Communist Federations

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"A sense of identity can firmly exclude many people as it warmly embraces others."

Amartya Sen (2006, p. 2).

Communism as a Radical Project

It is very easy to forget, in view of its sorry record of economic and political stagnation during its last few decades on the European stage, that communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe began as a creative and bold experiment. Here, I refer to such remarkable innovations as the Leninist Party, the ideological mission of personal, social and economic transformation, and the reliance not on the bourgeoisie, but rather on the party, state ownership of the means of production and central planning as the engines of economic growth and social change. Communism in Europe was, in short, a new type of dictatorship and one that was, moreover, very successful in its early years in promoting social and economic change. These achievements, plus its creation of a powerful political elite and, in the Soviet case, a Super Power that could stand up to the West, made the communist model extremely influential abroad. Beginning in the 1970s, however, two trends began to take shape that eventually undercut the sustainability and the external appeal of the communist model. The first was an economic slowdown in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and the second was the global diffusion of democracy and neoliberal economic policies (Simmons, et.al, 2008). As a result, both the model itself and its ability to win adherents abroad came to an end (see Bunce, 1999).

There was, however, another, equally audacious innovation that the European communists introduced—in this case, targeting the intersection between politics and culture. Here, I refer to the remarkable decision by the Soviet leadership in the early 1920s to build an ethnofederal state in the ashes of the Russian empire (see, for example, Brubaker, 1996; Bunce, 1999; Suny, 1994, 1999a, 1999b; Martin, 2001; Beissinger, 2002; Hale, 2008). This was a state that, like all federal systems, was divided into territorially-defined subunits that had their own institutions of representation and decision-making. However, it added the distinctive feature of drawing those subunits in accordance with the spatial distribution of cultural communities; that is, groups that shared a common ethnicity, language and/or religion (and see Hale, 2008). Thus, the Bolsheviks added to their already very ambitious agenda the goal of constructing a new type of nation-state that used political, social and cultural institutions in order to build, represent and empower national communities. They took on this national and state project, moreover, despite the fact that such tasks were not part of their Marxist job description.

At the time, such an approach to the political management of cultural diversity was unprecedented. Like its political-economic counterparts, the ethnofederal experiment proved to be very influential, not just in shaping the evolution of the Soviet Union, but also in convincing leaders in other

states with diverse populations to adopt a similar approach. This was the case, moreover, whether these regimes were communist or democratic. Thus, just as communist-era Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia emulated the Soviet model of ethnofederalism, so did, for example (but in many cases not consciously), Nigeria, Spain, Lebanon, Cyprus, Northern Ireland, Burundi, Belgium and postcommunist Russia and Bosnia (see, for example, Conversi, 1993; Medrano, 1995; Guibernau, 1995; Suberu, ????; Moreno, 2001; Bose, 2002; McGarry and O'Leary, 2002; Zahar, 2005; Rothchild and Roeder, 2005a, 2005b; Hale, 2008; Erlanger, 2012; Howard, 2012). Indeed, this approach to addressing the challenges posed by cultural diversity within states had even more extensive impact. For example, it was championed by some theorists of divided societies and by many members of the international community when they took on the responsibilities of re-building states and regimes after internal wars (Lijphart, 1969, 1977, 1996; Hartzell, 1999; Csergo, 2007; Rothchild and Roeder, 2005a, 2005b; Jung, 2010). Thus, while the international influence of the Leninist party and communism's distinctive approach to dictatorship and development declined over time, the same cannot be said for the impact of the ethnofederal model. This is despite the obvious and one would think worrisome point that ethnofederalism in the communist world played a key role in the dissolution of both the regime and the state (Bunce, 1999).

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the design, origins and impact of ethnofederalism in the European communist experience. I begin by elaborating on ethnofederalism in theory and in practice in the communist world and then offering an explanation of why the Soviet and, later, Yugoslav and Czechoslovak leadership decided to take the audacious step of building this kind of state. I then discuss the impact of that decision on the sustainability of these communist regimes and states. As we will discover, while there were certain short-term benefits associated with the ethnofederal experiment, there were significant longer-term costs for the regime and the state. I conclude the paper by briefly assessing the extent to which these costs were a function of the fact that communist regimes were dictatorships. Could we argue, in particular, that ethnofederalism is a more viable approach to the political management of cultural diversity in democratic orders? Here, I conclude that many of the costs that we identified in the communist cases appear as well in democracies that have adopted ethnofederal institutions.

Defining Ethnofederalism

In the communist context, ethnofederalism referred to a type of federal system in which each of the constitutive subunits was defined by—and, indeed, named for, as well as understood to serve the functions of developing and representing—a designated cultural community. Thus, ethnofederal states were part of the communist developmental project, and they were constructed upon a purposive coincidence between the geographical distribution of nations and the spatial designation of political institutions. To borrow from communist parlance: while the state was socialist in form, its subunits were national in content.

This approach to federalism, which we also see in, for example, the Eurozone members of the European Union, contrasts sharply with several other variants on federalism that we find in the world today. One is ethnofederalism that is based strictly upon linguistic cleavages, rather than, say, ethnicity,

religion or other cultural markers. An example here is India (see Bajpai, 1997; Lijphart, 1996). Another is asymmetric ethnofederalism, as we see in, say, Canada and Spain. Here, only some of the subunits that comprise the state are defined in cultural terms, and these subunits are different from their counterparts in having significant cultural and political autonomy (see, for example, Moreno, 2001; Medrano, 1995). Finally, there are "a-national" federal systems, as in the United States and Germany, wherein political subunits are defined in purely spatial terms. Thus, there is no "cultural" content to any of the states in the United States or to any of the Lander in Germany. As a result, representation at the subnational level flows strictly from place of residence, rather than from this factor in conjunction with membership in the titular nation.

These variations recognized, however, our examples remind us of an important point. It is very rare for dictatorships to go the federal, let alone the ethnofederal route. This is largely because, just as federalism creates subnational institutions that have some potential for establishing autonomy from the center and thereby providing a base of operations for resisting central directives, so nationally-defined federalism introduces further constraints on the powers of authoritarian leaders. For example, by highlighting the importance of culture and anchoring it in both space and institutions, ethnofederalism works against the ability of authoritarian leaders in culturally diverse countries (depending upon their approach to governance) to mobilize support and remain in power by using such familiar methods as suppressing cultural differences, building a state-wide and non-ethnic identity, and/or ruling on behalf of one cultural community in particular. In this sense, while authoritarian regimes vary from one another and while the strategies their leaders use to manage diversity also vary, ethnofederalism would be equally threatening to the rulers of, say, Bahrain, Syria, China and Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

With these distinctions in mind, we can now elaborate on certain details about the theory and practice of ethnofederalism in the communist world (and see Bunce, 1999, 2004a, 2004b, 2013; Roeder, 1991; Brubaker, 1996; Martin, 2001; Beissinger, 2002; Hale, 2008). Let us begin with the "ethno" side of the equation. As a result of the historical development of this part of the world, when the Soviet and then the Yugoslav leaders came to power (this was less an issue for the Czechoslovak leadership), they confronted not just societies that were remarkably diverse in terms of class and culture, but also nations that varied significantly from one another in their size, geographical compactness, socio-economic resources, development of a cultural and political leadership stratum, consciousness and political sympathies. Moreover, just as there was a combustible correlation between political preferences, on the one hand, and cultural and socio-economic cleavages, on the other, so many nations on the perimeters of these states had co-nationals in neighboring countries. As a result, the national question in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in particular was inextricably-linked to the other concerns of their communist leaders, including their ability to stay in power, build a new regime, define and defend state boundaries, and promote social and economic change.

Every plausible approach to achieving all these objectives, however, carried significant risks. For example, just as investing in nations in ways that leveled the developmental and political playing field made some sense as a strategy of both development and cooptation, so this approach could in fact give some nations reasons to revolt—for instance, those that had once been privileged—and other nations resources to revolt—for example, those that were given political subunits. Moreover, in accentuating

national differences, this approach could undermine the development of a common socialist identity. At the same time, failure to invest in nations could enhance the ability of the regime to establish a common identity centered on socialist ideology. However, it would at the same time likely undercut the mission of social and economic change and, by both reinforcing existing national and often socio-economic hierarchies and de-legitimating, at the same time, national identities, encourage nationalist unrest as well. Communist leaders, therefore, were between the proverbial rock and a hard place when it came to the issue of combining the national question with their other political and economic goals.

Also relevant to understanding the "ethno" aspect of ethnofederalism is the fact that there were significant differences in the representation of titular nations in the republics and, especially, in the lower tiers of the communist ethnofederations, such as the autonomous regions and provinces that were nested within the republics that made up the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. For example, just as Russians outnumbered Kazakhs and Latvians in Kazakhstan and Latvia, respectively, so other republics within the Soviet Union were much more dominated in a numerical sense by their titular nations—for example, Armenia and Georgia. At the same time, within the Russian republic, for example, Tatars were a larger percentage of the population in Bashkortostan than they were in neighboring Tatarstan (see Guiliano, 2000). While one could provide further examples along these lines, we can conclude with a more general point. Especially in the Soviet Union, but also to some extent in Yugoslavia, it would be a mistake to assume that, despite their name and purported function, subnational units were primarily composed of members of the titular nation. If there was a certain "mischief" in how communist leaders drew certain administrative boundaries, so the geographical dispersion of many nations and the inter-mixing of cultural communities made it very hard for the architects of ethnofederalism to produce homogeneous subunits.

The federal side of the story was also complicated because of the way that communist systems were organized. Federalism is usually defined as a structure that features particular constitutional powers granted to the center and to the subunits, along with powers that are to be shared between the two sets of political actors. Moreover, the distribution of these powers is subject to re-negotiation. However, in the communist cases, the center in theory and certainly more so in practice dominated the system in both economic and political terms. This contrast in "federalness" reflected the obvious point that communist ethnofederations were dictatorships rather than democracies. In this sense, subunits in the communist ethnofederations in Europe were designed to play the role of extending the center's control over the periphery rather than providing institutional limitations on that control. There were three key factors, moreover, that reinforced the dominance of the center in these dictatorships in particular: the overarching ideological mission of building a common, socialist identity; the administrative principle of democratic centralism, wherein diverse opinions were tolerated until a decision was made and all units of the system were then expected to play the role of transmission belts for the implementation of central policy; and the center's control over the all-union economic and political institutions. With respect to the final point, it is important to recognize that communist regimes, whether federal or unitary, had an unusually dense institutional landscape. However, in no cases do we find what could be termed "floating institutions." Instead, every institution was embedded in a hierarchy that ran from the bottom to the top of the system, whether that institution was defined in

functional terms (as with the economy) or in territorial ones (as in the cases of the party, social and cultural institutions, and representative political bodies).

However, federalism did provide nonetheless some constraints on the center. For example, the leadership of most republics—and, indeed, most autonomous provinces-- included a representative of the titular nation (though this was not, interestingly enough, true of Chechnya within the Russian federal republic, where Russians dominated) (see Evangelista, 2005; Lieven, 1998). Moreover, in the case of Yugoslavia, the republics had a great deal more institutional autonomy than was the case for their counterparts in Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. This was particularly the case after 1965 and especially following Tito's death in 1980. As a result, the ethnofederal state in Yugoslavia evolved into a confederation, in which the center had increasingly limited capacity to orchestrate politics and economics. Finally, the mere existence of the republics and their significant institutional and national endowments, coupled with the significant slowdown in the circulation of elites during the last several decades of communism (especially in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia), laid the groundwork for a gradual and cumulatively significant redistribution of power and economic resources from the center to the next tier of the ethnofederation. This "republicanization" of politics and economics is a dynamic that we will address in great detail later in this paper.

Another important consideration is that in these federations, similar to their counterparts elsewhere, but in a more extreme way because of the dictatorship and its institutional design, political and economic dynamics took place largely through vertical, rather than horizontal interactions. In this sense, the communist version of ethnofederalism closely resembled an empire. Thus, bargaining within these federations over power and money was largely a dyadic dynamic involving each republic and the center, rather than a process that either took place among republics or between the center, on the one hand, and a group of republics, on the other. What also blocked horizontal politics (as well as economics) was the fact that each republic represented a specific nation that had its own institutions and well-defined interests. While the nature of these subunits contributed to their ability to serve as counterweights to the center's power, it also served the opposite function, especially in the early years of communism. It made coalition formation among the republics very hard as a result of the obstacles posed by the center's political and economic monopoly; the generation of divergent interests among the republics; the construction of "hard" boundaries demarcating the republics; and perceptions among leaders of the republics that in the struggle for the center's favors, they were involved in a zero sum game. In this sense, ethnofederalism was a powerful tool for maximizing centralized control.

In addition, the titular nations that were given political units at the second tier of the communist ethnofederations—that is, the constituent republics--had certain rights, such as self-determination, and certain institutions, such as their own communist parties and academies of sciences, that were denied to the subunits, usually also ethnically-defined, that were located on lower administrative tiers of the system. In this sense, there was an institutional and therefore national "pecking order" in the federations that, as in both Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, featured greater cultural diversity and, thus, more complex administrative structures to recognize that diversity and channel it towards desired political and economic ends. For example, while Serbia had the right to secede from the Yugoslav union (and it is important to remember that Serbia was in fact the first republic to do so when Yugoslavia

began to dissolve), Kosovo and Vojvodina, which were autonomous provinces attached to Serbia, did not. While these lower-level units had less power, in part because of fewer rights, but also because they were nested within and usually directly responsible to a unit above them, they also played another role in some cases. In particular, they existed in order to counter the power of republics—by, for example, privileging a specific minority group, even when it was outnumbered by another group, including the group after which the republic had been named. In this way, some of the ethnically-based provinces served as Moscow's eyes and ears in republican politics. This is precisely what we saw, for example, in the case of Abkhazia, an autonomous province within the Georgian republic, whose rulers were Abkhaz, but whose population was primarily Georgian. Because Abkhaz were a minority within their own province, but allied with Moscow against the Georgian majority in the province and in the republic, moreover, they greeted the eventual weakening of Moscow's control over the state with considerable alarm. While they had a lot to gain from a strong Moscow and a subservient Georgia, they had a lot to lose from a Moscow in retreat and a Georgia on the road to statehood (Dale, 1996; Bunce, 2007). What we saw, in short, was a security dilemma (Posen, 1993).

Finally, ethnofederalism was defined to accomplish an even more complex set of objectives that we have thus far noted. For example, in addition to their representative institutions, republics had nationally-defined educational systems that promoted development of the titular nation's language and culture; their own communist parties that recruited, socialized and empowered nationally-defined political and economic elites; and their own academies of sciences that created a large, nationally-defined corps of cultural elites within each republic. Ethnofederalism, in short, was set up to serve cultural, social and economic, as well as political purposes. Indeed, the assumption was that all of these functions were inter-related. At the same time, however, while all of the Yugoslav republics were equal in their institutional endowments, the same was not true for the Soviet Union or Czechoslovakia. In those two countries, the largest and most politically influential nation and its designated republic—that is, the Russian and the Czech republics, respectively, as opposed to Serbia's position in the Yugoslav federation—did not have their own cultural and political institutions. Instead, the first two republics served as the seat of the "all-union" institutions, including, for example, the communist party, the economic ministries, the parliament, the secret police and the military.

This contrast between the Soviet and Czechoslovak ethnofederations versus Yugoslavia reflected differences in political pressures on the ground. One issue was that, for Tito and his allies, Serbia needed to be sufficiently empowered to serve as a counter-weight to Croatian nationalism. At the same time, Serbia had to be rewarded for making two sacrifices: giving up independent statehood in order to join the socialist Yugoslav state, and accepting republican boundaries that did not encase the entire Serbian population of the country. Thus, an institutional "deal" was struck that, in contrast to the situation of Russia within the Soviet ethnofederation, gave Serbia the full complement of institutions that all the other Yugoslav republics received (and see Vujacic,1996; Vujacic and Zaslavsky, 1991). By contrast, in the Soviet case, limiting the Russian republic to serving as the host for all-union institutions served two functions: using Russia to safe-guard the Soviet project (which was no small concern in such a huge state), while reassuring non-Russians at the same time that Russia would lack the specifically Russian institutions that would allow it to continue its historical role of political, economic and cultural

domination over the entire country (Dunlop, 1998). As for Czechoslovakia, there was not just the issue of the historical domination of the Czechs during the interwar period, but also the threats to communist hegemony posed by 1968; that is, the necessity of using an empowered Slovak republic to rein in the Czech party and population. In this sense, the logic of introducing ethnofederalism in Czechoslovakia after 1968 was two-pronged: court the Slovaks (who received from the deal not just new institutions and legitimation of their national heritage, but also a disproportionate supply of economic resources from the center and from the Soviet Union) (see Bunce, 1984/5).

Why Ethnofederalism?

Why did communist leaders in the Soviet Union and then in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia decide to introduce ethnofederalism (see, especially, Brubaker, 1996; Martin, 2001; Suny, 1994a, 1994b)? It is a puzzling decision for a variety of reasons. One is that it was untried—which was especially worrisome, given that these decisions were made in a time of significant nationalist mobilization within and all along the borders of the Russian empire. Moreover, the Bolsheviks had, to put it mildly, a lot on their plate, once the civil war ended and they confronted not just extraordinary economic and political disarray and the hostility of the West, but also all the problems associated with having won power in what was in effect "the wrong kind of country" in which to build communism; that is, an agrarian empire, not an industrialized state. In addition, by constructing such elaborate cultural, social and political institutions, ethnofederalism promised to invest heavily in the development of national, rather than class identities and nationally-based, rather than class-based coalitions. It also opened up the possibility in the process that there would be simultaneous territorially- and nationally-based resistance to the extraordinarily ambitious goals and policies of the center and its ruling communist party. Finally, every imaginable approach to building an ethnofederal state in the Soviet Union, as elsewhere, meant an inherently exclusionary, as well as an inclusionary effort. There were too many nations and proto-nations to be given political units, and most of them were too dispersed for these units to achieve anything close to cultural homogeneity. For example, during its last decades, the Soviet Union had recognized more than one hundred and twenty nations. What all these considerations implied is that ethnofederalism was simultaneously a luxury and a gamble.

It is for precisely these reasons that the idea of ethnofederalism provoked extensive debates within the Bolshevik party, and that the decision to move ahead on this front prompted scholars to offer a wide range of explanations for this radical venture (see, for example, Slezkine, 1994; Brubaker, 1995; and, especially, Martin, 2001). Rather than work through all these debates among the Bolsheviks and among those whose business has been to analyze them, let me highlight two lines of argument that I find to be the most persuasive explanation for this policy. First and more surprisingly, the Bolsheviks decided on this approach to the management of cultural diversity because they were being in a way good Marxists. Because they were Marxists, but had won power only to face the daunting prospect of needing to establish the very socio-economic and political conditions that were supposed to have been in place for them to emerge as Russia's rulers, they felt compelled to follow their "premature" victory with policies that created those missing stages of development and that promised to help—or force— Russia to move quickly through them. In this way, the super-structure—that is, politics—had to create the base—that is, socio-economic conditions, rather than the reverse. If the Marxist understanding of

stages of development led the Bolsheviks in power to build a penetrative and loyal party and use that party, plus ideology, terror, state ownership of the economy and central planning, in order to generate the needed class structure and the industrialized economy that the building of socialism required, so it also led them to identify two more tasks that they needed to fulfill in order to play "catch-up" with history; that is, building a nation and building a state. Thus, the Bolsheviks were gradualists in the sense of believing in the importance of stages of development, but they were radicals in the sense that they felt they needed to use all the power at their disposal to move quickly through those stages and thereby arrive at the promised land.

One reason they had to hurry was that they were vulnerable-- to challenges within the party and from below in Russia and to the threats posed by a West that had quickly provided concrete evidence of its opposition to Bolshevik rule. It is here where we discover another factor influencing the introduction of ethnofederalism; that is, the lessons that the Bolsheviks learned from their own revolution, which had sparked nationalist-based secessionist movements in the western portions of the Russian empire, and from similar processes associated with decline and then the disintegration of the Habsburg and the Ottoman empires. Here, the key issue was how, given their fragile hold on power, they could demobilize not just those national communities whose leaders had secessionist agendas, but also attach these nations, along with the many others that made up the far-flung Russian empire, to the new Soviet state and its ideological project. They could, of course, have decided to trim back the empire to its core groups, thereby forfeiting not just the Baltic areas and sections of Poland (which did happen), but also, possibly, Belarus, Ukraine, the Caucasus and Central Asia. However, their logic was likely that Ukraine and the Caucasus were too important to forfeit, and that downsizing significantly in a territorial sense could tempt further interventions by the West while encouraging a national- and territorial-form of a bank run. As so often happens with empires and states and political units that, as with the emerging Soviet state, straddle the two, heightened concerns about security often lead to decisions to engage in territorial expansion.

Once we combine these considerations, we can conclude that the ethnofederal approach to nation- and state-building allowed the Bolsheviks to be both good Marxists and clever politicians. The latter was particularly the case, moreover, since, as noted above, just as ethnofederalism invested heavily in the development of nations, so it embedded those nations and their institutions in a more elaborate hierarchy that limited the ability of these nations to carve out autonomy, mobilize against the center, form coalitions with one another and thereby use their institutional resources to threaten the sustainability of the regime and the state. Moreover, many of these nations had strong incentives to support the communist regime. Like the peasants who went to the cities once the communists began to implement their agenda of rapid industrialization, so the nations that acquired a written language, literacy, leaders and economic opportunities as a result of the policies of the communists developed identities and interests that supported the communist experiment. In this sense, especially for the less-developed nations within the federation, ethnofederalism fused the national with the socialist project (Darden and Grzymale-Busse, 2007; Bunce, 2005). As a result, the nations that benefited from communism were in a position to serve as powerful counterweights to those nations that had been more developed when the communist period began, perceived tensions between the socialist project

and their nationalist aspirations, and, that, as a result, were more prone to resisting the center and engaging in popular unrest. In this way, as Terry Martin (2001) has argued, ethnofederalism in the Soviet Union was the first example we have of state-based affirmative action.

Finally, as an added lure, the right of national self-determination reassured the leaders of national communities that they indeed had power—or at least expanded economic and political opportunities--within the communist project. This was especially the case, since this constitutional principle was associated in practice with elaborate political, economic, social and cultural institutions of the sort that one sees in nation-states. In this way, one could argue that ethnofederalism in the communist case resembled the European Union--in its institutional design and its underlying logic of producing nested national identities and institutions within a larger supra-national structure. Returning to the period of the 1920s, moreover, one can also suggest that ethnofederalism was a way to build a bridge between the communist socio-economic project, on the one hand, and the appeals of Wilsonian principles, on the other.

The Functions and Impact of Ethnofederalism

Our discussion of the design of and the rationale behind ethnofederalism suggests that this approach to state-building in the communist world was intended to serve a remarkable array of functions. Some of these functions have already been noted—for example, investing in national and therefore social and economic development, strengthening the state through a nationally- and territorially-defined policy of divide and rule, and enhancing the legitimacy of the regime by building supportive constituencies (also see Nove and Newth, 1968 on Central Asia). However, another goal of ethnofederalism was to lay the groundwork for the development of a new, civic identity that was based on a set of shared ideological principles. Here, Marxist ideology mixed with a fanciful dose of optimism. Thus, the Maslow-like argument was that, once national aspirations were met and once nations had reached a certain level of consciousness and socio-economic development, they would be free to move on the next stage; that is, a common, a-national identity that embraced Soviet values. In this sense, the balance between Soviet and national identities would shift, given development and the consolidation of the state, in support of the former.

The question then becomes: did the communist architects of these states get the results they wanted from the ethnofederal experiment? In the short-term, they did. Thus, despite Western hostility to the communist project, nationalist uprisings preceding and sometimes following the empowerment of the communists, and the enormous dislocations produced by, first, war and then Stalinist terror and draconian developmental policies, these three states and their communist regimes managed to survive. In the Yugoslav and Soviet cases, moreover, ethnofederalism contributed to their sustainability. It did in fact prevent significant challenges to the regime by fragmenting opponents along national and territorial lines, while encouraging some nations and their leaders to develop a significant stake in the status quo. Moreover, especially for the less developed nations that received republican and even provincial status, ethnofederalism made important contributions to their cultural development. In addition, most nations benefited from socio-economic development. Of course, there was also an extensive price that was

paid—especially for peasants, leading members of the party, and nations that were either excluded from the state's architecture or deemed dangerous.

The longer-term ledger, however, is very different. From this vantage point, we can argue that ethnofederalism subverted both the state and the regime (Bunce, 1999). This happened, in part because of growing problems in the center. As these regimes evolved, they were less able to generate economic growth and therefore provide the economic resources and the social opportunities for the upward mobility that had in the early years been responsible for generating at the least popular compliance and at the most outright appreciation for what the regime and its policies had accomplished. Economic performance was also undermined by ethnofederalism. Among other things, these states encouraged a remarkable duplication of economic institutions, which contributed to economic inefficiency. This is precisely what one would expect in a system that in effect constructed proto-states in all of its subunits. If duplication was a drain on the economy, however, so were the obstacles that ethnofederalism had erected to a rational division of economic labors among the republics. As a result of these and other problems, such as the growing costs of planning and state ownership once the economic mission shifted from the creation of the factors of production to their efficient utilization, these economies, as well as those in the unitary communist states, began to decline. Vested interests in the status quo on the part of not just party leaders, but also planners, factory managers, and the working class, not to mention leaders of the republics, however, created powerful centers of resistance to the introduction, let alone the implementation of needed market-oriented reforms. As a result, the center lost one of its key levers for extracting the compliance of its publics and its subunits; that is, the distribution of economic resources.

At the same time, pressures built on communist rulers to maintain their coalitions at the top in difficult economic circumstances by embracing a policy of "stability in cadres" that involved giving allies in the party two things that they coveted, but that they had never had: job security and predictable access to rents. However, by slowing down the circulation of political leaders, republic-level elites lost any hope for upward political mobility, had fewer incentives, as a result, to prove themselves to their superiors, and faced the prospect at the same time of diminishing resources supplied by the center. The predictable outcome was to hoard resources and to build ethno-political machines that were notable for their corruption and their ability to carve out economic and political autonomy from the center. At the same time, they were also well-endowed with virtually all the institutions that are associated with statehood, including geographically-bounded political authority, a well-defined nation, educational institutions, an often self-sufficient local economy, and a well-established political, social, economic and cultural elite stratum. It is not surprising, therefore, that, as the center weakened, the political and economic autonomy of the republics grew, along with public unrest, and the ability of the center to contain these challenges to its hegemony declined. Also important was the fact that the republics, because of their growing autonomy and their very different political, economic and social circumstances, began to follow very different political and economic trajectories. As a result, they became too "different," as well as too independent, to be easily incorporated into a common state or regime project. For example, just as the Baltic republics had very little in common with Kazakhstan in the Soviet Union by the 1980s, so in Yugoslavia by the 1980s the political economy and the regime and state

preferences of citizens in Slovenia were very different from what existed in Serbia. As for Czechoslovakia, similar distinctions were drawn, especially given the fact that the Slovaks had gained so much more from the ethnofederal experiment than had the Czech lands.

For all these reasons, therefore, it is not accidental (to recycle a familiar communist phrase) that, once the center either divided because of these difficulties plus changes in the constitution (as in Yugoslavia in the 1980s) or responded to these difficulties by launching bold and divisive reforms (as with Gorbachev, beginning in 1986), popular unrest erupted in all three of the ethnofederations. Moreover, because of that institutional context, unrest took on specific forms. Thus, particularly in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, popular mobilizations quickly became nationalist mobilizations that were rooted in specific republics and that sought at the least greater autonomy within the federation or at most independent statehood. What we did not tend to see in these ethnofederations, once again particularly in the Yugoslav and Soviet contexts, were, for example, class-based mobilizations; mobilizations by national communities that did not have institutional representation within the federation; or uprisings that crossed national or republican lines. Thus, it was clear that it was the structure of the ethnofederal state that defined the playing field, including the players and the kinds of national, spatial and political demands that they put forward. In this way, ethnofederalism insured that the exit of communism would go hand in hand with the dissolution of the state. Finally and also a function of ethnofederal structures, the states that arose from the wreckage of these regime and state experiments featured precisely the boundaries that had designated the republics and, in some cases, the ethnically-defined provinces during the communist era.

A final indicator of the organizing power of ethnofederalism in disorganized times is another pattern that we find in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in particular. In the years when many of these republics were seceding from the union and in the years following the transition to statehood, the leaders of these republics, then countries confronted the problem of restive minorities. In virtually every case, these challenges to the borders of the new state were carried out by national communities that had institutional recognition and resources during the communist era (with the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia with respect to Nagorno-Karabagh being an exception). Here, I refer not just to the eventual secession of Montenegro from rump Yugoslavia, with Montenegro serving as the final republic to depart from the Yugoslav confederation, but also to the secessionist demands put forward by ethnically-defined provinces that had been nested within republics during the communist era--for example, Transniestr (Moldova); South Ossetia and Abkhazia (Georgia); Chechnya and Tatarstan (Russia); and Kosovo (Serbia) (see, for example, Cerovic, 2001; Cornell, 2001; Gorenburg, 2003; Guiliano, 2000; Treisman, 1997; Toft, 2003; Jenne, 2006; Bunce, 2007; Hale, 2008; Pula, 2001; but see Barany, 2002). What we saw, in short, was a continuation to the next administrative tier (where it existed) of the very dynamics that had led to the dissolution of the state into its republican components. This second round of secession, however, was less successful in producing new states. As Charles King (2001) has argued, one reason for this, aside from the international community's unwillingness to accord recognition to these "statelets," is that both sides in the conflict enjoy significant rents from a situation of semi-sovereignty (also see Lake and Rothchild, 1998).

The point of this discussion, therefore, is not to argue that it was the collapse of communism that was responsible for nations demanding and winning states in Europe's eastern half. Rather, the key claim is that communism itself was the culprit. When communist regimes endowed nations with institutions, they provided all the resources these nations needed to construct states in the wreckage of the communist experiment (see, especially, Bunce and Watts, 2005 for a comparison of nations with and without institutions). In this sense, the Bolsheviks were correct to see ethnofederalism as a nation- and state-building project. Where they miscalculated was in not foreseeing that the more accurate term was nation- and state-building *projects.* Thus, we reject the cliché that nationalist uprisings took place in the communist world, because communism had frustrated their aspirations. Quite the contrary. In building nations, providing institutions for their development and representation, freezing identities and interests along national and territorial lines, and building compartmentalized and distinctive politics and economics by republic, the communist ethnofederations put in place the very building blocks needed for the multiplication of nations and states.

Conclusions: Dictatorship, Democracy and Ethnofederalism

The purpose of this paper has been to analyze the origins, design and evolution of three communist ethnofederations: the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. Rather than summarize what has already been argued, allow me to conclude this paper by addressing at least in skeletal fashion the scope conditions of my arguments. Put simply: would an ethnofederal approach be as likely to undermine the regime and the state if the regime was democratic, rather than authoritarian? Is ethnofederalism a problem, therefore, in countries such as Bosnia, Russia, Belgium, Nigeria and Lebanon?

There are many reasons why the communist experience with ethnofederalism should not travel well to democratic contexts. One is that communism was a highly-repressive dictatorship, especially in its early years, and it was distinctive with respect to its ambitious ideological mission and the fused, centralized and extraordinarily penetrative political and economic system that communist leaders built to achieve that mission and, not incidentally, to stay in power.. As the discussion above recognized, these defining elements of communism led them in some respects to invent ethnofederalism, and the partnership among these seemingly diverse aspects of the communist project in Europe was responsible for both building and disassembling the regime and the state. The other is that the costs attached ethnofederalism, while growing over time as a result of the design of the state, also increased in response to the economic and social slowdown.

These arguments about the interactive consequences of ethnofederalism and the communist political economy recognized, however, I would nonetheless claim that at least some of the costs associated with this approach to the management of cultural diversity also appear in democratic systems that feature ethnofederal elements. Most obviously, ethnofederalism, whether in a democratic or an authoritarian political setting, can never be configured in ways that either succeed in representing every cultural community within the state or that produce culturally homogeneous units. As a result, ethnofederalism always leaves out in the cold individuals and groups that are not members of the officially-recognized national cleavages, because of their own preferences and the identities they have

constructed; their failure to meet the ascriptive criteria for membership in the group; and/or the bad luck of living in the "wrong" subunit. In this sense, ethnofederalism always rests on cultural and political—and often economic and social—favoritism. It cannot avoid the problem that: "Gifts of inclusion often go with the adversity of exclusion" (Sen, 2006, p. 203). Indeed, it is precisely the same trade-off that we find, more generally, in all nationalist movements (Marx, 2003).

A second problem is that ethnofederal institutions, whatever their regime context, encourage a freezing of identities, values and interests, and, therefore, a narrowing of the opportunities that individuals and groups have to discover and express the diversity of their identities and their preferences. In this sense, ethnofederalism and, more generally, power-sharing arrangements can lead to a "miniaturization" of human beings (Sen, 2006, p. 185; also see Zahar, 2005; Roeder and Rothchild, 2005a, 2005b; Howard, 2012). Because they are stuck in an "ethnocracy trap" (Howard, 2012), it is very hard for them to build collaborative relationships that extend beyond their national community—not just in the political realm, but also in the societal and economic spheres (Varshney, 2002). As a result, ethnofederalism can work against the development of trust among different cultural communities and among citizens who purportedly share the same state; the formation of governments that are broadly representative, as well as stable, flexible and effective; and even the generation of strong economic performance (also see Gerring, Thacker and Moreno, 2005; Anderson, 2001; Roeder, 2005).

What further contributes to these costs is the fact that the effectiveness of power-sharing arrangements, such as ethnofederalism, depends significantly not just on the ability of these institutions to legitimate and represent cultural differences, but also on the desire and the willingness of political leaders who speak for these communities to work with one another. It was precisely their inability to do so that, for example, led ultimately led to the dissolution of the Soviet, Yugoslav and Czechoslovak states. Why they could not was largely a function, moreover, of the ways in which ethnofederal institutions limit opportunities for cross-community interaction, generate identities and interests that diverge along national lines, and provide leaders of national groups with incentives to engage in ethnic outbidding (Chandra, 2004; Roeder, 1998). Collaboration among leaders of different national communities, therefore, is discouraged as a result of the identities and interests that ethnofederalism generates.

Ethnofederalism can also weaken, rather than safeguard states. Here, there are two issues. One is that ethnofederalism makes secession easier, because it encourages, as noted above, differentiation among political units, isolates these units and their associated cultural communities from one another, and encourages leaders to play up differences among these communities rather than locate values and interests that they share. It can be countered, of course, that secession is not necessarily a bad thing, especially if it produces a closer alignment between national and state boundaries. However, secession is usually an ugly business, if for no other reason than the facts that leaders often want it more than their followers and some people, because of their identities and interests, lose out in the transition to sovereign statehood.

The other issue is that ethnofederalism bears a close family resemblance to empires in both structural and behavioral terms. In a structural sense, I refer to the power of vertical relationships and

the weakness of horizontal ones. The problem, therefore, is a "siloization" of culture, politics and often economics. However, one can also think of empire as an issue of legitimacy. Thus, when the Soviet Union began to dissolve, the perception of many citizens was that the state had ceased to be effective and that it had lost, as a result, both its right and its capacity to rule (see, especially, Beissinger, 2002). As a result, it was argued that the Soviet Union had transitioned from being a state—that is, the repository of legitimate spatial and coercive authority-- to being an empire—where the monopoly on space and authority could be legitimately contested. Ethnofederal arrangements, I would argue, make such re-interpretations of the state project much more likely, especially since, while one can imagine recentralization of a unitary state as one option that dissatisfied citizens could entertain, it is much harder to do so in the case of ethnofederalism where some units would benefit from greater centralization, whereas many others would not. Indeed, it is far easier for publics to move in the opposite direction in an ethnofederal state setting; that is, to shift from supporting some autonomy, which is the status quo, to advocating greater autonomy, even to the point of independence. This is especially the case, because local leaders in ethnofederations realize that, because they have few opportunities for winning and exercising power at the center, they need to settle on the next best thing: becoming leaders of their own states (see Horowitz, 1985). This is a familiar line of argument, for example, to scholars who have analyzed Belgium.

In addition, ethnofederalism can encourage the development of corrupt and exclusionary ethno-political machines. This is largely because ethnofederal institutions provide leaders with ample rents to reproduce their coalitions over time. It is striking here, for example, that in the Russian Federation, there is evidence that the ethnically-defined republics have been less likely to experience turnover in parties and governments, more likely to have one-party systems and to have powerful executives that are subjected to fewer institutional constraints, and, finally, more prone to corruption (see, for instance, Petrov, 2013). In this state at least, ethnofederalism has weakened party systems and civil societies; undermined political competition; and supported a turn towards more dictatorial politics.

Finally, there is a tension between the principles underlying liberal democracy and those that define ethnofederalism (Howard, 2012). Here, there are two problems. One is that competition is not fully open. This is because political posts are often reserved for members of specific national groups. Indeed, in many ethnofederations, this is also true for state institutions, which in theory should be staffed on the basis of considerations of merit. At the same time, group rights can work against the principle of individual rights. This issue returns us to an earlier problem. Individuals who are not members of the group are in some sense stripped of their rights. At the same time, all individuals in an ethnofederation are discouraged from fully exploring, let alone expressing their diverse identities, values and interests. Instead, the design of the state has narrowed their world.

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