



Apr 14th, 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

## Ancient Bonds, Contemporary Powers: Investigating the Causes of Center/Periphery Conflict in the Russian Federation

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Oral Presentation O3.3

**ANCIENT BONDS, CONTEMPORARY POWERS: INVESTIGATING THE CAUSES OF  
CENTER/PERIPHERY CONFLICT IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

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What are the real causes of conflict between the federal regions and central authority in the Russian Federation? Why is it that some regions are compelled to act assertively towards Moscow, while others are not? These questions are relevant for any actor concerned with Russian affairs; moreover, they represent a critical debate for those who hope to bring aid to Russia's struggling regional populations. This research furthers the debate through a test of the two major schools of ethno-federal thought: primordialism and bargaining theory. The study (1) identifies relevant variables, (2) constructs indices to represent each of the theories, and (3) tests those indices for correlation with regional aggression.

This research shows that characteristics suggested by both primordialism and bargaining theory exert influence on regional aggression; however, it also finds that bargaining theory more accurately explains the behavior of Russian regions. In the end, this study concludes that ethnic differences, per se, do not lead to center/periphery conflict in the Russian Federation.