had the potential to become actual institutional veto players who were able to constrain the central government (see Stepan 2004: 347-348).

The capability of the regional chief executives in post-communist Russia to counter-balance the federal centre—both as individual actors and collectively—has fluctuated. Russian federalism has undergone a dynamic development and significant elements of change both from a formal and an informal viewpoint; the regional leaders have operated under different formal rules and centre-regions relations have been characterized by periodic swings between a centralization and decentralization of power and authority. This is quite understandable, since one cannot expect the Russian federal system, or any federal system for that matter, to become stable and establish predictable centre-region relations in a relatively short space of time.

This dissertation concentrates on the role and position of the regional chief executives within the Russian federal system since the beginning of the 1990s. To be more explicit, the primary concern revolves around the power and authority of regional chief executives in centre-regions relations in the Russian Federation. Russia has been administratively divided into a large number of regions—varying between 88 and 89

administrative units—during the last decades (see map in Appendix A). To understand the dynamics and the mechanisms of the complex relations that exist between the federal centre and the federal units, the main aims of this dissertation are to:

- (1) discuss the ability of regional chief executives to act as institutional veto players that have the potential to counterbalance the federal government;
- (2) examine the institutional strength of regional chief executives in political structures at the subnational and federal levels;
- (3) determine which political resources are associated with greater levels of bargaining power of regional chief executives in centre-region relations.

1.2 Federalism and Veto Players

In the first part of this chapter, the intention is to formulate a framework for the comparative analysis of elite interaction within the scope of federal governance structures. The Russian political system is formally a federal political system.¹ Thus, an introductory discussion on federalism is a logical theoretical point of departure to understand the relevance of considering regionally based political actors as potential institutional veto players. The principle of federal division of power establishes that the federal component units should be considered independent actors within the political system. Representatives of the subnational governments should be expected to have the ability to act as veto players that are in a position to counterbalance and resist the power and influence of the federal government.

1.2.1 Federal Division of Power

The essence of federalism lies in the division of power and authority between at least two levels of government. Basic definitions of federalism assert that the different tiers of government should be vested with decision-making autonomy in at least some policy domains. Robert Neumann (1960: 679) regards federalism as “a method through which power is divided between the central government and the authorities of regional units in a particular country”. Kenneth Wheare (1963: 10) sees the federal principle as “the method of dividing powers so that the general and regional governments are each, within a sphere, co-ordinate and independent”. William Riker (1964: 5; 1975: 101) asserts that both the federal government and the governments of

¹ The Russian Constitution (1993) establishes a federal form of government: “The Russian Federation—Russia shall be a democratic federal rule-of-law state with the republican form of government” (Chapter 1, Article 1). In addition, the constitutional document in question has a great deal of attributes typical of federal states.

the member units “rule over the same territory and people and each kind has the authority to make some decisions independently of the other”.

Daniel Elazar emphasizes the combination of *shared-rule* and *self-rule* in the federal partnership. The concept of shared-rule refers to the distribution of power between different levels of government: they are partners that have the ability to make decisions both mutually and independently. The parties should, nevertheless, enjoy integrity and self-rule in some constitutionally specified matters. Especially the representatives of the lower tier of government (the constituent units) should be protected from the dominance of the upper tier of government (the common federal government) (Elazar 1987: 5-6; see also Watts 1999: 6-7). In a federal system, the separate levels of government are “endowed with independent legitimacy and a constitutionally guaranteed place in the overall system and possessing its own set of institutions, powers, and responsibilities” (Elazar 1987: 21). Thus, both the federal centre and the component units should decide over their own separate and sovereign political institutions, such as executive, legislative and judicial branches of power.

Elazar (1997) has illustrated the federal idea by presenting a federal model (also known as the matrix or covenantal model) in which power is dispersed among several centres (Figure 1.1). In this matrix, the cells are made up of the constituent units of the polity; they represent independent political actors which have their own arenas for political action. They coexist within a framework of common federal institutions (the executive branch, legislative branch and judiciary). Formal and informal lines of communication interconnect the formally independent actors. The different constituent units (states, provinces, *länder*, cantons or republics) are fundamentally equal (even though complete equality in terms of evenly distributed powers across the constituent units is not necessary). While power is spread among different actors and across different levels of government in the federal model, the hierarchical model is characterized by a pyramid-shaped power structure in which the top level issues orders down a chain of command to other administrative segments (Figure 1.2). In the centre-periphery model, authority is concentrated in a single centre, but power, in varying degrees, can be dispersed to the periphery depending on which decisions are taken in the centre (Figure 1.3).

The concept of federalism involves both *structure* and *process* of government. These two dimensions determine the actual division of power within a federal state. On one hand, the structure of federalism manifests itself in a specific type of constitutional design and institutional framework. On the other hand, the process of federalism refers to the political practices that have evolved over time and determine the nature of the relationships both among members and between different levels of government within a federal system. The existence of both a proper institutional structure and a

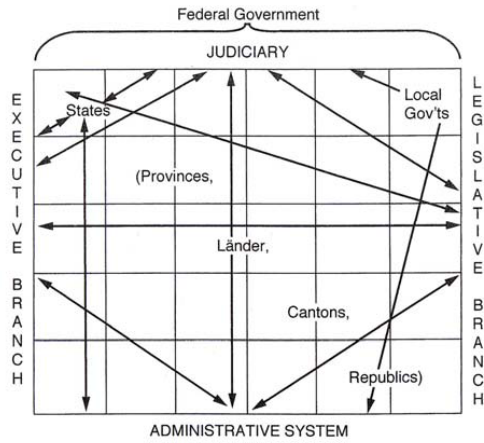


Figure 1.1 The federal or matrix model (Elazar 1997: 240).

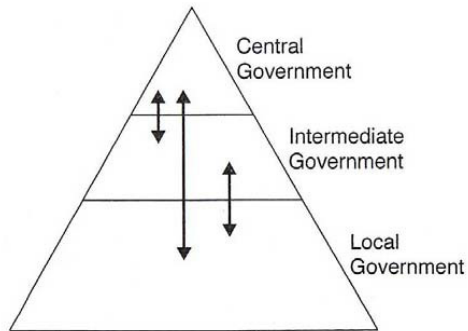


Figure 1.2 The hierarchical model (Elazar 1997: 239).

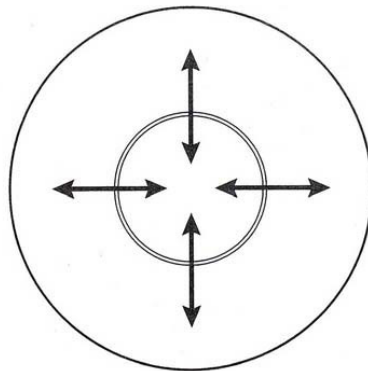


Figure 1.3 The centre-periphery model (Elazar 1997: 239).

working partnership is important when achieving an operative federal system (Elazar 1987: 21 and 67-68). In a similar way, Edward Gibson (2004: 4-5) sees two different aspects of federalism: *federalism as alliance* and *federalism as decentralization*. The aspect of alliance contends with different forms of political organization associated with shared rule between different levels of government, while the aspect of decentralization emphasizes the practices compatible with the distribution of power within a state.²

1.2.2 Federalism as Structure

Studies of federalism have often been embedded within a formal and legal framework. Studies that have adopted a legal-institutional perspective have focused on how formal structures shape the practices and dynamics of federal systems. Friedrich (1968: 80) points out that “institutions provide part of the setting or environment of decisions”. Gibson (2004: 8) supposes that federal institutions and the constitutional design have a large effect on, for instance, the degree of centralization and decentralization, the strength of different political actors, the formation of the party system and patterns of policy-making.

In the case of federal states, the study of political structures usually deals with federal political institutions and constitutions. First, a written constitution that formally allocates power between different tiers of government is one of the most central institutional mechanisms (Watts 1999: 35-41). The constitutional features of a federal system “spell out the attributions of authority, the limitations of authority, the policy scope of different governmental bodies and levels of government” (Gibson 2004: 8). A constitution also defines the structure, rules and procedures of government in terms of the functions of the executive, legislative and judiciary branches within a federal state (Blondel 1995: 233; Watts 1999: 72-75). Second, the institution of bicameral parliament is another central institution in most federal states: the constituent polities are usually represented in the upper chamber of parliament that will enable them to participate in the political processes and central decision-making at the federal level (Elazar 1987: 173; Watts 1999: 92-97). Third, analysts often focus on the role of different government institutions; that is to say, the effect that presidential and parliamentary systems have on the political dynamics within federal systems (Watts 1999: 84-90). Fourth, in many federal systems, independent supreme courts and constitutional courts play important roles: these institutions interpret the constitution and resolve conflicts between different levels of government (Watts 1999: 99-101).

² There are additional theoretical approaches to the study of federalism. Birch (1966) identifies the following approaches: (1) institutional or constitutional, (2) sociological, (3) process or developmental and (4) political. Thorlakson (2003) distinguishes between three approaches: (1) sociological, (2) constitutional and (3) governmental or political.

A *federation* should be perceived as a specific form of a *federal political system*. The federation is the prime institutional embodiment of the federal principle.³ Through the process of political institutionalization, the federal principle translates into a federation. In that case, the idea of federalism is converted into an institutional arrangement that takes the form of a sovereign state (see King 1982: 77). In a federation, one of the most important institutional devices is a written constitution which sets the levels of jurisdictional decentralization by formally distributing legislative, executive and taxing powers. It is of great importance that no level of government is formally subordinate to another, whereby a federation should be considered an embodiment of a constitutional relationship between a central government and a set of constituent units (Neumann 1960: 679; Watts 1999: 7).

In federal literature, a large number of definitions of federalism bear witness of the importance of a constitutional division of power. William Riker remarks that the distribution of competencies in most federations and federal states rests upon the presence of a social contract between the different levels of government in the form of a constitutional arrangement (Riker 1964: 5; Riker 1975: 101). Preston King (1982: 77) writes that the central government in any federation “incorporates regional units in its decision procedure on some constitutionally entrenched basis”. Robert Dahl (1983: 95-96) points out that federalism exists when “some matters are exclusively *within* the competence of certain local units—cantons, states, provinces—and are constitutionally *beyond* the scope of the authority of the national government, and where certain other matters are constitutionally outside the scope of the smaller units”. Arendt Lijphart (1984: 169) asserts that “federalism means a constitutionally guaranteed division of power between the central government and governments of the component units”.

1.2.3 *Federalism as Process*

The term federalism is, nevertheless, primarily regarded as a normative principle, philosophy or ideology (Livingston 1968; King 1982; Burgess and Gagnon 1993). Federalism corresponds to the perception of an ideal organization of human affairs. Such a normative view acknowledges and promotes the importance of delegating powers and achieving unity and stability despite diversity (Smith 1995: 4; Elazar 1987: 64-67). The utilization of the federal principle does not necessarily require the establishment of a conventional federal system taking the form of a modern state with

³ The institutionalization of the federal principle has given rise to a variety of federal arrangements that incorporate the federal idea and practice the principles of shared-rule and regional self-rule: (1) unions, (2) constitutionally decentralized unions, (3) federations, (4) confederations, (5) federacies, (6) associated statehood, (7) condominiums, (8) leagues and (9) joint functional authorities and (10) hybrids (Watts 1999: 7-9).

formal federal institutions: “The essence of federalism is not to be found in a particular set of institutions but in the institutionalization of particular relationships among the participants in political life” (Elazar 1987: 12; see also Watts 1999: 14-16).

Advocates of the process dimension of federalism argue that the understanding of the dynamics of federalism requires insight into the dynamics of centre-region relations. Robert Neumann (1960: 869) points out that the actual nature of federalism is found in the constant process of adaptation. A key issue within federations is to achieve working relationships between central and regional governments through formal or informal intergovernmental negotiations and political bargaining. Carl Friedrich (1968) primarily sees federalism as a dynamic process of governance: federal relationships are more crucial in the study of federalism than formal rules and institutions. Federal relations are characterized by complex and changing patterns of interaction between central and regional governments:

Federalism should not be seen only as a static pattern or design, characterized by a particular and precisely fixed division of powers between governmental levels. Federalism is also and perhaps primarily the process of federalizing a political community, that is to say, the process by which a number of separate political communities enter into arrangements for working out solutions, adopting joint policies, and making joint decisions on joint problems, and, conversely, also the process by which a unitary political community becomes differentiated into a federally organized whole. Federal relations are fluctuating relations in the very nature of things. (Friedrich 1968: 7)

The strength and degree of both democracy and decentralization affect whether constituent units in reality are protected from the domination and intervention of central government. A large number of scholars have stressed that democracy is a very important ingredient in a federal system: only a constitutional democracy can be a true federal system (King 1982; Dahl 1983). According to Alfred Stepan, “only a system that is a constitutional democracy can provide *credible guarantees* and the institutionally embedded mechanisms that help ensure that the law-making prerogatives of the subunits will be respected” (Stepan 2004: 31). It should be pointed out, however, that even though the federal principle is associated with democracy, the fact is that many federations have not been true democracies (Riker 1975: 156-157).⁴

⁴ An important question is whether Russia is a democracy. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian government committed itself to a transition to democracy. This attempt was not entirely successful and by the end of the 1990s Russia could not be categorized as a liberal democracy. For instance, problems with rule of law and the adoption of a super-presidential constitution, which was ratified by popular referendum without having been approved by a democratically elected legislature, did not comply with democratic principles (Stepan 2000 134; Colton and McFaul 2003: 12-13). Russia could, however, in many respects be considered an electoral democracy where the entry of politicians

The move towards the actual practice of federalism, *federalization*, is regarded as being equivalent to the process of political decentralization: “Today *federalization* has meant a process that has given protagonism to subnational governments and political actors, has often heightened the importance of territorial representation...in national political institutions, and has redistributed power and resources between levels of government” (Gibson 2004: 2). The principle of federalism is associated with decentralization and delegation of powers. Federalism and decentralization are, however, separate analytical dimensions. Federalism “expresses the *nature* of the relationship between levels of government”, while decentralization “expresses the *actual distribution of power* among levels of government” (Baldi 1999: 3). There are many forms of decentralization or noncentralization.⁵ Decentralization refers, for instance, to the formal allocation of legislative powers, the allocation of administrative responsibilities and the distribution of financial resources between different levels of government (Watts 1999: 71-75).

A state that is formally considered to be a federation is not necessarily the same as a decentralized state, while a unitary state is not automatically centralized. The fact is that some federations are characterized by a high degree of centralization, while some unitary states de facto have a decentralized form of government (Friedrich 1968: 5; Riker 1975: 101-103). William Riker illustrates the extent of territorial centralization and activities of the different levels of government by placing federations along a centralization-decentralization continuum. Riker then presents a dichotomy and categorizes the different federations as *centralized* and *peripheralized*. At the two extremes of this continuum, either the central government or the constituent governments have authority to make decisions in at least one restricted policy category (Riker 1975: 101-102).

1.2.4 Subnational Chief Executives as Institutional Veto Players

Based on the discussion above, a fundamental aspect of federalism is the division of sovereign authority between a central government and governments of the component

and parties was open and where elections were uncertain and competitive (Colton and McFaul 2003: 13; Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 2004: 9). Democratic institutions and practises have eroded after Vladimir Putin became president at the beginning of 2000. The presence of a strong presidential system, weak formal institutions and rule of law, the presence of highly informal and clientelistic practices, a weak social society, growing governmental control over mass media and the increasing manipulation of the electoral environment make Russia slightly more authoritarian than democratic according to social scientists (Colton and McFaul 2003; Hahn 2004; Ross 2005).

⁵ Watts (1999) uses the terms *decentralization* and *noncentralization* interchangeably. However, some political scientists prefer to make a distinction between these two terms with regard to the diffusion of powers in federal systems. According to Elazar (1987: 34), “decentralization implies the existence of a central authority, a central government that can decentralize or recentralize as it desires”, while the term noncentralization denotes a political system in which “power is so diffused that it cannot be legitimately centralized or concentrated”.

units. A key issue within a federal order is that each level of government has the final authority to make independent decisions in some matters. As a consequence, federalism is compatible with the presence of multiple centres and independent political arenas within state structures. By creating multiple political arenas and dispersing powers, federalism empowers representatives of constituent units. Enabled by formal structures and regulations, the component units should have the potency to take an independent course of action within the framework of a federal system, especially if they operate within a democratic and decentralized political order.

The theory of federalism has, for obvious reasons, been linked with the theory of veto points. Tsebelis (2002) notices that federal government tends to generate additional veto players, either by creating a bicameral system in which both chambers have effective veto powers over legislation or by requiring qualified majorities in policy-making. Federalism is also considered to add more veto players in the form of constituent units. Scholars such as Stepan (2004), Mainwaring and Samuels (2004) and Gerring, Thacker and Moreno (2004) have argued that federalism produces a unique set of veto actors consisting of constitutionally recognized subnational governments. A federal and decentralized form of government should guarantee subnational actors to become independent agents that have the potential to counterbalance the federal centre. In that case, they should be in a position to assume the role of veto players that have to agree and comply to policy changes within the federal state.

George Tsebelis (1995; 1999; 2002) introduced the general public to the concepts of institutional and partisan veto players in the study of legislative games at the national level. Tsebelis (1995) defines *institutional* and *partisan* veto players as actors “who can block the adoption of a policy” (*ibid.*: 305) or “whose agreement is required for a policy decision” (*ibid.*: 293). That is to say, these veto players are individual or collective actors who are able to effectively obstruct the passing of legislative bills and whose consent is required for the change in *status quo* in the legislative arena. In the analysis of legislative games at the national level, institutional veto players refer to constitutionally recognized actors who represent the executive (president, prime minister) and legislative (lower chamber, upper chamber) branches of government. They are formally in a position to veto legislation. Partisan veto players, on the other hand, are collective actors generated inside institutional veto players by the political game; that is, political parties which act and make decisions within formal political institutions. The number of partisan veto players inside an institutional veto player varies depending on how many political parties are required to make up a parliamentary majority. For instance, if a single cohesive majority party controls the government, there is one partisan veto player within government, while a two party government has two partisan veto players. Parties within parliaments or government

coalitions are considered collective veto players, since numerous actors are involved in decisions and simple or qualified majorities are required.

Gerring, Thacker and Moreno (2004) have implied that each subnational government in a federal system is, in theory, a veto-holder. This is the case if one or several subnational governments or legislatures refuse to pass a budget or otherwise use the threat of disorder. The central government may have to engage in political bargaining and offer benefits to gain the compliance of defiant subnational units. This definition of a veto player is less strict than the one presented by Tsebelis. Tsebelis did not include subnational governments in his analysis of legislative games at the national level. Yet, Tsebelis did acknowledge a range of other possible veto players within a state: local governments, courts, referendums, interest groups, etc. (Tsebelis 1995: 306-307 and 323).

Stepan (2004) applies a broader interpretation by including subnational units and subnational governments in the theoretical model of veto players. Institutional veto players are defined as those who have to “agree and comply” to policy changes. This means that veto players are in a position to either prevent laws from getting passed or refuse to comply at the implementation stage (*ibid.*: 326). The governments of the constituent units can also be regarded as veto players (whereby the analysis is not restricted to games in the parliamentary arena). Stepan recognizes four potential electorally generated institutional veto players in democratic federal systems: the *lower chamber*, the *upper chamber*, the *president* and the *constituent units* (see Figure 1.4). Stepan prefers to designate the two parliamentary chambers, the president and the subnational governments as *electorally generated institutional veto players* to distinguish them from other important institutional veto players such as *supreme courts* and *autonomous central banks* whose representatives are not directly elected by the people (*ibid.*: 324).

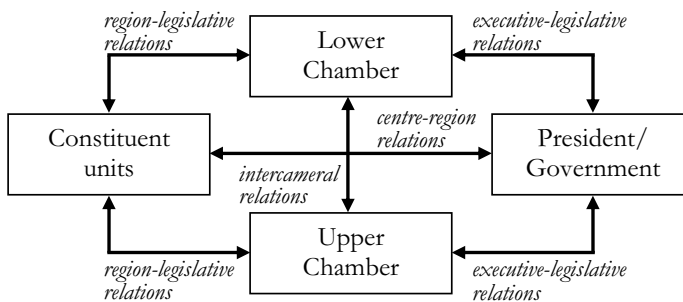


Figure 1.4 Patterns of relations between four electorally generated veto players in a federal system.

Stepan also discusses the impact of partisan veto players which can reduce the number of effective institutional veto players. Depending on the outcomes in popular elections, the number of effective veto players can vary between one and four (the maximum amount of electorally generated veto players, four, can be found in federal systems). The president, the majority of the members of the parliamentary chambers and the regional executives may belong to the same political party. In such cases, a single, centralized party controls all the institutional veto players, thus reducing the number of actual veto players to a single one (Stepan 2004: 341).

Scott Mainwaring and David Samuels (2004) consider federalism as a bargaining game between the central government and states. In their study of Brazil, it is portrayed as a bargaining game between the president and representatives of the states (governors and members of the national congress) (*ibid.*: 86). As figureheads of subnational governments, the executive leaders may become important actors in national politics. Mainwaring and Samuels point out that federalism induces subnational executives to assume the role of veto players who have the capacity to constrain the power of the central government, provided that the former set of actors have the adequate powers and resources to be powerful actors in national politics (*ibid.*: 87). The veto powers of state governors mainly derive, on one hand, from the possibility to influence national legislators and, on the other hand, the state governorship itself, which provides authority and control in subnational politics. If subnational leaders can influence political processes at the national level, by controlling members in the lower chamber and/or upper chamber of parliament, they may block policy initiatives put forward by the central government. If governors possess great powers in the subnational arena, they have the ability to prevent the central government from implementing reforms at the subnational level. Especially if subnational governments have extensive control over fiscal resources, and if government functions are devolved to state governments, they are better able to constrain central initiatives (*ibid.*: 88-90).

1.2.5 Collective and Individual Veto Players

The theoretical model of institutional and partisan veto players should not be considered as something new and profound. Numerous studies before have dealt with the presence of checks and balances in political systems and the ability of political actors to function as veto players in a position to constrain other political actors. Tsebelis and his followers have, however, introduced a set of new concepts and they have created a general framework that helps to illustrate the presence and activities of different actors within political systems. Nonetheless, there are a number of problems associated with the assertion that subnational governments are in a position to act as institutional veto players, especially with regard to political games in the legislative arena and the efforts of political actors to hinder change in legislative *status quo*.

On a general level, Wiberg (2002) contends that the theoretical model presented by Tsebelis has been wrongly applied in the empirical studies of legislative games. The reason for the objection is that national governments cannot be considered as veto players. Wiberg disapproves of the assumption that parties and government coalitions are unitary actors that are veto players in legislative games. On the contrary, parties are not necessarily unified actors characterized by strong party discipline. In addition, it is the parliamentary majority that is an effective institutional veto player, together with the president or the royal head of state in some political systems, and whose consent is required to either pass laws or who are in a position to effectively prevent laws from getting passed.

A similar kind of critique can be directed against the argument that subnational governments should be considered veto players in the legislative arena. This concerns the collective action problem. The main concern is whether the representatives on behalf of individual subnational governments are able to build alliances and secure working majorities within the national legislature. If that would be the case, it would enable the federal constituent units to confront or constrain the central government. It is not, however, a matter of course that subnational units may be considered a unitary force. They might not have the desire or the ability to coordinate their responses and rally a majority behind decisions and policies.

Another problem, with regard to the upper chamber of parliament, is whether the members of parliament prefer to defend and articulate the interests of the constituent units they represent or whether national legislative party discipline is of primary concern. If members are loyal to their party, particularly if they are directly elected and operate within parties with strong party discipline, the incentives to follow instructions given by the regional administration are weaker, meaning that the latter party has to rely on the loyalty of their representatives. This is not the case if representation is primarily built around the member units and if the members of one of the parliamentary chambers are appointed by and accountable to subnational governments or legislatures (Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 2004: 116-120).

* * *

Is there a point in developing the concept of veto player so that subnational governments can be considered as actors who are able to exercise veto powers outside national legislative bodies? Stepan (2004) and Mainwaring and Samuels (2004) think that subnational governments and even influential subnational chief executives should be considered potential institutional veto players. In that case, the analysis of their ability to constrain central government should not only be restricted to legislative activities within national institutions, but more so their propensity to constitute a

balance to the central government in everyday politics. The idea of subnational actors as institutional veto players should, henceforth, be understood as one or several separately identifiable subnational governments. The subnational chief executives should primarily be regarded as individual veto players outside national legislative processes. The analysis in this dissertation will, therefore, not be solely restricted to the ability of subnational units to exercise influence collectively within national legislatures and in legislative games where a combination of legislators have to make up simple or qualified majorities to pass or reject legislative bills.

1.3 Intergovernmental Relations

In this section, the concept of intergovernmental relations within a federal context will be explored. The discussion concerns the processes and institutions that are attributable to the collaboration between the federal and subnational governments. One of the key structural elements of a federation is “processes and institutions to facilitate intergovernmental collaboration for those areas where governmental responsibilities are shared or inevitably overlap” (Watts 1999: 7). The examination of dynamic relationships between the central government and the subnational governments is in accordance with the process dimension of federalism (Friedrich 1968: 7; Neumann 1960: 689).

The concept of intergovernmental relations is applicable in various contexts. That is to say, the concept is related to a variety of activities and interactions (decisions, fiscal transfers, exchanges of information and opinions) between different types of governmental institutions (cabinets, departments, administrations) and actors (politicians, public servants) at different levels of government (national, regional, local) (Wright 1988: 15-24). Here, the intention is to bring focus on and characterize intergovernmental relations within a federal context. Such relations entail intricate processes of political bargaining and intergovernmental negotiation between representatives of different levels of government.

William Riker brought attention to the issue of federal bargaining by emphasizing that the origin and establishment of a federation lies in an historically unique event: a federal bargain. In that case, federations emerge as a result of coalition building or collaboration between different entities and groups who voluntarily engage in negotiations, choose to give up their sovereignty and finally agree to join together in a new political and federated entity by striking a federal bargain (Riker 1964: 11-14; Riker 1975: 113-114). Scholars have not, however, been pleased with this restricted characterization of federal bargaining. Intergovernmental bargaining within a federal context should instead be considered as a continuous process of negotiation between the federal centre and the constituent governments (Rhodes 1999: 61).

With regard to relations within federal states, the term intergovernmental relations refers to “complex political, administrative and financial interactions between levels of government” (Hague, Breslin and Harrop 1998: 173) or “ways and means that involve extensive and continuing relations among the federal, state, and local governments or any combination thereof” (Elazar 1987: 16). Continuous processes of political bargaining constitute an essential and central feature of federal systems: “Ongoing intergovernmental bargaining is a necessary and uniformly healthy characteristic of democratic federalism, and only needs to be prevented from taking destructive forms” (Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 2004: 70). Bargaining within a federal context is designated by decision theorists as N+1 participation interaction. Ordeshook and Shvetsova (1997: 29) describe this as “an interaction in which federal subjects and the national government are adversaries who must compete for power and resources through bargaining, strategic manoeuvring, coalition formation, and deception”.

The arrangement and conduct of intergovernmental relations vary from one federal state to another. Numerous factors shape the structure of intergovernmental relations. Cameron (2001: 121-124) identifies demographic and geographic factors (size of the country, size of the population, distribution of the population), social and cultural factors (race, religion, language, culture), historical factors (tradition), constitutional and institutional factors (number of units, size of units, degree of asymmetry, type of law and civil law system, type of government system), political factors (electoral system, nature of political party system, degree of decentralization) and circumstantial factors (external threat, internal threat). Below, the discussion revolves around the following issues: meetings follow a formal or informal format; different actors and a different number of actors are engaged in intergovernmental relations; intergovernmental meetings are held regularly or irregularly; and different models of federalism deal with both competition and interdependence between the different levels of government.

1.3.1 Intergovernmental Coordination

Inconsistencies in the allocation of powers between the different levels of government affect the need for intergovernmental collaboration. The complexity related to the division of powers and responsibilities between different levels of government, especially in matters concerning areas of concurrent and overlapping jurisdiction, necessitate the build up of operational intergovernmental practices and institutions (Watts 1999: 118; Opeskin 2001: 129). For instance, if legislative powers are concurrent, whereby both the central government and the constituent governments are able to pass laws, they are more likely to cooperate; but if legislative powers are exclusive and possessed either by the national parliament or the subnational

parliaments, the incentives for cooperation are lower (Neumann and Robinson 2001: 9).

Even though a federal constitution allocates power and responsibility, and specifies the roles of the national and subnational levels of government, it is necessary for the parties to communicate with each other (Watts 1999: 118; Opeskin 2001: 129). The need for interaction is essential, since the feature of interdependence between the different levels of government is very evident in contemporary federal systems (Hague, Breslin and Harrop 1998: 173). The complex interdependencies of the two levels of government create needs for continuous and extensive bargaining (Rhodes 1999: 61). Despite constitutional restrictions and provisions, which set the rules for the division of power within federal states, and regardless of the fact that federal constitutions are difficult to amend, there is usually room for flexibility: “Federations show surprising flexibility and even dynamism” (Hague, Breslin and Harrop 1998: 173). In this respect, intergovernmental relations are essential, since the machinery of intergovernmental relations allows federal systems to adapt and change to shifting circumstances (Neumann and Robinson 2001: 7).

1.3.2 Intergovernmental Relations in Presidential and Parliamentary Systems

Intergovernmental relations may involve a number of different actors at different positions in different political institutions. Different forms of government, in general, generate different patterns of intergovernmental relations. Whether a political system is based on the principle of the separation or fusion of powers is considered to affect how intergovernmental relations are organized within a federal system. The executive and legislative branches play different roles in presidential and parliamentary systems that result in different forms of intergovernmental relations (Neumann and Robinson 2001: 9).

In parliamentary systems, which embody the principle of fusion of executive and legislative powers, the executive branches tend to dominate the legislatures (Watts 1989: 8-9; Cameron 2001: 122; Opeskin 2001: 130). This can be explained by the fact that the legislative and executive branches constitute an integrated centre of authority: the legislative body (parliament) elects the executive body (cabinet), whereby the cabinet which is headed by a prime minister (or premier) enjoys the political support of the parliamentary majority (see Riggs 1997: 257; Lijphart 1999: 117-127). The executives in parliamentary systems also tend to be dominant actors in federal relations (see Figure 1.5). The concept of executive federalism refers to the dominance of parliamentary executives at both levels of government in intergovernmental relations. For example, the practice of executive federalism has been given considerable attention in the literature about Canadian federalism. In Canada, the

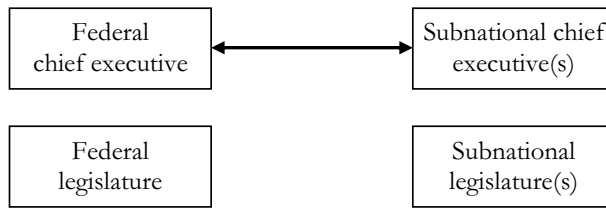


Figure 1.5 Intergovernmental relations in parliamentary systems.

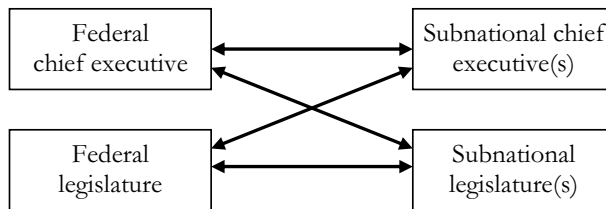


Figure 1.6 Intergovernmental relations in presidential systems.

executive branches of the federal and provincial governments, or more precisely, the members of the parliamentary cabinets, primarily interact via intergovernmental meetings (Watts 2002: 173; Smiley 1987: 83-100).

In presidential systems, power is dispersed among a greater number of actors. The system of separation of executive and legislative powers gives rise to independent centres of power, including independent executive and legislative branches at both levels of government (see Figure 1.6). Intergovernmental relations become fragmented and difficult to coordinate due to the occurrence of both horizontal and diagonal relationships between the executive and legislative branches at both the federal and subnational levels (Watts 1989: 8-9; Cameron 2001: 122).

1.3.3 Unilateralism, Bilateralism and Multilateralism

The federal government may interact with a different number of subnational governments. McRoberts (1985: 71) outlines three models of intergovernmental relations: “1. unilateralism, in which each level of government acts independently of the other; 2. bilateralism, in which the federal government collaborates with provincial governments on an individual basis; and 3. multilateralism, in which the federal government acts jointly with all or most of the provincial governments” (see Figures 1.7, 1.8 and 1.9). In the first case, the federal centre is able to unilaterally issue orders to weak administrative units. In the second example, negotiations between the federal centre and single regions may produce bilateral agreements. In the multilateral model, the federal centre deals with a collective of subnational governments.

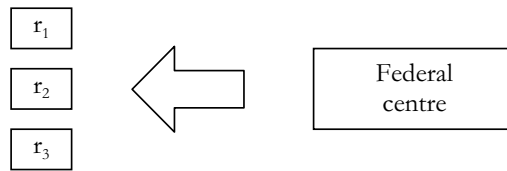


Figure 1.7 Unilateralism in centre-region relations.

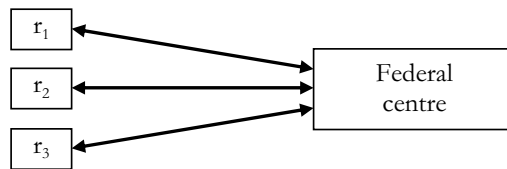


Figure 1.8 Bilateralism in centre-region relations.

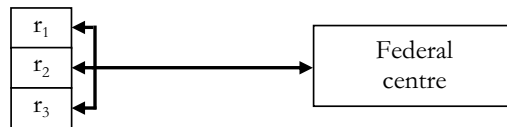


Figure 1.9 Multilateralism in centre-region relations.

1.3.4 Arenas of Intergovernmental Relations

In order to attain a functional and appropriate system of intergovernmental relations, the different levels of government are provided with arenas which facilitate the sharing of information, consultation, cooperation, coordination of policies, decision-making and conflict resolution (Opeskin 2001: 129; Cameron 2001: 125). The federal government and the governments of the constituent units may conduct intergovernmental relations both via formal institutions and via informal channels. The number of constituent units often affects how intergovernmental relations are organized. In a federal system with a small number of constituent units, ad-hoc and informal bargaining is more common, while a polity with a large number of units requires intergovernmental relations that are institutionalized (Neumann and Robinson 2001: 9).

Formally mounted intergovernmental relations and negotiations between different levels of government take place in institutionalized bodies or liaison bodies (McRoberts 1985: 72; Opeskin 2001: 130; Cameron 2001: 124-125). Established forums of interaction offer the regional leaders the opportunity to coordinate responses to bring pressure to bear on the federal government. For instance, in *intra-*

jurisdictional intergovernmental relations, subnational units are brought into national governmental structures, most often by being represented in the upper chamber of parliament (Cameron 2001: 125). If federal units are represented in the bicameral legislature, they are able to take part in the decision-making process and bargain with the federal government within the state structure. Intergovernmental relations fall into the category *inter-jurisdictional* relations if interaction takes place either between the different levels of government or between subnational units.

In the case of formalized procedures, decisions made by the different representatives or agents are presented in the form of written and binding intergovernmental agreements and programmes. Intergovernmental relations do not have to be formal and constitutionally instituted. Intergovernmental relations may also be informal, whereby the participants conduct informal consultations in order to, for instance, exchange information, achieve intergovernmental coordination and collaborate in matters which are of concern to both the federal government and subnational governments (McRoberts 1985; Cameron 2001: 125). The regions and the regional leaders may, on a regular basis, meet and communicate with the federal authorities in the circuit of conferences, councils and commissions. Intergovernmental meeting may also be of an ad hoc nature (Cameron 2001: 125-126; Neumann and Robinson 2001: 9). As in Canada, the conduct of intergovernmental relations has been developed in a pragmatic way, since there are no constitutionally established structures (Watts 2002: 172). Therefore, the possibility of informal contacts between politicians and officials, in the form of informal talks and correspondence and unstructured encounters, should also be recognized (Cameron 2001: 124-125; Opeskin 2001: 131-132).

Intergovernmental relations vary in terms of the degree of transparency and political accountability. For instance, government officials may choose to bargain behind closed doors, instead of providing full insight into intergovernmental affairs (Cameron 2001: 125). In order to improve the level of accountability, Neumann and Robinson (2001: 15) underscore the importance of clear roles and responsibilities of the participating parties, transparency, the possibility for scrutiny by the legislature and the enablement of public debate before the conclusion of intergovernmental agreements.

1.3.5 Competition and Interdependence

Various models of federalism have been presented to characterize the features of competition and interdependence regarding the relationship between the national and subnational levels of government. First, competitive models of federalism emphasize that the different levels of government compete for power. Most often one party gains power at the expense of the other; it is a zero-sum game. Further, there are different competitive models depending on how dominant the different levels of government

are within the federal system. The model of nation-centred federalism holds that the national government is in a dominant position at the expense of regional governments which are regarded as incompetent. Such an arrangement gives rise to centralized governance. The model of state-centred federalism outlines a decentralized federal system where the constituent states have a wide array of powers. In contrast to the two former competitive models, a more balanced federal system is achieved through dual federalism. In that case, the national and subnational governments dominate different policy areas, respectively. Second, interdependent models of federalism do not assert that the interaction between the national and regional governments is a game. For example, the model of cooperative federalism puts emphasis on the partnership and the importance of the division of responsibilities. Instead of competition, the different levels of government work together and have mutual objectives to attain beneficial results (Nice 1987: 4-7). Neumann and Robinson (2001: 9) point out that the degree of competition between the different levels of government determines the enticement for cooperation. On one hand, in a competitive environment, where the different levels of government compete for power, intergovernmental relations are less institutionalized. On the other hand, in a cooperative environment, where partnership is important and the different levels of government have mutual objectives, intergovernmental relations can be expected to be institutionalized and formal to a higher degree.

1.4 Federal Asymmetry and Bargaining Power

Provided that subnational chief executives are considered as individual veto players, the question that arises is why some of them are attributed with greater levels of power and influence in intergovernmental bargaining processes? The discussion on what determines the relative bargaining power of individual subnational governments in relation to the central government in intergovernmental bargaining is associated with the concept of federal asymmetry. Charles Tarlton (1965) points out that patterns of intergovernmental relations vary in significant ways within federal states. That is to say, each component government cannot be expected to maintain the same type of relationship to the central government. Variations in federal relations are dependent on the degree of symmetry in the federal system. Disproportionality is inherent in federal systems and differences among territorial units lead to power asymmetries.

the notion of *symmetry* refers to the extent to which component states share in the conditions and therefore the concerns more or less common to the federal system as a whole. By the same token, the second term, the concept of *asymmetry* expresses the extent to which component states do not share in these common features. Whether the relationship of a state is symmetrical or asymmetrical is a question of its participation in the pattern of social, cultural, economic, and political characteristics of the federal system of which it is part. This relation, in

turn, is a significant factor in shaping its relations with other component states and with the national authority. (Tarlton 1965: 861)

In symmetrical federal systems, the political units are relatively equal socially, culturally, demographically, economically, geographically and politically. If symmetry is prevalent, equality is predominant and the component parts have in principle similar types of relationships to the federal centre. In asymmetrical federations, on the other hand, the political units are different from each other. As a consequence, they interact with the federal centre in dissimilar ways, since they have different interests due to the fact they are concerned with different kinds of issues (Tarlton 1965: 867-870). Some local governments have adequate resources and are in a position to demand more political power than others. Therefore, elements of disputes and internal resentment are more likely to occur in asymmetrical federations due to diversity (see Tarlton 1965: 872-873; Watts 1999: 63). In that case, the political system has to be adapted to meet the different needs and demands from its components.

Different types of asymmetry are embedded in political systems.⁶ With regard to the study of federalism, Alfred Stepan recognizes two legitimate uses of the word asymmetrical: “socioeconomic asymmetry and its implications for bargaining within the federation” and “constitutionally embedded differences between the legal status and prerogatives of different subunits within the same federation” (Stepan 2000: 141-142). Ronald Watts (1999) distinguishes between two kinds of asymmetry among federal units: *political* and *constitutional* asymmetry. On one hand, “*political* asymmetry...arises from the impact of cultural, economic, social and political conditions affecting the relative power, influence and relations of different regional units with each other and with the federal government”. On the other hand, “*constitutional* asymmetry...relates specifically to the degree to which power assigned to regional units by the constitution of the federation are not uniform” (*ibid.*: 63; see also pages 65-68). Cameron Ross (2002: 8-10) presents a typology of asymmetry in federal states by making a distinction between *socio-economic*, *political* and *constitutional*

⁶ Different approaches have been taken when dealing with the issue of asymmetry. For instance, Watts remarks that a particular source of instability is if a federation only has one or two dominant entities in terms of power and influence. Watts illustrates by comparing the variation in population in a number of federations: on one hand, by pointing at asymmetry in terms of the population of the largest units in relation to the total population and; on the other hand, by looking at the population ratio between the largest and the smallest units. Similar comparisons have been made dealing with territorial size and wealth (Watts 1999: 63-65). Alfred Stepan (1999; 2001) examines the degree of asymmetry with regard to the relative influence of component units within upper chambers of parliament. Stepan deals with the issue of over-representation of small and sparsely populated units. Over-representation is destined to appear in federal systems which practice the principle of territorial representation and where the component units have equal number of seats in the parliament. On one hand, such an arrangement corrects the imbalance between large and small component units, but, on the other hand, it leads to a counter-majoritarian system of governance.

asymmetry. Socio-economic asymmetry refers to economic inequalities between subnational units with regard to, for instance, wealth, unemployment, industrial development and the size both in terms of area and population. Political asymmetry is regarded as “inequalities of representation and political status which federal subjects gain either from their socio-economic status or which they may develop from more overtly political factors such as patron-client relations” (*ibid.*: 10).

1.4.1 Political Resources as the Basis for Power

The factors attributable to asymmetry can also be distinguished as political resources. Political resources constitute the basis for power and can be used in order to influence other actors (Dahl 1961: 226; Dahl 1971: 82; Cox and Jacobson 1973: 3).⁷ Subnational political actors may take advantage of and deploy a variety of political resources in centre-region relations. Rhodes (1999) points out that power relationships in centre-local relations are reciprocal: the central government and the local authorities are interconnected and interdependent. In that case, different resources constitute the bases of the power-dependence relationships. Rhodes identifies five categories of resources which are important to the understanding of the relative power of central and local government actors: constitutional-legal, hierarchical, financial, political and informational resources (*ibid.*: 79-81).

Social cleavages go hand in hand with political resources. Society is often marked by numerous lines of cleavage. Social diversity, or divisions between groups in society, are structured along a number of dimensions: ethnicity (language, religion, nationality), geography (centre/periphery, urban/rural), economy (wealth, class), attitudes (ideology, party identification), etc. Social cleavages are potential catalysts for conflict and competition between societal groups, thus increasing the probability for instability within political systems (Lane and Ersson 1994: 52-56; Easton 1979: 230-243; Shils 1988: 253 and 256). Social cleavage structures have also an effect on the structure of political attitudes. Different social bases provide incentives for political mobilization and the emergence of different voting patterns (Lipset and Rokkan 1967).

⁷ There is much confusion over the concepts of *power* and *influence*. Some have regarded influence as a special case of power, others have considered power as a special case of influence, while a third group of scholars have more clearly distinguished the concepts from each other (Mokken and Stokman 1976: 36-37). I will make a distinction between power and influence based on the definitions given by Cox and Jacobson (1973: 3). The term influence refers to the ability of an actor to modify the behaviour of another actor in the political arena. Influence is regarded as a special case of power. The degree of influence is greatly dependent on the power of the actor and how well the actor manages to transform power into influence. Hence, the term power denotes the capability of an actor to take advantage of available political resources, which can also be termed assets or values, in order to reach certain goals. An actor brings various political resources to the power relation; the resources may be employed to exercise power over others.

Stein Rokkan and Derek Urwin point out that the component parts of a state that constitute the periphery differ from each other geopolitically, geoeconomically and geoculturally.⁸ These variations have an affect on the relationship between the centre and the periphery. Territorial, cultural and economic resources can be used as valuable bargaining chips when representatives of the periphery bargain with the centre (Rokkan and Urwin 1983: 124-135). The geopolitical, geoeconomic and geocultural dimensions are of central importance in terms of the extent peripheries are dependent on centres and the ability of centres to penetrate peripheries. Rokkan and Urwin assert that distance, difference and dependence determine the marginality of the peripheries. First, distance affects whether the ties between the centre and the periphery are loose or strong. Second, difference alludes to whether or not the periphery has a separate identity and is inclined to distance itself from the centre. Third, dependence refers to the fact that peripheries are in various degrees dependent on centres which are major hubs in terms of transactions concerning political, economic and cultural matters (*ibid.*: 1-18). Mény and Wright (1985: 1) express a similar line of thought: “distance in economic, cultural, social, ethnic, political, or even psychological terms...has an impact on the complex relationships which exist between the various components of the political and administrative organization of the country”.

1.4.2 Structural and Behavioural Bargaining Power

With regard to the concept of *bargaining power*, the distinction between the *structural* and *behavioural* approaches is of central importance.⁹ The structural approach suggests that

⁸ The discussion of mechanisms of centre-region relations in this part is based on what advocates of the centre-periphery paradigm (Rokkan and Urwin 1983; Mény and Wright 1985) have written, even though the theoretical framework of this dissertation is built around theories dealing with federalism and federal relations. Hence, Elazar (1991) points out that the federal model “views the polity as a matrix of overlapping, interlocking units, powers, and relationships”. In that case, the federal model is not compatible with the centre-periphery model, which describes the centre-region relationship as a hierarchical domination by the centre over the regions and the local authorities. Nevertheless, representatives of the periphery cannot be considered as being completely subordinate to the centre (even though a periphery is usually understood as territory dominated by or subordinated to a centre). For instance, Rokkan and Urwin (1983: 14-16) accentuate that the centre-periphery relationship is reciprocal; the peripheral community will try to resist centralization in any form in order to preserve its political, economic and cultural distinctiveness, while Shils (1988: 257-258) remarks that disharmony, not consensus, is prevalent between centres and peripheries and that it is an impossible task for a single centre to exercise control and authority over all parts of society.

⁹ The discussion on structural and behavioural approaches is based on theories of asymmetrical international negotiation. International negotiation theory can be applicable on intra-state relations within federations. Fernandez (1998: 10) assumes that “the bargaining power relation between strong and weak states, on one hand, and central state and region, on the other hand, are comparable”. These two different system levels have converged, and that subnational regions are in a similar situation as weak states, whereby they adopt a similar bargaining style in bargaining situations. Likewise, due to the political independence of the Russian regions in a federal setting, Vladimir Gel'man (1999: 942) is in favour of viewing centre-region relations from an international bargaining perspective.

discrepancy in power in asymmetrical power relationships depends on variations in structural power. Structural power is derived from accessible structural resources. Scholars distinguish between *aggregate structural power* and *issue-specific structural power*. Aggregate structural power is equivalent to the total resources and possessions of (state) actors. These resources include demographic (size of territory, size of population), economic (industrial capacity, natural resources), geographic (geopolitical location) and military variables (Habeeb 1988: 17; Aguirre 1995). However, the apprehension that the possession of aggregate structural resources constitutes the primary source of power has been criticized. Critics have stressed the significance of issue-specific structural power. Resources that are relevant in some bargaining situations may be irrelevant in other situations. In interdependent relationships, actors who are normally considered as strong may in certain issues be more dependent on the counterpart. Therefore, the balance of power between the actors may be reversed in the bargaining situation, if the actors are disproportionately dependent upon each other in specific issues (Baldwin 1979; Keohane and Nye 1977: 46-54; Aguirre 1995).

The behavioural approach concerns the ability of actors to exercise power by actually taking advantage of structural resources and capabilities; that is to say, by developing strategies and employing tactical manoeuvres. Structural resources should rather be seen upon as constituting a foundation for actors when they interact and bargain with other actors (Lockhart 1979: 90; Habeeb 1988: 16-18; Caporaso and Haggard 1989: 100). In order to build up their bargaining power, and maximize the gains in negotiations, actors may use bargaining moves; for instance, threats, concessions, persuasion and stalling (Habeeb 1988; Aguirre 1995; Sivberg 1999).

Which factors are of interest if behaviouralists attempt to explain the outcomes of the interactive processes between central and regional leaders? Several factors can be recognized and regarded as being of the essence. Sivberg (1999) lists different determinants which have appeared in literature on negotiation theory. *Commitment* refers to the devotion among the actors to put in more time and effort to “fight for the preferred outcome”. *Internal unity* is a significant element in order to achieve and display a sense of commitment and a united bargaining front. *Manipulation of alternatives* relates to the tactical aspect of the game, while bringing pressure on the counter-part by *coalition-building* with external actors is another. *Information* is regarded as an important resource and provides the actors with knowledge. The possession of information and knowledge helps actors to attain *legitimate authority*. This, in turn, enhances the *reputation* of actors in the bargaining game. These three latter factors (information, legitimate authority, reputation) are important with regard to the amount of bargaining power or who get the privilege to enter into negotiations. *Networks* and *informal relations* are noteworthy factors when examining the nature of the relationship

between the different levels of government. Thus, one should take notice of personal relationships between actors in negotiations and the bargaining game (*ibid.*: 21-24).

1.4.3 Problems of Measuring Power

A key consideration in this dissertation is to present reliable dependent and independent variables to be able to explain the relative bargaining power of subnational leaders in federal relations. The measurement of power and influence is, however, a controversial issue. Herbert Simon (1953) has addressed a number of problematic issues related to this: Is it appropriate to equate the power of actors with the resources that they have at their disposal? Should one distinguish between the individuals and structures as power holders? Which political resources are significant as a basis for power and influence? How can power be measured in numbers?

First, the equation is not as simple as asserting that the possession of a certain amount of resources is equal to a certain amount of power. The causal and dispositional definitions of power make a difference between potential and actual power. On one hand, the causal approach simply measures power by looking at the outcomes of power relations. On the other hand, the dispositional approach makes a difference between potential use of power and actual use of power. In that case, it is difficult to define power since one cannot be sure whether actors actually have exercised power, even if they have had the capacity and the adequate political resources to do so (Simon 1953: 501-502; Dowding 1991: 4-5; Wrong 1979: 6-10 and 124-130). Bacharach and Lawler (1981: 45) also disapprove of the practice of translating the outcomes of a bargaining process into a dependent variable: the tactical aspect of political bargaining is much more important. Dowding (1991: 55) prefers a dynamic and behaviouralist approach to the study of power relations. The author recommends not putting too much of an emphasis on the unequal distribution of resources between actors when examining and explaining the outcomes in power and bargaining relations.

Second, Simon points at the importance of being aware of whether the power of an actor stems from personal qualities or the structure of which an actor is part of. In order to substantiate, an elected official becomes more powerful thanks to the structure that surrounds this person; for instance, the administrative bureaucracy (Simon 1953: 506-507). This refers to the difference between individual and collective resources. On one hand, Wrong asserts that many political resources should be regarded as the property of groups, not individuals. A group can wield great amounts of power by pooling individual resources (Wrong 1979: 130-142). On the other hand, Dowding insists that the focus should be on individuals as power holders, not structures as power holders. Yet, Dowding recognizes that an actor in a high position

within a social structure has a competitive advantage and a greater ability to exercise power over other actors (Dowding 1991: 5-16).

Third, the task of measuring the magnitude of the power base brings along a number of difficulties. Which political power resources should be recognized? Under which circumstances are political resources relevant? How can the political resources be ranked in terms of their relevance? (Simon 1953: 501-502; Baldwin 1979: 165). Subnational executives have a range of formal and informal powers at their disposal. The great difficulty is to find valid and relevant measures in order to establish the formal and actual powers of leaders at the subnational level (Dometrius 1979; Jacob and Lipsky 1968: 522-523). Simon (1953: 512-514) also points out that one has to reflect upon whether it is appropriate to measure the quantity of power and influence in cardinal numbers, especially on a continual scale (see also March 1955: 446-447).

* * *

In this dissertation, it is assumed that the bargaining power of subnational chief executives largely depends on the different political resources they are able to employ when they bargain with central actors. Mainly contextual variables, which refer to demographic, ethnic, economic, geographic, ideological and political-institutional variables, are expected to affect the relative bargaining power. Despite all criticism, I shall quantify bargaining power and political resources to understand the mechanisms of intergovernmental bargaining in the Russian Federation. Assumingly, the uneven access to structural resources provides different positions for regional actors in federal bargaining games. The intention is not to examine if or how subnational political actors have managed to convert potential power into actual power, or the ability of actors in power relations to develop strategies and employ tactical manoeuvres. Further, the regional chief executives are regarded as individual power holders, even though the political resources which are normally associated to regions or groups are considered as possessions of the individual regional leaders. As executive leaders and figureheads of their regions, they are in a position to make use of collective political resources when they interact with the federal centre.

1.5 Research Problem and Research Questions

The general aim of this dissertation is to study the development of federalism in the Russian Federation: from the desperate attempts of President Boris Yeltsin (1990–1999) to establish a stable federal state to the largely successful efforts of President Vladimir Putin (2000–) to rein in the regions and bring them under stricter central control. I will attempt to identify and explain patterns of interaction between the federal centre and the regional chief executives. In the Russian federal system, the

executive branches, both at the national and regional levels, have been key power brokers, while the representatives of the legislative branches have been less influential. The *federal centre* refers to the federal executive power branch (the Russian president, the presidential administration and the Russian government). The *regional chief executives* are the heads of the executive branches of the 89 units. Regional chief executives are usually identified as presidents (in republics) or governors (in *krais*, *oblasts* and *okrugs*).¹⁰ In some republics, the chief official is designated as head of the republic, chairman of the government or head of the state council. In a large number of *krais*, *oblasts* and *okrugs*, the chief executives are entitled head of the administration. Furthermore, a mayor is the superior political actor in the federal city of Moscow.

The ability of subnational executive leaders to act as institutional veto players is of central importance in this dissertation.¹¹ In an ideal federal state, or federation, the constitutional distribution of powers and responsibilities empowers regionally based governmental institutions and actors and limits the prerogatives of the central government. According to this view, institutional mechanisms and frameworks are important if representatives of subnational units are to become prominent political actors within federal systems. Institutional factors alone do not, however, ensure that subnational governments are in a position to act as veto players. As Mainwaring and Samuels (2004: 87-88) have pointed out, the ability to assume the role of a veto player is limited in a highly centralized political system.

In Russia, the political strength of the regional governments has varied considerably over the years: President Boris Yeltsin had great difficulties to keep unruly regional leaders in line, while President Vladimir Putin was able to strengthen the authority of the federal government at the expense of the regions. This means that the regional

¹⁰ The Russian Federation consists of 89 administrative units: 21 republics, six *krais* (territories), 49 *oblasts* (regions), 10 autonomous *okrugs* (autonomous districts), one autonomous region and two federal cities (Moscow and St Petersburg). The republics (called autonomous republics during the Soviet period) were established from 1919 onwards in order to grant a degree of administrative autonomy to some major minority groups. Autonomous *okrugs* were also created to grant minor nationalities separate districts, but these were administrative sub-divisions of *krais* or *oblasts*. Nine of the ten autonomous *okrugs* in the Russian Federation are still administratively subordinated to *krais* or *oblasts*. Republics and *okrugs* are often referred to as ethnically defined regions. *Krais* and *oblasts* are called territorially defined regions, since these regions are made up of an overwhelming Russian majority.

¹¹ It makes no sense to consider the regional chief executives as partisan veto players. The rate of party membership or affiliation among the regional chief executives has been extremely low. Few executive leaders have had open party affiliations and they have run as independents. Several of those who have been affiliated with a political party have distanced themselves from political parties once elected (McFaul 2000; Stoner-Weiss 2002; Ross 2002: 99-101, 105-106). There have been weak party systems both at the national and regional levels: weakly developed party loyalties, a low level of party institutionalization, insufficient party discipline among the members, a lack of strong and long-lived parties, etc. (Golosov 2003).

governments at times have been able to resist central government control. As discussed above, the concept of institutional veto player refers to political actors who have the ability to constrain the federal centre by making sure that policy initiatives are blocked within legislative institutions at the federal level, or reforms are prevented from getting implemented at the subnational level. Their ability to function as veto players in legislative games at the federal level—by being able to muster a parliamentary majority in the upper or lower chamber of parliament—is only of minor interest. Instead, it is thought that the ability of regional chief executives to act as veto players stems from their capacity to control or influence political life in the regions. In that case, they are in a position to defy the federal centre or block the implementation of federal decisions. With this in mind, it is of great interest to examine the capacity of the federal units to constrain or defy a formally strong president and central government during and after the massive transformation process that took place in Russia during the 1990s. The general research question is as follows:

When and why have the regional chief executives been in a position to assume the role of institutional veto players in post-communist Russia?

The general research question incorporates the formal and informal aspects of both federalism and political power. This dissertation is in many respects dual in character, both with regard to the distinction between structure and process of politics and the distinction between formal and informal powers of political actors (see Figure 1.10). It is assumed that formal powers interact with informal powers in the sense that the formal environment and the possession of informal power resources are both very important concerning what determine the ability of subnational actors to achieve an influential position within political systems (see Schlesinger 1965, Bernick 1979 and Dometrius 1979 for discussion on formal and informal gubernatorial powers). A governmental or political approach to the study of federalism is adopted. This approach fuses the sociological and constitutional approaches to federalism, since the governmental or political approach “looks at both the structure *and* operation of federalism” (Thorlakson 2003: 3). Therefore, patterns of relations are expected to be determined by both social cleavages and institutional effects: the governmental or political approach involves “investigating the conditions that affect the operation of federalism and the impact of federal institutions on political behaviour and patterns of relations in the state” (*ibid*: 4).

The first specific research question relates to the structure of politics and the formal aspect of power. From a general point of view, formal institutional structures and formal powers should be recognized and discussed in the study of politics. Political structures refer to “collection of institutions, rules of behavior, norms, roles, physical

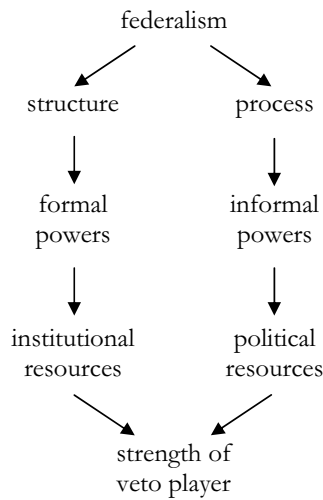


Figure 1.10 Central concepts of the dissertation.

arrangements, buildings, and archives” (March and Olsen 1984: 741). In power relations, political actors may be effectively limited by the formal institutional structure. Institutional constraints set up the boundaries and reduce the space of manoeuvre of political actors. According to the theory of new institutionalism, institutional contexts, in which political actors operate, affect the behaviour of political actors (March and Olsen 1984). By looking at the institutional framework within which regional chief executives operate, it gives us an idea of their ability to constitute a strong and independent force within a federal political system. If these political actors are in a strong position of power, and not subordinate to actors at the national and regional levels, they have the potential to take an independent course of action. Relating to the formal position of regional chief executives, the first subquestion is:

To what extent have institutional structures empowered or constrained Russian regional chief executives in regional and federal politics?

It is necessary to look beyond formal institutional standards and discuss to what extent informal politics go hand in hand with constitutional formalities. The existence of a federal structure, with a set of institutions, does not guarantee a functioning federal system. Political actors do not automatically become effective veto players in federal systems. Constitutional and formal regulations only “express a *presumptive* division of power between actors and institutions at different points of time in the federal system” (Gibson 2004: 8). Therefore, the understanding of the operation and evolution of any federal system requires more than merely the insight into static and formal governmental structures and constitutional law. Just as important is the

examination of the dynamic interplay between central and regional governments. In the absence of clear rules of the game in federations, a key issue is to achieve working relationships between central and regional governments through formal or informal intergovernmental negotiations and political bargaining.

In that case, there is also reason to discuss the ability of the Russian subnational executives to transform institutional power into real power. Even though subnational executives are formally in a strong position, they might not be in possession of sufficient informal power resources which would ensure and enhance their ability to exercise influence. Informal power stems from a multiplicity of sources. This dissertation proposes that bargaining power is a function of contextual factors related to the regions: economic conditions, ethnic composition, geographic location and the political environment. Leadership variables are also taken into consideration. These factors are assumed to serve as political resources which, in turn, can be transformed into bargaining power in intergovernmental relations. As a matter of fact, the relationship between the federal government and the regions in the Russian Federation bears obvious traces of asymmetry.¹² The unequal distribution of political resources, which provide subnational actors with different levels of power and influence as they interact and bargain with the federal centre, is recognized and studied. The second subquestion is:

Which political resources have Russian regional chief executives been able to mobilize in centre-region relations?

The discussion in the concluding chapter of this dissertation concerns to some extent the operation of the federal system in the Russian Federation: Do the elements of intergovernmental bargaining and political asymmetry within the Russian Federation comply with the basic idea of federalism and federal relations? The discussion deals with the problematic issues in centre-region relations relating to the lack of agreement over the basic idea of federalism and the rules of the game, procedures for resolving conflicts between the federal centre and the regions and asymmetric bargaining power of regional leaders. The discussion will also bring up the fact that federal relations can

¹² The level of internal heterogeneity is very high within the Russian Federation. There are considerable variations amongst the regions in terms of the size of their territories and populations. There are also huge differences in prosperity across the administrative regions, as indicated by, for instance, industrial development, extraction of natural resources, per capita income and unemployment (Ross 2002: 8-10; Hanson 2005). Furthermore, the Russian Federation is the largest territorial state in the world that stretches across eleven time zones. As a consequence, the regions vary in terms of geopolitical and geoeconomic importance. Some of the regions have direct access to international borders and suitably located ports. With regard to ethnic groups, the Russian Federation is a complex multicultural state. Russia is a patchwork of ethnic groups, many of them concentrated to individual political units. As a matter of fact, the political-administrative structure is partly organized along ethnic lines. Ethnic republics have previously enjoyed an enhanced status within the federal system.

be characterized as informal and secretive elite bargaining processes. The fact is that in Russia intergovernmental bargaining has only involved the top leadership of the executive branches, whereby it has not been open for scrutiny by the legislature or the public.

1.6 Theory and Research Design

This dissertation deals with two sets of theories: the first set is assigned to formal powers, while the second set relates to informal powers of regional chief executives. In addition, the two different sets of theories fail to agree in terms of from which perspective the strength of the regional leaders are being explored. As will be discussed below, when the formal powers are examined, the regional leaders are dealt with as a collective, while the study of informal bargaining power focuses on the resource mobilization abilities of individual regional chief executives. The research design, which will be discussed below, is also presented in Table 1.1.

In order to substantiate, this dissertation consists of a series of comparative studies. The comparative approach applies to the study of both formal and informal powers of the regional chief executives. The purpose of the first empirical study is to clarify the formal position of Russian regional chief executives within the Russian Federation in order to become aware of the formal rules which provide them with the authority to act as institutional veto players (see Chapter 2). The comparative element in the study of formal powers relates to both the comparison across time (variations within the Russian Federation) and the comparison across countries (differences between federal states). The comparative method in this case is limited to typology formation. The different political systems are classified according to variation in governmental structures and the legal framework within which subnational leaders function. A set of basic variables, derived from theories concerning institutional structures and formal powers, are used to distinguish between different political systems.

The study which examines the institutional position of regional chief executives is, to a great extent, associated with their position as a strong collective within the Russian Federation. First, it examines the potential for strong leadership at the regional level. This study does not tell anything about in which regions highly centralized systems with executive dominance have been established. The fact is that the balance of power between the executive and legislative branches of power has varied, and still varies, from one region to another. Second, the ability of the regional chief executives to exercise influence in the parliamentary arena is discussed. In the legislation process at the federal level, the federal subjects are represented in the Federation Council, the upper chamber of parliament. It is up to the regional representatives to coordinate their responses and rally a majority behind decisions and policies. The study in

Table 1.1 Research design.

<i>General research question</i>	When and why have the regional chief executives been in a position to assume the role of institutional veto players in post-communist Russia?	
<i>Subquestions</i>	To what extent have institutional structures empowered or constrained Russian regional chief executives in regional and federal politics?	Which political resources have Russian regional chief executives been able to mobilize in centre-region relations?
<i>Theory</i>	<u>Formal powers</u> Formal regulations affect the ability of regional chief executives to act as institutional veto players who have the potential to constrain the federal government	<u>Informal powers</u> Political resources that can be mobilized enhance the bargaining power of regional chief executives within the framework of centre-region relations
<i>Type of powers analyzed</i>	Collective, formal powers of regional chief executives determined by institutional design and institutional factors	Individual, informal powers of regional chief executives determined by political, cultural, demographic, economic and geographic variables
<i>Units of analysis</i>	Subnational chief executives in: - Russian Federation (1993–2004) - 24 federal states (2002)	Regional chief executives among: - the 89 regions of the Russian Federation
<i>Method</i>	Typology formation	Quantitative analysis
<i>Variables</i>	Institutional variables: - formal powers at the subnational level - federal level representation and powers of the upper chamber - formal devolution of powers to the constituent units	Dependent variables: - chronological order in the bilateral power-sharing treaty process (1994–1998) - federal-level influence of regional chief executives (2003)

question does not provide any information about the bargaining power of individual chief executives at the parliamentary level. Third, the allocation of constitutional powers between the federal centre and the regions is brought up. The examination of the formal division of authority between different levels of government also delineates the obligations and the rights of the regions as a collective.

The comparative dimension is of particular relevance when the aim is to determine the relative bargaining power of individual regional leaders in centre-region relations (Chapter 4 and Chapter 5). In the analysis of informal powers, a quantitative research strategy is applied (bivariate and multivariate statistical analyses). The fact that I start off with a theory and a series of independent variables signifies that a deductive approach is taken. The theory guides the selection of the appropriate independent

variables. I proceed from the thought that actors in the bargaining game have access to various political resources which have a bearing on the bargaining position in power relations. By drawing on the experiences from experiences in the Soviet Union and Russia at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, but also by relating to general theories of bargaining, the intention is to identify a number of variables which can be expected to explain variance in bargaining power in the Russian Federation during recent years (see Chapter 3).

In contrast to the first empirical study, the two studies relating to different amounts of bargaining power concentrate on the efforts and success of individual federal subjects to improve their terms within the federal state. From that perspective, a certain type of bargaining—collective bargaining—when the federal government bargains with groups of regions, is of no particular interest. This form of bargaining would relate to a process when national and subnational leaders bargain to find a balance between the federal centre and the federal subjects as a group (see Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 2004: 62-63). Instead, bargaining over the devolution of powers should be considered as competition among federal subjects.¹³ In bargaining processes, the constituent units are unequal; some subnational leaders are equipped with greater levels of bargaining power, while others lack relevant political resources, whereby they are in a disadvantaged position. With that follows the assumption that only a restricted number of federal subjects have the ability to act as effective veto actors, while the other federal subjects have only limited abilities to constrain the federal centre.

While the examination of formal powers features comparative analysis across a limited number of countries, the study of informal powers applies comparative analysis across subnational units. Snyder (2001) remarks that the study of subnational units, and comparisons across subnational political units, provides insight into a variety of topics relating to political science: democratization, ethnic conflicts, decentralization, etc. In the case of the Russian Federation, a plethora of comparisons across regions, focusing on political developments on the regional level, have emerged during recent years (many of them can be characterized as small-N case oriented comparisons). The subnational comparative method offers many advantages, especially in the case of the subnational units in the Russian Federation, to engage in large-N quantitative analysis. The subnational comparative method usually increases the number of observations,

¹³ When Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova write that “bargaining...we see today in contemporary federal systems is more commonly a manifestation of competition *among federal subjects*”, they refer to conflicting opinions regarding the degree of centralization within a federal state; that is to say, when one subset of subjects prefers that more power should be allocated to the centre, while another subset of subjects prefers status quo or less powers to the federal centre (Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 2004: 62-63).

thus reducing the problem of “many variables, small-N”. If several variables are involved, while the number of research subjects is small, too few degrees of freedom are provided to mount a respectable test (Snyder 2001: 94-95; see also King, Kehoane and Verba 1994: 208). From this perspective, it is of great benefit that the Russian Federation is composed of as many as 89 regions, whereby the “small-N problem” is as good as eliminated.

There is great variation (or internal heterogeneity) between the subnational units within Russia institutionally, culturally, historically, economically, ideologically and geographically. On one hand, the variance is a positive thing, since this study acknowledges the importance of above-mentioned conditions and variables, as structural resources are expected to serve as bargaining chips which enhance the bargaining power of regional actors. On the other hand, there is a risk that the degree of heterogeneity is so great that it is impossible to control the effects of other relevant variables. Even though only subnational units from a single country are included, there may be significant differences among the subnational units. Such extraneous variance can bring errors into the analysis. The neglect of confounding variables which are associated with both dependent and the independent variables can lead one to draw the wrong conclusions (Snyder 2001: 96; Peters 1998: 32-35).

Taken together, the large number of research subjects, paired together with great internal diversity, will enable me to conduct an extensive variable analysis. A couple of the empirical studies in this dissertation are large-N quantitative studies, in which statistical data analysis techniques are employed. Even though a large number of independent variables are included, the quantitative approach can still be criticized due to the fact that some explanatory variables are left out: “statistical explanations tend to leave a number of factors unmeasured that might be central to the more descriptive and convoluted explanations provided through configurative analysis” (Peters 1998: 7). Then again, this dissertation can, to a great extent, be regarded as theory-conscious where the development and testing of hypotheses are of central importance, in contrast to descriptive-oriented single-case or multiple-case studies.

1.7 Structure of the Dissertation

The remainder of this dissertation is organized into five additional chapters. Chapter 2 is devoted to the institutional design and its implications for the formal position of subnational executives in the Russian Federation. The formal institutional strength of the regional chief executives at both the regional level and the federal level is discussed. The Russian regional leaders have, with regard to the formal setting, operated under different rules since the beginning of the 1990s. In order to understand the development in the Russian Federation better, the formal position of

subnational executive leaders in contemporary federal states is also examined. The analysis of whether subnational executives are equipped with formidable formal powers only constitutes a basis for further examination and discussion. Hence, even though formal powers are necessary to a certain extent, one should be aware of the fact that the ability to exercise influence also depends to a great extent on the possession of informal power resources.

Chapter 3 deals with what can be expected to contribute to greater levels of bargaining power in centre-region relations. The purpose of this chapter is to identify the independent variables which will be included in the analyses in the following two chapters. The relevant variables are selected by drawing lessons from the experiences from processes of separatism and regionalism both in the Soviet Union and in post-communist Russia. The fact is that scholars have concluded that acts and threats of separatism largely served as a powerful instrument in the intergovernmental bargaining game to gain political and economic concessions from the central government. Factors which were associated with greater levels of bargaining power correlated with increased levels of separatism (both with regard to the timing of sovereignty declarations during the parade of sovereignty in the Soviet Union and variance in separatist activism in Russia at the beginning of the 1990s).

Chapter 4 examines the bilateral power-sharing treaty process in the Russian Federation 1994–1998. During this period, the federal centre and 46 regions signed bilateral treaties and agreements concerning the distribution of political and economic power. In the empirical part, the intention is to examine which factors correlate with the point of time when regions signed bilateral treaties. The dates of bilateral treaties will indicate the success of regions and regional leaders. This is motivated by the fact that the bilateral treaty process to a great extent became recognized as a competitive process; prestige was at stake and regional leaders made efforts to secure deals as soon as possible to assert their competence and ability to bargain successfully with the federal authorities.

Chapter 5 seeks to explain the variation among regional executives in political influence (or bargaining power) at the federal level during President Putin's first term. The dependent variable reflects the level of political influence in legislative and executive power structures as well as among the federal business elite. The variable is based on a series of ratings conducted in 2003 by the Centre for Political Technology in Moscow. The panels have been made up of around 20 experts representing academic, media, party and governmental organizations. They have estimated the levels of influence of each regional chief executive on a five-point scale.

Chapter 6 summarizes the results of the previous chapters with regard to the formal and informal powers of the regional chief executives and their ability to function as institutional veto players. In addition, a normative discussion concerning the practices and procedures of Russian centre-region relations will be conducted. It relates to whether the elements of intergovernmental bargaining and political asymmetry within the Russian Federation comply with the basic idea of federalism, and whether the development has been positive or negative when compared to democratic and consolidated federal states.

Chapter 2

The Formal Position of the Russian Regional Chief Executives*

2.1 Introduction

As previously outlined in Chapter 1, federalism disperses power by creating multiple centres and independent political arenas, whereby representatives of the constituent units are empowered. Political scientists point out that a federal political system should rest on a constitutional division of powers between the federal and regional governments, where both levels of government are guaranteed sovereign authority to make independent decisions in at least some policy areas (Wheare 1963: 10; King 1982: 77; Dahl 1983: 95-96; Lijphart 1984: 169). In that case, federalism generates an additional set of veto players in the form of subnational executive branches headed by politically strong presidents, governors or premiers. If equipped with adequate powers and resources, they should have the capacity to constrain the power of the central government (Stepan 2004; Mainwaring and Samuels 2004). The ability of subnational chief executives to constitute a strong and independent force within a federal political system depends to a great extent on the formal arrangements. Institutional structures enable or constrain actions of political actors (March and Olsen 1984).

In this chapter, the intention, first and foremost, is to broadly characterize the formal institutional strength of the regional chief executives in the Russian Federation. Consideration will be given to the extent leaders of the subnational executive branches in the Russian Federation have been in a position to assume the role of institutional veto players who have been, on a formal level, able to counterbalance the federal centre. The Russian presidents, governors and mayors in the 89 administrative regions have, in terms of the formal setting, operated under different rules since the beginning of the 1990s. In addition, the institutional position of subnational executive leaders in 24 contemporary federal states will be examined to understand the development in

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Russia better.¹⁴ The inclusion of other federal states helps us to position the Russian regional chief executives with regard to their formal powers. Even though it is very difficult and not always meaningful to compare federal states, since they vary in many ways with regard to both formal arrangements and informal procedures, they are useful yardsticks which will help us to better comprehend the formal powers of the Russian regional leaders.¹⁵

2.2 Theoretical Framework

What improves the capacity of subnational governments and leaders to constrain the federal government and limit its power to introduce and implement changes in policy? Under which circumstances can subnational executives act independently from other institutional actors at the regional level? This study deals with three sets of factors: First, the ability for strong and prolonged rule at the subnational level will be taken into account by examining to whom regional leaders are accountable and the length of tenure. Second, the capacity to make their voice heard at the federal level and collectively act as veto players in the parliamentary arena depends on the powers of the upper chambers and who represents and controls the members of the upper

¹⁴ 25 contemporary federal political systems are listed by the Forum of Federations in their publication *Handbook of Federal Countries, 2002*. These states “either classify themselves as federations, or incorporate enough elements to make it useful to include them in a study of federalism” (Griffiths 2003: xii). They are: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, Comoros, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Micronesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Serbia-Montenegro (former Yugoslavia), South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, USA and Venezuela. Note, however, that it has been debated which countries can be regarded as true federal states. Derbyshire and Derbyshire (1996) include Sudan and exclude Spain and South Africa. Anckar (2004: 100) follows the categorization of Derbyshire and Derbyshire, except for the fact that Palau is added. Karvonen (2003: 26-29) does not consider St. Kitts and Nevis, South Africa and Spain as federal states. Watts (1999) does not categorize Bosnia-Herzegovina as a federation or quasi-federation.

¹⁵ The subunits which are studied are first-order administrative divisions. The heads of subnational governments are analyzed, not the heads of subnational units. The head of a subnational government is the leader of the government and has administrative powers to govern. The head of a subnational unit is the *nominal* chief executive officer of the subnational unit; that is to say, a symbolic and ceremonial official with little actual power. In most cases, the heads of subnational governments and subnational units are the same. However, in Canada, Australia, India and Malaysia, the heads of the subnational units are not the active heads of government and are formally appointed by the monarch, president or state legislative assemblies. The provinces in Canada have lieutenant governors appointed by the monarch on the advice of the federal government. The states in Australia have governors appointed by the monarch on the advice of the state governments. The states in India have governors appointed by the president on the advice of the union governments: Nine states in Malaysia have hereditary rulers, while the governors in four states are appointed by the state legislative assemblies (Watts 1999: 86-87; Griffiths 2003). Further, the political systems in the republics of Serbia and Montenegro can be regarded as semi-presidential. The president comes to power in general and direct elections, while the prime minister, who is head of the government, is nominated by the president and confirmed by the assembly.

chambers. Third, the formal devolution of powers to the constituent units has a bearing on the independence of subnational governments.

2.2.1 Accountability and Structure of Government

The first variable deals with the sources and mechanisms of accountability of subnational executives. The status and position of subnational executives rest to a considerable extent upon whose mandate they are bound to respect. If political actors at a higher tier of government have the authority to select executives at a lower tier of government, the political system is more centralized, compared to a political system where a second tier body, or the voters at a second tier, have the right to appoint or elect their executive independently. In that case, subnational executives appointed by the central authorities find themselves in a weak position, especially if the latter ones are capable of removing the former ones. The space of manoeuvre of the regional executives is also restricted if they are appointed by and responsible to local legislatures, but not as constrained as in the previous case. Popularly elected subnational executives, who are responsible to their electorate, and who are difficult to dismiss during the term of office, are in a very secure and strong position.

The method by which subnational leaders are selected is strongly related to the type of political system. Two basic categories of government institutions can be identified: *separation* and *fusion* of executive and legislative powers. The form of government institutions, in turn, has a major impact upon the character of the executive-legislature relationship in a political system. First, presidential political systems are organized around the principle of separation of executive and legislative powers. In these political systems, the executive branch has the capacity to constitute a balance against the legislative assembly: the executive is formally independent of the legislature.¹⁶ Such executive leaders are generally elected by the people for a fixed term and difficult to discharge. Second, parliamentary systems are characterized by the fusion of executive and legislative powers. They have premiers or prime ministers who are appointed by and accountable to the legislatures (Riggs 1997: 256-257; Lijphart 1999: 117-127; Watts 1999: 84-85).

In addition, the possibility of semi-presidential systems of government (also known as premier-presidential systems) should be recognized. In a semi-presidential system, the

¹⁶ Of course, one has to be aware of other formal powers which have an affect on the relative powers of chief executives within a regional setting: for example, veto powers and budget powers in the legislative process, administrative control, right to appoint public officials, etc. However, my intention is not to review formal regulations specifying the position of subnational executives in detail. Instead, I choose to simply distinguish between systems embodying the principles of separation of executive and legislative powers and the fusion of executive and legislative powers.

popularly elected president is, formally, the head of state, while the prime minister and the cabinet represent the executive and administrative body. The president nominates a candidate for prime minister who must then be approved by the legislature. The president may dismiss the deputies of the government. The legislature may express its non-confidence in the prime minister and the government which shall result in their resignation (Duverger 1980; Shugart and Carey 1992; Lijphart 1999: 121; Karvonen 2003: 54-56).

2.2.2 Length of Tenure

Assumingly, the advantage of political longevity is great: political leaders are able to accumulate political resources and build up their power and authority. Public office provides access to a variety of political resources. In power relations, actors may take advantage of available political resources in order to influence or alter the preferences or strategies of other actors. Such political resources refer to legality, political and financial support, access to and influence over subordinates, the possibility to establish contact networks and relations to key actors, etc. (Dahl 1961: 248 and 308-309). Once elected to public office, political leaders are in a position to improve their personal and political standing by building up their popularity, establishing patron-client networks and political connections, attaining knowledge about the political environment, rewarding followers or making life difficult for opponents, etc. The longer political leaders spend time in office, they gain greater leadership skills and experience in exercising power (Alford and Hibbing 1981; Tompkins 1984: 528-529; Bienen and van de Walle 1989: 24).

The length of tenure will be assessed by looking at (1) the amount of years for every term and (2) the number of maximum terms that popularly elected subnational executives are allowed to serve. Federal states which incorporate the system of separation of powers are analyzed. The provisions in national constitutions and laws are primarily taken into account (except for federal states, in which each federal unit may decide on the length of tenure; in that case, the most frequently occurring arrangement is listed).

2.2.3 Representation in the Upper Chamber of Parliament

Federal states tend to have bicameral national parliaments composed of two separate and independent chambers. The lower chamber of parliament (or the lower house) is usually strictly based on population representation, while the upper chamber of parliament (or the upper house) is based on territorial representation (Hague, Harrop and Breslin, 1998: 186). The institution of the upper chamber of parliament enables federal units to bargain and take part in central decision-making. If this legislative institution is vested with significant powers, and the national executive is dependent

on the support of the parliament so as to secure legislative majorities, the upper chamber may effectively serve as a veto player.

The composition of upper chambers varies depending on different forms of representation and principles of selection. The method of selection affects the influence of subnational governments or executives over the upper chamber. Subnational executives are best able to exert influence over the upper chamber if they themselves have the privilege of becoming members of parliament, either through direct elections or by automatically gaining membership by virtue of office (*ex officio* membership). The representatives of the subnational executive branch of power are also in a strong position if they have the right to appoint and dismiss their own representatives and, thus, have the capability to control and instruct them. Such a practice is compatible with a confederal, and less centralized, arrangement: "In a confederation the common institutions are composed of the delegates appointed by and accountable to the constituent governments" (Watts 1999: 83-84). The heads of administration are in a weaker position if they are not authorized to select the members. For instance, if members of parliament are loyal to their respective parties, particularly if they are directly elected and operate within parties with strong party discipline, the incentives to follow instructions given by the regional administration are weaker, wherefore the latter party has to rely on the loyalty of their representatives. This is not the case if representation is primarily built around the member units and if the members of one of the parliamentary chambers are appointed by and accountable to subnational governments or legislatures (Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 2004: 116-120). Further, the executive bodies of government may have restricted influence over the members of the upper chamber if the latter ones are selected by the local legislatures (through appointment or indirect election) or if they are centrally appointed.

2.2.4 Powers of the Upper Chamber of Parliament

In order for regional actors to participate in central decision-making, and serve as institutional veto players, the upper chamber of parliament should have real powers. However, it is difficult to quantify the relative powers of the two chambers. Conflicting theories and methods have been presented: Mastias and Grangé (1987: Chapter 4) assert that the political importance and legitimacy of the chambers is determined by whether they are directly elected by the people or if the members are selected through indirect elections or appointment. Lijphart (1999: 205-213) rates the strength or weakness of bicameralism by looking at (1) formal constitutional powers and (2) legitimacy based on the modes of selection of the two chambers. The degree of congruence (or incongruence) indicates whether the two chambers differ in their composition (for example, due to overrepresentation of certain groups in one of the

chambers). Tsebelis and Money (1997) put emphasis on mechanisms of reconciliation; that is, the impact of rules, procedures and time frames when the two chambers have to come to an agreement to resolve deadlocks.

In order to categorize the federal states, a crude assessment of the relative powers of the two chambers of parliament will be made: that is, if the two chambers are roughly equal in power or if the lower chamber of parliament dominates.¹⁷ The strength of each upper chamber will be assessed by comparing its powers to the lower chamber. The question is whether the upper chamber in each federal state has the power to effectively veto laws passed by the lower chamber. If the upper chamber is vested with absolute veto power, and able to reject laws adopted by the lower chamber, the bill is sent between the two chambers until agreement has been obtained, or the chamber which initiated the bill drops it. Deadlocks between the two chambers may be resolved through a variety of ways; for example, reconciliation in mediation committees, double dissolution or joint sitting. The procedure of joint sitting tends to weaken the upper chamber, since the lower chamber usually outnumbers the upper chamber (see Watts 1999: 92-97; Tsebelis and Money 1997). In the case of suspensive veto, the upper chamber can only send a bill back to the lower chamber and delay the passing of a bill for a certain period of time, since the lower chamber has the final decision (a constitutionally required majority often has to be attained to override the veto).

2.2.5 Formal Devolution of Powers to the Constituent Units

There is no guarantee that subnational actors are capable of carrying out the role as constraints to central government, or as veto players, even though the federal constitution explicitly states that subnational units should constitute a separate branch of government and, thus, be independent of the federal government. One has to keep in mind that the conditions vary from federal system to federal system: the degree of centralization and decentralization affects the influence and space of manoeuvre of subnational actors. From a formal point of view, subnational actors are unable to influence policies effectively if they are held under a tight rein by the national constitution. However, it is not an easy task to assess the degree of jurisdictional decentralization, or the formal division of authority between different levels of government, since it is challenging to quantify and measure the contents of constitutional paragraphs (Blondel 1995: 229; Watts 1999: 72). Well aware of this problem, the analysis will be restricted to a quite rudimentary and general assessment

¹⁷ I only intend to carry out an in-depth analysis of the strength of the upper chamber vis-à-vis the lower chamber, not vis-à-vis the national executive. One might pass judgment on the fact that I disregard the importance of the national executive (who is an important veto actor in presidential systems) in the legislative process. Nevertheless, I expect to gain a sufficient picture of the strength of the institution of the upper chamber in different federal states simply by reviewing the inter-cameral relationship.

of the decentralization of jurisdiction (with regard to allocation of legislative powers, the allocation of administrative responsibilities and financial decentralization).

An exploration will be made to discover the extent to which policy areas are devolved to subnational governments in the national constitutions, and the extent to which policy areas are under the domain of the federal government in the different federal states. There are three categories of constitutional provisions: *exclusive*, *joint* and *residual* constitutional powers of the federal government and the constituent units. Exclusive powers are solely reserved to either the federal government or the subnational governments and legislatures. Powers held by both the federal and subnational government are designated as joint powers. Residual powers are those powers not mentioned by the constitution, but, nevertheless, assigned to a certain level of government.

2.3 The Institutional Position of the Russian Regional Executives

In this part, the development of the institution of regional chief executives in the Russian Federation is reviewed and discussed. In addition, the institutional position of regional chief executives in Russia will be compared with the formal position of subnational heads of government in 24 other federal states. A series of tables are included to provide an overview of the institutional arrangements in different federal states. The intention is to compare whether Russian subnational chief executives possess weak, moderate or strong formal powers.

2.3.1 Executive Dominance in the Russian Regions

The 1990s saw the emergence of a multitude of different governmental systems (presidential, semi-presidential, parliamentary) and political regimes (pluralist democratic, authoritarian, hybrid) at the regional level in Russia (Ross 2002: 127-128; Chirikova and Lapina 2001: 33; Gel'man 1999). The balance of power between the executive and legislative branches of power has varied, and still varies, from one region to another. However, in the majority of the Russian regions, highly centralized systems were established, most of which were based on the principle of separation of executive and legislative powers.¹⁸ Federal legislation and rulings by the Constitutional

¹⁸ President Boris Yeltsin and the federal centre ensured the dominance of executive leadership at both the national and regional levels in Russia. The growth of regional presidential and gubernatorial power originated from the conflict between Yeltsin and the parliament, which culminated in the autumn of 1993. A majority of the regional legislatures parted with Ruslan Khasbulatov, the speaker of the Supreme Soviet, in his feud with President Yeltsin. Soon after the showdown in September and October of 1993, when the parliament (the Supreme Soviet and the Congress of People's Deputies) was violently dissolved, Yeltsin also disbanded the regional legislatures by presidential decree. The republics were not, however, obliged to dissolve their legislature, only recommended to do so (Ross 2002: 93).

Court helped to ensure that political power and executive authority became concentrated in the office of the chief executive (Ross 2002: 123-128; Chirikova and Lapina 2001: 32-34; Busygina 2002 302-303). Thus, the regional chief executives in the Russian Federation have been important players and have been vested with considerable amounts of power within their regions:

Official regional authorities, especially all the heads of regional governments, are the most important players in the institutional setting of the region. They decide on the structure of the regional administration or government; they set the rules for the functioning of the regional economy. Although the legislative assemblies draw up the regional budget, the chief executive is in charge of managing and distributing the bulk of the region's financial resources. The same is true with regard to the introduction of local taxes or the allocation of money for regional economic programs. The regional parliaments pass the respective regulations, but the governors' apparatus is responsible for implementation. Moreover, in the economic sphere, regional authorities have the right to regulate prices, provide enterprises with licenses and special privileges and decide on privatization. (Makarychev and Perović 2001)

At the beginning of the 1990s, the republics in Russia were able to autonomously decide upon the formation of the political system. Most of the republics adopted a presidential or a semi-presidential form of government. Republics such as Karelia, Altai and Udmurtia chose to set up parliamentary regimes at the early stage, but they had created presidencies by 2000. The majority of the heads of the republics in Russia have been subject to popular elections throughout the 1990s.¹⁹ The chairmen of the republican supreme soviets were indirectly chosen as part of the 1990 local parliamentary elections. In 1991 and 1992, republican presidential elections were held in eight republics, while another eight executives were popularly elected in 1993 and 1994. Thus, republican executives have been accountable to their local constituencies

For some time, during the period between the dissolution of the regional legislative assemblies and the new elections in 1993 and 1994, the chief executives had legislative authority (Zlotnik 1996). In several regions, the element of separation of powers between executive and legislative bodies wore away; officials of the administration were allowed to become deputies in the regional assemblies (Hughes 1997; Ross 2002: 93). Especially interlocked elites, mainly comprising administrative and economic elite groups, which to a large extent were former representatives of the communist *nomenklatura*, managed to strengthen their grip over regional political life by gaining seats in regional legislatures (Hughes 1997; Ross 2002: 129-132).

¹⁹ After 2000, Dagestan has been the only republic with an indirectly elected executive, the chairman of the State Council, which has been selected by the Constitutional Assembly. Udmurtia held its first popular presidential elections in 2000 (until that point of time, the highest executive post in the republic was held by an indirectly elected chairman of the Supreme Council). Karachaevo-Cherkessia held its first popular presidential elections in April 1999. The Altai republic decided to create a presidency in 1997 and arranged its first popular elections in December the same year (the chairman of the republican legislature was previously the leader of the republic). Before 1997, seven republics arranged their first popular executive elections in 1991 (Adygeya, Chechnya, Kabardino-Balkaria, Mari-El, Mordovia, Sakha and Tatarstan), one in 1992 (Tyva), three in 1993 (Bashkortostan, Chuvashia and Kalmykia) five in 1994 (Buryatia, Ingushetia, Karelia, Komi and North Ossetia) and one in 1996 (Khakassia).

and not owed their position to the leadership in Moscow for a long period of time. They enjoyed this privilege up until the second half of the 2000s when a new federal law took effect stipulating that all regional chief executives are to be nominated by the Russian president and approved by the regional legislatures (see below).

Initially, the *krais*, *oblasts* and *okrugs* did not enjoy the same privileges as the ethnic republics. President Boris Yeltsin introduced the institution of governors (or heads of administration) among the non-republics by decree on 22 August 1991. The Soviet administrative system of combined executive (executive committees) and legislative (regional soviets) powers among *krais* and *oblasts* was abolished. The executive committees had formally been elected by, and responsible to, the regional legislatures (but they were in practice selected from *nomenklatura* lists) (Hahn 1996; Evans 2000).

The development of the institution of governors in the *krais*, *oblasts* and *okrugs* has involved a number of stages as of 1991. The question of whether governors should be appointed or not was widely debated between 1991 and 1995. The dispute was part of a prolonged struggle between the president and the parliament. In 1991 and 1992, governors were appointed unilaterally by presidential decree by the consent of the parliament. After December 1992, the regional legislatures had to give their approval to the nominations. In case of rejection of a nomination, or if a vote of no confidence against the governor was passed, popular elections had to be held to resolve the difference of opinion between the Russian president and regional legislatures. In April 1993, elections were scheduled for, and held in, eight regions, since the regional legislatures did not approve of the presidential appointees or nominees (Petrov 1999a: 24-25; Zlotnik 1996). However, immediately after the dissolution of the parliament in October 1993, President Yeltsin recaptured the initiative to unilaterally appoint and dismiss governors (Petrov 1999a; Blakkisrud 2003a: 72-73).²⁰

The story took a new turn in late 1995. In the attempt to resolve a dispute between the president and the parliament concerning the formation of the Federal Council, a compromise was reached leading to the introduction of solely popularly elected governors from 1996 onwards (Sakwa 2002a: 133-134; Blakkisrud 2003a). The introduction of nationwide elections enhanced the regional executives' authority by providing them with democratic legitimacy. It was also a step forward in the process of developing and strengthening federalism in Russia.

²⁰ With regard to the non-republics, as of October 1994, popular elections were allowed to be held only with special permission by the federal centre. Gubernatorial elections were approved and carried out in thirteen *krais* and *oblasts* between October 1994 and December 1995. Before that, gubernatorial elections were held in one region in March 1994, in eight regions in 1993 (see note above) and in two units in 1991, when mayoral elections were held in Moscow and Leningrad (St. Petersburg) (Petrov 1999a: 24-25).

In 2000, President Vladimir Putin managed to push through a bill guaranteeing the Russian president the right to remove regional executives from office if there was evidence that they had committed acts that violate federal law. However, to dismiss a regional executive on criminal charges was complicated in practice: the regional executive had the chance to correct his or her behaviour after having been issued a warning, and, if faced with a second warning, favourable court decisions were required (Hyde 2001: 732-733).

In the autumn of 2004, President Vladimir Putin announced his intention to further reorganize the political system in Russia and increase the federal government's control over political life. One of the propositions was to strengthen the executive chain of command by retaining the power to nominate the previously popularly elected regional chief executives. After the adoption of a new federal law in December 2004, the Russian president obtained the authority to nominate all the regional chief executives, while each regional legislative assembly has to confirm or reject a presidential nominee to the post of regional chief executive. However, if the legislature rejects a nominee twice, a one-month consultative process is initiated. After that the president can make a new nomination, appoint an acting governor for up to six months or dismiss the legislature. If the legislature rejects a nominee for a third time, the president has the undisputed right to dissolve the legislature. The regional presidents and governors in office are permitted to remain in their posts until their terms expire. Therefore, a gradual transition will take place between 2005 and 2009 (Blakkisrud 2005).

So, in general, governmental power in the Russian Federation has been exercised on the basis of separation of powers. This is nothing overly unique if one takes other federal systems into consideration (even though it should be kept in mind that the Russian president and the regional chief executives in practice have enjoyed extraordinary levels of authority). As shown in Table 2.1, a little less than half of the federal states in the world have political systems which are based on the principle of the separation of powers. USA, Brazil and Argentina are typical examples of federal states with presidential systems. In these systems, there are formally strong and independent presidents both at the national and regional levels. However, most of the federal states have parliamentary regimes (fusion of executive and legislative powers) at both the national and the subnational levels. Note, the United Arab Emirates is the exception among contemporary federal states; at the subnational level, the seven emirates have a system of absolute executive power with no emirate legislatures, while the emirs are hereditary rulers.

Table 2.1 The executive-legislature relationship and means of selection of heads of subnational government in the Russian Federation and contemporary federal states.

Type of regime	Means of selection	Federal state
Absolute executive power, no legislature	Hereditary rule	United Arab Emirates
Separation of executive and legislative powers	Direct elections	Russian Federation (1996–2005/2009), Argentina, Brazil, Comoros, Mexico, Micronesia, Nigeria, Serbian Republic, Switzerland, USA, Venezuela
	Majority of executives centrally appointed	Russian Federation (1991–1995)
	All executives centrally appointed	Russian Federation (2005/2009–)
Fusion of executive and legislative powers	Drawn from subnational legislatures	Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, India, Malaysia, Serbia-Montenegro South Africa, Spain, Nevis, Pakistan, Ethiopia

Notes: Bosnia-Herzegovina consists of two constituent units: The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Serbian Republic, which have different political systems. In St. Kitts and Nevis, only Nevis has its own Island Legislature and Government.

The political systems in the republics of Serbia and Montenegro can be regarded as semi-presidential. In such a political system, the president comes to power in general and direct elections, while the prime minister, who is head of the government, is nominated by the president and confirmed by the assembly (see Lijphart, 1999: 121). However, the prime ministers in both federal units (Serbia, Montenegro) are the heads of the government and exercise most executive power.

This arrangement come to a close during President Putin’s second term when it was decided that executive leaders in the future will be appointed by the Russian president with the approval of the regional legislative power bodies. The last popular chief executive elections were held in January 2005. In 2009, by the latest, all regional chief executives will be centrally appointed. The procedure of centrally appointed subnational chief executives does not occur in contemporary federal systems. But this was the case in formally federal states when democratic rules were put on hold; for example, the governors in Brazil and Argentina were appointed during periods of military governments some decades ago. In Venezuela, the first gubernatorial elections since the 19th century were held in 1989, even though the South American country had, formally, been a federation for a long period of time.

2.3.2 Prolonged Length of Tenure of Russian Subnational Executives

The republican constitutions and regional charters in the Russian Federation have permitted their executives to serve for a maximum of two terms and four years per term (five years in some regions). A federal law adopted as late as October 1999 (“On the General Principles for Organizing Legislative (Representative) and Executive Organs of State Power in the Federal Subjects of the Russian Federation”) stated that no regional executive can serve for more than two consecutive terms of a maximum of five years per term (Blakkisrud 2003a). Formally, the length of tenure of Russian regional leaders has been similar to most of the other federal states (see Table 2.2). In about half of the federal states with presidential systems, the subnational executives are, customarily, admitted to be elected for a maximum of two four-year terms (Brazil, Nigeria, Venezuela and USA). The subnational leaders in the Comoros, Serbia-Montenegro and the Serbian Republic are elected to five-year terms for a maximum of two terms. In Argentina and Micronesia, the governors are restrained to serve only two consecutive terms at a time, but they may seek additional terms when one full term has passed after their previous period in office. The governors in Mexico may not seek re-election.

Table 2.2 The maximum length of tenure of directly elected subnational executives in the Russian Federation and contemporary federal states.

Federal state	Maximum length of tenure
Russian Federation (1999–2005/2009)	5 years, 2 consecutive terms
Comoros	5 years, 2 terms
Serbia-Montenegro	5 years, 2 terms
Bosnia-Herzegovina - Serbian Republic	5 years, 2 consecutive terms*
Argentina	4 years, 2 consecutive terms**
Micronesia	4 years, 2 consecutive terms**
Russian Federation (1991–1999)	4 years, 2 consecutive terms
Nigeria	4 years, 2 terms
USA	4 years, 2 terms
Brazil	4 years, 2 consecutive terms*
Venezuela	4 years, 2 consecutive terms*
Mexico	6 years, 1 term

Note: Switzerland is not included in this table. In Swiss cantons and half-cantons, as a rule, the presidency rotates every year among the members of a collegial group. This executive institution, the State Council, consists of 5 to 9 members, which are directly elected by the people, usually for a four-year period.

* Allowed to seek an additional term only immediately and only once.

** Eligible for additional terms, when one full term has intervened since last day in office.

Table 2.3 Leadership turnover in the regions 1993–2004.

Election cycle	Number of elections	Incumbent participates	Incumbent wins
2001–2004	74	59 (80 %)	45 (76 %)
1997–2000	81	71 (88 %)	49 (69 %)
1993–1996	78	74 (95 %)	40 (54 %)

Note: The following chief executive elections are not included: the elections in Chechnya 1995 and 1997; six elections declared invalid in 1993 (Ingushetia, Chelyabinsk) and 1996 (Evenk AO, Agin-Buryat AO, Krasnodar, Amur); ten valid elections held in 1991–1992.

The position of the Russian regional chief executives was, however, temporarily improved. At the beginning of 2001, a new federal law authorized them to extend their time in office.²¹ According to the decision, October 16 1999 was regarded as a benchmark date. Those elected to the post as regional executive after this date were considered to serve their first term. The regional leaders were allowed to continue in office by seeking a third (69 executives) or even a fourth term (17 executives) (Malyakin 2002). This decision further strengthened the position of many of the regional chief executives within their regions and prolonged their time in power. Incumbent presidents and governors have been difficult to defeat. On average, four out of five regional chief executives in the Russian Federation ran for re-election 2001–2004. Approximately three out of four incumbents succeeded in gathering enough votes to stay in office (see Table 2.3). The trend has been the same since 1999, whereby the success rate of the incumbents has been quite high during recent years. Between 1995 and 1998, on the other hand, more than nine out of ten incumbents faced the electorate, but only in 54 per cent of the cases were the incumbents able to continue in office. The survival rate of the governors originally appointed by President Boris Yeltsin was low during this period; a little more than half of the incumbents, which had been appointed by Yeltsin, lost.

²¹ In 2000, parliamentarians in the State Duma thought that some 20 regional executives were treated unfairly after the adoption of the federal law “On the general principles...” on October 16, 1999. “The law was in effect backdated, taking into account time spent in office prior to its adoption” (Malyakin 2002). Putin and his administration indirectly supported the initiative to prolong the subnational executives’ time in office by choosing not to oppose, lobby against or veto the bill. The federal centre obviously wanted to be on good terms with the regional executives after having imposed restrictions on the regions as part of President Putin’s federal reforms. The federal law was passed by the State Duma in the third and final reading in January 2001, while the president signed the bill into law in February. Later, some efforts were made by the State Duma to prevent regional executives from amending regional constitutions and charters in their attempt to continue in office for more than two terms. In its second reading, after the Federation Council had vetoed the amendment, a qualified majority was not achieved. On June 9, 2002, the original decision was confirmed by the Russian Constitutional Court.

2.3.3 Executive Representation in the Federation Council

The Russian Federation has a bicameral legislature—the Federal Assembly—that comprises the State Duma (lower chamber) and the Federation Council (upper chamber). The State Duma represents the citizens and has been composed of 450 members directly elected by popular vote: 225 members elected in single-mandate elections and 225 members elected through party lists. The Federation Council represents the regions according to the territorial principle of representation and should consist of 178 members: “Two deputies from each subject of the Federation shall be members of Federation Council: one from the representative and one from the executive bodies of state authority” (Article 95, Paragraph 2 of the Constitution).

In the absence of clear constitutional provisions, and due to repeated adjustments to federal law regulating the procedure of forming the Federation Council, different methods for selecting the members have been employed: direct elections, *ex officio* membership and appointment. In December 1993, as determined by presidential decrees (issued on October 11, 1993 and November 6, 1993), the members of the newly established Federation Council were elected by popular vote for a two-year term (Sakwa 2002a: 132-133). 59 regional chief executives were elected, whereby they made up about one third of the legislative body in 1994 and 1995. In addition, they had the authority to influence and instruct the other legislators (Zlotnik, 1996; Petrov 1999b).

A change in the procedure of forming the Federal Council occurred in late 1995 after a dispute between the president, who wanted his appointed governors to automatically become members of the Federation Council, and the two houses of parliament, whose deputies preferred popular elections (the federal law, or decree, dates back to December 5, 1995). A compromise was reached, so that, as of 1996, the heads of the regional administrations and legislatures from each region gained automatic membership in the Federation Council (*ex officio* membership) (DeBardeleben 1997: 51-52; Sakwa 2002a: 132-134).

New rules were introduced yet again in 2000 as part of President Putin’s reform package. The regional executives and speakers of parliaments were forced out of the Federation Council (decree issued on August 8, 2000). The regional chief executives and heads of parliament dismissed themselves, as they had to approve, reluctantly, the bill put forward by President Vladimir Putin. The executive and legislative branches in the regions had to find two other representatives for the seats before 1 January 2002. The regional executives had succeeded to delay the configuration of the Federation Council by eleven months and managed to ensure a gradual turnover. According to the new federal law, each regional legislature controls the appointment and dismissal of its own deputy. The nomination by the regional executive branch can be blocked by

a two-thirds majority in the regional legislature, while the dismissal of a deputy requires the consent of two-thirds of the regional legislature (Sakwa 2002a: 134-135; Hyde 2001: 727-731; Remington 2003: 671-672).

When compared to the other federal states in the world, the Russian regional executives are formally in a prominent position, since they appoint their own delegates (together with the legislative branches). Only the Länder administrations in Germany appoint all delegates to the upper chamber, the Bundesrat. The procedure of direct elections is the most popular alternative to fill the seats in the upper chamber of parliament, followed by indirect elections (see Table 2.4). In addition, the members in

Table 2.4 Means of representation in upper chambers of parliament in the Russian Federation and contemporary federal states.

Method of selection to upper chamber of parliament	Federal state
Subnational executive bodies appoint representatives; all seats filled this way	Germany
Ex officio membership; half of the seats reserved for subnational executives, the other half for speakers of legislature	Russian Federation (1996–2001)
Each subnational executive and legislature appoints a representative	Russian Federation (2002–)
Subnational executives allowed to participate in popular upper chamber elections	Russian Federation (1994–1995)
Indirectly elected by subnational legislatures	Austria, Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, South Africa
Direct elections	Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria, Spain, Switzerland, USA
Centrally appointed	Canada, Malaysia
Unicameral	Comoros, Micronesia, Serbia-Montenegro, St. Kitts and Nevis, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela

Notes: The Emirs in the United Arab Emirates, which is a unicameral federal state, appoint the members to the Federal National Council. In the State Union of Serbia-Montenegro, which was established in 2003, the two republican parliaments elected members for two years to the federal assembly. Direct elections are scheduled for 2005. All or most of the seats in Micronesia, St. Kitts and Nevis and Venezuela are filled through direct elections. In the Union of the Comoros, half of the deputies are selected by the Island Assemblies, while the other half are directly elected.

Belgium, Ethiopia, India, Malaysia and Spain are categorized according to how most members of the upper chamber are selected, since these federal states have mixed methods of selection.

Canada and Malaysia are centrally appointed, while six federal states have unicameral parliaments.

In what way were the Russian regional leaders able to take advantage of their ability to control the upper chamber of parliament? As members of the Federation Council, the regional leaders had the possibility to frustrate a formally strong Russian president. The regional leaders held a political position which allowed them to attempt to mobilize the public opinion and put popular pressure on the president. In addition, membership in the upper house of parliament allowed the subnational leaders spend time in Moscow lobbying and working on their relations to national politicians and bureaucrats (Huskey 1999: 193-194). However, the propensity for cooperation and collective action through the Federation Council has been low; the members have, in general, not been able to agree on various issues. In addition, when the regional executives were members of the Federation Council, they preferred to negotiate and interact with representatives of the federal centre independently, not collectively (Komarova 1999; Solnick 2000: 145-146).

2.3.4 Weak Veto Powers of the Russian Federation Council

In the legislation process, the Russian Federation Council is in a position to pass or reject laws (by a majority) adopted by the State Duma (draft laws have to be introduced in the State Duma, but the Federation Council has the right to initiate legislation, see Article 104 in the Russian Constitution).²² However, in case of rejection, the bill is sent back to the Duma. If the State Duma does not kill a rejected and returned bill, there are two ways out of a deadlock. On one hand, if the two chambers do not manage to come to an agreement, they may enter into discussions and resolve their differences by setting up a conciliatory commission. On the other hand, the State Duma can in a second voting, by a two-thirds majority, overrule the veto imposed by the Federation Council (and regardless of the outcome of the conciliatory process) (see Article 106 of the Russian Constitution). At the next stage, the president of the Russian Federation considers the law, after which the president either signs it or imposes a veto. If the president rejects a proposed law, the

²² Besides the right to take part in the legislative process, the Federation Council has great influence in the case of the confirmation over the appointments of key judicial and executive officeholders. The Federation Council approves and appoints judges to the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court of Arbitration of the Russian Federation, appoint and dismiss the procurator-general and the deputy-chairman and half of the members of the Accounting Chamber of the Russian Federation (Huskey 1999: 168-182; see also Article 102 in the Russian Constitution). Another group of constitutional powers concerns matters of national security: approval of the presidential initiative to introduce martial law and a state of emergency; decide on the possible deployment of armed forces abroad. The Federation Council shall also approve border changes between the regions, call presidential elections and take the decision on the impeachment of the president (Article 102).

Federation Council, together with the State Duma, is capable of reversing the presidential rejection. In that case, super majorities are required; that is, two-thirds of the total members in both chambers (Article 107).

In all, the Federation Council in the Russian Federation has rather mediocre powers. This fact can also be confirmed by looking at the upper chambers in the other federal states. From a comparative perspective, the Russian upper chamber has moderate powers; that is to say, somewhat weak abilities to hinder the legislative process initiated in the lower chamber. In Argentina, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, Switzerland and USA, both chambers are equally powerful: the upper chambers are vested with absolute veto power and are allowed to reject laws adopted by the lower chamber (see Table 2.5).

The members in Argentina, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Brazil, Switzerland and USA have directly members in the upper chamber of parliament. In Canada, the senators are centrally appointed, whereby they lack legitimacy and accountability. As a matter of fact, the senators in Canada hardly ever exercise the constitutionally provided powers, which would enable them to balance the lower chamber. The upper chambers in Australia, Germany, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan have some restrictions with regard to their ability to impose absolute vetoes. Several upper chambers may only issue suspensive vetoes. In most of the cases, the lower chambers have to override the rejections by a qualified (Russian Federation, South Africa) or simple majority (Austria, Spain), while the upper chamber in Malaysia can only delay the bill for a brief period. The upper chambers in India, Belgium and Ethiopia have very weak powers.

To what extent has the Federation Council taken advantage of the formal rights to disturb the legislation process by opposing bills passed by the State Duma? How disagreeable has the Federation Council been over the years? In the wake of Putin's federal reforms, the new Federation Council has rarely opposed legislation passed by the State Duma. The shift occurred in October 2001, while the Federal Council was halfway through the process of replacing the members of parliament: only 3 per cent of the proposed laws by the State Duma were rejected between October 2001 and July 2002, compared to over 20 per cent of laws rejected between January 1996 and July 2001 (Remington 2003: 680). However, one explanation to the compliance of the newly composed upper chamber is that the Federal Council often backed legislation initiated and presented by the president and the government. This is a clear sign of the authority and presidential control President Putin enjoyed during his first term (*ibid.*: 678 and 688). Otherwise, the feature of party politics is absent in the Federation Council, since its members are not organized around any political parties (*ibid.*: 667). Therefore, party politics has not influenced bicameral checks-and-balances in the Russian Federation.

Table 2.5. Formal veto powers of the upper chamber in the legislative process vis-à-vis the lower chamber in the Russian Federation and contemporary federal states.

Federal state	Powers of the upper chamber
Argentina	Absolute veto power
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Absolute veto power
Brazil	Absolute veto power
Canada	Absolute veto power
Switzerland	Absolute veto power
USA	Absolute veto power
Australia	Absolute veto power, but deadlocks resolved through double dissolution, re-elections and, ultimately, joint sitting
Germany	Absolute veto power in legislation concerning the federal units, otherwise suspensive veto power
Mexico	Absolute veto power, except for certain budget bills
Nigeria	Absolute veto power in non-financial legislation, deadlocks in financial matters resolved through joint sitting
Pakistan	Absolute veto power only in non-financial legislation, no budget-related powers
Russian Federation	Suspensive veto power, 2/3 majority required in the lower chamber to override upper chamber veto
South Africa	Suspensive veto power in legislation concerning the provinces, 2/3 majority required for lower chamber to override upper chamber veto, otherwise no veto power
Austria	Suspensive veto power, absolute majority required in the lower chamber to override upper chamber veto
Malaysia	Suspensive veto power, short time limits, money bills 1 month, other legislation 1 year
Spain	Suspensive veto power, simple majority required in the lower chamber to override upper chamber veto
India	Deadlock in non-financial matters resolved through joint sitting, otherwise no veto power
Belgium	No veto power, except for very basic legislation
Ethiopia	No veto power

Note: Comoros, Micronesia, Serbia-Montenegro, St. Kitts and Nevis, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela have unicameral systems.

2.3.5 Restricted Devolution of Russian Constitutional Powers

The Russian Constitution cannot be regarded as a guiding and authoritative document which establishes a clear constitutional division of power; it is vague in terms of federal relations and the division of powers between the federal centre and the

regions. The Russian Constitution favours the federal authorities at the expense of the regions. The list of exclusive powers of the federal government is extensive (Article 71). In addition, there is a series of powers which are exercised jointly between the federal and regional governments (Article 72). The residual powers (powers not mentioned in the constitution) rest with the constituent units (Article 73). In spite of this, few residual powers are left to the regions, since Articles 71 and 72 contain numerous provisions. In addition, there are no important responsibilities exclusively allocated to the regions, while the federal centre is allotted with a series of exclusive powers.

This leads one to suspect that the Russian Federation is among the most centralized federal states in the world, even though it is very difficult to compare different federal states simply by looking at constitutional provisions. Venezuela, Mexico, Malaysia and Argentina can be considered to be the most centralized federal states in the world (Watts 2003: 467; see also Brewer-Carías 2003; Mizrahi 2003; Patroni 2003; Means 2003). The Russian Federation can, in my opinion, be regarded as relatively centralized, together with Austria, Spain and Brazil (Watts 2003: 467; see also Sturm 2003; Harty 2003; Costa 2003). On the other hand, Germany, Switzerland, Canada, Belgium, the United Arab Emirates and Bosnia-Herzegovina are examples of considerably more decentralized federal states, in which the federal constitutions guarantee the federal governments great levels of self-determination (Watts 2003: 467; see also Hrbek 2003; Cameron 2003; Stauffer, Töpferwien and Thalmann-Torres 2003; Simmons 2003; Zahar 2003).

As mentioned, the Russian Constitution is considered vague and inadequate with regard to the federal division of power. The rights and responsibilities of the federal government and the constituent units are not, however, wholly fixed: flexibility was built into the Russian Constitution. The division of powers between the federal government and the regions may be regulated in special treaties; power may be delegated by mutual agreement between the federal executive power branch and the regional governments (Article 78, Paragraphs 2 and 3). Over the period 1994 to 1998, 46 out of 89 regions signed bilateral power-sharing treaties and agreements. The federal centre and regional government reached agreements on a case-by-case basis. As a result of signing bilateral power-sharing treaties, the federal centre achieved more predictable relations with the regions. The central authorities also wanted to pacify troublemakers and separatist regions (Ross 2002: 40-43). The bilateral treaty process was a typical example of the dominance of executive federalism; the chief executives at both levels of government were key players in the process and the legislative branches were excluded from the bargaining and signing process (Stepan 2000: 144). Most of

the power-sharing treaties and agreements have, however, been dismantled after 2001 when President Putin addressed that his intention was to reduce or even abolish them.

2.4 Summary

The intention of this chapter was to examine the ability of the subnational chief executives to operate as strong and independent actors within the Russian federal political system. If these political actors are in a strong position of power, and not subordinate to actors at the national and regional levels, they have the potential to take an independent course of action. Strong and independent subnational chief executives are better able to balance and constrain the central authorities by, for example, having the potential to act as veto players or resist the decisions or actions of the central government. Another purpose of this chapter was to compare Russia with other federal states to establish whether the Russian subnational chief executives possess weak, moderate or strong formal powers.

It is very difficult to rank the federal states in a meaningful way, since the leaders of the subnational governments are strong in certain domains while they are considerably weaker in others. Nevertheless, the inclusion of other federal states in this study helped me to position the Russian regional executives with regard to their formal powers. First, the regional executives in the 89 regions in the Russian Federation have been in a very strong position within their regions. Second, they have played a moderate role in federal politics by being in a position to control a relatively weak upper chamber of parliament. Third, the formal devolution of powers has favoured the federal centre at the expense of the regions.

If one takes both the formal and informal powers into account, the Russian regional leaders were at the height of their power between 1996 and 1999. The system of separation of executive and legislative powers was established in most of the Russian regions at the beginning of the 1990s. The balance of power came to lean in favour of the executive authority. The regional administrative leaders have had extensive control over local affairs and have actually been in a position to resist the federal centre. As of 1996, the regional executives became less dependent on the federal centre, since the Russian President abandoned his right to appoint and dismiss the governors, who have acted on a popular mandate ever since. In addition, the regional leaders in 2001 were provided with the opportunity to extend their time in office by being allowed to seek a third or fourth term. In the next years, the ability of the regional chief executives to balance the federal centre will be heavily reduced. A federal law adopted in 2004 authorizes the Russian President to appoint the regional chief executives in the future.

Between 1996 and 2001, by virtue of office, the regional chief executives were, together with the speakers of legislature, members of the upper chamber of parliament. This arrangement provided regional presidents and governors with a political forum at the federal level. However, the Federation Council has not been vested with real and effective powers; the State Duma may override a Federation Council veto by a two-thirds majority. At present, both the executive and legislative branches appoint and recall their own representatives to the Federation Council (even though the regional executives are bound by the consent of the regional legislatures). The Federation Council became more submissive in the legislation process after the turnover of the members in 2001, but this depends on the political authority President Vladimir Putin has enjoyed.

The constitutional division of powers to some extent constrains the ability of the subnational executive to influence policies effectively and take a strong position of power in the Russian Federation. The federal centre is allotted a series of exclusive powers, while no important responsibilities exclusively allocated to the regions. However, during the 1990s, when the federal centre was weak, a large part of the regions and the regional leaders were able to, on one hand, seize greater political autonomy and control over financial and natural resources through acts of separatism and, on the other hand, sign power-sharing treaties and agreements through bilateral negotiations with the federal centre. Nevertheless, President Vladimir Putin initiated measures of centralization in 2000. These measures considerably weakened the position of the regions and the regional political elites.

Chapter 3

Political Resources in Intergovernmental Bargaining

3.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 1, the conduct of federal relations involves processes of continuous bargaining and negotiating between political elites representing the governments at the central and regional levels (Elazar 1987; Rhodes 1999; Ordeshook and Shvetsova 1997; Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 2004). Asymmetry tends to be embedded in federal systems (Tarlton 1965; Watts 1999; Stepan 2000; Ross 2002). In that case, different patterns of relationships are bound to exist. The component units differ from each other demographically, culturally, economically, geographically, politically, etc. Due to this diversity, asymmetric federations have to be adapted to meet the different needs and demands from their component units, resulting in different types of federal relations (Tarlton 1965). Asymmetry has also an affect on the nature of the relationship between the federal centre and the various federal units. Bargaining power is assumed to be a function of the political importance of each region and each regional chief executive (see Treisman 1999: 58). The different subnational actors have different capabilities to exert influence in intergovernmental bargaining games. The outcomes of the bargaining games depend on what kind of political resources the actors representing the component units possess (Tarlton 1965; Rokkan and Urwin 1983; Rhodes 1999). Regional leaders who are able to employ extensive political resources are more likely to successfully defend their interest and strike better deals with the federal centre.

In this dissertation, it is hypothesized that the bargaining power of subnational chief executives largely depends on the different political resources they are able to employ when they bargain with central actors. Mainly contextual variables, which refer to demographic, ethnic, economic, geographic, ideological and political-institutional variables, are expected to affect the relative bargaining power. Despite all criticism (see Chapter 1.4), I shall quantify bargaining power and political resources in order to understand the mechanisms of intergovernmental bargaining in the Russian Federation. It is assumed that the uneven access to structural resources provides

different positions for regional actors in federal bargaining games. The intention is not to examine if or how subnational political actors have managed to convert potential power into actual power or the ability of actors in power relations to develop strategies and employ tactical manoeuvres. The regional chief executives are regarded as individual power holders, even though the political resources which are normally associated to regions or groups are considered as possessions of the individual regional leaders. As executive leaders and figureheads of their regions, they are in a position to make use of collective political resources when they interact with the federal centre.

Two sets of dependent variables are included to quantify the bargaining power of regional chief executives in intergovernmental relations: (1) the chronological order of the regions in the bilateral power-sharing treaty process 1994–1998 and; (2) the relative influence of the regional chief executives among federal political and business elites based on expert surveys conducted in 2003. The two dependent variables are described in more detail in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. A few points should, nevertheless, be made at this stage. Both dependent variables are expected to measure the ability of the regional chief executives to exercise influence in federal relations. With regard to the first dependent variable, the regional chief executives were the dominant actors in the bilateral power-sharing treaty process, whereby there is a connection between the timing of bilateral power-sharing treaties and the ability of the regional executive branch to bargain successfully with the federal centre. The second dependent variable more directly measures the degree of influence of the regional chief executives at the federal level. As I proceed from the assumption that the regional chief executives are regarded as individual power holders, who are in possession of collective political resources normally associated to regions or groups, it is motivated to use the same independent variables in both studies.

This chapter identifies and presents a number of variables that are associated with political resources and expected to enhance the bargaining power of regional chief executives in federal-regional relations. The selected factors will be used as independent variables in the empirical analyses in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. In order to identify relevant variables, the intention in this chapter is to draw lessons from the conduct of centre-region relations in the Soviet Union and Russia during the late 1980s and the early 1990s. Theories and empirical findings relating to bargaining power in intergovernmental relations are also taken into consideration.

Why, then, is it relevant to study separatism in the Soviet Union and Russia? Why can the knowledge of what explains increased levels of separatism in a Soviet and post-Soviet setting help us to understand what determines the relative bargaining power of individual regional chief executives in centre-region relations? In my opinion, the mechanisms of separatism in the Soviet Union and Russia and bargaining power in

intergovernmental relations are quite similar. As will be discussed below, a vital point is that numerous scholars have asserted that separatist behaviour and politicization of ethnicity and protest were only part of the federal bargaining game; goal-oriented regional political elites made every effort to extract political and economic concessions from the central government. Certain preconditions that induced political elites to think that separatism was a desirable and reasonable option may, to a large extent, be considered to be similar to such political resources which are thought to enhance the bargaining power of political actors.

3.2 Separatism and Instrumentalism

In order to draw parallels between separatism and bargaining power, we have to rely on the fact that the instrumentalist school of thought offers the best explanation to different levels of separatism. On this point, one has to be careful and restrictive as regards the drawing of parallels between separatism in the union republics and bargaining power. One may suspect that primordial considerations rather than bargaining ploys were associated to a greater extent with increased levels of separatism among the union republics. This chapter initially discusses different schools of ethnicity research. Two paradigms have been dominant in the study of ethnicity and nationalism in Russia: *primordialism* (Shils 1957; Geertz 1963) and *instrumentalism* (McKay 1982; Douglass 1988; Esman 1994).²³ The primordialist school of thought (also known as essentialism) places emphasis on ethnic consciousness and primordial sentiments. The instrumentalist school (or structuralism) stresses that ethnic mobilization is part of a bargaining process where political elites set out to extract benefits (political power and economic resources) from the state centre.

The *primordialist* paradigm sees ethnic identities as one of the givens of social existence, shaped by historic memory, language, religion, and geographic compactness. The politicization of ethnicity is communal self-discovery; protest, often an expressive act affirming communal solidarity. The *instrumentalist* paradigm sees ethnic identities as contingent and changing self-ascribed roles. The politicization of ethnicity and protest are goal-oriented behaviours—often focused on the pursuit of socioeconomic gain. According to the instrumentalist paradigm, an ethnic identity becomes a basis for collective action when there are comparative advantages to be gained from that specific ethnic identity over alternative ethnic, class, or other identities (Roeder 1991: 228).

²³ A third major paradigm in the study of ethnicity and nationalism is *constructivism*. According to the constructivist school of thought, group identity is socially constructed (or reconstructed) and imagined by the people. Group membership tends to change over time and identity and is shaped under the influence of social, economic and cultural pressures (Barth 1969; Anderson 1991; Nagel 1994). Elite manipulation can be of some importance in the construction of identities, but it is not of central importance (Hale 2004: 461).

A large number of political scientists have moved from the belief that regional protests, especially in the form of threats and acts of separatism, served as a powerful means for putting pressure on the central government in the competition over scarce resources in Russia at the beginning of the 1990s.²⁴ This is in line with the instrumental approach to the study of separatism. Regional elites and chief executives in Russia made demands for sovereignty and openly defied and confronted the centre aiming at improving their relative bargaining position within the existing institutional structure (Treisman 1997; Mitin 2003; Kahn 2002: 123). It should also be recognized that regional leaders pursued personal ambitions for power and they tried to muster public support by displaying outright opposition towards the federal government (Tishkov 1997: 44-46; Smith 2000: 210; Kahn 2002: 122). It has also been supposed that the regional elites in Russia in the early 1990s adopted different bargaining positions in the Russian Federation by publicly taking a separatist stance or a more pro-federalist or pro-centrist attitude. Some of the regional leaders openly declared that they preferred a more unitary state, while others demanded greater levels of political and economic autonomy, or even independence (Dowley 1999).

Separatist threats had to be credible and convincing to be effective. As an advocate of the instrumentalist school of thought, Daniel Treisman asserted that different levels of bargaining power vis-à-vis the central government largely explained the variance in separatist activism among the ethnic regions in Russia in the early 1990s. Regional leaders equipped with adequate power, resources and skills were more encouraged to demand and grab more autonomy from the centre. Treisman stressed that acts of separatism of the regional leaders to a large extent stemmed from rational calculations; they used pressure tactics with the intention to extract benefits from the federal centre. The regional political elites with sufficient political resources had the courage to defy the central authorities and make excessive demands for greater political and economic autonomy. Those who voiced credible separatist threats were successful in deriving political and economic benefits. In order to keep the state as stable as possible, the central government had to appease rebellious regional leaders (Treisman 1997: 247-248).

It should, nevertheless, be recognized that regional politicians did not act defiantly only with the intention of putting pressure on the central government. They were also

²⁴ Many of the threats and acts of separatism and regionalism should not be perceived as something that threatened the very survival of the state. For instance, in the early 1990s, Governor Eduard Rossel and the *Oblast* Soviet strived to secure greater autonomy for Sverdlovsk and upgrade the status of the *oblast* to that of a republic. Rossel and his partners were seen as separatists, but Easter (1997b: 631) points out that it was never the question of full-scale separatism: “The conflict with Moscow, instead, should be seen as an intra-state elite power struggle over political, economic and status resources”.

forced to pay attention to the political forces and the voters within their regions. Some analysts disagree with the idea that a purely instrumentalist interpretation of elite behaviour is the right one. They argue that the political leaders of the ethnic republics were, at least to some extent, forced to be attentive to ethno-nationalist groups within their regions. Gorenburg (1999) states that regional elites in Russia's ethnic republics as a matter of fact promoted ethnic revival in the early 1990s by adopting laws and programmes that enhanced the cultural and political position of titular nationalities. Regional elites avoided bringing up primordial issues in interviews and speeches in order not to alienate ethnic Russians within their regions and to minimize the risk of offending the central authorities. As a consequence, claims for sovereignty and decentralization seemed to be driven by instrumentalist interests. Giuliano (2003) claims that the strength of popular support for nationalism explains the assertiveness of republican leaders towards the centre at the beginning of the 1990s. In some republics, political leaders were pressured by ethno-nationalist politicians and movements, demonstrations and popular support for nationalism. Republican elites responded to the demands for sovereignty and pushed more aggressively for greater sovereignty. After all, the introduction of electoral democracy had made subnational leaders accountable to their constituencies, not Moscow.

Philip Roeder (1991) and Stephen Hanson (1999) have been critical of the pure forms of primordialism and instrumentalism relating to separatism in both the Soviet Union and post-communist Russia. Roeder asserted that neither primordial sentiments nor instrumental interests could alone explain the nature of ethno-politics within the Soviet Union from the mid-1950s up to 1991. Primordial politicization and instrumental calculation rather existed side-by-side and occurred interchangeably or simultaneously.²⁵ Hanson questioned the essence of the primordialist and instrumentalist sets of theories, since neither of these schools of thought managed to explain why the Soviet Union disintegrated, while Russia did not experience a break-up along national lines.²⁶ The findings in other studies do, however, suggest that an

²⁵ Roeder laid emphasis on the importance of analyzing political institutions within regions in order to understand ethnopolitics: that is to say, outbursts of separatism and demands for decentralization. Soviet federalism had provided indigenous regional elites, especially those in union republics, with political platforms and power bases. Thus, they had gained "entrepreneurial skills and means of communications". Such political leaders were in a position to exercise control over mobilizational resources, and they were able to decide when to mobilize members of ethnic groups politically in order to pursue primordial or instrumental strategies (Roeder 1991: 228-232).

²⁶ Hanson (1999) observed that primordialists (or essentialists) claimed they succeeded in explaining nationalism, separatism and secessionism among the union republics of the Soviet Union. The primordialist set of theories was not, however, valid regarding the development in Russia and the Russian Federation. Instrumentalists seemed to be better able to explain the behaviour of regional elites in ethnic regions in Russia. These regional leaders appeared to be rational and promoted nationalism

instrumental approach best seems to explain separatist and secessionist tendencies among ethnically defined regions in the Soviet Union during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Regional wealth and high administrative status, seemingly, best explained the increased levels of separatism. Indicators in the category of ethnicity also explained separatist activism, but only to a very limited extent (Emizet and Hesli 1995; Hale 2000).

3.3 Separatism in the Soviet Union and Russia

The Soviet Union was formally a federal and multinational state. In practice, the federal constitution and structure in the highly centralized socialist state did not guarantee devolution of powers to the constituent units. Federalism was a mere formality in the Soviet Union. William Riker (1975: 97) classified the Soviet form of federalism as communist federalism with all political power concentrated in Moscow and the Communist Party. The Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) had also a federal structure with its own administrative units.²⁷ The domination of the Communist Party effectively restricted the authority and the autonomy of the administrative units. The degree of political decentralization was reduced to a minimum and the constituent units were insignificant elements as regards the practice of federalism (Emizet and Hesli 1995: 502-505; Stoner-Weiss 1997a: 229-230; Filippov and Shvetsova 1999: 66-67).

3.3.1 *The Parade of Sovereignties 1988–1991*

The Soviet Union was formally dissolved in December 1991. The break up of the Soviet Union along national lines was preceded by ethnic mobilization. The trend towards politics of ethno-federalism in the Soviet Union had been on the rise for several decades: “demands for expanded autonomy, protests over language policy, pressures to reduce Russian migration, and intercommunal violence have surfaced in every decade since the mid-1950s” (Roeder 1991: 198-199). The latter part of the 1980s witnessed the rise of cultural consciousness among different nationalities first and foremost in the union republics in the Soviet Union, but also among many of the ethnically defined regions in Russia. During this period, the political climate had

and separatism only in order to gain greater privileges, not to secede and achieve independence (Hanson 1999: 18-26).

²⁷ The Soviet federal structure was hierarchical with different degrees of administrative status. At the top were the 15 Soviet Socialist Republics (SSRs), also known as the union republics. They became independent states as the Soviet Union disintegrated. The larger union republics were further divided into other regions. Among these regions the autonomous republics (ASSRs), which were designated homelands for ethnic groups, had the greatest privileges. *Oblasts* and *krais* followed next on the status ladder. Autonomous *okrugs* and autonomous *oblasts* were of lowest rank, because they were subordinate to other regions.

radically changed. Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms paved the way for political democratization, which terminally unleashed centrifugal forces. For more than 70 years, the Communist Party had managed to keep separatist tendencies in check and hold the Soviet Union together. Eventually separatism and ethnic nationalism flared up, especially among the union republics, but also in the various subregions. Ethnic separatism in the form of calls for independence, declarations of sovereignty and demands for greater political and economic autonomy emerged.

The Parade of Sovereignties commenced as a few union republics took the charge by declaring their sovereignty within the Soviet Union between 1988 and 1990. The great majority of the almost 40 ethnic regions within the union republics also declared their sovereignty in 1990 and 1991. The declarations of sovereignty meant that regional laws took precedence over Soviet laws and that the regional elites claimed they had the right to make independent policy decisions. These actions represented the first steps taken towards independence among the 15 union republics, even though the declarations of sovereignty were not equal to declarations of independence. The Baltic republics Estonia (November 1988), Lithuania (May 1989) and Latvia (July 1989) first declared their sovereignty, and thus increased their political and economic autonomy. The Caucasian republics Azerbaidjan and Georgia followed (in September and December 1989). The Russian Federated Socialist Republic issued its sovereignty declaration in June 1990. By October 1990, all 15 union republics had declared their sovereignty, and in 1991 they became independent states as the Soviet Union formally ceased to exist (Emizet and Hesli 1995: 501-508; Filippov and Shvetsova 1999: 67).

Autonomous republics and autonomous *okrugs/oblasts* within the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) also began to declare their sovereignty in a similar way as the union republics. The autonomous republics were at first motivated to enhance their position constitutionally within the Soviet Union, not necessarily to secede. In that case, they wanted to upgrade their administrative status to union republics, or issue declarations of sovereignty, in order to make clear they were independent of the union republics they were constituent parts of (Filippov and Shvetsova 1999: 67-70). Declarations of sovereignty were also important for the autonomous republics in their efforts to get involved in "the conclusion of a Union Treaty of a renewed Soviet Union and for negotiation of a new Federation Treaty within the RSFSR" (Kahn 2002: 123).

RSFSR President Boris Yeltsin actually encouraged the autonomous republics by urging them to "take as much autonomy as you can swallow". His intention was to make it more difficult for Mikhail Gorbachev in his quest to preserve the cohesion of the Soviet Union (Filippov and Shvetsova; 1999: 70-71; Graney 2001: 33). The North Ossetian ASSR responded first by declaring its sovereignty in July 1990, while the

Tatar ASSR did the same a month later. Within six months they amounted to 14, while all 16 autonomous republics (as well as four autonomous *oblasts*) within the RSFSR had passed their sovereignty declarations by July 1991 (Aklaev 1997: 37; Stoner-Weiss 1997a: 233-234).

3.3.2 *Separatism in Russia*

Regional elites in Russia seized the opportunity and filled the power vacuum, which emerged as a consequence of the state of chaos followed by the collapse of central power and the demise of the Communist Party. Kathryn Stoner-Weiss points out that it was quite a natural progression that regional politicians by 1990, in the midst of the transition process towards greater democracy in the Soviet Union, longed for greater control over policy within their regions. The introduction of democratic elections was of great significance: “Given that the regional legislators were now accountable to their constituents, it is not surprising that they began to demand increased authority over local affairs. The 1990 elections also initiated a struggle over the shape of the new Russian federal system and an ongoing power struggle between the Russian center and the periphery” (Stoner-Weiss 1997b: 73).

In addition, regional politicians were increasingly held responsible for political and economic conditions in the regions; the centre was incapable of carrying out its responsibilities during a time of political and economic chaos. Regional politicians began to protest, since these new arrangements, with increased responsibilities for the regions, did not bring about a more decentralized political system with formal and real powers for the regions. Regional leaders were more or less forced to oppose the central authorities to make the most of the situation and run regional affairs as smoothly as possible. From this time forth, the Russian political system went through a rapid decentralization process. The shift towards decentralization in Russia was the consequence of regional politicians who acted on their own devices and extended their political power. Regional elites had the opportunity to grab greater levels of autonomy when the Russian centre was weak during a chaotic situation both politically and economically (Stoner-Weiss 1997a: 233-246; Ross 2000 405-406).

Separatism in the form of the parade of sovereignties within Russia 1990–1991 was followed by continuous tension between the central authorities and the regions. Regional leaders asserted a wide range of minor and major demands during the 1990s: everything from greater levels of self-rule and autonomy to full independence. Ethnic separatism in the form of demands for secession and independence was, however,

soon replaced by legal and economic separatism.²⁸ Regional leaders began to make “more negotiable and viable demands for greater legal, economic and political sovereignty” (Ross 2002: 54). Legal separatism refers to the process when the regions adopted legal acts that contradicted federal norms. A large number of regional laws and constitutions violated federal norms set by the Russian Constitution and federal laws. The most offending regional laws were regional constitutions that included passages that dealt with declarations of sovereignty, assertions that republic laws have precedence over federal laws, claims that the natural resources are property of the republics and assertions that the republics have the status of subjects of international law (Treisman 1997; Ross 2002: 35-39). The development of economic separatism also seriously undermined the authority of the federal centre. Economic separatism refers to acts such as when regional authorities refused to implement federal economic legislation, made efforts to denationalize industries, took control of land and natural resources, withheld tax payments to the federal centre, imposed their own import and export regulations and signed trade agreements with foreign states (Ross 2002: 61-63).

3.3.3 Previous Studies of Separatism

A plethora of studies emerged in the wake of the separatist and secessionist crises in the Soviet Union and Russia. Political scientists tested the relevance of different sets of theories to explain reasons for increased levels of separatism and ethnic nationalism. It was an appreciative task, since scholars have not been able to develop a general explanation for the phenomenon; the relevance of theories regarding separatism and nationalism changes over time and space. The study of separatism in the Soviet Union and Russia has primarily dealt with the phenomenon in ethnic regions, since many regions were inhabited by substantial non-Russian ethnic groups. In Russia, separatism and regionalism was also quite common among many of the territorially defined regions, in which the great majority consists of ethnic Russians, even though to a lesser extent than in ethnic republics.

Emizet and Hesli (1995) examined the process of ethnic nationalism and separatism within a Soviet context by means of quantitative analyses. They used the date of declared sovereignty as a measure of disposition to secede among the 15 union

²⁸ The federal centre was able to turn back the tide of ethnic separatism and calls for secession. Only Chechnya continued its resistance and attempted to secede, whereby the federal authorities decided to intervene militarily in 1995. The other regions realized that the best alternative was to remain in the federation. Demographic, geopolitical and economic constraints also had a decisive effect on the fact that secession was not a liable option for most of the regions (Ross 2002: 53-58; Hughes 2001; Blakkisrud 1997). In addition, the federal centre was forced to appease the most opportunistic regional leaders, which, in turn, stifled the aspirations of ethno-nationalist forces within the regions. The regions were drawn into the new federation via the signings of Federation Treaty (1992), the Russian Constitution (1993) and bilateral power-sharing treaties (1994–1998).

republics in the Soviet Union. Hale (2000) used a similar dependent variable, but included as many as 45 ethnically defined regions (union republics, autonomous republics and autonomous districts) within the Soviet Union. Hale and Taagepera (2002) have drawn lessons from the collapse of the Soviet Union by echoing the findings of Emizet and Hesli (1995) and Hale (2000).

Treisman (1997) examined ethno-nationalist activism in the 32 ethnically defined regions in Russia 1990–1994. An index of separatism was created that indicated variation in separatist strategies of political leaders. Dowley (1999) created a political autonomy index that registered the extent that regional elites in all the 89 regions made calls for greater levels of political and economic autonomy or even independence 1991–1995. Hughes (2001) discussed structural constraints on secession potential in Russia; that is, why no other regions than Chechnya chose to go down the path of secession despite times of fragmentation of state authority and political and economic chaos. Mitin (2003: 54-58) made a summary of six key variables that in recent literature have explained the credibility of separatist threats made by regional leaders in Russia during the 1990s. Treisman (1999) and Ponomareva and Zhuravskaya (2004) have examined the fiscal relations between the federal centre and the regions.

3.4 Political Resources and Independent Variables

In this part, the intention is to identify political resources which can be expected to explain different levels of regional chief executive bargaining power. In the case of Russia, researchers have primarily examined ethnic separatism and fiscal relations in the study of intergovernmental relations. They have, for the most part, concentrated on what can be termed structural power resources to understand and explain intergovernmental politics in Russia. These staple resources refer to, for instance, economic and natural resources, ethnic composition and geographical location of the regions. Several efforts have also been made to explore the ability of regional leaders to mobilize such resources, as they have tried to yield political clout in intergovernmental relations. According to this perspective, the characteristics of an executive's region can largely determine the type and success of strategies employed by a leader to yield influence. Therefore, a series of variables measuring political, cultural, demographical, economic and geographic diversity between the regions will be included in the statistical models.

The intention is not to test the significance of staple contextual factors only. The explanatory value of more dynamic variables will also be tested. Political scientists have asserted that electoral legitimacy tends to increase the power and influence of political leaders. In line with this thesis, popular and durable Russian regional executive leaders should be attributed with greater levels of bargaining power in

centre-region relations. This dissertation also seeks to test the accuracy of the assumption that regional leaders in the Russian Federation are able to transform political strength and authority at the regional level—as measured by election outcomes and time in power—into greater bargaining power and political influence at the federal level. Electoral legitimacy and leadership experience should above all be expected to affect the magnitude of the informal power base.

Seven key categories related to different political resources that have been associated with increased levels of bargaining power are identified and presented in this chapter: 1) administrative status; 2) ethnicity; 3) economy; 4) spatial location; 5) attitudinal cleavages; 6) electoral legitimacy; and 7) leadership experience. Below, the independent variables which will be used in the two following empirical studies, and which belong to the different categories of political resources, are presented (see information on data sources in Appendix C).

3.4.1 Administrative Status

In this section, the significance of administrative status is discussed, both in terms of past and present administrative status within the Russian federal structure. The discussion revolves around the importance of having a national territory and why administrative status is associated with the greater bargaining power of regional leaders in centre-region relations. In the Soviet Union and the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, the political-administrative structure was, to great extent, organized along ethnic lines. The establishment of official national territories within the Soviet Union at an early stage helped minority groups to preserve their national identity.²⁹ Major nationalities were given their own territorial bases, or ethnic minority homelands, and some degree of territorial autonomy (even though communist hegemony effectively limited the range of regional autonomy). The concept of titular nationality refers to single or multiple ethnic groups sharing the same name as the constituent unit. These national minority groups had been annexed and incorporated through centuries of Russian territorial expansion.

High administrative status was associated with greater levels of separatism both in the Soviet Union and Russia. This variable has, together with economic variables, best explained increased levels of separatism. Among the ethnically defined units, the political leaders in the union republics went at the fore in the parade of the sovereignties between 1988 and 1991. These declarations of sovereignty were followed

²⁹ In Russia, the subnational units have been divided into two categories of subnational units: (1) ethnic-territorial entities and (2) administrative-territorial entities. Today, there are 32 ethnic-territorial entities: 21 republics, 10 autonomous *okrug*s and 1 autonomous *okrug*. The administrative territorial entities constitute 57 units: 49 *oblast*s, 6 *krays* and 2 cities with federal status.

by those of the autonomous republics (which were subunits of the union republics) (as of 15 December 1990, the *autonomous republics* became simply referred to as *republics* after a constitutional amendment in the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic). The last ones to declare their sovereignty, generally speaking, were the autonomous *okrug*s and autonomous *oblast*s which were at the bottom of the hierarchical ladder in the Soviet Union and the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (Hale 2000: 48-49). In Russia, the degree of ethno-nationalist activism was considerably higher among republics than among autonomous *okrug*s at the beginning of the 1990s (Treisman 1997: 229-230). Republic leaders publicly demanded political and economic autonomy overall to a much greater extent than non-republics (*krais*, *oblasts*, autonomous *okrug*s) (Dowley 1999: 370-371). Analysts supposed that federal units enjoying greater status within the Soviet federal hierarchy were more institutionally developed and had leaders with greater skills and the means to bargain with the central authorities. The political leaders had gained institutional resources which could be easily mobilized since they were in charge of federal units with working political and social institutions. In that case, separatist threats could be perceived as more credible, while political leaders with greater political power also dared to make more excessive demands (Roeder 1991: 228; Treisman 1997: 221; Hale 2000: 34 and 48-49).

At the present time, the differences between the different types of regions are formally not as great, if compared to the federal system during the Soviet period. However, even to this day, the republics in the Russian Federation are considered to enjoy special status and additional authority that can be converted into greater bargaining power (Mitin 2003: 56-57). Yet, the Russian Constitution asserts that all administrative units are of equal status (Article 5, Paragraph 1). But the status as a republic entails certain improved political, linguistic and cultural rights than for the titular nationalities (Smith 2000: 221). In the Russian Constitution, the republics are defined as states with their own constitutions (Article 5, Paragraph 2) and with the right to institute their own state languages (Article 68, Paragraph 2). One has to bear in mind that ethnicity and administrative status are intertwined; they are mutually reinforcing. Ethnic groups that are geographically concentrated into administrative units pose an even greater threat with regard to political mobilization: demands for greater self-determination can be legitimately made. Indigenous elites have been provided with power bases and political platforms from which they have had the potential to mobilize ethnic groups. Furthermore, the representatives of a titular nationality can politically be in a strong position despite the fact that the ethnic group is not numerically dominant in relation to the overall population: they are overrepresented in political institutions (Khazanov 1997: 135-136; Smith 2000: 213).

All in all, republics can be expected to be in a stronger position in the bargaining game than *oblasts*, *kerais*, autonomous *okrug*s and federal cities. Administrative status will be operationalized by creating two different sets of dummy variables. This is done because of the fact that a small number of former autonomous *oblasts* were upgraded to republics in 1991. It can be expected that ethnic regions that have been accorded with special administrative status for a long period of time might have enjoyed greater bargaining power. It is therefore motivated to check for the relevance of both previous administrative status and present administrative status. The first autonomous republics, or autonomous soviet socialist republics (ASSRs), were established around 1920. The Bashkir ASSR was formed in 1919 and the Tatar ASSR and the Dagestan ASSR were established in 1920 (see Table 3.1). During the last decades, the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic included 16 autonomous republics among a total of 88 primary and secondary administrative units (Sakwa 2002a: 205). The first dummy variable is coded 1 for regions that were autonomous republics before 1991 and coded 0 for non-republics.

Even though the federal structure of the Russian Federation is fundamentally a replication of the state structure during the Soviet period, there were some changes made in 1991 and 1992. The republics increased from 16 to 20 in 1991 and from 20 to 21 in 1992. Adygeya, Altai, Karachaevo-Cherkessia and Khakassia were upgraded from autonomous *oblasts* to republics after a decision by the Supreme Soviet on 3 July 1991. These constituent units had previously been secondary administrative units

Table 3.1 Year when (autonomous) republics were established.

Republic	Year	Republic	Year
Adygeya	1991	Karelia	1923
Altai	1991	Khakassia	1991
Bashkortostan	1919	Komi	1938
Buryatia	1923	Mari El	1936
Chechnya	1936*	Mordovia	1934
Chuvashia	1925	North Ossetia	1936
Dagestan	1920	Sakha (Yakutia)	1922
Ingushetia	1936*	Tatarstan	1920
Kabardino-Balkaria	1936	Tyva	1961
Kalmykia	1935	Udmurtia	1934
Karachaevo-Cherkessia	1991		

* The Chechen and Ingush autonomous oblasts merged in 1936 and became the Chechen-Ingush ASSR (this autonomous soviet socialist republic was abolished in 1944 and reconstituted in 1957). On 4 June of 1992, the Chechen-Ingush republic was formally split into two separate republics: Chechnya and Ingushetia.

within the RSFSR; that is to say, they had been subordinate to other administrative units (Sakwa 2002a: 207). In 1992, the Chechen-Ingush republic was reorganized and transformed into separate Chechen and Ingush republics. Therefore, the second dummy variable is coded 1 for republics after 1991 (including the four former autonomous *oblasts* that were upgraded to republics on 3 July 1991) and 0 for non-republics.

3.4.2 Ethnicity

Besides administrative status, ethnicity will also be recognized by examining the size of national groups and the presence of different religious groups. A large number of experts have assumed that regional leaders in Russia have taken advantage of ethnicity in the struggle for political and economic benefits. The ability to use the ethnic card brings greater legitimacy and credibility to demands made in the bargaining game. This blackmail potential is associated with the capacity of regional elites to politically mobilize the population along ethnic and religious lines. The presence of distinct ethnic groups within a territory generates a platform for ethnic nationalism and separatism and provides political leaders with the possibility to mobilize a large part of the population (Mitin 2003: 55-56; Smith 2000: 198).

Quite surprisingly, none of the previous quantitative studies presented in this study show any strong correlation between the degree of separatism and the proportion of titular nationalities in the Soviet Union and Russia. This has to some extent to do with the fact that analysts have examined ethno-nationalist activism among ethnic regions only. Territorially defined regions have, in general, not been included. The inclusion of administrative-territorial entities would, on the other hand, have exaggerated the significance of ethnicity. Nevertheless, there are a number of cultural determinants that signify the importance of ethnicity in the sovereignty parade in the Soviet Union. Low population dispersion correlated with early declarations of sovereignty among the union republics between 1988 and 1991 (Emizet and Hesli 1995). Leaders of ethnic subunits with the least assimilated titular groups also tended to declare their sovereignty at an earlier stage than leaders of subunits in which the titular nationalities had been assimilated into the Russian culture to a greater extent (Hale 2000).

At the beginning of the 1990s, ethnic distinctiveness did not play too major a role in Russia. The size of different national groups did not correlate with separatist activism among the ethnically defined regions. Islamic religious tradition was the only primordial factor that seemed to verify any significance of factors accentuating ethnic self-identification. Ethnic regions with traditionally Muslim titular nationalities exhibited political-legal and economic separatism to a greater extent than ethnic

regions with traditionally Christian, Buddhist or Shamanist titular nationalities (Treisman 1997: 243-245).

Both the size of national groups and the religious profile of the different titular nationalities are used as independent variables in the empirical analyses. First of all, the first set of independent variables measures the concentration of non-Russians and the proportion of titular nationalities. Language is considered a key attribute of national identity in Russia. Language is the principle that defines the national characteristic of the titular nationalities. Even though national identity has been weak in many of the ethnically defined regions, with high rates of assimilation into the Russian nationality, there are implications that titular nationalities that are numerically predominant within their regions are more cohesive and have been better able to preserve their national identity (Smith 2000). It can, therefore, be supposed that the larger the titular nationality groups are, the greater the ability of regional leaders to mobilize ethnic communities, whereby they become equipped with greater levels of bargaining power in centre-regions relations. In that case, the success of regional leaders is dependent on the size of the titular nationalities.

Many of the republics are made up of considerable cultural, linguistic and religious groups. However, there are large differences between the republics: some of them have large titular groups, while others are quite marginal. At the beginning of the 1990s, a single titular nationality made up the absolute majority in only five out of 21 republics (Chuvashia, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Tyva and North Ossetia) (see Table 3.2). Two or more titular nationalities exceeded 50 per cent of the total population in two of the republics (Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria). The titular nationalities in Tatarstan and Kalmykia formed a majority with 48.5 and 45.4 per cent of the population. Ethnic Russians made up the majority in 12 out of 21 republics (they were in an absolute majority in nine cases). The other 11 ethnical-territorial entities—the autonomous *okrugs* and the autonomous *oblast*—are generally small in size and their titular nationalities only constitute a fraction of the total population (see Table 3.3). Only the Aginsk-Buryat and Komi-Permyak autonomous *okrugs* incorporate titular nationalities that outnumber ethnic Russians and form more than 50 per cent of the population. The *krais*, *oblasts* and federal cities are administrative-territorial entities that primarily incorporate ethnic Russians. Ethnic Russians made up between 72.0 and 97.4 per cent of the population in the territorially defined regions at the beginning of the 1990s.

Religion is also a potent social cleavage that affects intergroup relations. For instance, regional leaders are in a position to publicly threaten the federal authorities with religious conflict or they may claim they are safeguards against religious extremism, and thereby press for political and economic benefits. Federal authorities may also be

Table 3.2 Titular ethnic groups in the republics (1989).

Region	Titular nationality group	Titular group (%)	Ethnic Russians (%)	Religious profile of titular nationality
Bashkortostan	Bashkir	21.9	39.3	Muslim
Tatarstan	Tatarian	48.5	43.3	Muslim
Sakha (Yakutia)	Yakutian	33.4	50.3	Shamanist, animist
Khakassia	Khakasian	11.1	79.5	Shamanist, animist
Udmurtia	Udmurtian	30.9	58.9	Shamanist, animist
Karelia	Karelian	10.0	73.6	Christian
Komi	Komi	23.3	57.7	Christian
Chuvashia	Chuvashian	67.8	26.7	Christian
Mari El	Marian	43.3	47.5	Shamanist, animist
Mordovia	Mordvinian	32.5	60.8	Shamanist, animist
Buryatia	Buryatian	24.0	69.9	Buddhist
North Ossetia	Osetian	53.0	29.9	Christian
Adygeya	Adygei	22.1	68.0	Muslim
Kabardino-Balkariya	Kabardinian	48.2	32.0	Muslim
	Balkar	9.4		Muslim
Karachaevo-Cherkessia	Karachaev	31.2	42.4	Muslim
	Cherkessian	9.7		Muslim
Dagestan	(14 groups)	80.2	9.2	Muslim
Kalmykia	Kalmykian	45.4	37.7	Buddhist
Altai republic	Altai	31.0	60.4	Shamanist, animist
Tyva	Tuvinian	64.3	32.0	Buddhist
Ingushetia	Ingushetian	74.0	13	Muslim

Table 3.3 Titular ethnic groups in the autonomous okrugs and oblasts (1989).

Region	Titular nationality group	Titular group (%)	Ethnic Russians (%)	Religious profile of titular nationality
Khanty-Mansi AO	Khant	0.9	66.3	Shamanist, animist
	Mansi	0.5		Shamanist, animist
Jewish AO	Jewish	4.2	83.2	Jewish
Yamalo-Nenets AO	Nenets	4.2	59.2	Shamanist, animist
Chukotka AO	Chukchi	7.3	66.1	Shamanist, animist
Nenets AO	Nenets	11.9	65.8	Shamanist, animist
Taymyr AO	Dolgani	8.9	67.1	Shamanist, animist
Evenk AO	Evenk	14.1	67.5	Shamanist, animist
Koryakia AO	Koryak	16.5	62.0	Shamanist, animist
Ust-Orda Buryat AO	Buryatian	36.3	56.5	Buddhist
Aginsk-Buryat AO	Buryatian	54.9	40.8	Buddhist
Komi-Permyak AO	Komi-Permyak	60.2	36.1	Shamanist, animist

extra attentive towards political representatives of culturally distant ethnic groups. Treisman (1997) demonstrated that republics with predominantly Muslim titular nationalities have been more successful and courageous in the federal bargaining game. Adygeya, Bashkortostan, Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia and Tatarstan have Muslim titular nationalities among the Russian regions. A dummy variable coded 1 for republics with Muslim titular nationalities and 0 for other regions is used in the empirical analyses.

There is also a number of large titular nationality groups that are predominantly Buddhist. They can be found in three republics (Buryatia, Kalmykia and Tyva) and two autonomous *okrugs* (Ust-Orda Buryat AO and Aginsk-Buryat AO). A dummy variable marking whether republics have Buddhist titular nationalities (1) or not (0) is introduced to test whether the existence of a separate Buddhist religious identity is of any significance. Only the titular nationalities in Karelia, Komi and North Ossetia are predominantly Christian and the representatives of this religion are assumed to have the least advantageous position in the federal bargaining game. As many as five republics and eight autonomous *okrugs* have titular nationalities that are shamanist and animist in religion. This will not be recognized in this study. The titular nationalities in these regions usually form a minority of the population. There have neither been any indications that such religious groups have been in an advantageous position in Russia.

3.4.3 Economy

A number of economic variables are included to test the assumption that the economic status of regions is related to different levels of bargaining power. Leaders of wealthy regions were more prone to act courageously in the bargaining game by voicing separatist threats and making greater demands for decentralization during the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. Hughes points out that even though many regions made demands for greater sovereignty “only those with significant economic assets had the leverage to bargain seriously with the federal government” (Hughes 2001: 42). They had sufficient resources to go head to head with the central authorities and go down the path of separatism by demanding and granting themselves greater autonomy. They also managed to put pressure on the federal centre that rendered them greater economic concessions. Regions with sufficient economic resources were less dependent on the federal centre and subsidies, whereby their leaders were more inclined to challenge the central authorities. Advocates of separatism and secessionism had the possibility to politicize around economic issues and hint at the fact that the federal centre is more or less exploiting the region.

Emizet and Hesli (1995) concluded that high socio-economic development (besides low population dispersion) was the strongest predictor for early declarations of

sovereignty among the 15 union republics in the Soviet Union. Representatives of advanced national populations also seemed to desire autonomy much more than representatives of backward titular nationalities (Emizet and Hesli 1995). Hale (2000) also observed that regional wealth (together with previous autonomy within the Soviet federal structure) best explained variance in the dependent variable (the timing of sovereignty declarations in 45 ethnically defined regions within the Soviet Union).

Treisman (1997) emphasized the great importance of bargaining power of regional leaders in his attempts to explain different levels of separatist activism among the ethnically defined administrative subunits in Russia in the early 1990s. Extensive regional economic resources provided regional leaders with greater leverage to bargain and pressure the central government. Since they had the courage and credibility to act more provocatively, and press claims in the “game of nerves” with the centre, they managed to achieve greater autonomy and extract economic benefits (*ibid.*: 246-247).

There are major inequalities across regions in terms of economic development in Russia. Regional inequality generally increased during the 1990s. Especially regions with strong natural-resource-based export capabilities and commercial and financial hubs (which had the ability to sell to the outside world) fared better during difficult times (Hanson 2005). Due to the great levels of socio-economic asymmetry, it is assumed that “economic strength leads to differentials in the political powers of the regional elites” (Ross 2002: 76). Prosperous regions during the 1990s were more inclined to act insubordinately, since they were less dependent on financial support offered in the form of centrally controlled and administered subsidies (Mitin 2003: 57-58; Hughes 2001: 42; Dowley 1999: 377-378). The federal centre was, at least to some extent, dependent on wealthy regions providing the federal state with tax incomes. Political leaders in charge of regions which supply a great amount of taxes are presumed to enjoy greater levels of bargaining power and influence vis-à-vis the federal centre (Chirikova and Lapina 2001: 59). Also, confrontation was a viable option for leaders in economically self-sufficient regions, since they, to a lesser degree, had to fear central economic sanctions (Mitin 2003: 58).

A range of economic indicators are associated with increased levels of separatism (and greater levels of bargaining power) in Russia. Large amounts of natural resources and major industrial enterprises have been of great importance to Russian regional leaders (Hughes 2001: 42). Russian regions acknowledged as large producers of raw materials and fuel had separatist-minded regional leaders (Treisman 1999: 42). Independent variables such as population, industrial output, raw materials production and industrial exports correlated positively with the degree of separatism in post-communist Russia (Treisman 1997: 239). The possession of natural resources of value on the world

market was associated with leaders preferring greater levels of political and economic autonomy within during the early 1990s (Dowley 1999: 378).

In the empirical analyses to come, the following independent variables will be included: (1) population; (2) regional product per capita; (3) gross regional product; (4) volume of industrial production; (5) volume of oil and gas production; (6) fiscal dependence of region; and (7) volume of exports. Since the least squares method is sensitive to outliers, the economic variables are transformed into logarithms (log10). Another problem concerns the population variable. This variable may also be an indicator of the political weight of regions in terms of the number of potential voters determining the outcomes in national elections. On the other hand, there is a moderate or strong positive correlation between population and the economic variables that leads one to be aware of the fact that population can be used to measure the economic strength of regions. For instance, Hanson (2005) has pointed out that there is an evident relationship between population size and prosperity. Therefore, the empirical results and the significance of the population variable should be interpreted with caution.

3.4.4 Spatial Location

Spatial location in terms of both proximity to the federal centre and geopolitical or geoeconomic location within the federal state will be quantified. Rokkan and Urwin (1983: 128-129) have argued that a favourable geopolitical and geoeconomic location enhances the political value of a region, and this can be used as a key resource to press claims on the centre. For instance, the identity of group may be historically linked to a territory. Also, interface peripheries with landward borders to neighbouring states may orientate themselves towards alternative cultural and economic centres which offer “different and extra political options which themselves might be converted into political pressures that can be brought to bear upon the centre” (*ibid.*: 129).

With regard to Russia, Mitin (2003: 57) posits that an advantageous location of a region provides credibility and a better bargaining position in confrontations with the federal centre. Political leaders in charge of border regions are thought to be able to make more credible threats of separatism. Hughes (2001: 43-44) also emphasizes the significance of spatial location. This refers to whether federal units are located “at or near an international frontier” and the degree of peripherality in terms of geographic distance to the federal centre. Peripheral border regions are considered to have greater secession potential and they are more difficult to control. Insubordinate landlocked regions may have to face central countermeasures in the form of closed borders and a central boycott. Proximity to other markets increases the independence of federal units. Regions far from the core area of Russia are able to orientate towards other

centres and develop trade relations with other countries. They are, therefore, less dependent on the internal market and the domestic infrastructure. The centre is, supposedly, able to exert more control and influence the closer it is to a region.

The arguments above have not been confirmed quantitatively. With regard to the sovereignty parade among the union republics in the Soviet Union, there was no reason to test the relevance of the hypothesis, since the units had to be located at the perimeter of the Soviet Union to achieve the status of a union republic. The results do show that international linkage to Western Europe, as indicated by membership in international associations, was significant, but these results should be interpreted with caution, since the relatively wealthy Baltic and Transcaucasian union republics are the reason for this relationship (Emizet and Hesli 1995: 526 and 531). Hale (2000) did not include any geographic variables in his analysis.

In the case of Russia, neither distance from Moscow, nor access to an international border or functioning ports, correlated with separatist activism among the ethnically defined regions in the early 1990s (Treisman 1997: 239). A possible explanation to this is that the leaders of the ethnic republics in Russia had not actual secession in mind; they preferred greater autonomy and they were confident enough to press for a wide variety of claims, even though they were surrounded by Russian territory (*ibid.*: 247).

Peripheral regions with access to an international border or functioning ports ought to be more difficult to control. Geographically remote regions are politically and economically less tied to the federal centre (less dependent on the domestic market, ability to orientate towards international markets), while an advantageous geoeconomic and geostrategic location increases the political value of a region. The first independent variable reflects the distance (kilometres) between Moscow and the administrative centre of each region. This variable is transformed into a logarithm form, \log_{10} , since the values are skewed to the right.

Three dummy variables related to geopolitical and geoeconomic location are included. First, border region is a dummy variable that categorizes whether a region has access to an international border (1) or is landlocked or lies at the northern rim without any direct land border to another country (0). The regions coded as 1 are those with international borders located along the southern and western borders of the Russian Federation. Those coded as 0 are the landlocked regions that are surrounded by Russian territory, Kalmykia by the Caspian Sea and the remote northern regions (Nenets AO, Yamal-Nenets AO, Taimyr AO, Sakha, Chukotka AO and Koryak AO). Second, rim region is a dummy variable that categorizes whether a region lies at the rim of the Russian Federation (1) or is landlocked surrounded by Russian territory (0). Third, port region is a dummy variable that categorizes whether a region has access to

one or several important marine ports (1) or not (0). The regions considered to have access to important seaports are: Magadan, Kamchatka, Khabarovsk, Primorsky, Sakhalin, Astrakhan, Dagestan, Krasnodar, Rostov, Kaliningrad, Leningrad, St. Petersburg, Murmansk and Archangelsk (see also map in Appendix B).

3.4.5 Attitudinal Cleavages

The political orientation of both the regional political elites and the electorate may matter in bargaining situations. Some scholars maintain that political leaders in charge of regions whose residents are hostile to the centre are better able to put pressure on the federal centre and bargain successfully. Regional elites may be motivated to adopt an assertive bargaining attitude and defy the centre if they can count on solidarity in the form of anti-centre sentiments among the population. Political mobilization based on ethnic, cultural and religious solidarity adds to the credibility. This goes as well the other way around: if the federal centre is aware of the potential for political mobilization in a certain region with a population demonstrating discontent with the federal centre, representatives of the central regime are more likely to favour the regional leader in question (Treisman 1999: 23-24 and 59; Mitin 2003: 54-55). The political orientation of the electorate is most easily assessed by looking at the votes for communist candidates or pro-Kremlin candidates. In line with the arguments above, Huskey remarks that President Boris Yeltsin appeared to be “most generous with hostile regional elites governing in areas whose populations had voted against Yeltsin or other pro-reform candidates” (Huskey 1999: 210).

Loyalty and obedience did not, in general, bring along any great payoffs at the beginning of the 1990s. Instead, the politics of protest resulted in greater rewards. Treisman (1999: 66-67 and 79-80) finds evidence for the fact that disobedient regional leaders and regions received larger net fiscal transfers from Moscow in the beginning and the middle of the 1990s. Disobedience refers here to regional leaders that opposed and confronted President Yeltsin and the presence of hostile regional residents that voted heavily against President Yeltsin and pro-government political blocs.

The examination of the political affiliations of the representatives of the regional governments would normally be a good way to assess the extent of ideological cleavages between the centre and the regions. In the case of the Russian Federation, the problem is the very large number of non-partisan candidates in regional executive elections. Few executive leaders have had open party affiliations and they have run as independents. Several of those who have been affiliated with a political party have distanced themselves from political parties once elected (McFaul 2000; Stoner-Weiss 2002; Ross 2002: 99-101 and 105-106). Therefore, it is not relevant to look at which

regional chief executives have belonged to the “party of presidential authority” and which have belonged to other political parties.

The independent variables reflecting political polarization are based on the results from presidential and parliamentary elections. The success of (1) candidates and parties endorsed by the Kremlin and (2) candidates of the Communist Party is examined. The first independent variable indicates the success of Boris Yeltsin in each region in the 1991 presidential elections (the results from the 1996 presidential elections cannot be turned into an independent variable, since the first power-sharing treaties were signed in 1994). Yeltsin won the elections by taking 57.3 per cent of the vote in the first round. The Communist Party endorsed candidate Nikolai Ryzhkov finished second with 16.9 per cent of the vote. The other presidential election that will be taken into account is the one arranged in 2000. Acting President Vladimir Putin captured 52.9 % of the vote. Gennady Zyuganov of the Communist Party got 29.2 % of the vote.

The results from the 1993 and 1999 State Duma elections, based on the party-list vote, are also used.³⁰ With regard to the 1993 parliamentary elections, the independent variables reflect the support of both Russia’s Choice and the Communist Party. Russia’s Choice was a pro-government party that earned 15.5 per cent of the vote in the proportional elections. The Communist Party gained 12.4 per cent of the vote. They were the second and third most popular alternatives in the elections (the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, LDPR, headed by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy received most of the party-list votes, 22.9 per cent). In 1999, Unity became the new “party of power”. *Unity* was sponsored by the Kremlin and collected 23.3 per cent of the party-list vote. The Communist Party won the elections by a small margin, having garnered 24.3 per cent of the vote. The levels of electoral support for the different parties have differed largely across the regions.

3.4.6 Electoral Legitimacy

Public officials whose authority is based on an electoral mandate can be considered to enjoy legitimacy. In other words, legitimacy is provided by the voters, either derived from direct or indirect popular choice. Centrally appointed political leaders, on the other hand, lack popular legitimacy. The point is that popularly elected regional chief executives can, in contrast to centrally appointed ones, be considered to be vested with greater levels of bargaining power: they are less dependent on the goodwill of the

³⁰ The Russian Federation adopted a mixed proportional and majoritarian system. 225 of the members in the State Duma are elected from single-member districts and 225 members were elected from federal party-lists on a proportional basis (in 1993, 1995, 1999 and 2003).

federal centre. Politicians held accountable not to the centre, but the constituents, can be expected to be more likely to act defiantly and to indulge in politics of confrontation.

In a wider perspective, the concepts of legality, legitimacy and popularity fit the assumption that regional chief executives who are popularly elected enjoy strong local support, having done so for a long period of time, and are able to transform their power and authority within their regions to an influential position in national politics. Robert Dahl regards legality and popularity as very important political resources for politicians in order for them to gain influence. Elected politicians having gained popularity among certain groups of society are able to make use of it in bargaining situations since they have a large number of supporters behind them (Dahl 1961: 246-250).

Kahn points out that the introduction of elections in the Russian regions (elections for the republican supreme soviets were held between March and August 1990) provided the elected republican political elites with a direct incentive to declare their sovereignty 1990–1991. Newly elected republican elites began to work on draft declarations after the elections (Kahn 2000: 61-62; Kahn 2002: 105-106). Treisman recognized the importance of electoral legitimacy and the manner of appointment with regard to how inclined heads of regional administrations were to oppose the central authorities. Centrally appointed regional executives were considered to be less likely to challenge the president and the central government, as they necessarily cannot rely on a local base of support. By being popularly elected, regional chief executives could base their leadership on an independent source of legitimacy. The federal centre was less able to punish disobedient regional leaders which were only accountable to their constituents, not the president. Therefore, popularly elected leaders were expected to have greater courage to turn to confrontational behaviour (Treisman 1999: 123; Treisman 1997: 223; see also Mitin 2003: 58). Treisman (1999: 127) proved statistically that popularly elected regional chief executives were more likely to oppose and criticize President Yeltsin in the midst of the conflict with the parliament in September 1993.

The size of electoral victory is, in my opinion, also of great importance. Regional chief executives that win overwhelming majorities are expected to enjoy greater authority both in regional politics and intergovernmental relations. A number of specialists on Russian regions have stressed that political weight and authority of regional leaders at the regional level translates into bargaining power and influence at the federal level. For instance, they have asserted that “credible commitment through elite consensus and popular legitimacy” (Pascal 2003: 88), “strong local support and effective control of their regions” (Zlotnik 1996) and “high level of authority among the population of

the regions” (Chirikova and Lapina 2001: 60) enhance the bargaining power of regional executives in their dealings with the federal centre.

Elizabeth Pascal considers elite consensus and popular legitimacy as key bargaining resources enhancing the bargaining power of regional executives in intergovernmental relations. By offering a credible and unified bargaining front, regional regimes have been better able to gain concessions from the federal government, for example, by making threats of separatism and regional sovereignty (Pascal 2003: 88). Regional leaders who have been successful in establishing close working relationships with representatives of the public and private sectors have gained access to information and have been better able to swiftly develop agendas and strategies and produce effective government policies. Such regional leaders earned an advantage in the bargaining process: they had better capabilities to present concrete bilateral proposals and campaign for the needs of bilateral treaties and agreements in the 1990s (Pascal 2003: 76-78 and 86-87).

Furthermore, authority at the subnational level, argumentatively, translates into the ability to play a dominant role in national politics. From the perspective of the federal centre, the fact that regional leaders have strong backing by the local electorate might be regarded as important at the eve of national presidential or parliamentary elections, when the federal centre wants to be on terms with regional leaders in key regions, since the regional leaders have some influence over the preferences of the electorate (Hughes 1997; Melvin 1998).

Empirical results show that the popular base of the regional chief executives mattered in fiscal intergovernmental relations in the second half of the 1990s. There is a relationship between the percentage of votes for the regional chief executives and the inability of the federal government to collect taxes in the regions. Politically strong regional chief executives were more prone to deliberately resist federal tax collection by controlling federal tax agents, by protecting regional companies from paying federal taxes and by helping firms to obtain tax deferrals through bargaining with the federal centre. It is argued that popular regional leaders had more authority within their regions and they did not have to rely on federal political support in times of regional executive elections (Ponomareva and Zhuravskaya 2004).

The first independent variable in this category, popularly elected chief executive, is a dummy variable that distinguishes between popularly elected chief executives (=1) and centrally appointed chief executives (=0). President Boris Yeltsin was in a position to unilaterally appoint and dismiss the heads of administration in the non-republics between October 1993 and April 1996. After this, the regional chief executives have been popularly elected. There are two exceptions. In July 1997, President Yeltsin had

the legal right to dismiss Kemerovo Governor Mikhail Kislyuk (who had not yet stood for popular election) and appoint a new governor. In June 2000, President Putin appointed Akhmad Khadyrov as president of Chechnya. In addition, the president of Dagestan is indirectly elected (by the republican parliament).

The second independent variable, vote for chief executive, measures the political weight and authority of each regional chief executive based on the share of the vote in the first election round in the most recent election. It is most convenient to include the election results in the first round since a number of regions use a plurality (first-past-the-post) system with only one round. Most regions arranged, however, a second round runoff between the two top candidates if the first round did not produce a winner with more than 50 per cent of the vote. In general, chief executive elections in the Russian regions were held every four years. A few regions held elections every five years.

3.4.7 Leadership Experience

Bienen and van de Walle (1991: 687) assert that the skilful use of political resources and abilities help political leaders stay in power for an extended period. Recently elected leaders lack legitimacy and executive experience. In due time, politicians gain experience and they are able to develop leadership skills and amass political resources rendering them with greater abilities to stay in office and exercise power and influence. That is why they proceed from the assumption that the variable time in power captures different aspects of leadership skills and political resources available to a leader (see also Bienen and van de Walle 1989). In other words, durable political leaders are able to accumulate greater political resources attached to office. This will enable them to build up their reputation and bargaining power in centre-region relations.

Hence, in this study, the political strength of individual chief executives also relates to the ability to stay in office for several terms (besides their ability to amass votes). Elisabeth Pascal believes that regional political regimes characterized by longevity and stability have had the best chance to negotiate successfully with the central government in the Russian Federation. The federal government has preferred to bargain with popular and established regional leaders who have been able to offer a credible commitment to political and social stability and implement decisions, agreements and programmes (Pascal 2003: 86-88). Vladimir Gel'man also thinks that dominant regional executives who are able to stay in power for a long time have been favoured by the federal government: "The Russian national authorities need stability, loyalty and predictability of regional political regimes more than open political competition with unclear consequences" (Gel'man 1999: 948).

Table 3.4 Political resources and independent variables.

Expected causal effect	Independent variables
<i>Administrative status</i>	
Ethnic republics are in a stronger position in the federal bargaining game than <i>oblasts</i> , <i>krais</i> , <i>okrug</i> s and federal cities since their leaders have been in possession of institutional resources and they have enjoyed special status within the federal system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Republic status after 1991 - Republic status before 1991
<i>Ethnicity</i>	
The presence of distinct ethnic groups generates a platform for ethnic mobilization, nationalism and separatism, whereby a distinct ethnic identity constitutes a valuable bargaining chip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ethnic Russians (%) - Titular nationality (%) - Muslim titular nationality - Buddhist titular nationality
<i>Economy</i>	
Political leaders in wealthy regions act more courageously in the bargaining game and have greater abilities to bargain successfully with the federal centre since they are relatively self-sufficient and not dependent on federal subsidies; the federal centre is less able to impose sanctions (population may also be related to greater political weight in terms of a large number of voters)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Population - Regional product per capita - Gross regional product - Volume of oil and gas production - Volume of industrial production - Fiscal dependence of region - Volume of exports
<i>Spatial location</i>	
A favourable geopolitical and geoeconomic location enhances the political value of a region; peripheral regions with access to an international border or functioning ports can be expected to be more difficult to control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distance to Moscow - Border region - Rim region - Port region
<i>Attitudinal cleavages</i>	
Regional leaders which are able to mobilize, or are supported by, regional populations hostile towards the federal centre are inclined to adopt an assertive bargaining attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vote for Yeltsin/Putin - Vote for Ryzhkov/Zyuganov - Vote for Russia's Choice/Unity - Vote for Communist Party
<i>Electoral legitimacy</i>	
Popularly elected regional chief executives who also enjoy great levels of support within their regions are able to convert this local authority into greater levels of status and influence in federal relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Popularly elected chief executive - Vote for chief executive
<i>Leadership experience</i>	
Regional chief executives who have consolidated their position in their respective regions by staying in power for several terms and years have gained greater levels of leadership experience which they can make use of in intergovernmental relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time in power

The independent variable time in power indicates the number of consecutive years and months each regional chief executive has spent in office by January 2003. The reason for why the number of terms is not included as an independent variable is that the regional elections are spread out over a period covering almost the whole four-year electoral cycle. A regional chief executive is regarded as having stepped into office when he or she became chairman of the republican supreme soviet, appointed governor by President Yeltsin or elected in popular executive elections (it is not taken into account whether a regional leader previously had been first secretary of the regional Communist Party committee).

3.5 Summary

This chapter identified political resources which can be expected to explain the relative bargaining power of regional chief executives when they interact with representatives of the federal centre. Findings and lessons were drawn from various studies that have dealt with separatism and intergovernmental relations in the Soviet Union and Russia during the latter part of the 1980s and the early part of the 1990s. Seven sets of political resources were discussed and presented. They related to ethnic, economic, geographic, ideological and leadership contexts. These political resources and the independent variables within each category are presented in Table 3.4.

Chapter 4

The Bilateral Power-Sharing Treaty Process 1994–1998*

4.1 Introduction

Over the years 1994 to 1998, the federal centre and 46 regions in the Russian Federation signed bilateral power-sharing treaties and agreements concerning the distribution of political and economic power. This chapter attempts to explain the chronological order of the regions that signed these treaties. The reason why certain regions managed to sign bilateral treaties, while other regions did not, is also taken into consideration. By means of bivariate and multivariate statistical techniques, the ambition is to test the strength of the relationships between the timing of bilateral treaties and the various independent variables presented in Chapter 3. The independent variables are expected to be related to political resources that regional chief executives are able to make use of when interacting and bargaining with representatives of the federal centre.

4.2 Consolidation of the Russian Federation

The first steps to refederalize Russia were taken in 1990 while the Soviet Union still existed. Preparations on a new federal treaty within the RSFSR were called for in July 1990. The Federal Treaty was signed on 31 March 1992 after a series of negotiations involving the president, parliament and regional governments. The Federal Treaty consisted of three separate treaties for (1) republics, (2) *krais*, *oblasts* and two federal cities and (3) autonomous *okrugs* and *oblasts*. Tatarstan and Checheno-Ingushetia refused to sign the Federal Treaty, while Bashkortostan and Sakha agreed to sign it after having received certain privileges in the form of two protocols that accompanied the treaty (Hughes 2001: 46-47; Sakwa 2002a: 219-220; Kahn 2002: 124-132).

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The process of constitutional reform turned out to be fraught with great difficulties (the inadequate 1978 RSFSR Constitution was still in force). A deadlock over the federal architecture occurred due to differences of opinion both between the president and the parliament and between the president and regional governments. Numerous draft constitutions, presented by both the president and parliament, were debated between 1990 and 1993. The increasing tension and power struggle between the president and parliament ended in the use of violence in September/October 1993 and the dissolution of the parliament. Soon after, President Yeltsin presented his own draft constitution that was submitted to a popular referendum. The Russian Constitution gained legal force after having been ratified in a national referendum in December 1993 (Hughes 2001: 48-49; Kahn 2002: 132-141).

The powers and responsibilities of the component units were not, however, clearly defined and safeguarded by the federal constitution. The new Russian Constitution was vague and inadequate with regard to the federal division of power. It established a highly centralized federal system with strong presidential rule. As a consequence, disputes regarding the division of power and responsibility between the central and regional authorities characterized centre-region relations for the most part of the 1990s. The struggle for power mainly concerned how political strength and economic resources should be distributed (Sakwa 2002a: 54-60 and 214-221).

Bilateral power-sharing treaties and agreements were signed between 1994 and 1998 in order to more accurately define the relationship between the federal centre and the regions in terms of jurisdictional and distributional issues. At the negotiation table, representatives of the central government and about half of the regional governments reached agreements concerning the division of political power and economic resources. In the bilateral treaty processes, the federal centre and 46 regions concluded bilateral power-sharing treaties and agreements on a case-by-case basis.

4.2.1 Bilateral Power-Sharing Treaties and Agreements

The bilateral power-sharing treaties (*dogovory*) served as quasi-constitutional umbrella documents, drawing up the general framework for special arrangements between the federal centre and the specific regions. The negotiations took place between representatives of the executive branches at both the federal and regional levels. The treaties were signed by the president of the Russian Federation and the regional chief executives. Each bilateral power-sharing treaty was accompanied by a series of intergovernmental agreements (*soglasbenie*) that adjusted and defined the powers of the regions more in detail: they were adapted to meet the needs and desires of individual regions. The agreements were, in general, subject to renegotiations every four or five

years between ministry-level representatives of the federal centre and regional governments (Solnick 2000: 141-142).

Tatarstan was the forerunner in the bilateral treaty process. The republic was also granted the most extensive and advantageous agreements regarding the division of political and economic powers. The 12 agreements consisted of clauses concerning disparate issues: distribution of property; financial matters such as banking and budgetary relations; foreign economy relations; customs; management of the oil- and defence industry; environmental protection; crime control; military service; education; economic cooperation.³¹ Sakha's and Bashkortostan's treaties and agreements included primarily paragraphs that specified the economic rights of the republics. Sakha's agreements regulated, for example, taxes and the budgetary relationship with the federal centre, extraction of minerals and natural resources (especially diamonds) and economic relations with other countries. In the case of North Ossetia, the agreements related to border issues and the control of migration flows since the republic is located in North Caucasus and borders Georgia (Drobizheva 1996).

Kaliningrad and Sverdlovsk were the first non-republics to obtain bilateral treaties and agreements. In Sverdlovsk's case, 17 agreements accompanied the treaty. These agreements specified the powers of the *oblasts* in several policy areas: management, possession and use of local resources; budgetary and monetary issues; powers in the energy, agricultural and military-industrial sector; the right to international and foreign economic relations; the maintenance of law and order; social issues and education.³² Kaliningrad's agreements were considerably fewer; they amounted to three agreements and concerned education and science, cultural questions and the maintenance of law and order in the region (Stoner-Weiss 1998).

4.2.2 Why Bilateralism?

Why was the practice of concluding bilateral power-sharing treaties and agreements introduced? Why did political bargaining between the federal centre and the regions become institutionalized? To begin with, the treaties and agreements concerning the distribution of powers between the federal centre and the administrative units became a key instrument to achieve more predictable intergovernmental relations. Both the federal centre and the regions benefited from these deals and agreements. The treaties and agreements provided stability and clarity in centre-region relations. A large part of the regional governments obtained greater formal political and economic privileges.

³¹ The bilateral power-sharing treaty and agreements between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tatarstan were available at <http://www.tatar.ru/english/00000038.html>.

³² Sverdlovsk's agreements were available at <http://www.e-reлиз.ru/govern/en/text/ustav3-4.htm>.

Bilateral negotiating was one way to maintain federal relations with regional elites during a tumultuous period. The bilateral treaty process helped the central authorities to neutralize and pacify separatist regions. Bilateral power-sharing treaties served as concessions and they were necessary to “forestall the danger of a split in the Federation” (Ross 2002: 42; see also Nicholson 1999). Thus, the federal centre was able to further consolidate the federation by improving the relations with the most troublesome regions. For example, the wealthy republics Tatarstan, Bashkortostan and Sakha agreed to pay taxes to the federal budget (Solnick 2000: 142).³³

From a negative point of view, the risk of federal instability increased. The element of contractual federalism increased at the expense of constitutional federalism. The signing of power-sharing treaties weakened the credence of the Russian Constitution since many of the agreements contradicted the Russian Constitution (Ross 2000: 409-410). The bilateral treaty process resulted in a more complex and asymmetrical federation; that is to say, an imbalanced federation composed of constituent parts, of which some enjoy different and special rights. On one hand, only about half of the 89 regions signed bilateral treaties and agreements, while, on the other hand, some regions achieved greater privileges than the others. The fear of even greater inequalities among regions motivated some regional leaders and politicians not to conclude bilateral deals (Filippov and Shvetsova 1999: 62 and 73-74; Nicholson 1999; Ross 2000: 409-410).

The practice of asymmetrical federal relations was not, however, something new and unique in Russia. Regions with republican status had previously had greater privileges and rights than the *krais*, *oblasts* and *okrugs*. Asymmetrical treatment in federal relations originated from political and economic inequalities within the political system; the central authorities had to respond to different regional needs and demands. Since Russia was a large and diverse country, it was necessary to consider local differences and, therefore, sign individual treaties and agreements (Tolz and Busygina 1997: 405). For example, the planned Soviet economy with its concentration of certain forms of production and specialized enterprises into certain regions exaggerated the diversities between regions. Such monoindustrial arrangements demanded a redistribution of economic resources; some regions were more subsidized than others. When the system broke down, as a consequence of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, there

³³ It seems that some treaties were concluded for political gains. A series of bilateral treaties were signed on the eve of the presidential elections. 12 were signed during the four weeks preceding the first round of the presidential elections held on 16 June 1996, while six bilateral treaties were signed between January and April the same year. In that case, it can be alleged that the bilateral treaties concluded with the regions were part of a strategy of President Boris Yeltsin to gain loyalty and political support from both political elites and voters in the benefited regions (Ross 2002: 42; Tolz and Busygina 1997: 404; Filippov and Shvetsova 1999: 62-63).

were great variations regarding how dependent regions were on the federal centre in the Russian Federation (Filippov and Shvetsova 1999: 63-64).

Actually, bilateral procedures were established during the late stages of Soviet federalism, during the Mikhail Gorbachev era when the role of the Communist Party declined. Previously, the subnational units could count on representation in the federal centre through the ruling Communist Party. However, in the new political order, regions with a higher degree of federal status managed to enhance their position, while federal units with a lower degree of administrative status lost much of their representation in the federal centre. Hence, some of the latter ones sought to upgrade their status. During the late stages of Soviet federalism, former autonomous republics earned the same status as union republics, to which the formers were constituent parts. Thus, bilateralism became a necessity in federal relations, since the regions in principal were equal actors. Eventually bilateralism also found its way into the political life of the Russian Federation. The procedure was extended into the post-communist society and bilateral deals became common in the Russian Federation (Filippov and Shvetsova 1999: 66-71).

4.3 Empirical Design

4.3.1 Statistical Techniques

This empirical study has a quantitative approach. The logic of the comparative analysis that follows rests on the assumption that political resources enhance the political importance and the relative bargaining power of regional governments and leaders in intergovernmental relations. The political resources and the independent variables were presented in Chapter 3. To begin with, the regions that signed bilateral power-sharing treaties are examined. Republics and non-republics are analyzed both together and separately. In order to consider the effect of single independent variables, the associations between pairs of variables are explored. One has to be careful with regard to which statistical method is used. It is not suitable to use parametric techniques that describe the strength of linear relationships and assume that data are normally distributed. Especially since we are dealing with a time variable, a non-parametric technique is less sensitive to above-mentioned requirements and, therefore, more appropriate. Spearman's rank order correlation will be used to calculate the strength of the bivariate relationships between the dependent variable and the various independent variables. This correlation test simply uses the rank values of the corresponding variables.

Main emphasis will, nevertheless, be put on multivariate analysis. Since time plays a key role in this study, I set out to test the relevance of different variables by applying a

hazards (or duration) model. Event history analysis is useful for timing events (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 1997). In this case, ordinary least squares regression analysis is inappropriate for statistical reasons. First, it is unreasonable to assume that time and durability are normally distributed, whereas the residuals are assumed to be distributed normally in linear regression. Second, duration data are positive, whereby possible negative predicted values generated by ordinary least squares models violate the assumption of normally distributed errors. Third, ordinary least squares regression models assume that causal relationships are linear, while this is not necessarily true when it comes to duration data. All in all, linear-normal models are inefficient and biased when applied to duration data (Bennett and Stam 1996: 244; King, Alt, Burns and Laver 1990: 850-851).

Another problem with the ordinary least squares model would concern censored data. The great advantage of applying event history or duration models is the inclusion of right-censored observations. Otherwise, selection bias would occur (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 1997: 1415-1417). To substantiate, the regions which signed bilateral power-sharing treaties are not normally distributed along the time-axis (the bilateral treaty process took place between February 1994 and June 1998). The majority of the regions are concentrated to January–June of 1996 (16 treaties, 38 %), July–November of 1997 (12 treaties, 29 %) and May–June of 1998 (6 treaties, 14 %). Furthermore, regions that had not signed any bilateral power-sharing treaty are difficult to incorporate in ordinary least squares regression models. The problem with ordinary least squares regression models is that these fail to acknowledge, in a relevant way, that regions did not participate in the bilateral treaty process. If such regions would be included, regression tests would result in biased test statistics and, consequently, biased conclusions. The exclusion of regions without bilateral treaties is not a good solution. Eliminating these cases can lead to selection bias and we would lose a great deal of information.

As mentioned, a duration model will be employed to test the effect of various political resources expected to increase bargaining power. To be able to model event data in the presence of censored cases, the Cox proportional hazards model is an appropriate model that will handle the censored cases correctly. The Cox regression model can also assess the impact of multiple continuous covariates (see Box-Steffensmeier and Zorn 2001: 974-978).

4.3.2 Dependent Variables

The dates of treaty signing will indicate the political importance of regions and regional leaders. This is motivated by the fact that the signing of the bilateral treaties partly became recognized as a competitive process. A lot of prestige was at stake and

regional leaders attempted to secure deals as soon as possible to assert their competence and ability to bargain successfully with the federal authorities. Many bilateral agreements were also accompanied by secret and unpublished protocols (Nicholson 1999: 20-21; Tolz and Busygina 1997: 406). To what extent is it valid to use the chronological order of the regions in the treaty-signing process as a dependent variable? Would not a qualitative assessment of the content of the power-sharing treaties be a better solution? Svendsen (2002) actually constructed a political autonomy index that measured the degree of autonomy each region achieved through the bilateral treaties. The index took into account the extent to which the treaties contradicted the Russian Constitution (by looking at 24 federal competencies, 17 joint competencies and 6 residual powers belonging to the regions). A Pearson correlation test reveals, however, that there is a strong correlation between the timing of treaty signing and the autonomy index ($r_{xy}=.688$, $p<.000$, $N=42$). This is in line with the argument that the earliest signatories earned more rights, while the subsequent bilateral deals provided fewer privileges and were of a more symbolic character (Filippov and Shvetsova 1999: 73).

First, the study includes a dependent variable—or timing score—which indicates the number of weeks after Tatarstan that a given region signed its bilateral treaty. The dependent variable consists of values that indicate the regions that received bilateral treaties. Even though 46 regions signed treaties, there are only 42 bilateral treaties, and thus 42 cases. Four autonomous *okrug*s signed joint treaties and agreements together with the regions (*oblasts*) and territories (*krais*) they were administratively subordinated to.³⁴ The difference in time between the first (Tatarstan) and the last region (city of Moscow) amounted to 226 weeks. Consequently, Tatarstan receives the value 226 and Moscow the value 0 in the bivariate correlation tests (see Table 4.1).

Second, in order to gain additional knowledge of the bilateral treaty process, a dichotomous dependent variable is introduced. The bivariate correlation tests with this dependent variable provide a means to test relationships between the independent variables and a dummy variable that indicates whether a region signed a bilateral power-sharing treaty or not (1=treaty, 0=no treaty).

³⁴ With regard to those regions that signed joint treaties, the best solution is to treat them as joint units in the analysis. The status of the autonomous *okrug*s has been unclear. They were simultaneously constituent parts of *krais* or *oblasts* and components of the Russian Federation. Separate economic data for the nine autonomous *okrug*s have not been published for most of the 1990s; they have been included in the data for the *oblasts* and *krais* where they are located. Therefore, the data for nine autonomous *okrug*s are added into those of the host regions in this study. The following administrative units signed joint treaties: (1) Krasnoyarsk *krai*, Taimyr AO and Evenk AO; (2) Irkutsk *oblast* and Ust-Orda AO; and (3) Perm *oblast* and Komi-Permyak AO.

Table 4.1 Regions and dates of bilateral power-sharing treaties.

Year	Region	Date	Timing score 1*	Timing score 2**
1994	Tatarstan	Feb. 15	226	10
	Kabardino-Balkaria	Jul. 1	207	29
	Bashkortostan	Aug. 3	202	34
1995	North Ossetia	Mar. 23	169	67
	Sakha (Yakutia)	Jun. 29	155	81
	Buryatia	Aug. 11	153	83
	Udmurtia	Oct. 17	139	97
1996	Kaliningrad	Jan. 12	127	109
	Sverdlovsk	Jan. 12	127	109
	Krasnodar	Jan. 30	124	112
	Orenburg	Jan. 30	124	112
	Komi	Mar. 20	117	119
	Khabarovsk	Apr. 24	112	124
	Omsk	May 19	109	127
	Irkutsk/Ust-Orda Buryat AO	May 27	107	129
	Perm/Komi-Permyak AO	May 27	107	129
	Sakhalin	May 27	107	129
	Chuvashia	May 27	107	129
	Nizhny Novgorod	Jun. 8	106	130
	Rostov	Jun. 11	105	131
	Leningrad	Jun. 13	105	131
	St. Petersburg	Jun. 13	105	131
	Tver	Jun. 13	105	131
Altai krai	Nov. 29	81	155	
1997	Bryansk	Jul. 4	50	186
	Magadan	Jul. 4	50	186
	Saratov	Jul. 4	50	186
	Chelyabinsk	Jul. 4	50	186
	Vologda	Jul. 4	50	186
	Samara	Aug. 1	46	190
	Astrakhan	Oct. 30	33	203
	Yaroslavl	Oct. 30	33	203
	Kirov	Oct. 30	33	203
	Murmansk	Oct. 30	33	203
	Ulyanovsk	Oct. 30	33	203
	Krasnoyarsk/Taimyr AO/Evenk AO	Nov. 1	33	203
1998	Amur	May 20	4	232
	Ivanovo	May 20	4	232
	Kostroma	May 20	4	232
	Mari-El	May 20	4	232
	Voronezh	May 20	4	232
	Moscow	Jun. 16	0	236
No treaty	37 regions			237

Source: Nicholson (1999: 73-81)

* Timing score for Spearman's Rank Correlation; ** Timing score for Cox Regression

Third, a dependent variable suited for event history analysis will be used.³⁵ The bilateral treaty process was put to an end in June 1998. Therefore, in the second stage of the analysis, an additional 37 cases are censored. Since the Cox proportional hazards model will be used, the time variable will be different than the dependent variable above (see Table 4.1). The starting value is 0 (when the Russian Constitution was signed in December 1993) (the starting point has no special meaning in this duration model, however). Tatarstan receives the value 10, the city of Moscow takes on the value 236 and the censored cases are aligned with the value 237. In all, the second dependent variable provides values for 79 cases (Chechnya is excluded, while nine *okrugs* are combined with seven *krais* or *oblasts*).

4.4 Results

Why did certain regions manage to sign bilateral deals at an early stage in the Russian Federation during 1994–1998? What distinguished regions that did not sign bilateral power-sharing treaties at all? The empirical part of the study has a quantitative approach. The intention is to examine which factors correlate with the point of time when regions signed bilateral treaties. I begin the analysis by controlling for bivariate relationships (using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient) between the different dependent and independent variables. In the last empirical section, possible multivariate relationships are uncovered with the help of Cox regression analysis. It is important to test to what extent cultural, geographic, economic, political and leadership factors operate cumulatively.

4.4.1 Bivariate Correlations

First of all, the analysis shows, as anticipated, that republics went at the forefront of the bilateral treaty parade (as indicated by the correlation coefficients for both measures for republic status and the ethnic variables in Table 4.2). Seven republics signed bilateral treaties in 1994 and 1995. They were Tatarstan, Kabardino-Balkaria, Bashkortostan, North Ossetia, Sakha, Buryatia and Udmurtia. The first *krais*, *oblasts* or *okrugs* were accorded that privilege in January 1996 when Kaliningrad, Sverdlovsk, Krasnodar and Orenburg received their own special treaties. From that point of view, republics were in a stronger position in the federal bargaining game than *oblasts*, *krais* and *okrugs*. On the other hand, it should be observed that there was an even divide between both the republics and the non-republics: about half of the republics and half of the other administrative units were involved in the treaty parade (whereby there is

³⁵ A previous study of the bilateral power-sharing treaty process (Söderlund 2003a) only included those regions that signed bilateral power-sharing treaties. Multiple regression analysis using the ordinary least squares technique was employed. Dusseault, Hansen and Mikhailov (2005) did, however, use the Cox proportional hazards model and they included regions that did not sign bilateral treaties.

Table 4.2 Bivariate relationships between the date of bilateral treaty signing and independent variables (Spearman).

Independent variables	Timing score			Treaty dummy		
	All regions (N=42)	Republics (N=10)	Non-republics (N=32)	All regions (N=79)	Republics (N=20)	Non-republics (N=59)
<i>Administrative status</i>						
Republic status after 1991	0.553**	—	—	-0.037	—	—
Republic status before 1991	0.553**	—	—	0.094	0.500*	—
<i>Ethnicity</i>						
Ethnic Russians (%)	-0.555**	-0.236	-0.294	-0.128	-0.113	-0.247
Titular nationality (%)	0.540**	0.067	—	-0.079	0.017	—
Muslim titular nationality	0.448**	0.798**	—	-0.064	-0.105	—
Buddhist titular nationality	0.201	-0.058	—	-0.079	-0.140	—
<i>Economy</i>						
Population	0.054	0.212	0.243	0.329**	0.624**	0.283*
Regional product per capita	0.087	0.224	0.220	0.374**	0.624**	0.308*
Gross regional product	-0.024	-0.055	-0.024	0.239*	0.442	0.152
Volume of industrial production	0.066	0.224	0.188	0.336**	0.642**	0.254
Volume of oil and gas production	0.367*	0.394	0.249	0.087	0.247	0.033
Fiscal dependence of region	0.105	0.164	0.207	0.247*	0.539*	0.168
Volume of exports	0.018	0.234	0.321	0.125	0.303	0.079
<i>Spatial location</i>						
Distance to Moscow	0.381*	0.309	0.368*	-0.016	-0.191	0.039
Border region	0.102	0.342	0.178	-0.004	-0.302	0.099
Rim region	0.131	0.355	0.226	0.007	-0.302	0.112
Port region	0.037	—	0.313	0.131	-0.333	0.242

<i>Attitudinal cleavages</i>							
Vote for Yeltsin	-0.274	-0.273	-0.006	0.018	-0.154	0.082	
Vote for Ryzhkov	0.194	-0.152	-0.030	-0.065	0.154	-0.160	
Vote for Communist Party	0.095	0.115	-0.122	-0.100	0.017	-0.151	
Vote for Russia's Choice	-0.118	-0.139	0.023	0.303**	0.416	0.306*	
<i>Electoral legitimacy</i>							
Popularly elected chief executive	—	—	0.017	—	—	—	
Vote for chief executive	0.125	0.417	0.072	—	—	—	

Notes: Data for one republic (Ingushetia) are missing for following variables: *fiscal dependence of region*, *vote for Yeltsin* and *vote for Ryzhkov*. Data for three republics (Ingushetia, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Tyva) and two non-republics (Chukotka AO, Jewish AO) are missing for *volume of exports*. The correlation coefficient for *popularly elected chief executive* is calculated for 25 non-republics, while the correlation coefficients for *vote for chief executive* are calculated for 9 republics and 25 non-republics.

** p<.01; * p<.05

no statistically significant correlation between the binary dependent variable and republic status in Table 4.2). So, from this perspective, the republics were not *per se* guaranteed bilateral treaties.

Previous autonomy among the republics is apparently of some importance. This is indicated by the correlation between the independent variable republic status before 1991 and the binary dependent variable (see Table 4.2). Hence, Adygeya, Altai, Karachaevo-Cherkessia and Khakassia, which previously had been autonomous *oblasts* formerly subordinate to other regions, and which were upgraded to republics in July 1991, did not obtain any bilateral treaty. How can the impact of republic status be explained? On one hand, republican leaders had gained greater skills and capabilities after having inherited working political and social institutions. The former autonomous republics within the former federal system of Soviet Russia had a national imprint due to the existence of titular nationalities; larger national groups were granted separate regions and some degree of autonomy already during the Soviet period. Thus, indigenous elites were, for example, provided with power bases from which they were able to mobilize ethnic groups. In turn, the institutional resources could be easily mobilized and transformed into bargaining power in intergovernmental relations (Roeder 1991: 228; Treisman 1997: 221; Hale 2000: 34 and 48-49; Khazanov 1997).

Which role did ethnic, or primordial, attributes play in the negotiations? What was of greater significance: the impact of republic status or the size of ethnic groups? This cannot be established based on the correlation coefficients in the first column in Table 4.2; the coefficient values are as good as equal. However, when only the republics are taken into consideration, the dependent variables and the variables reflecting the shares of titular nationalities and ethnic Russians do not correlate at all. Thus, the size of ethnic groups cannot alone explain the variance. In addition, the explanatory power of the ethnic variables decreases when all the regions are taken into consideration. As above, this is due to the fact that only 10 out of 20 republics (excluding Chechnya) were provided with bilateral power-sharing treaties and agreements.

With regard to the importance of religion, three republics with predominantly Muslim titular nationalities (Tatarstan, Kabardino-Balkaria and Bashkortostan) were actually the three first signatories in the bilateral treaty parade. However, the relationship between this independent variable and the binary dependent variable is not statistically significant since several Muslim republics (Adygeya, Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia Karachaevo-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria) did not take part in the bilateral treaty process. The same goes for regions with Buddhist titular nationalities.

A conceivable explanation as to why regions obtained bilateral deals at a certain stage was the demographic balance in combination with Muslim faith. In Kabardino-

Balkaria (48 % Kabardins, 10 % Balkars) and Tatarstan (49 %), the titular nationalities were in the majority compared to the share of ethnic Russians as based on the 1989 census. The case of Bashkortostan is somewhat exceptional: at the beginning of the 1990s, the Bashkirs made up only 22 per cent of the republic and they were outnumbered both by ethnic Russians (39 %) and by Tatars (28 %). If the two dominant Muslim nationalities—Bashkirs and the Tatars—are added together, they outdistance the ethnic Russians. From that perspective, it is possible to maintain that Bashkortostan possessed an ethnic resource, as the region had a Muslim majority. Among the other republics, only Chuvashia (68 %) and North Ossetia (53 %) had Christian titular nationalities that were in a comfortable majority. The titular nationalities in Mari-El (44 %), Sakha (33 %), Udmurtia (31 %), Buryatia (24 %) and Komi (23 %) were in the minority in relation to ethnic Russians, and thus they constituted considerable, but not too great, shares of the regional populations. On the other hand, three of the four republics whose titular ethnic groups comprised over 64 per cent of the population did not take part in the treaty process: Dagestan (80 %), Ingushetia (74 %) and Tyva (64 %).

At first glance, economic factors do not seem to have been of any significance with regard to the timing of the bilateral treaties. The enlisted economic indicators in Table 4.2 (except for one variable) do not alone explain the chronological order of the 42 regions which actually concluded bilateral treaties. In the case of the republics, the poor Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia managed to wedge themselves in between the wealthy regions Tatarstan, Bashkortostan and Sakha. Likewise, in the case of the non-republics, several less wealthy managed to sign the treaties at an early stage. There are, anyhow, evident signs that poor regions were disadvantaged and did not take part in the bilateral treaty process. This is especially the case when republics are analyzed separately, while it is less apparent when only krajs and oblasts are examined (see Table 4.2). To illustrate, the financial situation in each region is inspected by looking at how independent each region was of federal economic support in 1995.³⁶

Based on the figures, it is possible to conclude that wealthy regions had greater leverages of bargaining power and, thus, gained the privilege of signing the bilateral treaties. On one hand, eight of the ten most subsidized regions did not take part in the

³⁶ The fiscal redistribution in Russia at the beginning of the 1990s has, however, been criticized for being uneven and subjective, because the federal authorities tended to reward politically and economically strong regions (since they had the best bargaining skills) (see Treisman 1996; Treisman 1998). This thesis has come under some criticism, though, and the results of these studies are regarded as exaggerated, since they only concentrate on budgetary transfers, not the aggregate balance of fiscal flows (see Sakwa 2002a: 238). McAuley (1997) concludes the redistribution of resources in 1995 were de facto motivated by social and economic needs, not because of bargaining skills of certain regional leaders and that the federal centre wanted to come on good terms with strong regions.

Table 4.3 Share of receipts from federal budget in total budget revenue of region 1995 and dates of treaties.

Region	Share of receipts	Date of treaty
<i>Ten least subsidized</i>		
Bashkortostan	0.2 %	Aug. 1994
St. Petersburg	0.4 %	Jun. 1996
Tatarstan	0.9 %	Feb. 1994
Krasnoyarsk	1.0 %	Nov. 1997
Lipetsk	1.1 %	
Nizhny Novgorod	1.1 %	Jun. 1996
Samara	1.2 %	Aug. 1997
Sverdlovsk	2.1 %	Jan. 1996
Yaroslavl	2.9 %	Oct. 1997
Moscow, city of	6.7 %	Jun. 1998
<i>Ten most subsidized</i>		
Adygeya	42.7 %	
Kostroma	44.0 %	May 1998
Kabardino-Balkaria	44.6 %	Jul. 1994
Karachaevo-Cherkessia	45.1 %	
Chukotka AO	50.7 %	
Jewish AO	55.7 %	
Dagestan	64.4 %	
Kalmykia	66.1 %	
Altai, republic of	74.4 %	
Tyva	78.7 %	

Notes: The city of Moscow is considered as an unsubsidized region, even though there are regions whose share of receipts from the federal budget in total regional budgetary revenues is lower than the city of Moscow and which are categorized as slightly subsidized regions (see McAuley 1997). Five autonomous okrugs were also classified as substantially subsidized (Evenk AO) or highly subsidized (Aginska-Buryat AO, Komi-Permyak AO, Koryak AO and Ust-Orda AO) regions, but they are not presented in this table, since each of them in this study are regarded as an entity together with the kraiss or oblasts they were administratively subordinate to.

bilateral treaty parade (Kostroma and Kabardino-Balkaria being the exceptions). On the other hand, as good as all unsubsidized regions signed bilateral treaties: Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Sverdlovsk, Nizhny Novgorod, St. Petersburg, Samara, Krasnoyarsk, Yaroslavl and the city of Moscow. Lipetsk was an exception and did not obtain any bilateral treaty. In addition, Yamalo-Nenets autonomous *okrug* and Khanty-Mansi autonomous *okrug* were also classified as unsubsidized regions, but since they in this study are regarded as an entity, together with Tyumen *oblast*, they are not presented in the table. The relationship between the three administrative units has been strained, since the two wealthy autonomous *okrugs* have protested against the superiority of the

Table 4.4 Population and dates of treaties.

Region	Population (1994)	Date of treaty
<i>Ten most populated</i>		
Moscow, city of	8 793 000	Jun. 1998
Moscow oblast	6 644 000	
Krasnodar	4 940 000	Jan. 1996
St. Petersburg	4 883 000	Jun. 1996
Sverdlovsk	4 667 000	Jan. 1996
Rostov	4 401 000	Jun. 1996
Bashkortostan	4 055 000	Aug. 1994
Tatarstan	3 744 000	Feb. 1994
Nizhny Novgorod	3 683 000	Jun. 1996
Chelyabinsk	3 617 000	Jul. 1997
<i>Ten least populated</i>		
Adygeya	449 000	
Kamchatka	439 000	
Karachaevo-Cherkessia	434 000	
Ingushetia	352 000	
Kalmykia	321 000	
Magadan	307 000	Jul. 1997
Tyva	306 000	
Jewish AO	218 000	
Altai, republic of	198 000	
Chukotka AO	113 000	

oblast institutions and laws (Paretskaya 1997) From this perspective, the likelihood of a joint treaty was small, even though the two autonomous *okrug*s were unsubsidized and Tyumen was slightly subsidized.

With regard to the size of the population, nine of the ten most populous regions, which were made up of more than three and half million people, received bilateral power-sharing treaties (see Table 4.4). Only one of the ten least populated regions, with less than half a million people, did the same (Magadan *oblast*). On one hand, the independent variable population can indicate the importance of political weight of a region in terms of the number of potential voters. On the other hand, correlation tests (the correlation coefficients are not presented here) show that the variable population to a very great extent captures the effects of most of the other economic variables.

A statistically significant correlation coefficient indicates a positive relationship between the timing score and distance to Moscow, both with regard to all regions and non-republics. That is, peripherally located regions concluded bilateral treaties earlier than centrally located regions (see Table 4.2). In Chapter 3, it was presumed that peripheral regions are in a better position in the intergovernmental bargaining game.

Peripheral regions have looser ties to the federal centre and the domestic market with Moscow as a financial gravitation centre. In general, regions with administrative capitals farther away from Moscow than 1000 kilometres signed these treaties earlier than those located closer to the federal centre.

In some respects, the geopolitical and geoeconomic positions of regions appear to be of some significance. Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia ought to have been able to take advantage of the fact that they were border regions (situated along the Russian-Georgian border) in the politically unsettled North Caucasia. The federal centre obviously wanted to support the leaders and gain their sympathies in this part of the Russian Federation (see Lysenko 1996). Otherwise, it is dubious whether direct access to international borders made a difference (the access to international borders was not of any significance according to the correlation coefficient in Table 4.2). First, several of the republics with bilateral treaties were enclaves or bounded by the Arctic Ocean. Second, it does not appear to have mattered whether or not *krais*, *oblasts* and *okrug*s bordered other states. On the other hand, it can be a consequence of the fact that most of the *krais* and *oblasts* bordered rather geopolitically and geoeconomically insignificant countries like Kazakhstan, Belarus and Mongolia. Hence, the dummy variable border region does not correlate with either of the dependent variables.

There are some indications that *krais*, *oblasts* and *okrug*s with access to ports seem to have had an advantage in the bilateral treaty process when compared to enclaves and border regions. On one hand, port regions among non-republics signed bilateral treaties at an early stage (the relationship is statistically significant at the 0.08 level). Kaliningrad, Krasnodar, Khabarovsk, Sakhalin, Rostov, Leningrad *oblast* and St. Petersburg signed bilateral treaties in 1996, while Magadan, Astrakhan and Murmansk did the same a year later. On the other hand, only three out of 14 regions with access to major ports did not take part in the bilateral treaty process (Primorye, Kamchatka and Arkhangelsk).

Since port regions generally have not been among the wealthiest regions in Russia, economic factors do not correlate with the dates of bilateral treaties. Instead, geoeconomic and geopolitical factors helped to explain the sequence in the bilateral treaty process; port regions are gateway regions involved in international trade or military or naval outposts. Kaliningrad, which was the first *krai* or *oblast* to sign a bilateral treaty, was in an excellent position due to its exclave position. Besides being a geopolitically important region, Kaliningrad has a great opportunity to orient itself towards the neighboring countries of Poland and Lithuania and the rest of Western Europe. Krasnodar was close to several important ports on the Black Sea, and the region was also a key region in the North Caucasus with regard to the export and

shipment of oil and other goods. Consequently, Krasnodar signed its bilateral treaty only three weeks later than Kaliningrad and Sverdlovsk. Other significant port regions were also early participants in the bilateral treaty processes: Khabarovsk and Sakhalin have ports on the Pacific Ocean; St. Petersburg and Leningrad *oblast* have access to the Baltic Sea; Rostov has access to the Azov Sea and to the Black Sea. On the other hand, it was not surprising that Magadan (in the Far East) and Astrakhan (by the Caspian Sea) signed bilateral treaties at a later stage, since they were less geoeconomically and geopolitically important. Murmansk could be regarded as an exception: despite its strategic location on the Kola Peninsula, with military and naval bases, plus a lively export, the *oblast* signed a bilateral treaty rather late.

Apparently, political variables do not add to the explanation of the variability in the chronological order. First, the political attitudes of regional voters do not seem to have been of any importance (Support for Russia's Democratic Choice should not be considered to be of any relevance; the apparent relationship is due to the effect of economic variables correlating with support for the party in question). Leaders in charge of regions which supported Yeltsin or the Communists did not find themselves in a better bargaining position (see Table 4.2).

It is difficult to assess whether electoral legitimacy and time in power made any difference. Above all, the units of analysis are not directly comparable since elections have not been held concurrently in all regions. Consequently, there is no point in calculating whether time in power has any explanatory power. Some comments can, however, be made about electoral legitimacy. First of all, as many as seven chief executives in the non-republics signed bilateral deals before popular gubernatorial elections were held. Besides these, there is no evidence that regional executive leaders enjoying high levels of popular support which received deals before their first popular elections were successful in the signatory process (see Table 4.2). Non-republican chief executives originally appointed by President Yeltsin (among those regions where elections were held before treaty signing) were neither in an advantageous position (or disadvantaged position for that matter) in the bilateral treaty process.

4.4.2 Multivariate Analysis

What do the multivariate regression analyses tell us about the relationship between the chronological order of the regions in the bilateral power-sharing treaty process and the different independent variables? With the help of duration models (Cox proportional hazards models) I attempt to assess the effect of multiple continuous covariates. The intention is to check the relevance of previous findings which were based on non-parametric bivariate correlation tests. The final regression models contain what is considered to be the key variables that explain the chronological order of the regions

in the bilateral treaty process. The relevant variables have been selected after having been subject to pretests: both by running stepwise regression, when the computer decided which variables are relevant, and by entering the variables myself in a different order. This was a necessary procedure due to the fact that many of the independent variables intercorrelate. If all independent variables would be included in a same model, it would reduce the ability of the regression model to accurately describe the relationships.

Both regions that signed bilateral power-sharing treaties (42 cases) and regions that did not obtain any bilateral treaties (37 censored cases) are included in the two first models (a total of 79 cases). The estimation results of the multivariate models are presented in Table 4.5. The overall fit of the two Cox proportional hazards models is good and we can reject the null hypothesis as the coefficients are jointly zero beyond the 0.001 level. Model 1 identifies three factors that are statistically significant and quite powerfully explain the variance in the dependent variable: the explanatory variable republic status before 1991 is significant at the 0.001 level, population at the 0.01 level and regional product per capita at the 0.05 level.

Model 2 in Table 4.5 bears witness of the possible significance regarding geographic location. However, the inclusion of distance to Moscow makes the regression model more instable. The independent variables republic before 1991 and population still

Table 4.5 Multivariate relationships between the date of bilateral treaty signing and selected independent variables (Cox regression).

Independent variables	Cox Proportional Hazards Model Estimates		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Republic before 1991	1.54*** (0.43)	1.58*** (0.43)	—
Population	1.60** (0.50)	1.98*** (0.55)	1.43* (0.57)
GDP per capita	1.54* (0.78)	1.33† (0.76)	—
Distance to Moscow	—	0.54† (0.32)	—
Port region	—	—	1.09** (0.39)
N	79	79	59
χ^2	21.84	23.87	12.26
Log-likelihood	320.60***	317.82***	230.44**

Note: Unparenthesized entries are hazard ratios; parenthesized entries are standard errors.

*** p<.001; ** p<.01; * p<.05; † p<.10

strongly correlate with the dependent variable. Distance to Moscow and regional product per capita correlate, but they are only statistically significant at the 0.1 level. Obviously the problem is that the distance variable is negatively correlated with the population variable; peripheral regions have smaller populations, but in spite of this they appear to have received bilateral power-sharing treaties at an earlier stage than centrally located regions (which the bivariate correlation coefficient indicated). Note, the results would be approximately the same if the administrative status variable is replaced by the variables that indicate the share of titular nationality groups or ethnic Russians: both these variables would indicate that the republics were in a privileged position (not necessarily that republics with large titular nationalities had a greater advantage in the bilateral treaty process than republics with relatively small non-Russian ethnic groups).

The bivariate analyses showed that the economic variables alone did not have any great impact with regard to the chronological order of the regions. In the case of the non-republics, this can be explained due to the fact that regions with access to important seaports in general signed bilateral power-sharing treaties at an early stage. Port regions are generally not among the wealthiest regions in Russia, whereby economic factors do not correlate with the timing score in bivariate analyses. This assumption can be verified by running a multivariate regression analysis when only non-republics are taken into consideration. Model 3 in Table 4.5 confirms that the independent variables population and port region correlate with the dependent variable. None of the other independent variables are statistically significant if they are inserted in a regression model.

4.5 Summary

The aim of this chapter was to gain knowledge of, and explain, the dynamics of intergovernmental relations with regard to the bilateral treaty process in the Russian Federation between 1994 and 1998. A combination of different political resources provided a satisfactory explanation of the sequence in the bilateral treaty processes. It is evident that these cultural, economic and geographic factors together explain the order of the regions in the bilateral treaty process very well. Actors within the federal centre obviously had a general picture of how prominent and strong the regions were with regard to the extent of political resources. The federal centre was obviously more or less forced to come to terms with such strong regions to avoid trouble in the form of separatist and disobedient behaviour.

According to the results of the empirical part, ethnically defined regions that had enjoyed republic status before 1991 were more likely to secure signing a bilateral treaty at an early stage. The significance of population was also very great since a large

number of sparsely populated and at the same time poor regions signed bilateral power-sharing treaties relatively late or not at all. The fact is that populous regions were in general wealthy and independent of federal subsidies. Thus, administrative status and economic wealth appear to be the most important factors that were associated with the advantage of receiving bilateral power-sharing treaties and agreements early. Furthermore, geoeconomically and geopolitically important regions which had access to seaports or were situated along important international borders also seemed to fare well in treaty parade. There were also some indications that peripherally located regions had an advantage.

No single region had the optimal requirements sketched out above. For instance, enclaves were also key players in the political process and the intergovernmental bargaining game; especially if they could compensate their poor geographic location by having favourable economic and cultural resources at their disposal. Tatarstan and Bashkortostan were good examples of this. Economic potential no doubt played a great role. A strong ethnic profile and an advantageous geographic location was not necessarily enough: the republics Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan and Tyva, which were reckoned as being some of the most deprived regions in Russia, were not granted bilateral treaties. Interestingly, port regions, which could be considered as being geopolitically and geoeconomically important, managed to sign bilateral treaties early, even though they were not wealthy (Kaliningrad, Krasnodar, Khabarovsk, Sakhalin and Rostov).

Chapter 5

Regional Chief Executives and Federal-Level Influence*

5.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to explain the variation among regional executives in political influence at the federal level in 2003. At this point of time, Vladimir Putin had been in office as president for three years. Despite the fact that Putin had made great efforts to achieve political centralization, the regional chief executives could still be considered as influential actors within the Russian political system. This study involves a dependent variable based on a set of expert surveys that reflect the influence of regional chief executives in central power structures and among the federal business elite. The independent variables included in this empirical study were presented in Chapter 3.

5.2 Russian Centre-Region Relations 1998–2002

During the 1990s, the federal centre in the Russian Federation faced many problems in terms of its ability to exercise authority and implement policies in the regions. The Russian Federation experienced long periods of uncontrolled decentralization and short bursts of centralization. Ethnic, economic and legal separatism among many of the regions during this decade undermined the effectiveness of the central government. A weak federal centre did not manage to control and discipline separatist-minded regional elites who seized greater political autonomy and control over financial and natural resources (Treisman 1997; Ross 2002: 53-63). The years 1994–1998 saw, however, the establishment of functioning relationships between the federal centre and the most assertive regions through bilateral bargaining and the signing of power-sharing treaties and agreements. The equilibrium was seriously disturbed, though, when the financial crisis struck in the autumn of 1998. During a

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time of crisis, many regional governments had to adopt protectionist measures to safeguard their local economies. A large number of violations of federal law were registered during a short period. Reports of non-compliance to federal law and the constitution declined, though, during 1999 (Ross 2002: 64; Stoner-Weiss 2005).

In the aftermaths of the 1998 financial crisis, no strong presidential “party of power” existed. A large number of regional chief executives attempted to fill the political vacuum by creating or joining political blocs or movements. These served as political platforms in the State Duma elections held in December 1999. They sought to enhance their ability to influence and defend the interests of the regions at the federal level. In August 1999, the political movements Fatherland (*Otechestvo*) and All Russia (*Vsya Rossiya*) joined forces and formed an alliance, Fatherland-All Russia (*Otechestvo-Vsya Rossiya, OVR*).³⁷ One month later, the Kremlin reacted by creating and backing a new loyalist party, Unity (*Edinstvo*). Unity quickly gained popularity among the voters and managed to win 23 per cent of the votes on the national party list in the Duma elections held in December. Thus, the Kremlin effectively managed to reduce the popularity of Fatherland-All Russia, which received 13 per cent of the vote, while the Communists polled 24 per cent (Rutland 2000).

The success of Unity in the Duma elections was one of the key events that ensured Vladimir Putin’s rise to power. With Putin as President of the Russian Federation, the federal centre managed to rebuild central authority.³⁸ In May 2000, the federal centre launched a counterattack against the regions by initiating measures of centralization. As popularly elected president, Vladimir Putin managed to push through a series of federal and administrative reforms relatively easily in the State Duma and the Federation Council. Putin set out to restore central and vertical power in the federation with the aim of increasing the cohesion and effectiveness of the Russian State. President Putin believed that the reinstatement of a strong state, by achieving law and order, would solve many of Russia’s problems. The formula to establish a strong state was to wipe out various forms of separatism and to weaken the position of the regions and their political leaders. During the period as acting president, Vladimir Putin clearly signalled for reassertion of federal control and stated that Russia needs a unified legal, constitutional and economic space. However, it was only after the presidential elections, and the inauguration as popularly elected president, that

³⁷ Fatherland was created by Moscow Mayor Yurii Luzhkov in December 1998. All Russia was formed by Tatarstan President Mintimer Shaimiev and St. Petersburg Governor Vladimir Yakovlev in April 1999 (Rutland 2000).

³⁸ Vladimir Putin became prime minister in August 1999. Four months later, on 31 December 1999, Boris Yeltsin stepped down and appointed Putin as acting president. Putin then went on to win the presidential elections on 26 March 2000 and was inaugurated on 7 May 2000.

Putin was confident enough to initiate federal reforms and, especially, restrict the privileges of the regions and their political leaders. The decision process was rapid. The president issued decrees in May, the State Duma and the Federation Council approved the proposed laws in June and the bills were signed into law by the president in July of 2000.

The reorganization of the presidential administration was first on the agenda. Putin created seven federal districts and appointed seven presidential representatives. President Yeltsin had not managed to introduce influential, independent, effective and loyal presidential representatives in the regions: they became too dependent on and influenced by the regional authorities. President Putin drastically reduced the number of presidential representatives from more than 80 to seven. The envoys were ordered to supervise federal agencies (fiscal, judicial and administrative) and discipline the regional executives and legislatures within their districts. They were primarily expected to monitor fiscal flows and regional budgets and to check whether regional laws and constitutions complied with federal ones. The representatives did not, however, obtain any real formal powers, whereby they have only served as the eyes and ears of the president (Orttung and Reddaway 2001: 101-102; Hyde 2001: 721-727).

A way of reducing the powers of the regional elites was to deprive them of their seats in the Federation Council—the upper chamber of parliament—which consisted of the chief executives and heads of regional legislatures from each of the 89 regions. Every region had to find two other representatives for the seats before 1 January 2002. The regional executives and legislatures were, however, able to select the new regional representatives. To compensate the regional leaders, Putin established a State Council as a consultative body and forum for a limited number of regional leaders (Orttung and Reddaway 2001: 99; Hyde 2001: 727-731).³⁹ All in all, the regional leaders became less visible in national politics and the Federation Council became considerably more compliant towards the central authorities (Remington 2003).

Putin also managed to push through a bill guaranteeing the Russian president the right to remove regional executives from office (and dismiss regional legislatures with the approval of the Duma). Dismissing regional executives on criminal charges, and obtaining favourable court rulings, was, however, complicated in practice. Such cases required serious violations of federal law and courts from three different jurisdictions had to give their approval for a dismissal, after which the president could issue a warning. If this warning is ignored, the federal centre was, only then, in a position to

³⁹ The State Council meets four times a year at the request of the Russian President, while the State Council's Presidium, which consists of seven regional chief executives at a time, meets monthly in order to discuss the policy initiatives of the federal government (Avtonomov 2002: 67).

proceed (Orttung and Reddaway 2001: 100; Hyde 2001: 731-734). Putin did not, however, actively try to dismiss any regional executive on criminal charges. Therefore, it is unclear whether the threat of disbandment had any effect on the behaviour of regional executives. The possibility to instigate countermeasures served at least as a psychological weapon for the Russian president.

Two other significant initiatives in the centralization process were that the federal government improved its position in inter-budgetary relations (by gaining greater control of the tax collection on behalf of the regions) and that its control over federal agencies in the regions (courts, law enforcement agencies, media, etc.) was increased. With regard to monetary flows, the federal centre was quite successful and gained greater control over monetary resources. At the end of the 1990s, the regions received 49 per cent of the tax revenues, while they were left with only 45 per cent a few years later (Sakwa 2002a: 238-239).

The federal centre also made great efforts to bring numerous regional constitutions and charters, as well as articles in bilateral treaties and agreements, into line with federal laws and the Russian Constitution (Sakwa 2002a: 233). Among the first key tasks of the presidential representatives was to monitor regional legislation, list violations and bring these into accordance with federal legislation. Approximately 20 per cent of regional legislation was not in line with the federal constitution before the initiation of the centralization process. Most of the regions amended their regional legislation quickly, while others remained intractable.⁴⁰ In the summer of 2001, the federal authorities also turned their attention to the power-sharing treaties and agreements. Many of the 42 bilateral treaties and several hundred agreements did not conform to federal law. Putin clearly addressed that his intention was to reduce or even abolish them.⁴¹ Most regions complied with the instructions and adopted the new rules of the game. Especially *krais* and *oblasts*, as well as traditionally loyal

⁴⁰ By the end of 2000, about 80 per cent of the laws, which had been checked and declared invalid, had either been brought or were in the process of being brought into accordance with federal legislation. In real numbers it concerned 60 constitutions and 2312 regional laws (Hahn 2001). On the other hand, the process was in fact delayed, since the federal authorities had set a deadline of January 2001. In June 2001, 94 per cent of the laws had been brought into conformity (RFE/RL Russian Federation Report 3 (20), 4 July 2001). By March 2002, more than 5800 laws had been annulled or amended (EWI Russian Regional Report 7 (14), 10 April 2002).

⁴¹ On 26 June Putin established a commission (the Kozak Commission) in order to consider the future of the power-sharing treaties and agreements and to discuss how responsibilities should be divided between the federal and regional governments. A deadline was set for July 28, 2002, whereby regions had to bring their power-sharing agreements into conformity with federal law (RFE/RL Russian Federation Report 3 (19), 27 June 2001; RFE/RL Russian Federation Report 17 October 2001). By April 2002 a total of 28 out of 42 treaties had been annulled (RFE/RL Russian Federation Report 4 (15), 24 April 2002).

republics, were compliant. Another group of regions (traditionally troublesome regions such as Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Sakha and Sverdlovsk) proceeded slowly, acted defiantly and forced the central authorities into a series of negotiations. The political leaders in these regions have also been quite unmanageable through the years (Lapina 2001; Söderlund 2003b: 80-89).

Incumbent regional chief executives in several regions managed to consolidate their position after victories in regional elections in 2000 and 2001; members of the presidential administration were not capable of influencing the outcomes of regional elections. This was an obvious failure of the federal centre which, in general, did not manage to replace unwanted incumbent governors by supporting other candidates (Corwin 2001; Corwin 2003a). In addition, in 2001, the regional chief executives were allowed to seek a third term or a fourth term after the amendment of a federal law that regulated the length of term of office for regional executives.

There have been mixed opinions about whether the federal reforms and the efforts to control the regional leaders were successful or not. On one hand, some observers have argued that the main accomplishment is a change in atmosphere: fewer regional leaders openly opposed Putin and his policies after the reforms (Orttung 2001). On the other hand, critics claimed that Putin initially tottered in his attempts to impose reforms in 2000. The reforms stopped at half measures and the federal centre was not fully successful in its mission to obtain a strong state. Putin obviously wanted to avoid serious conflict with regional leaders. Putin offered concessions to the relatively strong regional leaders (Hyde 2001: 736-738). Hence, during his first term as president, it was difficult for Putin to completely change the balance of power in Russia. The federal authorities had the upper hand at the beginning of the centralization process, but the relations of power soon levelled out. The central authorities became more cooperative towards the regions in the fall of 2000 and winter of 2001. The federal centre had not sufficient capacity and instruments to implement federal reforms and policies in all regions; regional elites were capable of blocking the initiatives (Orttung 2001; Isaev 2002).

5.3 Federal-Level Influence in 2003

It feels relevant to examine the relative bargaining power of regional leaders in centre-region relations in 2003. As discussed above, the regional chief executives could still be regarded as influential political actors within the Russian federal system, despite the efforts of President Vladimir Putin to restore central and vertical power by restricting the privileges of the regional political leaders. A series of expert surveys seems to be appropriate to convert into a dependent variable that indicates the political influence of regional chief executives at the federal level (instead of using intergovernmental

transfers as a dependent variable). A research team at the Centre for Political Technology in Moscow has, since October 2000, conducted frequent evaluations, every two months for the most part, concerning the political influence of regional executive leaders (see <http://www.politcom.ru/>). The panels have been made up of around 20 well-known experts representing academic, media, party and governmental organizations. They have estimated the levels of influence of each regional chief executive on a five-point scale. A total score has been obtained by including three parameters: *influence in the federal centre*, *influence in the regional arena* and *popularity amongst the regional population*. In this study, I am interested in only one of the parameters: *influence in the federal centre*. According to the research group, this parameter takes into account the influence amongst the political elites linked to central power structures and amongst the federal business elite.

If one looks at the names near the top of the ratings during recent years, they are mostly regional leaders who have been prominent figures in federal relations for a long period of time: for example, Mintimer Shaimiyev (Tatarstan), Yury Luzhkov (city of Moscow), Murtaza Rakhimov (Bashkortostan), Yegor Stroeve (Oryol), Viktor Ishayev (Khabarovsk), Eduard Rossel (Sverdlovsk) and Aman Tuleyev (Kemerovo). These regional chief executives have not necessarily been loyal to the federal government through the years; several of them have, in fact, acted defiantly and promoted the interests of their regions despite protests from the federal centre.

Rostislav Turovsky's analysis of the results of each rating in 2003 gives an idea of what seems to have an effect on the influence of regional leaders in the federal centre.⁴² The ability of regional executives to affect policies at the national level by promoting their interests in legislative and executive power structures is of great importance. This is in line with the general belief that the most effective way of lobbying is to take advantage of personal contacts with key figures and leading politicians in Moscow. Another channel of influence is personal networks: if regional elites have connections to or are included in various elite groups, which comprise segments of both national and regional elites, they have a much greater chance of making their voices heard in legislative and executive power structures (Chirikova and Lapina 2001: 51-57).

⁴² The six 2003 ratings (January, March, May, July, September and November) were available on the Internet: "Regional'nye lidery v yanvare 2003 goda, <http://www.politcom.ru/2003/reiting4.php>; "Regional'nye lidery v marte 2003 goda, <http://www.politcom.ru/2003/reiting5.php>; "Regional'nye lidery v mae 2003 goda, <http://www.politcom.ru/2003/reiting6.php>; "Regional'nye lidery v iyule 2003 goda, <http://www.politcom.ru/2003/reiting7.php>; "Regional'nye lidery v sentyabre 2003 goda, <http://www.politcom.ru/2003/reiting8.php>; "Regional'nye lidery v noyabre 2003 goda, <http://www.politcom.ru/2003/reiting9.php>.

The ability of regional leaders to push and lobby for bills which are up for consideration in the State Duma is evidently of some importance in the ratings conducted by the Centre for Political Technology in Moscow. To some extent, the strengthening of the influence of Tatarstan President Mintimer Shaimiyev in the May ratings was explained by the fact that he had participated in a coalition that successfully lobbied for a reduced taxation for oil-industry workers. Otherwise, regional leaders who are considered important actors in certain policy areas or in certain state level institutions have fared well in the ratings. Belgorod Governor Yevgeny Savchenko, who for a long time had a noticeable effect on agrarian policy in Russia, has continually been ranked quite high. The influence of Oryol Governor Yegor Stroeov, on the other hand, has been steadily reduced after he had to step down as the speaker of the Federation Council in December 2001.

The establishment of close relationships with representatives of the central government, most importantly the Russian president, shows in the ratings. Governor Valentina Matvienko (St. Petersburg) and President Akhmad Khadyrov (Chechnya) are good examples. Both were strongly supported by the federal centre in the regional executive elections, but they did not enjoy a great amount of authority within their regions. Matvienko, a former ambassador, cabinet minister, vice-premier and presidential representative of the Northwest Federal District, was considered to be the third most influential regional executive in the November ratings, only two months after she was elected Governor of St. Petersburg. Akhmad Khadyrov was appointed head of the Chechen Republic government in June 2000 by President Putin, while Khadyrov was popularly elected in October 2003 after massive support by the Kremlin. Khadyrov was included in the ratings for the first time in November and he immediately occupied 12th place.

There are numerous factors having an impact on how influential political leaders are; static or relatively static factors alone cannot explain the variation. As will be noticed below, single and sudden political events can either temporarily or permanently have an effect on the levels of influence of regional leaders, as perceived by the members of the panels. For instance, radical fluctuations in the ratings occurred after criminal charges were filed against regional leaders by the Kremlin-controlled Prosecutor General's Office. The rating of Governor Mikhail Mashkovtsev in Kamchatka fell sharply in November 2003 after he had been criminally charged with misappropriation of funds allocated for the heating arrangements. The same had happened to Tver Governor Vladimir Platov some months earlier, when he became subject to an investigation and charged with exceeding his powers after an affair involving stolen bonds issued by the Tver administration.

Presidential visits to certain regions have obviously contributed to the growth in governors' influence. The fact that talks between President Putin and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder were conducted in October 2003 in Yekaterinburg, the capital of Sverdlovsk, is considered to have strengthened the influence of Governor Eduard Rossel. Putin also met Rossel during the stay in Sverdlovsk. Putin's visit to Bashkortostan in January 2003 was regarded as a sign of goodwill which strengthened the position of President Rakhimov. A presidential visit to Tyumen *oblast* obviously boosted the influence of Governor Sergei Sobyenin in the March ratings.

The approach of parliamentary and presidential elections also affected the ratings in 2003. During the build-up to the December State Duma election, support for United Russia, the party loyal to President Putin, was associated with a rise in the influence of certain leaders. In addition, regional chief executives in charge of key regions in the election campaign were also thought to have enhanced their position, since many of the regional leaders are considered to have the ability to shape the outcomes of national elections. Turovsky mentioned Rostov and Krasnodar, which are populous regions situated in southern Russia, as important in this respect.

Good relations with prominent business elites and contacts with large business companies affect the degree of influence. As mentioned, the influence of the regional executives in the expert surveys is also determined by their perceived influence among the federal business elite. Big business enterprises have supported and funded the election campaigns of several candidates in regional presidential and gubernatorial elections in their efforts to gain access to policymakers: for example, Boris Zolotarev (Evenk AO), Nikolay Maksyuta (Volgograd), Anatoly Guzhvin (Astrakhan), Anatoly Yefremov (Arkhangelsk), Vyacheslav Lyubimov (Ryazan) and Konstantin Titov (Samara) have received support from companies such as Gazprom, LUKoil, Russian Aluminium, TNK and Yukos.

There has also been an influx of national and regional-level business leaders, especially from extractive industries, in recent years. Between 2000 and 2002 eight present or former heads of business companies were elected: Aleksandr Khloponin of Taymyr AO and Krasnoyarsk (Norilsk Nickel), Khazret Sovmen of Adygeya (Polyus Gold Mining), Vyacheslav Shtyrov of Sakha (Alrosa diamond company), Sergei Darkin of Primorye (Roliz fishing company), Boris Zolotarev of Evenk AO (Yukos), Roman Abramovich of Chukotka (Sibneft), Vladimir Loginov of Koryak AO (Koryakgeodobycha) and Leonid Markelov of Mari El (Rosgosstrakh) (see Corwin 2003b). Roman Abramovich has been regarded as one of the most influential regional leaders in the Russian Federation in recent years, despite the fact that he is governor for the remote, poor and sparsely populated region of Chukotka. While governors such as Abramovich, Khloponin and Shtyrov have been regarded as very influential at

the federal level, the other businessmen have, however, occupied mediocre positions in the ratings.

Furthermore, political events can change things in a very short time. The arrest of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, head of the Yukos Oil Company, in the autumn of 2003 had a negative effect on the influence of those regional leaders who had close relations with Yukos. This was evident in the November ratings when governors such as Viktor Kress (Tomsk), Konstantin Titov (Samara), Nikolay Merkushkin (Mordovia) and Boris Zolotarev (Evenk AO) lost some or a considerable amount of influence at the federal level.

5.4 Dependent Variable

With regard to the quantitative research design, correlation and multivariate regression techniques will be employed to test the effects of the independent variables (political resources presented in Chapter 3) on the dependent variable (federal-level influence of regional chief executives discussed above). One should, however, be critical of translating the expert ratings presented above into a dependent variable. The question lies in whether the figures can be considered relevant, valid and reliable. First, it is very difficult for the panelists to keep track of and give an accurate account of the influence of as many as 89 regional executives. Second, as noted above, it is evident that the surveys are sensitive to single and changing political events in a short space of time, thus not necessarily only measuring a fairly static amount of power. Third, one cannot draw too sweeping conclusions with regard to what determines the success of regional leaders in intergovernmental relations. Besides influence in political power structures, the ratings in question to some extent take into account influence among the federal business elite. Fourth, one may contend that the relationship between influence and political resources is essentially tautological. That is, when the chief executives are being rated, the experts may base their judgment partly on whether or not the regional leaders are in possession of certain political and structural resources examined in this study. Thus, it is not entirely clear that the actual influence of regional chief executives is being measured, only potential power as determined by the possession of political resources. Nevertheless, statistically significant correlations will, at minimum, support the assumption that experts perceive that federal-level influence of regional chief executives depends on the availability of political resources.

In addition, an important question is whether broad conclusions can be drawn despite the fact that only a relatively small group of people has participated in the evaluations. The panels have for the most part been composed of the same people and the number

Table 5.1 Federal-level influence of 85 regional chief executives 2003.

Region	Chief Executive	Influence (mean)	Standard deviation	Number of ratings
Tatarstan	Mintimer Shaimiyev	4.67	0.09	6
Moscow	Yury Luzkov	4.45	0.18	6
Chukotka	Roman Abramovich	4.38	0.31	6
Krasnoyarsk	Aleksandr Khloponin	4.05	0.08	6
Kemerovo	Aman Tuleyev	3.99	0.04	6
Oryol	Yegor Stroyev	3.90	0.11	6
Sverdlovsk	Eduard Rossel	3.73	0.14	4
Tyumen	Sergey Sobyenin	3.72	0.06	6
Khabarovsk	Viktor Ishayev	3.71	0.17	6
Khanty-Mansi AO	Aleksandr Filipenko	3.66	0.12	6
Bashkortostan	Murtaza Rakhimov	3.60	0.11	6
Yamalo-Nenets AO	Yury Neyelov	3.58	0.13	6
North Ossetia	Aleksandr Dzasokhov	3.58	0.15	6
Rostov	Vladimir Chub	3.56	0.04	6
Sakha	Vyacheslav Shtyrov	3.49	0.08	6
Perm	Yury Trutnev	3.46	0.11	6
Krasnodar	Aleksandr Tkachev	3.45	0.15	6
Yaroslavl	Anatoly Lisitsyn	3.45	0.15	6
Moscow oblast	Boris Gromov	3.43	0.14	6
Kabardino-Balkaria	Valery Kokov	3.40	0.13	6
Tomsk	Viktor Kress	3.37	0.13	5
Astrakhan	Anatoly Guzhvin	3.36	0.15	6
Leningrad	Valery Serdyukov	3.33	0.11	5
Saratov	Dmitry Ayatskov	3.31	0.11	6
Chelyabinsk	Pyotr Sumin	3.29	0.12	6
Novgorod	Mikhail Prusak	3.27	0.12	4
Vologda	Vyacheslav Pozgalev	3.23	0.07	6
Mordovia	Nikolay Merkulshkin	3.18	0.04	5
Samara	Konstantin Titov	3.18	0.09	6
Irkutsk	Boris Govorin	3.12	0.04	6
Altai krai	Aleksandr Surikov	3.11	0.15	6
Omsk	Leonid Polezhayev	3.09	0.13	4
Ingushetia	Murat Zyazikov	3.08	0.09	6
Lipetsk	Oleg Korolev	3.08	0.14	6
Chuvashia	Nikolay Fyodorov	3.07	0.18	6
Altai republic	Mikhail Lapshin	3.06	0.08	6
Sakhalin	Igor Farkhutdinov	3.06	0.12	4
Novosibirsk	Viktor Tolokonsky	3.04	0.12	6
Murmansk	Yury Yevdokimov	3.02	0.16	6
Nizhny Novgorod	Gennady Khodyrev	2.98	0.06	6
Karelia	Sergey Katanandov	2.98	0.09	6

Kaliningrad	Vladimir Yegorov	2.96	0.19	6
Adygeya	Khazret Sovmen	2.85	0.13	6
Vladimir	Nikolay Vinogradov	2.83	0.08	6
Smolensk	Viktor Maslov	2.82	0.08	6
Tambov	Oleg Betin	2.81	0.12	6
Stavropol	Aleksandr Chernogorov	2.79	0.07	6
Udmurtia	Aleksandr Volkov	2.78	0.08	6
Komi	Viktor Torlopov	2.78	0.06	6
Kaluga	Anatoly Artamanov	2.78	0.04	6
Arkhangelsk	Anatoly Yefremov	2.74	0.07	6
Tula	Vasily Starodubstev	2.70	0.18	6
Penza	Vasily Bochkarev	2.69	0.16	6
Buryatia	Leonid Potapov	2.68	0.09	6
Orenburg	Aleksey Chernyshev	2.68	0.12	6
Volgograd	Nikolay Maksyuta	2.67	0.11	6
Primorsky	Sergey Darkin	2.66	0.11	6
Voronezh	Vladimir Kulakov	2.65	0.09	6
Evenk AO	Boris Zolotarev	2.65	0.19	6
Ulyanovsk	Vladimir Shamanov	2.61	0.10	6
Mari El	Leonid Markelov	2.57	0.15	6
Taymyr AO	Oleg Budargin	2.57	0.12	5
Ryazan	Vyacheslav Lyubimov	2.50	0.11	6
Kalmykia	Kirsan Ilyumzhinov	2.49	0.14	6
Chita	Ravil Geniatullin	2.48	0.08	6
Ivanovo	Vladimir Tikhonov	2.47	0.21	6
Kostroma	Viktor Shershunov	2.40	0.15	6
Kurgan	Oleg Bogomolov	2.36	0.10	6
Pskov	Yevgeny Mikhailov	2.32	0.17	6
Amur	Leonid Korotkov	2.31	0.11	6
Khakassia	Aleksei Lebed	2.29	0.19	6
Magadan	Nikolai Dudov	2.29	0.23	5
Karachaevo-Cherkessia	Vladimir Semyonov	2.28	0.11	4
Kursk	Aleksandr Mikhailov	2.22	0.12	6
Bryansk	Yury Lodkin	2.20	0.16	6
Tyva	Sherig-ool Oorzhak	2.19	0.17	6
Kamchatka	Mikhail Mashkovtsev	2.17	0.36	6
Kirov	Vladimir Sergeyenkov	2.16	0.34	6
Nenets AO	Vladimir Butov	2.13	0.28	6
Jewish AO	Nikolay Volkov	2.05	0.19	6
Tver	Vladimir Platov	2.02	0.56	6
Ust-Orda Buryat AO	Viktor Maleev	1.81	0.12	6
Komi-Pemyak AO	Gennady Savelev	1.79	0.06	6
Aginsk-Buryat AO	Bair Zhamsuyev	1.76	0.20	6
Koryakia AO	Vladimir Loginov	1.59	0.08	6

of experts has varied between 18 and 21 in the six surveys conducted in 2003.⁴³ Despite this, similar evaluations and indices are rare. The empirical findings of a large-N quantitative analysis may confirm conclusions and hypotheses presented in descriptive-oriented single-case or multiple-case studies. The ratings provide a unique opportunity to run statistical tests thanks to a large number of research objects. Since there are as many as 89 regions and regional leaders, the ranking figures can be turned into a dependent variable which is well suited for quantitative analyses (correlation and regression analyses).

The dependent variable is based on the evaluations of the influence of regional executives in the federal centre from 2003 (January, March, May, July, September and November). The ratings are presented separately by the Centre for Political Technology in Moscow at their website (see note above). There are several reasons why I prefer the ratings of 2003 instead of those from 2001, 2002 and 2004. First, the 2003 surveys are more easily accessible, since every one of them has continuously been published by the research team on the Internet. Second, by 2003 the experts had become accustomed to the procedures and they ought to be more stable in their judgments of the regional executives. Third, the most recent economic data I have access to at the time of writing are from 2001 and 2002. The dependent variable is derived by calculating the mean values of the ratings for 2003. Those regional executives who have been represented in at least four out of six ratings, without interruptions of elections, are examined. The requirement related to whether or not four ratings have preceded or followed elections has to do with the fact that popular support in the most recent regional elections is one of the variables. A total of 85 regional chief executives meet these requirements and are therefore included in the analysis (all except for the governors and presidents in Belgorod, Dagestan, St. Petersburg and Chechnya).⁴⁴ The mean values range between 1.59 and 4.67 (see Table

⁴³ For instance, the panel for the January ratings in 2003 was made up of the following experts: D. Badovskii (Institute for Social Systems), V. Gubarev (Director General of IMA-Press News Agency), M. Dianov (Director of the Institute for Regional Problems), A. Zhuravlev (presidential administration), V. Igrunov (State Duma Deputy, Yabloko), V. Kolosov (Center for European Geopolitical Studies, Institute of Geography), O. Kulikov (Party Secretary of the Communist Party), V. Lysenko (State Duma Deputy), M. Malyutin (Expert Institute RSPP), S. Mikhailov (Russian Social and Political Center), B. Nadezhdin (State Duma Deputy, SPS), A. Ryabov (Carnegie Moscow Center), A. Titkov (Carnegie Moscow Centre), R. Turovskii (Center for Political Technology), V. Chumakov (Agency for Regional Policy Studies), V. Shpak (Vremja Novosti), V. Shuvalov (Moscow State University), A. Shutov (Moscow State University), A. Yusupovskii (Institute of Development).

⁴⁴ The governor of Belgorod faced re-election in May of 2003 and was included in only three ratings both before and after the gubernatorial elections. The governor of St. Petersburg was popularly elected in September 2003. The popularly elected predecessor had only been included in three ratings. The president of Chechnya was listed in the ratings for the first time in November 2003. The president of Dagestan is not a directly elected regional executive (elected by the regional Constituent Assembly).

5.1). The federal-level influence figures are computed so that the highest value is 10 and the lowest 3.41 in order to be better able to interpret the regression coefficients in the regression models.

5.5 Results

In the empirical part below, a quantitative approach is conducted by using bivariate and multivariate methods. First, Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient is used to indicate possible bivariate and linear relationships between the dependent and independent variables. Second, to explore the multivariate relationships, the ordinary least squares (OLS) linear regression method will be applied.

5.5.1 Bivariate Correlations

There are no bivariate relationships between federal-level influence and administrative status. There are neither any positive bivariate correlations between the dependent variable and the ethnic variables (see Table 5.2). With regard to the most influential republican leaders, five are found; Mintimer Shaimiyev of Tatarstan is ranked 1st, Murtaza Rakhimov of Bashkortostan 11th and Aleksandr Dzasokhov of North Ossetia 13th, Vyacheslav Shtyrov of Sakha 15th and Valery Kokov of Kabardino-Balkaria 20th. The rest of the republican leaders are evenly distributed across the scale. The variables that measure the size of different national groups do not appear relevant, at least when bivariate correlations were calculated. The exception among the ethnic variables is the dummy variable Buddhist titular nationality that correlates negatively with the dependent variable. This is due to the fact that the five poor Buddhist regions (Buryatia, Kalmykia, Tyva, Ust-Orda Buryat AO and Aginsk-Buryat AO) are found in the bottom half of the ranking table. The significance of this independent variable disappears when I control for other variables.

The bivariate correlation-coefficients in Table 5.2 show that the economic variables are clearly correlated with the dependent variable. This is especially the case when non-republics are examined. These findings support the assumption that economic bargaining power is perceived as a very important element in the bargaining power and influence of regional chief executives. For instance, regions with large populations, high industrial output and large volumes of trade were associated with influential regional chief executives. These regions were wealthy and not dependent on central subventions. In contrast to this, most of the small autonomous *okrugs*, as well as other sparsely populated regions, had the least influential regional chief executives. These regions are quite poor and have only a few hundred thousand residents. The most notable exception is third-ranked Roman Abramovich who is governor of the remote, poor and sparsely populated Chukotka autonomous *okrug*.

Table 5.2 Bivariate relationships between federal-level influence (2003) and independent variables (Pearson).

Independent variables	Federal-Level Influence		
	All regions (N=85)	Republics (N=19)	Non-republics (N=66)
<i>Administrative status</i>			
Republic status after 1991	0.062	—	—
Republic status before 1991	0.129	0.342	—
<i>Ethnicity</i>			
Ethnic Russians (%)	0.030	-0.256	—
Titular nationality (%)	-0.124	0.157	—
Muslim titular nationality	0.170	0.369	—
Buddhist titular nationality	-0.298**	-0.412	—
<i>Economy</i>			
Population	0.490***	0.656**	0.482***
Regional product per capita	0.489***	0.547*	0.508***
Gross regional product	0.574***	0.627**	0.585***
Volume of industrial production	0.548***	0.522*	0.583***
Volume of oil and gas production	0.254*	0.506*	0.181
Fiscal dependence of region	0.445***	0.464*	0.470***
Volume of exports	0.564***	0.394	0.723***
<i>Spatial location</i>			
Distance to Moscow	-0.119	-0.266	-0.107
Border region	-0.020	-0.142	0.009
Rim region	-0.076	-0.144	-0.059
Port region	0.037	-0.208	0.086
<i>Attitudinal cleavages</i>			
Vote for Putin	0.017	0.363	-0.124
Vote for Zyuganov	-0.228*	-0.333	-0.199
Vote for Communist Party	-0.088*	-0.041	-0.110
Vote for Unity	-0.307**	-0.473*	-0.247*
<i>Electoral legitimacy</i>			
Vote for chief executive	0.418***	0.393	0.428***
<i>Leadership experience</i>			
Time in power	0.263*	-0.255	0.264*

Note: There are no data for one republic and 13 non-republics in the case of the independent variable *volume of exports*.

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

Distance to Moscow and the geographic location of a region are apparently of no relevance. A variable within the attitudinal cleavages category appears to be of some relevance. There is a weak negative correlation between the dependent variable and support for the Communist candidate (Gennady Zyuganov) in the 2000 presidential

Table 5.3 Vote for chief executive and federal-level influence.

	Vote for chief executive			Total
	17–40 %	40–60 %	60–94 %	
Influence				
3.20–4.67	4	5	18	27
2.66–3.20	12	11	7	30
1.59–2.65	10	14	4	28
Total	26	30	29	85

$\chi^2=19.82$ (df=4), $p<.001$

elections. This relationship is even strengthened if partial regression coefficients are calculated while controlling for the population variable and other economic variables. However, it is difficult to draw definite conclusions, since the independent variable that reflects support for Putin does not correlate with the levels of federal-level influence held by the regional chief executives. Otherwise, no expected patterns of correlations are observed in terms of voting behaviour in national elections. The statistically significant negative correlation between the dependent variable and support for the Kremlin-endorsed Unity party should be ignored. It is quite apparent that the population variable influences the two variables of interest. The correlation between federal-level influence and support for Unity emerges because sparsely populated regions situated in the north-eastern part of Russia voted for Unity to a higher degree.

The share of the vote of each regional president or governor is a powerful predictor. Those who had received over 60 per cent of the vote in the most recent election were generally more influential (see Table 5.3). Regional chief executives who gathered less than 60 per cent of the vote in the first election round had relatively low averages in the ratings. Time in power appears at first sight to provide regional chief executives with greater levels of influence in national politics. But if one removes the effect of electoral support for the regional chief executives, by applying partial correlation analysis, the statistically significant relationship between the dependent variable and time in power disappears. The reason for this is that the independent variables vote for chief executive and time in power correlate with each other; incumbents have tended to receive greater shares of the vote than newcomers.

5.5.2 *Multivariate Analysis*

To further ascertain the connection between the independent variables and federal-level influence, I run a multiple linear regression analysis using the ordinary least squares model. Insignificant variables are removed from the final regression models. The relevant independent variables are identified, on one hand, by inspecting which

Table 5.4 Multivariate relationships between federal-level influence (2003) and selected independent variables (OLS multiple regression).

Independent variables	Federal-level influence		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Constant	-9.80	-8.84	-7.37
Republic status after 1991	0.57* (2.02)	0.55* (2.13)	0.54* (2.19)
Population	0.92*** (3.99)	1.06*** (5.05)	1.23*** (5.89)
Regional product per capita	2.24*** (4.25)	1.60** (3.24)	1.32** (2.73)
Vote for Zyuganov	—	—	-0.04** (-2.92)
Vote for chief executive	—	0.02*** (4.53)	0.02*** (4.27)
N	85	85	85
Adjusted R ²	0.37	0.49	0.53

Note: Unparenthesized entries are unstandardized regression coefficients; parenthesized entries are *t*-statistics.

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

show a bivariate relationship with the dependent variable and, on the other hand, by checking the outcomes of stepwise variable entry (entering predictor variables into the regression analysis one at a time or in steps). I end up with five relevant and statistically significant control variables: republic status after 1991, population, regional product per capita, vote for Zyuganov and vote for chief executive. The regression tests do neither provide any evidence for the significance of geographic variables. Table 5.4 displays the unstandardized beta coefficients and *t*-values for the association between federal-level influence and the relevant independent variables.

The first model shows that the three independent variables regional product per capita, population and republic status together explain much of the variance in the dependent variable (the adjusted R^2 value is 0.37). Population and regional product per capita provide most explanatory leverage. This was quite expected based on the results of the bivariate correlations. Overall, both population and regional product per capita capture the effects of the other economic variables (oil and gas production, exports, industrial production, fiscal dependence of region). The fact is that populous regions are in general wealthy. Regional chief executives in regions with more than three million inhabitants were generally regarded as more influential than regional leaders with more than two million inhabitants, and so on. Parametric bivariate correlation tests provide evidence for very high intercorrelation ($r_{xy}=0.8$ and above) between the

variables population, gross regional product and industrial production. The population variable also correlates with most of the other economic variables ($r_{xy}=0.3$ and above). Note, however, that the correlation between the independent variables population and regional product per capita is only $r_{xy}=.341$, whereby autocorrelation does not cause bias in the coefficient estimates in Table 5.4.

In contrast to the bivariate correlation tests, republic status after 1991 becomes statistically significant and contributes additional explanatory power in the regression models. Thus, leaders in charge of ethnic regions are regarded as more influential at the federal level, provided that the regions are not too poor and sparsely populated. With regard to the ethnic variables, it does not actually matter whether the variable republic status or the cultural variables are included in the regression models. Both the share of ethnic Russians and share of the titular nationality population are statistically significant, and they provide roughly the same amount of explanation leverage as republic status if they are individually entered into the regression models (together with the other test variables). The reason for why I choose republic status after 1991 as a control variable is that the net effects (according to the unstandardized regression coefficients) of the demographic variables on the dependent variable are extremely low.

In the second regression model, there is a very strong relationship between electoral support for regional chief executives and influence at the federal level. The inclusion of vote for chief executive leads to a major increase in the adjusted R^2 value, from 0.37 to 0.49. On the other hand, one should be aware of the small value of the unstandardized coefficient (0.02). The net effect of the number of votes on the dependent variable in the regression models is quite small, so one should not draw any definite conclusions. It can nevertheless be concluded that the test variable reflecting electoral support of the regional chief executives adds a considerable amount of explanatory power to the regression models. In the third model, the variable vote for Zyuganov provides some additional explanatory power—from 0.49 to 0.53—even though the net effect is small. This correlation coefficient takes a negative value, suggesting that regional chief executives in pro-communist regions were in a disadvantaged bargaining position.

5.6 Summary

This empirical study brought forth the interesting fact that popular legitimacy has increased the bargaining power and influence of regional executive leaders at the federal level. They have been able to transform political strength and authority at the regional level into political clout when they have interacted with representatives of the federal legislative and executive power structures and the federal business elite. This

was possible at a point of time, 2003, when over six years had passed since practically all the regional chief executives became elected by and responsible to their regional constituencies. The majority of the regional leaders were nominated and appointed by the Russian president between 1991 and 1996.

Authority at the regional level was reflected by the electoral support regional chief executives enjoyed in the presidential or gubernatorial elections. The empirical results substantiate the assumption that the federal centre has preferred to deal with popular and established regional leaders who have ensured predictability in centre-region relations and who have had greater ability to ensure political and social stability in the regions. Authority at the regional level should also be associated with the ability of administrative leaders to build alliances with other regional elites. Drawing on the success of regional leaders to bargain and negotiate with the federal centre in the bilateral treaty process, Pascal observes that cooperation among elites and popular legitimacy were mutually reinforcing: “as political and economic elites jointly confronted wage and pension arrears, unemployment, and investment, the public offered support by backing candidates and programmes and by avoiding strikes”. Pascal continues by stating that “social stability and popular mandate then permitted leaders to remain in office” (Pascal 2003: 86-87). However, the quantitative analyses in this study showed that the degree of electoral support overshadowed the significance of time in power with regard to the ability to explain the federal-level influence of regional chief executives.

As anticipated, leaders of wealthy regions have enjoyed high levels of bargaining power. Thanks to their economic status, they became important partners for the federal centre. Political leaders in charge of federal subjects characterized by, for example, large populations and high levels of industrial development and per capita income have possessed lots of blackmail potential vis-à-vis the federal centre, since they supply a great amount of taxes to the federal budget. However, the positive correlation between size of population and federal-level influence can also indicate the political weight of regions in terms of the number of potential voters who are important at times of national elections.

It was also expected that cultural variables would have a positive effect on the degree of federal-level influence. While taking into account the effects of other variables, republic status become an essential explanatory variable. Yet one should be aware that culture counts, but economic resources decide whether a regional chief executive manages to be influential in dealings with the federal centre. With regard to attitudinal or ideological cleavages, the vote for the communist presidential candidate in the 2000 elections had only a small affect on the dependent variable.

The location of a region is apparently of no relevance. The distance measure and access to an international border or port had no effect on the dependent variable in the statistic analyses. This can to some extent be explained by the fact that the issue of separatism and secession has not been the subject of discussion during recent years. At the beginning of the 1990s the possibility of territorial fragmentation was seriously discussed. The era of regional separatism had come to an end by the close of the 1990s. The likelihood of separatism in the form of calls for increased economic autonomy in the distant regions is low. The regions in the Russian Far East, for instance, have faced economic problems and they cannot expect rapid and sustained economic growth despite their proximity to the Asia-Pacific region.

Chapter 6

Summary and Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The primary purpose of this dissertation has been to examine the ability of regional chief executives to counterbalance central power in post-communist Russia by drawing on a theoretical framework centred on the concept of veto players. To summarize, subnational governments in federal systems can be considered as potential veto players who have the ability to constrain central government by making sure that policy initiatives are blocked within legislative institutions at the federal level or that reforms are prevented from becoming implemented at the subnational level (Mainwaring and Samuels 2004; Stepan 2004; Gerring, Thacker and Moreno 2004). Two types of veto players have been recognized in political systems: institutional and partisan veto players (Tsebelis 1995; 1999; 2002).

In other words, subnational governments are regarded as veto players if they are in a position to function as institutional checks and balances and if they are subject to a minimum level of partisan control. The potential of subnational governments to become effective veto players depends, therefore, on both formal regulations and partisan linkages. Institutional mechanisms are important if subnational governments are to become significant political actors. The constitutional distribution of powers in federal states empowers regionally-based governmental institutions and actors and limits the prerogatives of the central government. But the capacity of the subnational governments to resist central government may be restricted due to interconnectedness between government parties at the federal and regional levels. Subnational governments and executives are more likely to offer effective opposition to the central authorities if they are partisan opponents of the central government.

In this dissertation, emphasis has only been put on the concept of institutional veto player, not the concept of partisan veto player. This was due to the fact that the rate of party membership or affiliation among the regional chief executives has been very low. Therefore, it made no sense to examine whether or not regional chief executives have

shared the party affiliation of the federal chief executive. The concept of institutional veto player has referred to subnational governments (or regional chief executives) that have been in a position to both collectively and individually constrain the power of the central government in everyday politics: for example, by preventing laws from being passed, by taking an independent course of action or by having the potency to block the implementation of central policies and decisions.

Both formal and informal power resources of regional chief executives in centre-region relations have been discussed. These power resources are attributed to the dimensions of structure and process of federalism. The structural dimension relates to the constitutional design and institutional framework, while the process dimension refers to bargaining processes taking place between representatives of different levels of government (Elazar 1987). On one hand, the institutional strength of regional chief executives in political structures at the subnational and federal levels concerns the aspect of formal powers. On the other hand, the examination of which political resources were associated with greater levels of bargaining power of regional chief executives in centre-region relations is associated with the aspect of informal powers.

6.2 The Russian Regional Chief Executives as Veto Players

The main research question posed in Chapter 1 was: *When and why have the regional chief executives been in a position to assume the role of institutional veto players in post-communist Russia?* The general research question was disaggregated into two further questions: *To what extent have institutional structures empowered or constrained Russian regional chief executives in regional and federal politics? Which political resources have Russian regional chief executives been able to mobilize in centre-region relations?* This subchapter sets out to recapitulate the discussion in previous chapters to come to terms with the extent the heads of regional governments have had the ability to counterbalance central government in Russia after the demise of the Soviet Union. After that, a summary of which political resources affected the relative bargaining power of regional chief executives in centre-region relations is provided. This, in turn, is followed by a discussion of both past and recent developments of federalism and federal relations in Russia. Finally, the significance of the development of the party system at the national and regional levels is brought up so as to propose an agenda for further research.

There have been great difficulties in finding a balance regarding the appropriate division of authority between the central government and the regions in Russia. The federal relations have been characterized by periodic swings between centralization and decentralization. The regional presidents and governors have had different capabilities to counterbalance central government during different periods of centralization and decentralization. In order to answer the main research question

above, the ability of regional governments to act as institutional veto players and counterbalance central government can roughly be divided into three phases. First, the beginning of the 1990s saw the rise of the regional chief executives in Russian politics after the breakdown of the old power structures. Second, the Russian regional chief executives managed to consolidate their position and they were at the height of their power between 1996 and 1999 both formally and informally. Third, the first half of the 2000s witnessed the beginning of the fall of the regional presidents and governors when they were stripped of many of their formal powers. These three phases will be discussed more in detail below.

6.2.1 The Rise of the Regional Chief Executive

At the beginning of the 1990s, after the collapse of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the regional chief executives managed to strengthen their position while the political system was in a state of flux. During the transition process, the pendulum swung from an extreme form of centralized government to a decentralized political order. The regional elites managed to attain greater political and economic power, mostly because the central government was weak and not in a position to forcefully intervene and discipline obstinate regional leaders. Regional governments became increasingly important political actors and they were in a position to offer effective opposition to the central authorities. Sakwa (2002b: 4) actually points out that, “regionalism emerged as a more effective check, if not a democratic balance, on executive authority than the relatively weak legislature and judiciary” in the 1990s. The major constraint on the ability to counterbalance the federal centre was that the majority of the regional chief executives were centrally appointed. The governors of the non-republics became fully accountable to the regional electorate as of 1996. Note, however, that the republican presidents were directly or indirectly elected by their constituencies and derived authority from a popular mandate as of 1990.

Immediately at the beginning of the 1990s, reforms of the federal structure were necessary to cope with regionalist demands for decentralization. In addition, the federal constitution of 1978 was inadequate, since it was adapted to fit a communist system of government. After the collapse of communist party hegemony, political liberalization within the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s paved the way for the collapse of central power, a process in which the union republics played a conspicuous role. After the Russian Federated Socialist Republic had declared its sovereignty within the Soviet Union in June 1990, many of the regions within Russia were quick to follow by issuing their own declarations of sovereignty in 1990 and 1991. The period between June of 1990 and August of 1991 can be considered as the first stage of effective decentralization. The wave of sovereignization initiated an uncontrolled shift in power and competencies in favour of the regions, whereby the central authorities were

substantially weakened (Aklaev 1997: 36-39; Stoner-Weiss 1997a: 233-240). There are several reasons why regional elites tried to take as much power as possible. First, ethnic revival played an important role, whereby many of the ethnic regions longed for greater autonomy (Treisman 1997). Second, demands for greater decentralization were partly a reaction to previous periods of extreme centralization after the demise of the Soviet Union. Third, regional politicians were increasingly held responsible for political and economic conditions in their respective regions. Fourth, the central government was also incapable of carrying out all of its responsibilities in the regions. Fifth, former regional party bosses, who had managed to cling on to power, also did their best to protect their newfound political status (Stoner-Weiss 1997b).

This period of decentralization was followed by a short period of consolidation, between the autumn of 1991 and spring of 1992. The second period commenced after the failed coup in August 1991 when communist hard-liners attempted to seize power to try to keep the Soviet Union from disintegrating. Intensified negotiations between different delegations and actors were conducted to find a solution with regard to the federal division of powers between the different levels of government. This bargaining process culminated with the signing of the Federal Treaty in March of 1992. The treaty outlined the division of power between the central government and the constituent units (Aklaev 1997: 39-43).

The signing of the Federal Treaty was only a step on the way, though, since a new constitution was in the process of being drafted. A political deadlock in the centre temporarily postponed the adoption of a new constitution. The long-standing and escalating power struggle between the president and the parliament helped to spark a second wave of sovereignization among the regions. The position of the regional leaders was enhanced since both sides in the constitutional conflict at the national level sought the support of regional leaders. Many regional leaders could also take advantage of the chaos in Moscow. Claims for greater political and economic autonomy were voiced, not only by national republics, but also by many territorial units (*krais* and *oblasts*). This period was characterized by high levels of instability and conflict between the federal government and the regional governments. Separatism in the form of disobedience of central government orders, adoption of own laws and refusal to pay taxes to the centre challenged the legitimacy of the central government. There were even disintegrative tendencies and the possible fragmentation of Russia of was widely discussed (Aklaev 1997: 43-48; Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 2004: 133).

President Yeltsin managed to defeat the parliament with the use of military force in October 1993. This was the beginning of the second wave of consolidation which most of all brought about the adoption of the Russian Constitution in December 1993

and the normalization of federal relations (Aklaev 1997: 48-51). The period between October 1993 and the summer of 1995 is called the dark age for regionalism. The majority of the regional leaders remained quite docile and neither supported nor criticized the president. Nevertheless, the secessionist-minded republican elite in Chechnya turned out to be the greatest concern. The central government decided to intervene militarily in December 1994. The use of force surely helped to stifle regionalist activism among the other regions (Stoner-Weiss 1997a: 240-244).

Wide disagreement still existed in federal relations after 1993, since the newly adopted constitution was not a document that clearly defined the powers and authority of the different levels of government. Due to these ambiguities, centre-region disputes connected to the federal division of power continued to be a problem. A few months after the adoption of the new constitution, the first bilateral power-sharing treaty was signed, thus paving the way for the process of bilateral bargaining between the federal centre and about half of the 89 regions between 1994 and 1998. These treaties partly helped stabilizing centre-region relations and consolidate the Russian Federation (Aklaev 1997: 51-58).

6.2.2 The Regional Chief Executives at the Height of Power

This dissertation has shown that the regional chief executives were at their height of power between 1996 and 1999. The practice of buying of opponents and awarding some supporters by signing bilateral power-sharing treaties, plus the fact that the federal centre had to give up its prerogatives to appoint the majority of the regional chief executives after 1995, denoted the resurgence of regionalism (Stoner-Weiss 1997a: 245-246). Regional governments continued to refuse to implement directives given and decisions made by the central government. Numerous regional constitutions and charters, as well as other basic laws, did not comply with federal norms. In addition, the regional chief executives became automatically members of the Federation Council, the upper chamber of parliament, which provided them with a platform in national politics.

By the middle of the 1990s, many of the regional executive leaders had consolidated power and controlled the political life within their regions. For instance, the powerful chief executives controlled the legislative processes at the regional level. The regional executives were able to convert their power and authority in the regional arena into influence in the federal arena. Since the regional executives had great authority in local affairs, the ability of the federal centre to implement federal policies and laws in the regions with defiant politicians and administrators was restricted. The federal government was neither able to effectively control regional branches of federal law enforcement agencies (Blakkisrud 2003a). The regional chief executives were

important in federal politics in the sense that they were important allies to the Russian president. On one hand, they were electoral machines who could influence electoral outcomes and secure electoral majorities in national elections (Blakkisrud 2003a; Orttung 2000; Chirikova and Lapina 2001). The regional presidents and governors have had “prominence and reputation, superior leadership skills, and financial and organizational advantages that give them unmatched resources which can be mobilized for electoral contests” (Hughes 1997). On the other hand, the regional chief executives were veto players in the legislative arena. As members of the Federation Council, they were able to counterbalance the State Duma, which was dominated by the Communist Party, by blocking and delaying unfavourable legislation (Blakkisrud 2003a). The role of the regional elites was further enhanced as a consequence of a weak party system both at the national and regional levels: weakly developed party loyalties, a low level of party institutionalization, insufficient party discipline among the members, lack of strong and long-lived parties, etc. (Golosov 2003).

6.2.3 The Fall of the Regional Chief Executives

The stabilization of the Russian economy after the financial turmoil in 1998 (which had resulted in small-scale regionalism) and the political strengthening of the federal centre restricted the ability of regional politicians to exercise influence in national politics. The first phase of centralization under Putin marked the beginning of the fall of the regional chief executives. They have progressively been stripped of their powers and authority during the reign of Vladimir Putin. In 1999, the regional chief executives had failed in building successful electoral alliances in the build-up to the State Duma elections. The Kremlin managed to regroup and reached unexpected success in the two national elections after having formed a new political party (Unity; later United Russia) and by finding a new strong presidential candidate (Vladimir Putin).

Immediately after having been sworn in as popularly elected president in May 2000, Putin introduced federal reforms in order to reassert federal control by creating a unified legal, constitutional and economic space. The first set of federal reforms was intended to strengthen the vertical chain of command to reduce the extent of political bargaining and weaken the power of the regional chief executives (Stoliarov 2003: 7-8). The main reforms were the creation of seven federal districts and appointing seven presidential representatives, the removal of regional executives and heads of parliament from the Federation Council and the possibility for the president to dismiss regional executives and regional legislatures. The federal centre further enhanced its position in inter-budgetary relations and gained greater control of the tax collection on behalf of the regions. The centre also increased its control over federal agencies in the regions, such as courts, law enforcement agencies and the media.

The federal reforms considerably weakened the regional chief executives. But these measures did not once and for all change the balance of power. The federal centre still had to come to terms with defiant regions through conciliatory procedures and informal bargaining, and offer concessions to the regional leaders by, for example, allowing them to seek additional terms in office. The regional executives in several regions managed to consolidate their position after victories in regional elections. Even though the change in atmosphere was evident, critics blamed Putin for stopping at half measures in order to avoid serious conflict with regional leaders.

The decisive setback for the regional executive leaders came to pass during Putin's second term as president when it was decided that the procedure of popular elections of the heads of the regional executive branch would be abolished and that the procedure of appointing regional chief executives would be reintroduced. Putin's controversial bill to abolish direct elections (submitted to the State Duma on 13 September 2004) did not encounter any strong resistance. The State Duma (controlled by the pro-Kremlin party United Russia) and the Federation Council approved the bill within three months and only a few of the regional chief executives protested against the plans to do away with direct elections. The last chief executive elections were arranged in January 2005 and those who were popularly elected before the new law took effect are allowed to remain in office until their term expires. A gradual turnover will take place until 2009, after which all regional chief executives will be nominated by the Russian President and formally appointed by the respective regional legislatures (Blakkisrud 2005).

6.3 Formal Position and Veto Power Ability

This section tries to provide an answer to the first subquestion that accompanied the general research question: *To what extent have institutional structures empowered or constrained Russian regional chief executives in regional and federal politics?* The pros and cons relating to the decision to reintroduce the system of allowing the Russian President to appoint and dismiss regional chief executives are also discussed. The issue of the institutional position of regional chief executives was analyzed and discussed in Chapter 2 as well.

At the beginning of the 1990s, politicians at both levels of government were engaged in the process of organizing the political structure, whereby the formal rules were not yet established and the degree of executive authority differed from region to region. The new Russian Constitution (1993) instituted a centralized federation with very few important responsibilities exclusively allocated to the regions. The upper chamber of parliament, which articulates the interests of the constituent units, was neither vested with absolute veto power vis-à-vis the lower chamber. The majority of the regional chief executives were centrally appointed. But despite these restraints, the regional

governments could be regarded as significant veto players. President Boris Yeltsin had great difficulties in keeping unruly regional leaders in line and the regional authorities managed to extend their authority on an informal level while the central government was weak. Therefore, constitutional formalities did not go hand in hand with informal politics during the first half of the 1990s.

By 1996, the regional chief executives had established themselves as key actors both at the regional level and the federal level. Most regional constitutions and charters guaranteed the chief executive a leading position in regional politics and they acted on a popular mandate after the federal centre abandoned its right to appoint and dismiss the governors in the non-republics. Together with the speakers of regional legislatures, the chief executives were in a prominent position at the federal level as they were automatically members of the upper chamber of parliament. Between 1996 and 1999, the regional chief executives enjoyed great levels of both formal and informal powers and they were able to resist central government control. The regions could be considered as a factor of stability and continuity in a position to prevent drastic changes in the political setting and constitute a balance to a future authoritarian central government (see Medvedev 2000: 29).

As of 2000, President Vladimir Putin was able to strengthen the authority of the federal government and managed gradually to rein in the regions and bring them under stricter central control. A series of federal reforms paved the way for a uniform and centralized federation. Even though the regional chief executives still a force to reckon with during Putin's first term as president, they avoided open confrontation with the Kremlin. Their ability to act as institutional veto players was effectively reduced after 2004 when the regional chief executives began to be centrally appointed.

6.3.1 The Appointment of Regional Chief Executives

The decision to abolish direct elections of regional presidents and governors has naturally raised concerns relating to the development of federalism in Russia. It is a blow to political pluralism and democratic legitimacy. The heads of the regional executive branch will owe their position to both the federal government and the regional legislatures. They are not able to establish their support base among the regional population and they are not accountable to their regional constituencies.

The reintroduction of the system of presidentially appointed regional chief executives also increases the ability of the central government to control regional governments unilaterally from top down, thus effectively reducing the ability of regional chief executive branches to act as veto players. One should, however, remember that Article 77, Paragraph 2 of the Russian Constitution states that the federal and regional bodies of executive power "shall form the single system of executive power". One

interpretation given is that this paragraph gives the federal executive the prerogative to “demand that regional administrations implement federal laws, federal constitutional law, presidential decrees, and even the resolutions and directives of the prime minister and cabinet” (Walker 1995). Nevertheless, a hierarchical structure of the executive branch, where the national executive passes orders downwards, weakens of the system of checks and balances. Political power will be less dispersed and less decentralized and the regional governments will be less independent and less able to counterbalance the federal government. Thus, the system of centrally appointed regional executive leaders is not in line with the federal principle.

According to Watts, for a political system to be considered a genuine federation, “neither the federal nor the constituent units of government are constitutionally subordinate to the other”, whereby (1) “each has sovereign powers derived from the constitution rather than another level of government”, (2) “each is empowered to deal directly with its citizens in the exercise of its legislative, executive and taxing powers” and (3) “each is directly elected by its citizens” (Watts 1999: 7). Similarly, Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova point out that “a state is federal if its governmental structure can be characterized by multiple layers...such that at each level the chief policy makers...are elected directly by the people they ostensibly serve” (Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 2004: 9). The central governments in democratic federal states are not allowed to interfere in regional matters (Stoliarov 2003: 81). This was also evident in the examination of the contemporary federal systems in Chapter 2 which showed that none of the federal states have centrally appointed regional chief executives or regional legislatures (the United Arab Emirates is the exception).

But there are some positive aspects of the fact that the power monopoly of the regional chief executives has been broken. The system of appointing regional chief executives can be an effective tool in curbing corruption and doing away with authoritarian regional leaders. Corruption of electoral politics in a number of regions, where big business interests and local mafias had become increasingly involved in electoral campaigns, damaged the legitimacy of the elections and the regional chief executives (Hill 2005; Blakkisrud 2005). In addition, as previously discussed, political power and executive authority became concentrated in the office of the chief executive and they have been vested with considerable amounts of power within their regions at the expense of the legislative assemblies (see Chapter 2.3.1).

Furthermore, low levels of elite circulation and a low degree of electoral competition in many of the Russian regions have not been consistent with democratic ideals. First, the reproduction of old elites was a common phenomenon at the regional level after the demise of the Soviet Union. Many of the representatives of the old political elite were able to survive the collapse of the communist system and transfer their power

into the new political arenas that were created in post-communist Russia. The majority of the executive and legislative organs in the regions became controlled by politicians who had been active in regional politics during the Soviet era (see Kryshtanovskaya and White 1996; White and Kryshtanovskaya 1998; Lane and Ross 1999; Hughes 1997; Rigby 2001). The introduction of popular elections at different stages in the 1990s did not bring about a turnover in leadership in a large number of regions either. By the end of the 1990s, over a third of the regional chief executives in office had held “the top state or top communist party posts” in the same regions before the collapse of the Soviet Union. Another third of the regional presidents and governors had occupied other elite positions at the regional level (“senior state or communist party posts an echelon or two below the top”) (Rigby 2001: 10–11).

Second, almost all the regional chief executives were temporarily allowed to extend their time in office. A federal law adopted at the beginning of 2001 permitted them to seek more than two terms. The regional chief executives that had been elected to office before October 1999 were legally authorized to run for a third or even fourth consecutive term. In October 1999, a federal law had been adopted stating that no regional chief executive can serve for more than two consecutive terms of a maximum of five years per term. However, in 2000, parliamentarians in the State Duma initiated a process to temporarily change the rules with regard to the length of tenure. They thought that a number of regional presidents and governors were treated unfairly, since “the law was in effect backdated, taking into account time spent in office prior to its adoption” (Malyakin 2002). In the end, 69 regional chief executives were allowed to seek a third term, while an additional 17 were able to seek a fourth term (the effect of this law was circumvented four years later when it was decided that all regional chief executives will by 2009 at the latest be nominated by the Russian president and approved by the regional legislatures). Between January 2001 and March 2004, four out of five previously elected regional leaders sought re-election. Three out of four of these incumbents managed to secure re-election (Söderlund 2005c).

Third, numerous regional electoral contests have ended up with incumbent executives winning over 70, 80 and even 90 per cent of the vote. These figures remind one of Soviet-style election returns (even though a large share of the vote does not automatically point to the fact that a regime is authoritarian). Several regions have been considered electoral autocracies where strong and charismatic executive leaders have legitimized their rule through sham elections. Executives in office have been able to discredit and manoeuvre out opponents by making use of administrative resources and controlling the media. In such authoritarian systems, the incumbent regimes have also been in a position to control and manipulate the elections to maximize the number of votes received. For instance, some regional chief executives have had

control over the appointment of the members of regional electoral commissions. The adoption of pro-incumbent election laws, which regulate the nominations of candidates for election, has been a means to minimize the risk of having to meet real electoral resistance. By changing the timing of the elections, incumbents have been able to weaken potential opponents who have had less chance to prepare for election. In guided elections, the electorates have been persuaded to vote for certain candidates. There are also suspicions that regional regimes have been able to falsify election results (Ross 2002: 157–168). Between January 2001 and March 2004, the incumbent presidents and governors in two-fifths of the regions were more or less unopposed, with incumbents taking between 66.9 and 93.5 per cent of the vote, while the degree of competition was relatively high or very high in the other regions (Söderlund 2005c).

6.4 Mobilization and Significance of Political Resources

Another prime objective of this dissertation was to assess and explain the relative bargaining power of regional chief executives in the Russian Federation when they have interacted with representatives of the federal centre. *Which political resources have Russian regional chief executives been able to mobilize in centre-region relations?* The political resources referred to contextual factors (economic conditions, ethnic composition, geographic location and the political environment) and leadership factors (electoral legitimacy and time in power) (see Chapter 3). Political resources were expected to be transformed into bargaining power in intergovernmental relations. In Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, quantitative analyses were conducted to test whether a number of independent variables, which were expected to reflect the extent of political resources that regional chief executives were in possession of, correlated with (1) the chronological order of the regions in the bilateral power-sharing treaty process 1994–1998 and (2) the level of political influence of regional chief executives in legislative and executive power structures and among the federal business elite based on a series of expert surveys conducted in 2003.

6.4.1 *The Importance of Economic Bargaining Power*

By and large, regional economic wealth has been an important resource for regional chief executives to bargain successfully with the federal centre. The empirical results support the assumption that political leaders in wealthy regions can act more courageously in the bargaining game and have greater abilities to bargain successfully with the federal centre. This was quite expected as economic variables had correlated strongly and positively with separatist behaviour among the ethnic regions in both the Soviet Union and in Russia at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s (see Chapter 4). Instrumentalists insisted that economic considerations were the driving force behind separatism. The assertion that culture counts but resources decide

in shaping separatist movements, suggests that separatism is, to a much greater extent, driven by the competition over distribution of resources than ethnicity and a separate culture (Andresen, Bull and Duvold 1997: 10).

With regard to the importance of economic bargaining power in intergovernmental relations, why should Russia be any different from other countries where wealthy subnational units are in an enhanced position in intergovernmental relations and in national politics (Rokkan and Urwin 1983: 134-135)? Russia differs, nevertheless, from most other countries due to the fact that the economic differences are so great between the regions. This has also been evident in intergovernmental relations where donor regions have had greater political status than recipient regions. First, economic factors were of great importance with regard to whether or not regions signed bilateral power-sharing treaties and agreements between 1994 and 1998. Yet, economic status alone did not play too major a role when statistical tests were run to explain the chronological order of the regions in the bilateral power-sharing treaty process. Instead, economic variables in combination with other bargaining resources provided great explanation. When federal-level influence of regional chief executives in 2003 was examined, the economic indicators offered great explanatory leverage and could alone explain much of the variance in the dependent variable.

Concerns were addressed with regard to the population variable in the chapter where the economic independent variables were presented (Chapter 3.4.3) and in the two empirical chapters (Chapter 4 and Chapter 5). The independent variable that indicated the number of people living in each region provided a high level of explanatory power in both empirical studies. The problem is that population might be an indicator of the political weight of regions in terms of the number of potential voters who determine the outcomes in national elections. On the other hand, the population figure correlates strongly with most of the economic variables. The circumstances suggest, anyhow, that prosperity was of much greater importance than the number of potential voters.⁴⁵

6.4.2 When Administrative Status and Ethnicity Matter

Demands for greater national self-determination and the creation of a federation of national states, voiced by the ethnic republics at the beginning of the 1990s, are considered to be the product of conscious myth-making by regional elites who have promoted their own self-interests (Goble 2004). The general assumption that regional leaders used ethnic identity as a cover only to enhance their bargaining power in

⁴⁵ The inclusion of interaction variables, where population was multiplied with the number of votes for Communist parties and candidates or Kremlin-backed parties and candidates, would not have had greater explanatory leverage than the population variable, thus supporting the assumption that population was first and foremost an indicator of economic bargaining power.

intergovernmental relations is in line with the instrumentalist interpretation of elite behaviour which has been the dominant school of thought when it comes to explaining separatist behaviour among the ethnically defined regions in Russia (Treisman 1997; Kahn 2002; Mitin 2003). What, then, did the empirical studies in this dissertation suggest? Did ethnic attributes associated render regional chief executives greater bargaining power in intergovernmental relations and in the struggle for political and economic benefits?

In both empirical studies, republic status correlated with the dependent variables, while neither the size of ethnic groups nor religious identity of titular ethnic groups appeared to provide any additional explanatory leverage. Yet, the regression models returned statistically significant relationships when size of titular ethnic groups was included, but this had to do with the fact that the political-administrative structure is organized along ethnic lines and that larger ethnic groups are concentrated to republics where they enjoy the status of titular nationality. Thus, republic status turned out to be a very significant explanatory variable that overshadowed the significance of other variables related to ethnicity. Ethnically defined regions that had enjoyed republic status before 1991 were particularly favoured in the bilateral power-sharing treaty process. Regional chief executives in charge of ethnic regions were also regarded as more influential at the federal level in 2003, given that the regions were not too poor and sparsely populated.

How can the significance of republics status be explained? Drawing on the discussion in Chapter 3, republics have been more institutionally developed and had leaders with greater skills and the means to bargain with the central authorities. They could make use of bargaining channels established during the end of the Soviet era. Furthermore, while the size of ethnic groups is not necessarily a prerequisite, one should not underestimate the significance of ethnicity. Thanks to their special status as titular nationalities, titular ethnic groups have dominated political life and held the key posts within the political system, despite the fact that they have been outnumbered by other nationalities within their regions. In that case, leaders of ethnic republics had access to their own territorial power bases that provided them with the ability to politically mobilize ethnic groups, or at least attempt to convince the central government that they had the potential to do so.

6.4.3 The Small Significance of Geographic Location

Did regional chief executives enjoy any advantages of geography? Spatial location only mattered to some extent and cannot be considered too important a political resource. There were indications that peripherally located regions concluded bilateral power-sharing treaties earlier than centrally located regions. A region's geoeconomic and

geopolitical location, as indicated by access to important maritime outposts, also correlated with the timing of bilateral treaties, but this was only the case among non-republics. Spatial location did not appear to have mattered at all in the second empirical study; no geographic variables correlated with the federal-level influence measure. The respondents in the surveys did not rank regional chief executives in charge of geoeconomically and geopolitically important regions higher than those who were executives of centrally located regions.

The small significance of geographic variables ought to be the consequence of a number of unfavourable conditions. For instance, this has become evident in studies on separatism in Russia. The reason why not a greater amount of regions opted for secession or greater autonomy at the beginning of the 1990s is that mainly poor and sparsely located regions with small titular nationalities were situated in the outer rim of Russia. This combination of factors therefore helped to stifle the development of separatist movements (Blakkisrud 1997; Hughes 2001; Ross 2002: 55-58). Chechnya was the only region in Russia that demanded complete independence in the 1990s. The federal centre managed to establish greater control over the republic only after military intervention in 1999. This has resulted in the adoption of a new republican constitution and the installation of a loyal republican president via direct elections.

6.4.4 The Irrelevance of Regime Opposition

Loyalty in the form of electoral support for Kremlin backed candidates and parties, or regime opposition in the form of support for the communists, did not appear to have been of any great importance. There was only weak evidence that support for the communist presidential candidate in 2000 was associated with lower degrees of federal-level influence a few years later. But otherwise there was no convincing evidence to suggest that support for certain candidates or parties was associated with greater levels of bargaining power. This lends further credence to the assumption that the federal centre has not been in a position to systematically award allies and punish antagonists.

Political ties to the federal centre, characterized by personalized and informal patron-client relationships, can be expected to have mattered in intergovernmental relations, especially before the regional chief executives became popularly elected.⁴⁶ It has been assumed that regional leaders with personal contacts to top politicians in the federal centre had better opportunities to lobby for beneficial deals and to gain preferential

⁴⁶ Regional leaders linked with influential national or interregional organisations were also thought to have gained political status and, thus, greater chances for establishing a dialogue with the national leadership (Tolz and Busygina 1997: 406).

treatment in the bilateral power-sharing treaty process (Tolz and Busygina 1997: 406; Yemelyanenko 1996; Solnick 1996). This assumption can be challenged though. There does not appear to be any evident relationship between the ability to obtain bilateral power-sharing treaties and whether the regions were governed by pro-Yeltsin incumbents or communists or independents (Söderlund 2003b: 65-66). The occupation of an elite position at the regional level during the Soviet era, thus belonging to the former political *nomenklatura*, neither appears to have mattered (Svendsen 2002: 160-170). Hence, from a general point of view, personalized and informal patron-client relationships were not of any great importance. After all, it has been widely acknowledged that support, loyalty and obedience to the national leadership generally did not render any great payoffs at the beginning of the 1990s (Treisman 1999). Moreover, the Kremlin was not very successful in securing the victory of its preferred candidates in regional presidential and gubernatorial elections between 2000 and 2002 (Perović 2004: 356).

6.4.5 Popular Support as a Bargaining Chip

Electoral legitimacy turned out to be a very interesting factor that from the beginning was not of any great importance, but later turned out to be of great significance. Electoral legitimacy had no explanatory power in the attempts to explain the chronological order of the regions in the bilateral power-sharing treaty process 1994–1998. The empirical analyses in Chapter 4 did not confirm the assumption that popularly elected regional chief executives obtained bilateral power-sharing treaties (with supplementary agreements) at an earlier stage than centrally appointed chief executives. This was at a point of time when most of the regional chief executives only a few years earlier had been appointed by and responsible to the national president. Thus, the institution of popularly elected regional leaders was not that developed at a point of time when many bilateral power-sharing treaties had already been signed or were in the process of being drafted.

Once the principle of direct elections had become institutionalized, the significance of strong electoral support as the source of political legitimacy appears to have grown. Chapter 5 provided evidence for a positive relationship between the electoral strength of regional chief executives and bargaining power in federal relations. This is indeed a very interesting finding. If true, democratic legitimacy in the form of legitimacy provided by the electorate was translated into greater bargaining power and influence for regional chief executives in intergovernmental relations. In that case, the federal centre was responsive to the signals of the voters. This may be a sign of the presence of a genuine democratic and federal culture. Yet, from a democratic point of view, this is slightly problematic as a number of autocratic regional leaders have over the years garnered a big share of the vote in not fully democratic elections. Just as “Yeltsin

turned a blind eye to the development of authoritarian regimes in the regions” (Ross 2002: 175), the federal centre has turned a blind eye towards regional chief executives who have managed to establish domination over their regions. In that sense it seems that actors at the federal level have preferred stability and predictability much more than the presence of subnational executive leaders elected via competitive elections. The presidents in Bashkortostan and Tatarstan are two examples of regional chief executives who have enjoyed autocratic power and who have been elected in elections that have merely been a façade (Grävingsholt 2002; Farukhshin 2002).

6.4.6 *Time in Power*

It was difficult to determine whether time in power mattered in the bilateral power-sharing treaty process. There was a statistically significant bivariate correlation between time in power and federal-level influence, but the variable had no explanatory power in the regression models (Chapter 5). The reason for this is that the degree of electoral support overshadowed the significance of time in power with regard to the ability to explain federal-level influence of regional chief executives. Furthermore, variables indicating the number of years in office and the popular base of the regional chief executives were highly intercorrelated. This intercorrelation can be explained by the fact that political leaders are able to accumulate political resources and build up their popularity while in office, which, in general, make them more difficult to beat (Tompkins 1984: 528–529; Alford and Hibbing 1981; Bienen and van de Walle 1989: 24).

6.5 Problems of Federalism in Russia

The empirical studies in this dissertation have demonstrated that asymmetry in federal relations, by reason of the uneven access to different bargaining resources, has been evident in the Russian Federation. This is in line with the statement made by Solnick (1996) who pointed out that all actors are not equal in bargaining processes between central and regional governments and that this asymmetry in the state structure has affected the outcomes of federal bargaining games. Ross (2002) has also observed that intergovernmental relations in Russia “have been determined principally by political and economic factors rather than constitutional norms” (*ibid.*: 172). The results are also in line with the expectations that asymmetry, as determined by social, cultural, economic and political characteristics, generate different patterns of federal relations (Tarlton 1965), that the political resources are important to the understanding of the relative power of central and subnational governments (Rhodes 1999), and that territorial, cultural and economic resources can be used as valuable bargaining chips (Rokkan and Urwin 1983).

Russia is acknowledged as one of the most asymmetric federal states in the world, characterized by high degrees of *socio-economic asymmetry* (variation across the regions with regard to size, population and economic status), *political asymmetry* (a subset of regions with greater representation and political status in federal politics), and *constitutional asymmetry* (certain regions are granted exclusive constitutional powers) (Ross 2002: 7-10). Scholars have pointed out that the difference in cultural, economic, social and political conditions between the regions has been the cause of the federal asymmetry. Extensive regional diversity has created different needs and variation in policy orientations among the constituent units (Avtonomov 2002: 61).

Further, due to a weak federal centre, processes of segmented regionalism generated federal asymmetry in terms of the fragmentation of political authority with different legal, economic and administrative practices across the regions. More than half of the regional constitutions or charters contradicted federal norms, thousands of regional legal acts have not been in line with federal legislation, the bilateral power-sharing treaties guaranteed the different regions with different rights and privileges, the process of distributing tax revenues among regions was not transparent and accurate, a growing economic divergence between regions magnified the extent of federal asymmetry and a regionalization of foreign policy occurred in many regions (Sakwa 2002b: 8-13).

Federal asymmetry should be deemed problematic. During the 1990s, numerous scholars stressed the negative effects of dissimilarities between the member units in Russian centre-region relations. Asymmetry in the division of power and authority among different regions, most of all attributable to the bilateral power-sharing treaties and agreements, was a source of inter-regional competition and rivalry that led to political instability (Filippov and Shvetsova 1999). For instance, many of the bilateral treaties and agreements undermined the legitimacy of federal law and the federal constitution. Overall, bilateralism is also regarded as a threat to institutional stability. The danger lies in that a subset of regions that have earned privileges via bilateral bargaining may in the future build a coalition to enter into disruptive renegotiations concerning the federal design (Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 2004: 139). From this perspective, there are certain advantages with Putin's efforts to create a unified legal space by ordering the regions to bring their laws into conformity with federal standards and by abolishing most of the bilateral power-sharing treaties and agreements which were in contradiction with the federal constitution and federal laws.

6.5.1 Balance of Power

Jackson and Lynn (2002) argue, however, that the problems in centre-region relations in Russia have not been the cause of asymmetrical treatment of the regions, but rather

the consequence of a disagreement over the general rules of the game and the lack of agreement over the idea of federalism. The disagreements have concerned the best model of federal democracy and how much executive authority the federal government should have over the regions. Neither side has had an interest in achieving predictable, reciprocal and transparent federal relations. For instance, instead of establishing functional intergovernmental relations, regional elites have only been interested in securing greater amounts of power for themselves. Thus, the lack of mutual trust and respect between the different levels of government caused strained federal relations.

An unclear delimitation of powers and responsibilities between the federal centre and the regions in Russia has caused a great deal of confrontation and repeated disputes over the appropriate federal division of power. In general, countries with a federal form of government are susceptible to tension. A recurrent dilemma of federal systems is to attain a balance of power between the different levels of government. Vague constitutions, which do not lay down detailed rules of the game, often bring about disputes over the division of power and authority. The constituent parts of a federation often wish to increase their powers, while the central government seeks to maintain or increase its dominance (Neumann 1960: 867; Hague, Breslin and Harrop 1998: 154-155 and 173).

Erk and Gagnon (2000) argue, on the other hand, that obsessive constitutional precision is not necessary or desirable in order to ensure stability of multinational federations: “intentionally leaving the constitutional definition of a federal arrangement ambiguous may, under certain circumstances, promote the durability of federations as each side can interpret their membership in the association differently, rather than being forced to accept the legally defined interpretation of the federation favoured by one side of the partnership” (*ibid.*: 93). Vague constitutional provisions on the division of powers in a federation allow for different interpretations and minimize feelings of injustice or restrictiveness imposed by legal provisions among the constituent units. However, constitutional ambiguity is useful as long as there is a feeling of solidarity and trust among the federal partners, ambiguity may otherwise lead to disagreements and instability.

In the absence of a broadly accepted division of authority between the different levels of government in the Russian Federation, negotiation and political bargaining were important means to find a balance in the distribution of power between the two levels of government and to resolve centre-region conflicts (Huskey 1999: 206). During a time of political turmoil in the 1990s, strong regions and regional leaders were able to enter into political bargaining and negotiation that gave rise to increasing levels of asymmetry between the constituent units. A series of bargains, including both formal

and informal agreements, were struck between central and regional leaders to help establish the rules of the political game in the 1990s (Solnick 1996; Treisman 1997; Filippov and Shvetsova 1999; Stoner-Weiss 2001).

6.5.2 Informal Federal Relations

Federal relations in the Russian Federation have mainly been characterized by bilateral and informal elite bargaining processes involving the top leadership of the executive branches (multilateral negotiations did, however, take place between 1990 and 1993 when the central government bargained collectively with groups of regions in order to find a compromise concerning the content of the Federation Treaty and the Russian Constitution). The fact that the representatives of the executive branches have been, at the expense of the legislative branches, the dominant actors in intergovernmental relations in Russia is not in line with theories presented in the general framework for analysis of this dissertation (see Chapter 1.3.2). Normally, the executive branches tend to dominate the legislatures in parliamentary systems, while presidential systems are characterized by independent executive and legislative branches at both levels of government. In Russia, the principle of separation of powers is predominant at the subnational level; the executive power is generally entrusted to an elected head of administration, while unicameral or bicameral assemblies represent the legislative branch of power. At the federal level, the Russian Federation should be regarded as having something between a presidential or semi-presidential system.⁴⁷

Informal practices and personalized relations in intergovernmental relations were common during the Yeltsin era. Obviously, there existed an informal deal in the form of mutual understanding between the president and the regional chief executives. They had a common interest in building up and securing the authority and strength of executive power at the expense of the legislative branch. Regional chief executives were able to organize political life within their regions. Yeltsin more or less turned a blind eye and did not interfere in internal politics in return for active or passive loyalty

⁴⁷ There is no common agreement on how to categorize the Russian political system. First, the Russian Federation is classified as having a super-presidential system due to the extensive formal presidential powers (Ishiyama and Kennedy 2001; Hellman 1996; Frye 1997). Second, others label it as simply a presidential system (Easter 1997a) or limited presidential system (Derbyshire and Derbyshire 1996: 44). Third, some scholars describe the Russian political regime as semi-presidential (Elgie 1999; Sedelius 2002: 20) or a system with a hybrid presidential parliamentary form of executive (Watts 1999: 86). One source of confusion is the fact that the president appoints the prime minister with the consent of the State Duma and that the government must enjoy the confidence of both the president and the lower chamber of parliament (the State Duma may express its non-confidence in the Government). These characteristics are typical for semi-presidential regimes. However, the Russian President has the formal prerogatives to dissolve the State Duma, if the parliamentary chamber rejects a nominee three times in a row or if the State Duma twice expresses its non-confidence in the government and the president disapproves of this decision (see Chapter 6, Articles 111 and 117 in the Russian Constitution).

(Blakkisrud 2003a: 83). The federal centre could, for example, count on social stability, political predictability and electoral support (Grävingsholt 2002: 189) or the avoidance of threats of secession (Sakwa 2002b: 13).

The process of executive bargaining was informal and secretive, not open for scrutiny by the legislature or the public. The presence of informality, secrecy, intransparency and confusion in intergovernmental relations has been considered a problematic aspect of Russian federalism. Concerns related to democratic accountability have been raised (see also Chapter 1.3.4). A typical example of the dominance of executive federalism, in which the chief executives at both levels of government were key players and where the legislative branch of power was left outside, was the bilateral power-sharing treaty process. The bilateral power-sharing treaties were not signed, or even shown, to the Russian Parliament. This was “procedurally exceptional in a democratic federation” (Stepan 2000: 144). In addition, “no regional government [was] fully informed about the content of centre-region bargains of other governments” (Herrmann-Pillath 2000).

Intergovernmental relations in Russia cannot be considered to be in resonance with the federal, or covenantal, model as discussed by Elazar (1997) (see also Chapter 1.2.1). According to this model, power is spread among different actors and across different levels of government. Political bargaining is conducted openly, not secretly and informally. The rules of the game are also constitutionally established in this model. Another typical feature for the federal model is that the composition of factions or coalitions, which cooperate or compete with one another and try to achieve certain political aims, changes continually depending on the political agenda (*ibid.*: 242). In the case of Russia, intergovernmental communication can in many instances be likened to the organic model where politics tends towards oligarchy and club-like politics. Privileged and exclusive political elites bargain in secret and make informal decisions (whereby political networks and interpersonal connections are important) (*ibid.*: 241 and 246).

By the close of the 1990s, when all the regional chief executives had become elected and responsible to the local electorate, “the political power relations became even more complex” and “increased the number of politically relevant actors in the national system of fiscal governance” (Herrmann-Pillath 2000). As a consequence, the political system could be characterized to an even greater extent as a competitive regime (see Chapter 1.3.5). During the 1990s, the presence of complex centre-region bargaining processes and claims for regional autonomy paved the way for the emergence of competitive federalism (Herrmann-Pillath 2000). The intensity of competition for power between the federal government and the regions has been reduced after 2000 when the federal centre grew stronger.

6.5.3 Centralization

A move towards a more centralized system of governance and a stable equilibrium of power relations can be detected as a consequence of Putin's rise to power in 2000. Previously, voices have been raised expressing concern about the presence of a segmented and asymmetric state based on contractual federalism rather than constitutional federalism. From that perspective, Putin's push to bring order to federal relations and restore the power and authority of the federal centre without having to change the constitution has been well received by many Russians. This was a means to deal with the shortcomings of the federal system and enhance the ability to govern effectively. The federal centre has, as a matter of fact, pointed out that their primary aim is to promote the efficient operation of the free market. A strong central government can be considered important in order to achieve political stability and economic development. On the other hand, the introduction of federal reforms and the development towards a centralized state have been disastrous for the development of federalism and the ability of the regional governments to constrain the central government. Critics have perceived the federal reforms as a move towards centralism and authoritarianism (Perović 2004: 355).

How will the regional elites respond to greater levels of centralization in the future? Will they take action? Instability in the form of separatism and regionalism may also occur in managed democracies where the regions are overpowered by a strong central government. Orttung and Reddaway (2001) acknowledged the danger of a future aggressive and centralized Russian state with a strong centre that would introduce economic and political restrictions on the regions. That could possibly lead to the mobilization of nationalist and separatist-minded movements. Luukkanen (2001) sketched out a couple of possible scenarios regarding the future of the Russian Federation. If Russian political leaders succeed in establishing a genuine democratic society, the Russian Federation will preserve, because internal problems presumably will be solved under democratic conditions. But, on the other hand, if Russia becomes less democratic and the federal centre grasps more power Russia might as well break up due to regional protests (Luukkanen 2001: 247).

In Russia, the challenge is to achieve a balance of interests between the federal government and the constituent units. This would entail the striking of a balance between diversity and unity. Ideally, a federal system is characterized by both diversity and unity (Elazar 1987; Smith 1995). Russia and federal states in general should attain equilibrium between federal and unitary elements. This would mean the absence of dominant regions inclined to separatism and the avoidance of a state with unitary features where the centre is strong (Stoliarov 2003: 171). The balance between diversity and unity is, nevertheless, a fundamental problem in federal states: the

authority of the federal government should not threaten the autonomy of the constituent units and the constituent units should not undermine the federal commitment by refusing to cooperate and by jeopardizing the stability of the federation (Qian and Weingast 1997; Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 2004: 26-28).

Federal states do, however, move back and forth between centralization and decentralization. Political bargaining and intergovernmental negotiation between different levels of government continuously take place in federal systems. “The internal equilibrium is not fixed” and “the federal structure remains open for endless renegotiations about the division of power among its constituent units” (Blakkisrud 2003b: 240). Yet, “ongoing processes of negotiation and renegotiation in a federation pose an ever present danger to federal stability and effectiveness” whereby “the primary purpose of federal design must be to keep those processes in check” (Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 2004: 33). A key question, therefore, is how to keep processes of intergovernmental negotiation and bargaining in check and yield stability in ongoing federal bargaining processes?

6.5.4 Underdeveloped Party System

Political parties and political channels where intergovernmental bargaining can take place are important for a federal system. Functional channels for intergovernmental communication in the form of established forums of interaction will most likely be necessary in the future in Russia. There have been no appropriate political arenas to address conflicts between the federal centre and the regions in Russia, in spite of the fact that representation in the upper chamber of parliament ensured the regions direct access to the legislation and decision-making process at the federal level. Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova categorized the Russian system as a *without* system where bargaining takes place outside the parliamentary arena.⁴⁸ The reason why the upper chamber has not become an adequate bargaining arena is that the State Duma can override vetoes by the Federation Council. In addition, when the Russian president is able to secure a majority in the State Duma, he is able to function as an effective veto player, thus further reducing the ability of the Federation Council to constitute a balance to the national executive. The fact is that Putin has enjoyed great levels of authority since both Unity and United Russia have supported President Putin in his

⁴⁸ Two forms of bargaining between the federal executive and the federal units are recognized: *within* and *without* bargaining. *Within bargaining* means that the federal units are represented in the national legislature and have access to a national venue for bargaining, while *without bargaining* means that they are not able to bargain within a national forum since they are not part of the national governmental structure (Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 2004: 117).

efforts to centralize and strengthen the power vertical in Russia (Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 2004: 118).

The parliamentary arena is an important arena where structured bargaining between actors at different levels of government can take place. The advantage of representation and bargaining *within* national governmental structures is that the use of parliamentary procedures encourages: (1) the emergence of the politics of compromise since alliances in the form of parliamentary majorities are required, (2) the creation of shifting coalitions that lowers the likelihood of permanent polarization and (3) transparency of rules. The without bargaining model, where negotiations between the federal centre and federal units are conducted bilaterally, can in the worst case pave the way for asymmetry and intransparency in federal relations instead of uniformity and transparency (Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 2003: 119-120). In order for a parliamentary arena to function as it should, there has to be institutionalized and stable parties. Hence, the establishment of a properly developed political party system is of very great importance to secure a stable federal state (see Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 2003: 39-43).

Informal negotiations became a vital channel of bargaining in the absence of a developed party system and formal and constitutionally instituted intergovernmental relations. The introduction of an open and regulated arena in the form of a functioning party system and a parliamentary arena for negotiation may be of great importance. So far, party systems at both the national and subnational levels in Russia have been anything but stable. Throughout the 1990s, the national party system was characterized by a high degree of electoral volatility and fragmentation. A large number of new national parties appeared within a short space of time, only to disappear shortly after. Numerous non-partisan independents have as well been elected to the State Duma (the lower chamber of parliament) (Moser 2001; McFaul 2001; Sakwa 2002a: 140-200). Party underdevelopment has been especially evident at the regional level. The average percentage of party nominees and party candidates has been extremely low in regional legislative elections. More than four-fifths of the candidates and the elected deputies were independents without running for election on the basis of party labels (Golosoov 2004 73-88; Moser 2003: 1056; Ross 2002: 97-101).

6.6 Regional Legislatures as Future Partisan Veto Players?

This dissertation has shown that the federal centre has strengthened its authority and will in the coming years be in charge of things at the expense of the regions and the regional chief executives. The system of centrally nominated chief executives will effectively reduce the ability of regional governments to act as institutional veto players. What are the abilities of the regions to counterbalance the central government

in the future? In my opinion, the ability of regional legislative assemblies to act as partisan veto players may be of great interest.

The regional legislative assemblies will be of increasing importance since they have strengthened their position vis-à-vis the regional chief executives. First, the federal law concerning the formation procedure of the Federation Council increased the authority of the regional legislatures. The regional legislatures are in a position to veto, by two-thirds majority vote, the appointments and dismissals of Federation Council deputies by regional chief executives (Perović 2004: 362). Second, the regional deputies are able to either approve or reject presidential nominees to the post of regional chief executive. However, if the candidate is rejected twice, the president is authorized to dissolve the regional legislature (Blakkisrud 2005). Third, the adoption of new electoral laws is likely to promote the formation of a party-based political arena at the regional level which will strengthen the legislative branch of government (Perović 2004: 362-363). Due to the lack of party structures across the regions, and the lack of national parties, the regional legislatures had in many regions been controlled by the regional chief executives (Golosov 2004: 161-202; Ross 2002: 122-133).

6.6.1 Electoral Engineering in Russia

There are several reasons why the development of the Russian party system at both the regional and national levels should be monitored and examined. A deliberate exercise in electoral engineering, via the adoption or revision of a series of electoral laws during recent years, will probably lead to fewer parties and lower rates of electoral volatility at the national level. The adoption of new electoral laws will also ensure that nationwide parties are going to gain much greater representation in regional legislative assemblies. National parties have been weakly represented in the regional electoral and legislative arenas. The new electoral laws will in all probability pave the way for the nationalization of party systems across the subnational units, both with regard to patterns of voting behaviour in national and regional parliamentary elections. The question that arises is how extensive the nationalization of party systems will be in the coming years. “Nationalization of the vote” refers to the process of homogenization of electoral behaviour that is manifested in the form of more uniform support for the major national parties across electoral districts and regions (Caramani 2004: 32-40; Chhibber and Kollman 2004: 4).

Reforms of the electoral system were initiated after 2000 with the aim of stabilizing the Russian party system. First, the 2001 law on political parties is a prime example of deliberative political engineering to bring stability to the party system both nationally and regionally. As of 2003, to be registered as a political party by the Ministry of Justice, and to be able to compete in legislative elections, a political party has to have

(1) regional party branches in more than half of the 89 regions with (2) a minimum of 10,000 members nationally and 100 members in more than half of the regional party branches. Therefore, the law demands that all parties have to operate at the national level and it forbids the establishment of regional parties (Golosov 2004: 257-258; Moser 2003: 1054). The latter prohibition reduces the ability of regionalist voices to be expressed in the party system, even though it should be acknowledged that purely regional parties were few before the party system reforms (see Golosov 2004: 80-81).

Second, the adoption of a revised federal electoral law in June 2002 was intended to accelerate party formation in the regions by introducing a mix of proportional and majoritarian electoral systems. The new law requires that, as of July 2003, at least half of the deputies have to be elected from closed party lists where the seats are allocated on a proportional basis. At present, the remaining seats are usually allocated using a single-member district plurality voting system. Some regions also use multi-member districts (Golosov 2004: 263-266; Moser 2003: 1049). Most regions have a fixed electoral threshold of 5 per cent in the proportional elections; others either have lower (3 per cent) or higher (7 or 10 per cent) thresholds.

Third, President Vladimir Putin submitted a proposal to the State Duma in December 2004 to replace the current mixed electoral system in State Duma elections with an electoral system based entirely on proportional representation. This makes it difficult for independent candidates to gain any seats, since State Duma deputies will be elected solely on the basis of party lists. The electoral threshold will also be raised from 5 per cent to 7 per cent. The draft law passed its first reading in the State Duma in December 2004 and its third and last reading in April 2005, after which the Russian President signed it into law in May the same year. The change to the electoral law will take effect as of the 2007 State Duma elections.

6.6.2 Nationalization of Party Systems and the Degree of Decentralization

The nationalization of the national party system and the regional party systems in Russia can have both positive and negative effects. On one hand, the formation of nationalized and stable party systems in Russia would be beneficial. Working party systems provide stability and harmony in political systems. Political parties are vital actors in modern democracies. The presence of well established and institutionalized parties and party systems is associated with a healthy democracy and it promotes stability in the form of regular patterns of party competition, legitimate political parties, citizen involvement, etc. (Mainwaring 1999). Partisan harmony across different levels of governments in federal states is expected to have a binding effect on federal polities, while partisan disharmony may give rise to centrifugal tendencies in the form of demands for decentralization (Burgess 1993: 107). Political parties contribute to

federal stability by acting as intermediates when conflicts arise between the federal government and the federal units. This helps to avoid open conflict and disruptive bargaining. If the governments at both the central and subnational levels are controlled by the same party, the incentives for cooperation and coordination are greater. In that case, political parties synchronise the policies and actions of administrations at the national and regional levels. The probability for conflicts in intergovernmental relations is greater if representatives of different parties control the central and subnational governments (Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 2004: Chapter 6).

On the other hand, subnational governments and parliaments are less likely to have the ability to act as veto players and constrain central government, if both levels of government are dominated by the same party (Stepan 2004; Mainwaring and Samuels 2004). Daniel Elazar (1987: 178) points out that “the existence of a noncentralized party system is perhaps the most important single element in the maintenance of federal noncentralization”. William Riker (1964: 129) argues that the structure and the level of decentralization of the party system has a bearing on the level of state centralization: “the federal relationship is centralized according to the degree to which parties organized to operate the central government control the parties organized to operate the constituent governments”. Riker and Elazar both assert that the presence of a centralized and dominant party limits the power of the constituent units. In a centralized party system, national party leaders have the capacity to make use of the organizational and ideological means to discipline copartisans at the subnational level. In a decentralized party system, political leaders in charge of subnational units are able to operate much more independently of central actors. Ronald Watts (1999: 75) also stresses that political parties and the political party structure affect the degree of decentralization within federations.⁴⁹

Thus, the ability of subnational governments to offer effective opposition to the central authorities is greater if they are partisan opponents of the central government. The assessment of partisan harmony—by comparing the allocation of votes and seats in both national and subnational elections—can be used to measure the degree of political decentralization. Riker and Schaps (1957) introduced the concept of partisan harmony, a measure that takes into account the extent to which subnational chief executives share the party affiliation of the federal chief executive. Other political

⁴⁹ Watts (1999: 91) recognizes four aspects that are worth looking into: “(1) the organizational relationship between the party organizations at the federal level and provincial or state party organizations, (2) the degree of symmetry or asymmetry between federal and provincial or state party alignments, (3) the impact of party discipline upon the representation of interests within each level, and (4) the prevailing pattern of political careers”.

scientists have analyzed to what extent parliaments and governments of the constituent units have mirrored the parliament at the federal level. Rodden and Wibbels (2002) calculated the share of subnational units controlled by the party of the federal executive to test the association between federal-provincial copartisanship and macroeconomic outcomes in federal states.

In conclusion, there are both advantages and disadvantages with a congruent party system. If the reforms contribute to a high degree of party system congruence, the prospects for uniformity and an even greater centralized political order in the Russian Federation will be greater, especially if a political party supported by the central government has an absolute majority in the national parliament and among most of the regional parliaments. In the case of Russia, it can be expected that the ability of the central government to control regional legislation and budgets will be greater, if nationwide parties that support the central government gain legislative majorities within the regions. Previously, the federal centre has had little influence over the regional legislatures and not been able to intervene in regional affairs. A future study would monitor the direction of party formation in Russia and detect the magnitude of the development towards the nationalization of electorates and party systems among the regions. The question is whether the national party system and the regional party systems will radically change in the coming years? Another question is to what extent will regional populations conform to central pressures by voting for United Russia? United Russia, which makes up the majority in the State Duma, has supported President Putin in his efforts to centralize and strengthen the power vertical in Russia. Apart from assessing the extent of the nationalization of the vote from a general point of view, it will be possible to identify individual regions that have party systems that do not correspond to party systems at the national level. These regions constitute autonomous spaces of electoral competition.

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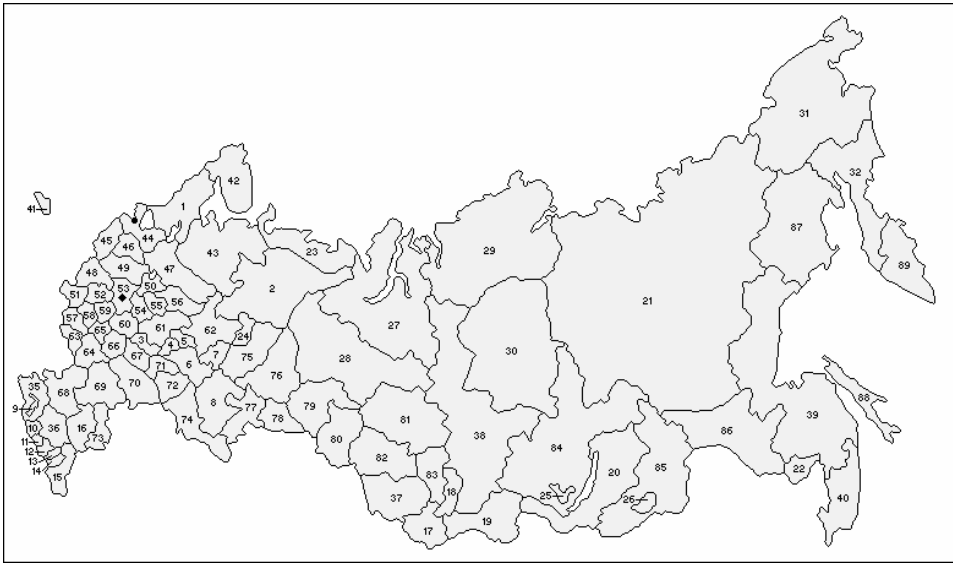
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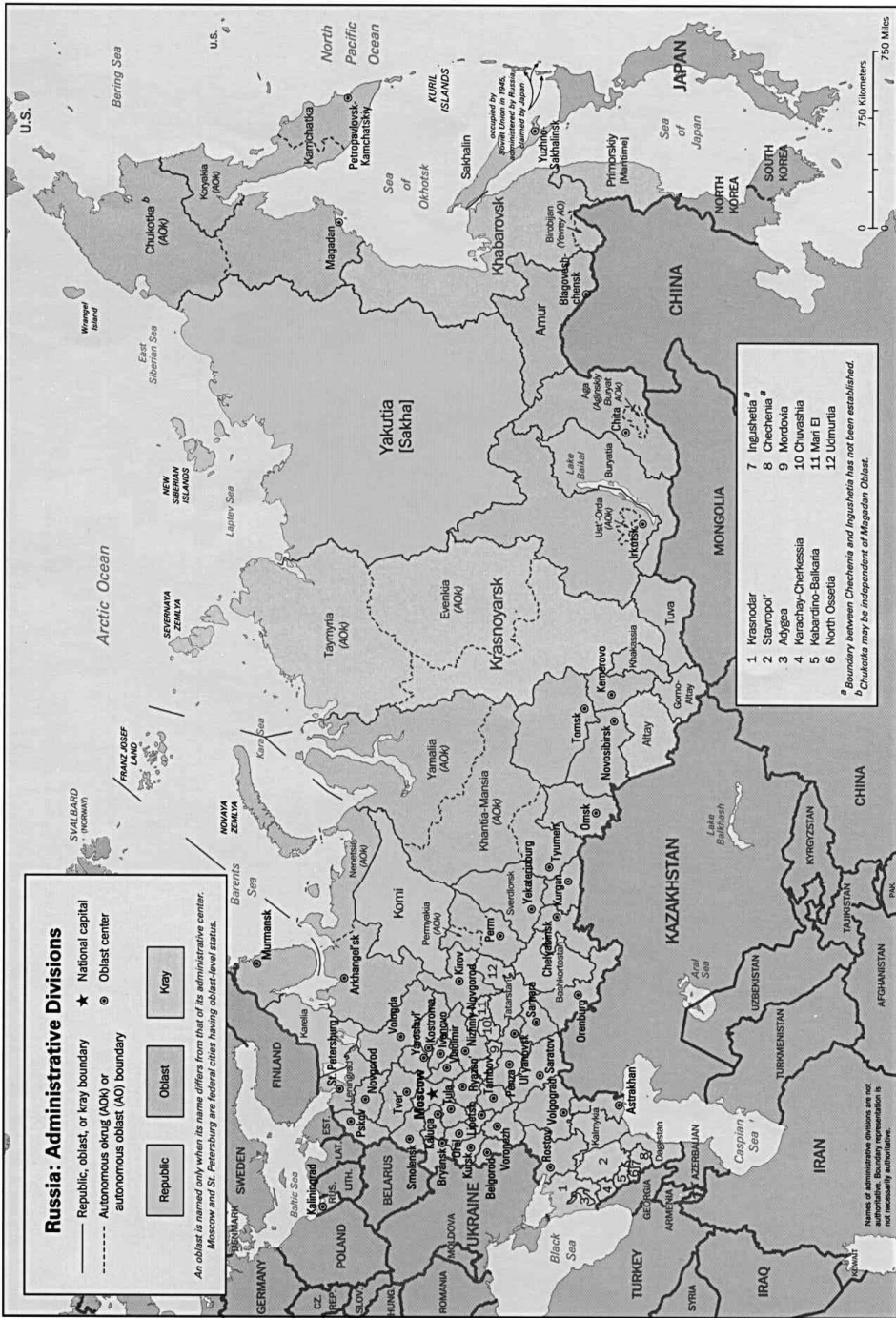
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Appendix



Republics	Autonomous okrugs	43 Arkhangelsk	67 Penza
1 Karelia	23 Nenets AO	44 Leningrad	68 Rostov
2 Komi	24 Komi-Permyak AO	45 Pskov	69 Volgograd
3 Mordovia	25 Ust-Orda Buryat AO	46 Novgorod	70 Saratov
4 Chuvashia	26 Agin-Buryat AO	47 Vologda	71 Ulyanovsk
5 Mari El	27 Yamal-Nenets AO	48 Smolensk	72 Samara
6 Tatarstan	28 Khanty-Mansi AO	49 Tver	73 Astrakhan
7 Udmurtia	29 Taimyr AO	50 Yaroslavl	74 Orenburg
8 Bashkortostan	30 Evenk AO	51 Bryansk	75 Perm
9 Adygeya	31 Chukotka AO	52 Kaluga	76 Sverdlovsk
10 Karachaevo-Cherkessia	32 Koryak AO	53 Moscow	77 Chelyabinsk
11 Kabardino-Balkaria	Federal cities	54 Vladimir	78 Kurgan
12 North Ossetia	◆ Moscow	55 Ivanovo	79 Tyumen
13 Ingushetia	● St. Petersburg	56 Kostroma	80 Omsk
14 Chechnya	Krais	57 Kursk	81 Tomsk
15 Dagestan	35 Krasnodar	58 Orel	82 Novosibirsk
16 Kalmykia	36 Stavropol	59 Tula	83 Kemerovo
17 Altai	37 Altai	60 Ryazan	84 Irkutsk
18 Khakassia	38 Krasnoyarsk	61 Nizhny Novgorod	85 Chita
19 Tyva	39 Khabarovsk	62 Kirov	86 Amur
20 Buryatia	40 Primorsky	63 Belgorod	87 Magadan
21 Sakha (Yakutia)	Oblasts	64 Voronezh	88 Kamchatka
Autonomous oblast	41 Kaliningrad	65 Lipetsk	89 Sakhalin
22 Jewish AO	42 Murmansk	66 Tambov	

Appendix A The administrative units of the Russian Federation.



Appendix B Russia and surrounding states. (<http://sunsite.informatik.rwth-aachen.de/Maps/>).

Appendix C Data sources.

Independent variable	Year	Source
Population	1994	Goskomstat Rossii (2003)
	2002	Goskomstat Rossii (2003)
Regional product per capita	1994	Goskomstat Rossii (2003)
	2002	Goskomstat Rossii (2003)
Gross regional product	1994	Goskomstat Rossii (2003)
	2002	Goskomstat Rossii (2003)
Volume of industrial production	1995	Goskomstat Rossii (2003)
	2001	Goskomstat Rossii (2003)
Volume of oil and gas production	1995	Goskomstat Rossii (2003)
	2001	Goskomstat Rossii (2003)
Fiscal dependence of region	1995	McAuley (1997)
	2001	Khristenko and Lavrov (2001)
Volume of exports	1998	http://www.vedi.ru/database/economic/export_usd.html
	2001	Goskomstat Rossii (2003)
Distance to Moscow		http://www.zimina.net/news.php?36
		http://www.russia.org.ua/russiatoday/
Titular nationality (%)	1989	Blakkisrud (1997)
Ethnic Russians (%)	1992	Brade and Schulze (1997)
Muslim titular nationality		Minority Rights Group International (1997)
Buddhist titular nationality		Minority Rights Group International (1997)
Vote for Yeltsin	1991	http://www.nupi.no/russland/elections/Pr_EL_91.html
Vote for Ryzhkov	1991	http://www.nupi.no/russland/elections/Pr_EL_91.html
Vote for Putin	2000	McFaul, Petrov and Ryabov (2000)
Vote for Zyuganov	2000	McFaul, Petrov and Ryabov (2000)
Vote for Russia's Choice	1993	http://www.nupi.no/russland/elections/StDum93_1.html
Vote for Communist Party	1993	http://www.nupi.no/russland/elections/StDum93_1.html
Vote for Unity	1999	McFaul, Petrov and Ryabov (2000)
Vote for Communist Party	1999	McFaul, Petrov and Ryabov (2000)
Vote for chief executive	1991–	http://ww.fci.ru
	2003	http://www.vibory.ru
		http://www.cityline.ru:8084/politika/reg/index.html

In an ideal federal state, the constitutional division of powers and responsibilities empowers regionally based governmental institutions and actors. Subnational governments should, in that case, have the ability to act as institutional veto players who are in position to counterbalance and resist the power and influence of the federal government. To what extent have the regional chief executives had the ability to constrain the central government in post-communist Russia? What are the sources of the formal and informal powers of the regional chief executives in Russian centre-region relations?

First, this dissertation examines the formal powers of the Russian regional chief executives at different stages between 1991 and 2005. Second, the dissertation goes on to explore which political resources have been associated with increased levels of bargaining power of individual regional chief executives vis-à-vis the federal centre. This is done by examining both the timing of bilateral treaties and agreements in the bilateral power-sharing treaty process 1994–1998 and the political influence of the regional chief executives at the federal level based on expert surveys in 2003.

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