FEDERALISM AND CIVIL CONFLICT: THE MISSING LINK?

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This thesis investigates federalism and civil conflict. Past work linking federalism and civil conflict has investigated the factors that pacify or aggravate conflict, but most such studies have examined the effect of decentralization on conflict onset, as opposed to the form federalism takes (such as congruent vs incongruent forms, for example). I collect data on civil conflict, the institutional characteristics of federalist states and fiscal decentralization. My theoretical expectations are that federations who treat federal subjects differently than others, most commonly in an ethnically based manner, are likely to experience greater levels of conflict incidence and more severe conflict. I find support for these expectations, suggesting more ethnically based federations are a detriment to peace preservation. I close with case studies that outline three different paths federations have taken with regards to their federal subunits.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND PUZZLE

The field of comparative politics includes a considerable amount of literature that examines the causes of the onset of civil conflict (Gurr 1968, 1970; Lichbach 1994; Davies 1962). Related literature also prescribes certain arrangements for the mediation of ethnic strife and existing conflict through federalism and power-sharing institutions (Lijphart 1977). However, with a few exceptions, there has been rather limited work on how federalism affects civil conflict, both with regards to conflict onset and severity (Bakke and Wibbels 2006). Some other work in the study of civil conflict has focused on the effects of decentralization (Brancati 2006), a related, but not identical, concept to federalism. Additionally, past literature exploring the link between institutions and civil conflict has treated federalism as a concept that does not vary much from federal state to federal state, often simply coding a federal state as a “dummy” variable (Saideman et al. 2002).

The lack of work investigating the effect of federalism on civil conflict is not a trivial one. Given that civil conflict often originates from ethnic strife, it is curious that prescribed ways to manage ethnic conflict such as federalism would not be studied with regards to civil conflict. If the form of federalism is posited as a remediation for ethnic strife, it stands to reason that civil conflict should be affected by the form federalism takes as well. Thus, the primary research question I ask is: What effect does the form of federalism have on civil conflict onset and severity? This thesis aims not only to address the current gap in the literature, but to provide policy-relevant conclusions regarding the effect of federalism on civil conflict as well.
What is Federalism?

What then is federalism and what are the forms it can take? William Riker’s (1964) classic definition of a federal constitution features three elements. First, two levels of government must rule the same people. Second, each level must have at least one “area of action” in which it has autonomy. Third, there must be a guarantee of autonomy for each government in its own sphere. Another definition comes from Elazar (1997), who defines federalism as a system where there is the distribution of powers among multiple centers of power, where none of the centers are higher or lower in importance than the other (239). These definitions encompass a variety of possible institutional arrangements within federalism. In comparative literature, federal systems can be classified based on whether they are congruent vs incongruent or symmetric vs asymmetric. Congruent federalism (Tarlton 1965; see also Lijphart 1999) is where each of the constituent parts of a federal state are similar in characteristics to the larger whole. An example would be federalism in the United States. In incongruent federalism, on the other hand, constituent parts are drawn up based on an area’s social or cultural composition that is unique from the state at-large. For example, Canada is an example of incongruent federalism due to the status of French-Canadian Quebec as a constituent part of the federation.

Symmetry with regards to federalism means that each constituent part is equal in status to the other constituent parts (Lijphart 1999). The United States is an example of this type of arrangement (this is similar to the constitutional concept of dual federalism or layer cake federalism). Asymmetric federalism is where the constituent parts have different power statuses. This system is found in Russia, for example, where oblasts (provinces), krai (territories) and
autonomous republics each have unique powers, and different statuses relative to each other and with the federal government.

One of the aspects of federalism not always found in traditional institutional studies on federalism and decentralization is that of fiscal federalism. Studies of fiscal federalism have examined how money is disbursed from the government to various regions, localities and electoral districts (Magaloni 2006, Boex and Martinez-Vazquez 2004, Ishiyama 2010). The work by Bakke and Wibbels (2006) finds that the effect of fiscal decentralization on rebellion and protest is conditional on interregional inequality. As part of my study, I examine fiscal decentralization as well.

I structure this work as follows. First, I introduce the puzzle and research question regarding the effects of federalism on civil conflict onset and intensity. Next, I review the literature pertaining to civil conflict and federalism. I do this by reviewing the broader literatures on civil conflict and federalism as separate concepts, and then go into a more specific review of the literature that examines the effects of institutional choice on civil conflict. Subsequently, I introduce my theoretical expectations that the effect of federalism on civil conflict will be influenced by the type of federalism employed and fiscal decentralization patterns. I test these expectations using a multi-method approach. This multi-method approach features a specifically quantitative portion based on examining the effects of features of federalism on civil conflict, using all federal countries \((n = 22)\).

In the subsequent chapter (Chapter 5) I describe the federal systems of Ethiopia, Russia and Brazil. I choose these states based on their regional diversity, previous history of conflict, non-Western status, and variant of federalism that is used in each state, and examine them to
illustrate how the form of federalism has affected conflicts within these countries. I close with a discussion of the results and their implications to policy and the field.

In sum, the connection between federalism and civil conflict is an under-researched topic. This work can not only help further the understanding of the link between federalism and civil conflict, but can do so in a way that accounts for a great degree of institutional and fiscal nuance.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Federalism and Decentralization

The beginnings of federalist philosophy are believed to have originated with Althusius (1603) in the work Politica, arguing for autonomy for his city of Emden in the midst of a Catholic-Lutheran conflict for governance. When considering that the beginnings of the nation-state system are thought to have originated with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, the concept of federalism is even older than the state itself. Philosophers such as Hugo (1736) and Hume (1752) pointed out or argued for various decentralized forms of government. Hugo saw that areas such as the Roman Empire were “double governments,” ruled by a central authority and various territorial governments. Hume argued for governance at multiple levels, including legislatures at central and territorial levels. Federalist thought progressed further in the early days of the American republic. In The Federalist Papers, Madison and Hamilton supported an American state that would split sovereignty between constituent parts and a central authority in order to combat the possibility of tyranny.

However, the comparative politics literature on federalism did not start to develop until Riker’s work, Federalism: Origin, Operation, Significance (1964). The author posits the concept of the “bargain of federalism,” in which he argues that a central government’s choice in choosing of a federal system is based on two necessary but not sufficient conditions. The first condition is when politicians desire territorial control, but must bargain due to military or diplomatic threats. The second comes from politicians who “give up some independence for the sake of union,” doing so because of military-diplomatic threats or opportunity.
An additional definition of federalism comes from Elazar, who sees the concept as “the fundamental distribution of power among multiple centers…not the devolution of powers from a single center or down a pyramid” (1997). Friedrich (1968) sees federalism as not governed by certain hard-and fast rules, but influenced crucially by beliefs, behavior and attitudes toward federalism. In a similar vein to Riker, Friedrich views federal forms as influenced by history. The scholar saw an important role for federalism, not as a cure-all, but as something that could lead to “good government” (184), and which would be necessitated in the coming years. Duchacek (1970) was critical of the construction of a theory of federalism, and argued that what was needed was a more precise way to measure federalism (191). He created ten “yardsticks of federalism,” which relate to factors such as the central government’s control over diplomacy and defense, the equal representation of unequal states, the possibility of constituent parts’ elimination, the clarity of territorial divisions and the existence of independent federal and state courts.

There have also been a variety of ways to classify federal systems. For instance, in *Patterns of Democracy*, Lijphart (1999) develops a score of centralization, finding that states such as Venezuela and India are constitutionally federal but have a degree of centralization in practice. Furthermore, his work, based on earlier work by Tarlton (1965) identified two other ways in which to identify federalism in form, quite apart from decentralization. The first involves congruent and incongruent federalism. Congruent federalism (Tarlton 1965, Lijphart 1999) occurs when each of the constituent parts of a federal state resemble the whole. For example, in the United States, there are no states that are known as ethnic minority states, despite the fact that some states have higher percentages of ethnic minorities than others. On the other hand,
incongruent federalism is seen in countries like Canada or Belgium where federations have one or more areas in which an ethnicity has its own home region.

The second way to classify the form of federalism is to distinguish between symmetric and asymmetric federalism. This involves how federal units are treated constitutionally (Elazar 1987). Under symmetric federalism, constituent parts are treated as equals. Again, the United States resembles an example of the former phenomenon, as Florida is treated no differently than Minnesota under the constitution. Under asymmetric federalism, constituencies are treated differently, such as in Russia where ethnic republics each have their own president, where as oblasts and krai have appointed governors.

Another approach to the study of federalism involves fiscal federalism. In federations (and even some unitary states with devolved powers), central governments will transfer funds to constituent parts. A traditional economic assumption related to governmental transfers is that they will be allocated based on how dire the socioeconomic circumstances in a given region are. However, comparative literature based broadly on single-country studies has shown that transfers are politically motivated phenomena. Within that literature exists three hypotheses about how monies are distributed: swing, reward and appeasement. The swing hypothesis says that the most money will be transferred to areas of intense electoral competition, in the hopes of purchasing electoral success (McGillivray 2004, Dahlberg and Johansson 2002). Much of the work finding support for the swing hypothesis comes from the American example and other established democracies.

The other two hypotheses are more relevant to this work, as they are associated with semi-democratic and autocratic regimes where civil conflict is more likely. Boex and Martinez-Vazquez (2004), influenced by the public choice and political economy literatures, analyze
factors relating to local expenditure needs, revenue capacity, politics and population size and how they relate to intergovernmental transfers. Using a largely descriptive approach, the authors find the strongest relationship between political representation and per capita intergovernmental transfers. More specifically, disproportionate political representation in the form of greater representation per voter results in more money “almost always” being transferred to a given locale (15). In her study of the autocratic Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) regime in Mexico, Magaloni (2006) analyzes the political patterns associated with PRONASOL, an anti-poverty program instituted by the Salinas government from 1989 to 1994. The program allocated resources to over 2,400 municipalities, making it a natural fit to test fiscal federalist theories. The author found that PRONASOL funds were more likely to be allocated to areas of high PRI support or in an area that was vulnerable to National Action Party (PAN) electoral victories at the next election. Meanwhile, areas of high PAN support were punished with a lack of funds. These results display support for the swing and reward hypotheses, but had the net effect of shutting potential political competitors out of electoral politics. A related strain of Africanist literature theorizes that hegemonic regimes are expected to give rewards to their supporters (Lindberg 2003, Bratton and Van de Walle 1997).

The appeasement hypothesis was formulated by Treisman (1996) as part of a study on fiscal transfers in post-Soviet Russia. Under appeasement, central governments transfer money to areas of limited support for the current regime, including areas that may be volatile or separatist. In particular, Treisman found that areas that conducted strikes had the greatest success in obtaining transfers, just more so than instances where areas claimed sovereignty from the Russian Federation. Ishiyama (2010) found support for the appeasement hypothesis in a study of the 2005 Ethiopian parliamentary elections. In that circumstance, the ruling Ethiopian People's
Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) regime gave greater block grants to areas held by the opposition Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) at the previous election.

**Literature on Institutions and Civil Conflict**

Like federalism, civil conflict and civil war are associated with different definitions and concepts. In the literature, civil wars have been defined in a variety of ways. Small and Singer (1982) define civil war as an armed conflict that involves military action internal to the metropole, active participation by the national government and resistance by both sides (210). Conditions used by the authors demarcating civil war from traditional interstate and extrastate war include the limiting of violence to the territory of a sovereign state and the government as a combatant. Small and Singer commonly use the 1,000 deaths threshold as a coding standard for civil wars. Sambanis (2004) reviews of a variety of other definitions in the literature, including those offered by Fearon and Laitin (2003), Gledisch et al. (2002) and Licklider (1995). He finds several flaws and develops his own definition using 11 conditions, which include parties being politically and militarily organized, local representation by insurgencies, sustained violence and effective resistance by the weaker party. The author addresses the issue of casualties by saying that the first year of the war should not produce any less than 500 to 1,000 deaths in the first year and that no three-year period should cause less than 500 deaths.

A further component of the civil war literature examines conflicts from an institutional weakness standpoint. This body of work concerns factors such as regime type, state capacity and instability. Hegre et al. (2001) use a democratic peace argument and empirics to state that democracies are less likely to have civil conflict than even stable autocracies. The authors cite previous literature, which suggests the presence of an inverted U-curve between level of
democracy and domestic violence (Ellingsen and Gleditsch 1997). In particular, regime change or recent regime change is expected to lead to more civil war outbreaks. They use a couple of different methods including Kaplan-Meier estimates and a Cox regression model, finding that “institutionally consistent democracies and stark autocracies are equally unlikely to experience civil war” (38). The authors cite the existence of a democratic civil peace (44) due to a higher survival rate for institutionalized democracies and past literature that posits autocracy to be slightly less stable than democracy. Fearon and Laitin (2003) respond to the conventional wisdom found in work by scholars like Huntington (1996) and Horowitz (1985) that ethnically heterogeneous societies should be more prone to civil war. In their empirical analysis, Fearon and Laitin note that when taking account of income, richer countries have less chance of an outbreak of civil war, regardless of heterogeneity or homogeneity. Fearon and Laitin ultimately conclude that “state weakness marked by poverty, a large population, and instability” (88) are more reliable indicators of civil conflict than measures such as ethnoreligious diversity, inequality or level of democracy.

Hendrix (2010) addresses the institutional question as part of the concept of state capacity. Influenced by Tilly (1978), he points to state capacity as playing an important role in civil wars because a state capable of addressing grievances through institutionalized mechanisms should lessen the likelihood for rebellion. The author breaks up previous measures of state capacity into those that primarily measure military capacity, bureaucratic or administrative capacity and the quality of political institutions, and addresses 19 such operationalizations for construct validity. He finds support for using measures of bureaucratic quality and the ratio of total taxes to GDP. Bureaucratic quality is deemed “satisfactory” due to the fact that it measures government efficacy, while taxes/GDP shows that the state can raise revenue and can monitor
the population effectively. Meanwhile, measures of the quality of institutions, such as Polity, are suspect in the author’s eyes due to limited evidence of intermediate-level democracies having a reliable bureaucracy.

The literature on broader institutions and state weakness’ effect on civil war is complemented by more specific work concerning institutions and institutional design. Heger and Salehyan (2007) argue that the severity of civil conflict will be dependent upon the ruling coalition size. As per the authors’ theory, states with small groups of ruling elites can be expected to repress and intensify violence to a greater degree than those with a larger coalition size. Their theory is influenced by the logic that smaller winning coalitions will be associated with less constraints. They also factor in previous work (Harff 2003) pointing to increased violence if a minority ethnic group is in power. They find support for the theory, but do questionably use a proxy for ethnic group size as one of their measures of winning coalition size, suggesting a degree of ethnic determinism in how elites are supported in conflict states. Heger and Salehyan close by recommending a consociational approach (Lijphart 1977, 1999) so that winning coalitions can be broadened. Other quantitative work has looked at specific institutional characteristics and their connection to civil conflict. Cohen (1997) looked at institutional characteristics and their effects on rebellion and protest using the Minorities at Risk (MAR) dataset. He found federalism to be associated with increased protest but decreased rebellion, and proportional representation (PR) electoral systems reduced rebellion. Saideman et al. (2002) focus on the effect of institutional choice on conflict, and formulates theory based on the ethnic security dilemma. The ethnic security dilemma occurs when the ambitions of one ethnic group to grab hold of power result in ethnic competition, causing a potentially violent situation (107). The authors posit that specific institutions can potentially exacerbate or mitigate the threat felt by
would-be violent groups. Like Cohen, they use the MAR data and separate dependent variables of protest and rebellion. They find proportional representation to be associated with both less protest and rebellion, and federalism to decrease violence. The authors come upon another institutional result concerning presidentialism and parliamentarism, finding neither executive structure to be associated with more or less violence, contrary to what scholars like Lijphart (1991) and Linz (1990) posit. It should be noted that the institutional findings are all made using the authors’ definition of democracy, operationalized as 6 or above on the -10 to 10 Polity scale.

Another work that has focused institutional solutions comes from Reilly (2002), who shies away from the typical debate centered around plurality and proportional electoral systems, bringing “centripetalism” to light as a potential institutional way to mitigate conflict. Centripetalism is roughly defined as forcing ethnicities to seek outside of their own group electorally, bargain with others and develop centrist parties. The author operationalizes centripetal institutions as those that feature preferential voting, either of a proportional nature with the Single Transferable Vote, or the plurality-based Alternative Vote (AV) system. Reilly details Northern Ireland, Estonia, Australia, Fiji and Papua New Guinea as places where preferential voting has been employed. However, the scholar stops short of a “one-size fits all” approach, saying that the specific demography of countries that would employ centripetal systems has to be taken into account. He points to the mixed-to-unfavorable experiences found in Northern Ireland and Fiji, where the dispersion patterns of the main ethnicities mitigated the cooperative effect centripetal institutions can have.
Literature on Federalism and Conflict

Finally, there is the literature that examines federalism (operationalized as decentralization) in conjunction with civil conflict. The logic behind federalism or devolution as a conflict-mitigating strategy is that it will allow the civilian population to have a greater say in governance if they are represented at local and national levels (Lijphart 1977, 1996; Horowitz 1991, Gurr 2000). However, as observed by Brancati (2006) there is a counter-argument that decentralized institutions can serve to intensify regional identities and provide mechanisms for potential secessionist movements. She found that among countries that have federal or devolved institutions, some have seen a decrease in hostilities, while others have seen a rise in conflict. Brancati looks for a causal mechanism as to why decentralization has varying affects on conflict in different countries. It should be noted that in Brancati’s piece, only countries scoring 5 or above on Polity for two or more consecutive elections are included in the data. Her argument in excluding lower-scoring countries is that, “…these nondemocracies infringe on the jurisdiction of [regional] legislatures, flout the legislation they produce, and install regional politicians that do not challenge the national government’s authority” (652). Brancati hypothesizes that the causal mechanism related to the variation in conflict and secessionism is due to regional party strength. For the author, “Regional parties increase ethnic conflict and secessionism by reinforcing ethnic identities, passing legislation that is harmful to regional minorities, an mobilizing groups to engage in ethnic conflict while using the resources decentralization provides them to do so” (657). Using district-level data and the MAR dataset, the author finds that the vote share won by regional parties has a significant impact on intercommunal conflict and antiregime rebellion. It should also be noted that countries with decentralized institutions are
found to have less intercommunal conflict and antiregime rebellion than those that have centralized government.

Another influential work in the study of decentralization’s effects on civil conflict comes from Horowitz (1985), *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. His theory of ethnic civil conflict in its most parsimonious form is, “Ethnic conflict arises from the common evaluative significance accorded by the groups to acknowledged group differences and then played out in public rituals of affirmation and contradiction” (227). In the book’s section on federalism, Horowitz says that there are circumstances by which ethnically homogenous or ethnically heterogeneous states would be appropriate under devolution or federalism. In states with clearly defined and territorially distinct sub-ethnic divisions, Horowitz recommends homogenous states. Under this arrangement, sub-ethnic or non-ethnic issues are likely to be particularly salient. For countries where the ethnic groups are mixed in most or all regions, heterogenous states would be forced under devolution and federalism, but Horowitz points to some benefits for the creation of those states. For these states, interethnic cooperation can exist, especially when groups cannot be expected to hold the majority of offices or seats in a majority of states. Horowitz recognizes, however, that there are prohibitive costs to this type of institution building and that “It takes some special conditions to create a federal or regional autonomy arrangement that will take hold” (623).

Later work by Horowitz (1991, 1993) focuses on the importance of electoral institutions that encourage interethnic cooperation. He cites the examples of Malaysia and the Indian state of Kerala, where an electoral coalition has been partly necessitated by the fact that ethnic parties to either side of the coalition have opposed a coalition’s compromises. In later work, he backs the Alternative Vote system as a way to encourage interethnic cooperation (Horowitz 1993).
However, a prominent example in Horowitz’s support of AV is the reliance on Fiji. In Fiji, there are two primary ethnic groups, Fijian and Indian. In the situations where more than two ethnic groups make up sizeable portions of the electorate, the intended effects of the AV system, including vote pooling and coalitions are more nuanced and can lead to electoral effects not possible with just two groups.

In various work Lijphart (1969, 1977, 2004) supports the ideas of the previously mentioned concept of consociationalism. In an ethnically divided society, consociationalism involves arrangements related to extensive power sharing and federalism. Where as Horowitz’s potential solutions to ethnic strife and possible violence involve ethnic cooperation between as few as two ethnicities, consociationalism calls for every substantive ethnic group in a country to share power in a grand coalition. The institutional prescription also calls for a proportional cabinet, where by every ethnic group’s representation on the cabinet is based on its percentage of the population. This aspect of consociationalism has been particularly criticized by scholars who call the system of elite power-sharing undemocratic (Brass 1991). A mutual veto is given to every group in the cabinet, meaning that even the smallest ethnic group can block certain policy. Lijphart insists that the mutual veto will not lead to intractability because vetoes are likely to be reciprocated. Consociationalism also allows for groups to have territorial autonomy through federalism. In conjunction with the other tenets of consociationalism, territorial autonomy has been criticized as exacerbating potentially separatist behavior. A huge shortcoming in consociational though and its potential contemporary institution-building implications are the cases Lijphart used to develop the theory. Western European examples are the primary basis for the prescription of consociationalism, most prominently including the author’s native Netherlands but also Austria, Switzerland and Belgium (Lijphart 1969, 1977).
Bakke and Wibbels (2006) focus on the effect decentralization has on regional and ethnic cleavages in 22 states. Like Horowitz, the authors believe that “the degree to which federal institutions can contribute to preserving peace depends on how these institutions respond to the characteristics of the societies they govern” (3). Bakke and Wibbels formulate four hypotheses, all involving interaction terms. For example, one of their hypotheses related to fiscal transfers expects that the interaction between large federal fiscal transfers and regionally concentrated ethnic groups detracts from conflict. However, the authors’ reliance on interaction terms is not coupled with any sort of tests for multicollinearity, even though they do mention the potential problem (29). Another shortfall of the study is that fiscal grants or transfers to specific districts or regions are not accounted for as they are in other studies of fiscal federalism (Ishiyama 2010, Treisman 1996). Nonetheless, Bakke and Wibbels come to conclusions in line with their theoretical expectations, that regionally concentrated ethnic groups and high interregional inequality leads to more conflict; and that fiscal decentralization’s impact on ethnic peace is conditional upon the distribution of wealth. Also, not related to the authors’ hypotheses, but interesting and unexpected is the finding in the data that federal oil-exporting countries are less prone to rebellion.

In sum, the limited literature on federalism’s impact on civil conflict has come to some important conclusions. For example, federalism (or decentralization) is no longer thought of as a panacea for ethnic conflict. Scholars recognize that the specific characteristics of how federalism operates, as well as the ethnic composition of a country, are important as well. Yet, scholarship can be enhanced if more is known about the form federalism takes (not simply operationalized as decentralization) and the fiscal components of federalism as well.
CHAPTER 3
THEORY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

In the following section, I provide a theory, a research design and some basic preliminary descriptive data that address the primary research question posed above: What effect does the form of federalism have on civil conflict onset and severity? I answer this question by accounting for factors related to federal institutions not previously expounded upon in the limited past empirical literature on the topic (particularly congruence, symmetry and fiscal decentralization). I do this by employing an approach using data from the population of federal countries. The research design laid out in this chapter allows for a test of how the various types of federalism in use among the world’s federations effects civil conflict. In this section I also formulate hypotheses for the expectations of how separate federal constructs are expected to influence the onset of civil conflict.

One of my primary assumptions in this chapter is that all federalisms are not created equal, as has been assumed to a degree by the previous conflict and federal literature, such as Bakke and Wibbels (2006) and Saideman et al. (2002). Where those authors focused primarily on the level of decentralization in federal states (or code federalism as a dummy variable), I focus on two dimensions in which federal systems can vary drastically: how congruent and how symmetric they are.

In congruent federalism, each part of the federation is similar in composition or characteristics to the larger whole. Incongruent federalism means that constituent parts of the larger state are drawn up based on varying social or cultural composition. Two bordering countries in North America show examples of each type of federalism. In the United States, no one ethnic or cultural group rules a single state, even though minorities may make up sizeable
portions of the sub-national entities. Even if Minnesota has the largest Scandinavian-American population in the U.S., that is not the state’s identity, and people of other heritage hold important national and local office. This can be contrasted with Canada, where Quebec is recognized as the French-Canadian province due to a predominance of French speakers and a vastly different culture from the remainder of the country. It is of the utmost importance to recognize that even the concept of incongruent federalism can vary significantly, and is not necessarily a cut-and-dried dichotomy. In the Canadian example, only one of the 10 provinces can be classified as incongruent to the rest. Provinces such as Ontario and Alberta may have different political interests and characteristics, but they are not substantially divergent in terms of social or cultural composition.

The example of Ethiopia displays how much incongruent federalism can vary between cases. In 1991, after the fall of military rule by the ruling junta The Derg, Ethiopia was led by a multiethnic transitional coalition known as the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). The party, which is still in power in the state, helped in the creation of an ethnically based federalist system. A constitution passed in December 1994 created nine federal states, and the city-state of Addis Ababa. Dire Dawa was added as a city-state in later years. In this federally incongruent system, nearly all of the states are based on different social, cultural or linguistic characteristics. This is just one of many examples where the connection between civil conflict and federalism can be explored by taking a more in-depth look at the ways ethnicities or social groups fit into federal institutions.

Another way federal systems can vary is if they are symmetric or asymmetric. In symmetric federalism, every federal subunit is regarded as a constitutional equal to the rest. In the United States, despite major differences in population, electoral and economic power,
California is treated in the same manner constitutionally as the much smaller Delaware. Conversely, the federal system in Russia is asymmetric. There exist 83 separate subunits in the country and a variety of constitutional categories they fall into, including two predominant ones. The 21 ethnic republics are constitutionally autonomous and are each intended to represent a different group in the Russian Federation. These republics nominally have the power to set their own languages and conduct their own foreign relations. Each has a president, although that actor’s political powers, as well as other powers given to the republics have been curtailed in practice during the Putin era. Forty-six oblasts and 9 krai compose the most common level of subjects in the Russian federation. Each of the 55 units has a federally appointed governor and a local legislature. Two federal cities, four autonomous okrugs and one autonomous oblast comprise the remainder of subnational federal units.

As is the case for incongruent federal systems, the level of asymmetry can vary. In Belgium, a less drastic form of asymmetry exists. The ethnic federalism employed by Belgium has the country divided up into communities and regions based primarily on the Flemish and French ethnolinguistic cleavage line. There is extensive overlap between the communities and regions, with the exception of the German community in Belgium’s east. Belgian federalism derives its asymmetry from the bilingual, bi-ethnic Brussels capital region, which is afforded less power than the Flanders and Wallonia regions. For example, the legislation from the capital region carries less weight than laws from Flanders and Wallonia. The capital cannot change its institutional design, as the other two regions can (Swenden 2002). Yet, these indicators of asymmetry are clearly not as constitutionally significant as those in Russia that see ethnic republics such as Dagestan and Chechnya sometimes act as if they were separate states altogether. It must be noted that in the literature, there is attention given to both de jure and de
facto asymmetry. Swenden, in a piece on Belgian asymmetry, defines de facto asymmetry as, “…social, economic, ethnocultural, or party-political diversity between the various units of a federal system” (68). This definition is almost a carbon copy of the meaning of incongruent federalism, a concept that has already been defined above. The future references in this work to asymmetric federalism will make use of what some scholars label as de jure or constitutional asymmetry (Stepan 1999, Swenden 2002).

Incongruent federalism promises to mediate conflict by giving a select number of ethnic groups regional autonomy. One of Lijphart’s beliefs in consociationalism is that “a multiple balance of power among the subcultures [is favorable] instead of either a dual balance of power or a clear hegemony by one subculture” (Lijphart 1969, 217) as well as providing for group autonomy (Lijphart 1977). It is however, an impossible task to give power to all subcultures, due to geography, population and parsimony reasons. In Ethiopia, 84 ethnic groups exist, but the smallest 72 ethnicities make up just eight percent of the country’s population (Habtu 2003). Excluding the city-states, the rest of the Ethiopian federal structure roughly approximates the largest ethnicities. It should be noted that in ethnically federal Ethiopia the most powerful ethnic group at a national level is the Tigray, who have just six percent of the country’s population but make up the largest elite class of the ruling EPRDF. Since the installation of incongruent federalism in 1994, demonstrations and violence have been regular in the state. Ethiopia cannot be called consociational because groups do not share power extensively at a national cabinet, but data involving incongruent federal countries can potentially help conduct a novel test of part of Lijphart’s theory and other federal thought.

Assuming that substantive and possibly conflictual ethnocultural groups in a country can each have an area of autonomy in a state while trying to share power on a national basis seems
quite optimistic. Indeed, in several cases, such power sharing and autonomy has failed. In Cyprus, power-sharing treaties and a constitution in 1959 and 1960 gave Turkish Cypriots 30% of the legislative seats and 30% of cabinet posts despite only 20% of the population. The Turkish were also allowed to have their own communal legislative body and were given great autonomy in areas such as welfare, culture and religion. Additionally, Turks were allowed 40% of the positions in the Cypriot Army. By 1963, constitutional rule had broken down and civil violence started. The Lebanese form of consociationalism went so far as to require a 6:5 ratio of Christians to Muslims in the nation’s parliament. While consociationalism is again in place in Lebanon, it was restructured after a protracted civil war and has been criticized as entrenching cleavages and inequality (Makdisi and Marktanner 2009). While Lebanon cannot be considered federal at any time, it nonetheless displays that if groups are assigned certain powers or offices, they may use their power to advance group interests and not seek compromise as Lijphart hopes for. Power sharing under consociational and consociational-like means has been, on the whole, unsuccessful in a trio of African countries: Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Lemarchand 2006). Lijphart concedes, “Fragmented societies have a tendency to immobilism…” (1969, 218) and “…decision-making that entails accommodation among all subcultures is a difficult process, and consociational democracies are always threatened by a degree of immobilism” (218). While some scholars have pointed out the promise involved in homogenously based federal states, examples have not been associated with a future stability in a political system (Horowitz 1985).

Consociationalism is not necessarily synonymous with federalism, and the Western European federal states’ success makes up an important part of the sample. Also, authors such as Brass (1974) and Horowitz (1985) point to success that ethnically homogenous states in India
have had. Nonetheless, I expect that a greater level of federal incongruity will lead to an increased likelihood of civil conflict. I expect this is due to the way incongruent federalism allows for the separation of a state along ethnocultural lines. I expect this result especially when the variance in incongruency across federations is taken into account.

Hypothesis 1: The greater the degree of incongruity a federal system has, the more likely the a) onset and b) greater the severity of civil conflict will be in that state.

The principles behind asymmetric federalism’s potential to mitigate civil conflict in a state are similar to those of incongruent federalism. If a potentially separatist or conflictual region is granted a special status with constitutional powers in some ways like those of a fully separate independent state, the hope is that those powers will give the citizens of the region a sense of governance. Just like with ethnic federalism, a major concern is that the special status in an asymmetric system will be a springboard to violence. Additionally, asymmetrical federalism has the potential to entrench ethnic identities in the system by giving ethnic regions different powers in comparison to the rest of the federal subunits. In Russia, with several statuses given to various regions, ethnic republics like Tatarstan often display separatist behaviors. However, the situation in these regions is somewhat complicated by the fact that the central government of Russia does not allow the ethnic republics all of their constitutionally conscribed powers. Nevertheless, I expect that greater asymmetry will be associated with greater proclivity for civil conflict.

Hypothesis 2: The greater the degree of asymmetry a federal system has, the a) more likely the onset and b) greater the severity of civil conflict will be in that state.
As stated in the introduction, this work aims not only to explore types of institutional federalism, but fiscal federalism and decentralization as well. In line with the remainder of my theory, I expect that greater levels of fiscal decentralization will be associated with civil conflict. When countries choose to give federal units funds, it may allow for the specific areas in question to act fiscally as separate states entirely, and lead to more civil violence.

Hypothesis 3: The greater the degree of fiscal decentralization a federal country has, the a) more likely the onset and b) greater the severity of civil conflict will be in that state.

To capture the effects of the two types of federalism as well as decentralization, I used the population of federal countries. As of February 2012, that includes Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Comoros, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Micronesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, the United States and Venezuela. I employed the temporal domain of 1978-2010, which closely approximates the years used by Bakke and Wibbels (2006). For my dependent variables in various models, I use measures of the onset and severity of civil conflict. The chief explanatory variables in the study are measures of how incongruent and how symmetric a federal system is.

The measures of congruence and symmetry are variables not previously collected in the comparative literature in the past. Therefore, it is necessary to be quite explicit as to the coding procedure used to collect these data. A completely congruent system is one in which no federal subunit has a distinct social or cultural identity. For example, Australia would be one case of a completely congruent federation, despite the fact that the Northern Territory has the highest proportion of indigenous Australians in any Australian state with 30%. While there are areas of
Aboriginal self-governance known as land councils in the Northern Territory, these areas also exist in states like New South Wales, the most populous state in Australia. Meanwhile, the Ethiopian and Belgian examples represent nearly completely incongruent federalism, with the boundaries for those states drawn up on ethnolinguistic lines.

I used a continuous variable to measure incongruent federalism from 0 to 100, based on the percentage of the population that lives in an incongruent area. Since Quebec is the only incongruent province or territory out of the 13 in the federation of Canada, Quebec’s 23.6 percent of the entire Canadian population as of 2011 would equal a score in the data of .236. This score was based on population data from government and archival sources. Due to the novelty of classifying certain portions of federations as incongruent, some subjective coding was needed in order to determine which areas of countries are incongruent. I again consulted government sources to delineate demography and regions that may have a distinct character versus the rest of the federation. However, just because a region has a majority of an ethnic minority does not mean that it is necessarily a component of an incongruent federation. For this reason, I sought out academic and news sources to determine if federal regions do have a different character from the rest of the federation.

I conducted a similar coding process as to the degree of symmetry in a federation. However, this process is not quite as straightforward at the congruent variable, due to the existence of multiple categories of special status and overlapping categories, as elaborated on previously in the Belgian and Russian examples. Like the congruence variable, I used a continuous variable of 0 to 100 to determine the level of asymmetry. What the asymmetry variable is explicitly measuring is how much of the country lives under federal regions or states that differ from the most common constitutional status of federal subunits. In Russia, with
oblats and krai operationally the same, the percentage of the population living under the remaining 28 Russian federal units would be translated to a score of asymmetry. I chose to make the incongruence and asymmetry scores ranging from the most congruent and symmetric at 0 to the most incongruent and asymmetric at 100 due to my hypotheses expecting incongruence and asymmetry to be associated with civil conflict.

Measures of fiscal decentralization are more readily available than those of variants of federalism, but are still fairly sparse. I defined the concept of decentralization as the funds allocated or transferred from the central government of a federal state to its subunits. As a variable, I operationalized this concept in terms of the percentage of government funds allocated to federal subunits. To retrieve these data, I first used the World Bank’s Decentralization Data. However, as these data only are collected up to 2000, I consult the International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) government finance yearbooks, as well as periodical country-specific reports that the IMF produces. One drawback of this approach may be that the variables used by each financial institution may differ slightly. For example, the World Bank’s variable of interest is explained as “Transfers to sub-national from other levels of Government”. Meanwhile, in the IMF’s 2008 Government Finance Statistics Yearbook, the corresponding measure is “General transfers between levels of government”. In practicality, these two measures should not differ substantially, but the potential for sub-national entities to transfer money to localities or municipalities exists.

I used two models for testing how different types of federalism and fiscal decentralization affect civil conflict. The first, an ordered logit model, takes the severity of civil conflict into account as a dependent variable. For that dependent variable, I used a measure that includes both the onset and severity of conflict, based on the Uppsala Conflict Data Program/Peace Research
Institute Oslo (UCDP/PRIO) Armed Conflict Dataset. I employed those particular data due to the relatively low threshold for battle-deaths to qualify as a conflict (Gleditsch et al. 2002, 617). That dataset features a variety of variables related to the type of conflict, its start and its end. Each observation in the data is country-year based, and only includes observations where conflict occurred. The main variable I applied is the “Int” variable measuring the intensity of conflict. The variable has two codes. A code of 1 means that the conflict was a minor one, with 25 to 999 battle-related deaths in a given year. While a code of 2 means there was a full-scale war in that country-year resulting in at least 1,000 battle-deaths. Since only country-years with conflict are in the data, I included years with no civil conflict in my data, creating a code of 0 to make the “Int” variable trichotomous.

However, since UCDP/PRIO is a data set including all conflict, certain types of hostilities must be excluded from the data. The UCDP/PRIO data defines four types of conflict: extrasystemic armed conflict occurring between a state and a non-state group outside its own territory; interstate armed conflict occurring between two or more states; internal armed conflict occurring between the government of a state and one or more internal opposition groups without intervention from other states; and Internationalized internal armed conflict occurs between the government of a state and one or more internal opposition groups with intervention from other states on one or both sides (Gleditsch et al. 2002). In the original data, extrasystemic armed conflict is given a code of 1, interstate armed conflict a code of 2, and so on as per the order of the previous sentence. Since this thesis concentrates on civil conflict, interstate armed conflict between two or more states or extrasystemic armed conflict occurring between a state and a non-state group outside its own territory are not of relevance. If relevant federal country-years are coded as 2 in the data, I made them 0 in the Intensity variable.
For the second model, I used a Cox proportional hazards model, with the onset of civil conflict treated as a “failure” in the model. As such, in an onset variable, I coded the first year a civil conflict appeared in a given country as a 1, regardless of its intensity. With the model taking into account just the onset of conflict, and not subsequent conflict years, I coded only the first year of a given conflict period. All country-years where conflict is not present are coded as 0 for the onset variable. In conjunction with the onset variable, I code an ID variable and a time variable. The ID variable is coded with the same value for a given period in a country leading up to the first year of a conflict. The time variable is coded sequentially starting at 1, also leading up to the first year of a conflict. In the case that a period of civil conflict ended within the temporal domain, a new ID number begins for that country, and the time variable resets back to 1. For example, if the first country in the data had five years of no civil conflict followed by one with civil conflict, the ID variable would be coded 1 for the first six years in the data and the time variable would be coded one to six.

The empirics of this work differ substantially from other work employing the connection between federalism and civil conflict. For example, this work explicitly involves different types of federalism and tests their effect on civil conflict in predominantly straightforward manners. Additionally, key controls related to institutions are included, namely relating to the nature of the executive and the electoral system. In a federal system with a president, the singular nature of the presidential actor means that only one party or one group can be expected to hold the top office. In a divided society where civil conflict is possible, the potential exclusion of groups from an executive may have a substantive impact on the likelihood that civil conflict will occur and/or be severe.
In the case of the electoral system to the main national representative body, groups may be disenchanted if electoral rules lead to exclusion from seats. For both of these control variables, I used the Electoral Systems Around the World data by Golder (2004). The domain of the data is 1946-2000. For more recent years, I consulted electoral data sources such as the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES). For his basic electoral system variable, Golder codes 1-4, based on whether or not a system is majoritarian, proportional, has multiple tiers of proportional representation or is mixed between majoritarian and proportional methods, respectively. While three out of four of these codes are straightforward, I chose to group the mixed systems in with the majoritarian or single-member district systems, as past research has shown that the calculus for voters is similar for any electoral construct where a candidate is chosen in a single-member district, regardless of whether or not the system has a proportional element (Ishiyama 1997).

To take account of these institutional factors, I use four dummy variables. For the electoral system, single member district/mixed systems and PR systems are each used as separate dummies. For the type of executive, parliamentary systems and presidential systems are used as dummy variables. Mixed or semi-presidential regimes are counted as presidential for the purposes of the data. As not all federal countries have elections that qualify as democratic elections, autocracies were used as the reference category with each set of dummy variables.

A control for ethnic fractionalization was needed, due to the likelihood that incongruent and asymmetric regions will be based on some measure of concentrated ethnicity. I use the ethnic fractionalization data compiled by Alesina et al. (2003). For other control variables, I used the log of GDP per capita from the World Bank. More economically developed states should be expected to have less outbreaks of civil conflict due to economic power as an indicator of state
strength to suppress potential conflict (Fearon and Laitin 2003). I also include the log of a country’s population, due its role in state strength. I chose not to include a measure of democracy, such as Polity score or the Vanhanen index, despite its common inclusion in the literature. For one, whether or not a state is democratic or autocratic is taken into account by the institutional variables as described above. While there is literature suggesting that federalism is only functional in truly democratic states (Bermeo 2002, Brancati 2006), this work does not take that view. Even though elections can be a crucial aspect of how federalism operates, regions can still have substantive powers related to governance. Constitutions in federations that are not fully democratic do still guarantee regions a healthy amount of autonomy, which can be cited in the case of a regional-center dispute. Additionally, the recognition of only democracies as federal in this study would have a tremendous limiting effect of the variation found on the dependent variable.
CHAPTER 4
DATA AND ANALYSIS

In total, data were collected on all 22 current federal countries over a 33-year period for a total of 632 country-years. As countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina have only been federal since a certain date after the first year in the data, not every country is accounted for between 1978 and 2010, inclusive.

In all federal countries, civil conflicts are especially rare. Conflict was present in just 71 of the 632 country-years, including 15 onsets. Slightly less than half of the 71 country-years with conflict had a value of 2 for intensity. It should be noted that the highest value for severity in my data did not necessarily mean that a single given conflict had more than 1,000 battle deaths. In the UCDP/PRIO data, values for intensity are listed by conflict for every country-year and not by a state’s country-year. Therefore, I gave a country a value of 2 if more than one conflict occurred for a given country-year in a state. I chose to make this judgment code because it captures the likelihood that the combined severity of multiple conflicts is equivalent to the situation where there is one major conflict. Additionally, two or more conflicts in a state is likely an indicator of overall instability related to conflict.

The incongruent federalism score ranged from the minimum possible value of 0 (several countries) to the maximum possible value of 100 (Micronesia). In most cases, delineating an incongruent federal subunit was straightforward and involved a basic review of the country’s federal composition, with attention also given to demographic and linguistic factors. In other countries, such as India, these factors were harder to recognize. In that specific case, I counted an Indian federal subunit as incongruent if it had only one official language and that language was not Hindi. I used a different subjective strategy for another larger federation, Russia, where the
existence of 21 ethnic republics is written into the constitution. However, not all of these ethnic republics are truly well represented by their namesake “nationality”. For example, the ethnic republic of Karelia, as of 2010, had just 7.4% Karelians and 82.2% ethnic Russians. Due to some of these ethnic republics not truly representing an incongruent part of the federation, I chose to count only those Russian republics with a 50% or greater population of the namesake ethnicity or nationality.

Spain was another case of a country where a larger degree of subjectivity was necessitated by the constitutional structure of the state. In that country, there are 19 total subunits, including 17 autonomous communities and two autonomous cities. Article 143 of the Spanish Constitution allowed autonomous regions to be those “bordering provinces with common historic, cultural and economic characteristics”. While every part of Spain is part of some autonomous unit at least loosely based on factors that could qualify as incongruent, only a few, such as the Basque County, Catalonia and Andalusia have consistently acted as separate nationalities. Where some of the coding for incongruent regions involved nuance, asymmetry usually involved looking at a country’s basic constitutional federal format and the constitutional status of the various regions. For states with a designated capital region, city or province, I counted that subunit as asymmetric if it exercised specific powers that distinguished it from the remainder of the federal regions.

Population data for every region of a federal country was not available for each year in the data, but data at intervals of five to 10 years was. In order to calculate the values for incongruence and asymmetry for each year in the temporal domain, I divided the total population in incongruent or asymmetric regions by the total population in the years population data were available. For the years where population data were not available, I calculated the change in
incongruent/asymmetric population and assumed a linear pattern for the missing years. For example, population data for the Russian Federation and its divisions are available for 2002 and 2010. With the asymmetric score for 2002 at 27.09 and the score for 2010 at 27.70, I assumed that in each year in between, the score went up by .07 to .08 per year.

Decentralization scores were likewise not always available for each year in the data, even after consulting the World Bank data, IMF country reports and some academic sources. As mentioned in the research design, the World Bank data are only available to 2000, and there are substantial gaps in the data. The IMF reports have only been archived since the late 1990s, and available editions of the Government Finance Statistics Yearbook feature limited country-years. Therefore, depending on how close missing years were to the beginning or end of the domain, I front-filled or back-filled decentralization scores for a given state. This approach has obvious limitations that may not capture the true amount of transfers. However, in all sources of data collected, decentralization percentages rarely changed much (not more than a couple percentage points) year-on-year. This suggests that it is reasonable to assume a fairly constant level of intergovernmental transfers for a limited set of years. In some cases, decentralization scores increased or decreased substantially from one observation to the next one. These drastic changes are attributable to political changes, such as Belgium and Mexico’s embrace of more fiscally federal policies in the late 90s.
The ordered logit model featuring severity of conflict as the dependent variable, as shown in Table 1, produced significant results in support of the two hypotheses relating higher levels of incongruent and asymmetric federalism to greater levels of conflict intensity. The hypothesis for incongruent federalism was significant at a 0.05 level, and the hypothesis for asymmetric federalism was significant at a 0.01 level. Their respective $p$-values were 0.015 and 0.007. As for decentralization, a variable also hypothesized to have a positive relationship with the severity of conflict, the measure was not significant with a $p$-value of 0.569. The institutional controls related to the electoral system and the type of executive featured mixed results. Additional controls for GDP per capita and population lead to intuitive conclusions that conflict will be more severe in poorer federal countries and more populous federal countries.

Table 1. Ordered logit model results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>95% Conf. Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incongruence</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>2.43**</td>
<td>0.008-0.711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymmetry</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td>2.70***</td>
<td>0.336-0.211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralization</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>-0.020-0.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fractionalization</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>-1.78*</td>
<td>-8.628-0.418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMD/Mixed</td>
<td>35.38</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>2.60**</td>
<td>0.874-6.258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportional Rep.</td>
<td>12.57</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>-0.506-5.568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>-1.73*</td>
<td>-5.037-0.308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>-0.65</td>
<td>-4.311-2.156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita (log)</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>.219</td>
<td>-3.34***</td>
<td>-1.159-(-0.302)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (log)</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>.231</td>
<td>4.21***</td>
<td>0.519-1.422</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$N = 632$, Pseudo $R^2 = 0.53$

*significant at 0.10, **significant at 0.05, ***significant at 0.01
Table 2. Cox proportional hazard model results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Hazard Ratio</th>
<th>Robust Std. Err.</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>95% Conf. Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incongruence</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>0.981-1.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymmetry</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td>3.35***</td>
<td>1.137-1.633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralization</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.945-1.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fractionalization</td>
<td>218.9</td>
<td>668.8</td>
<td>1.76*</td>
<td>0.548-87377.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMD/Mixed</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>-1.47</td>
<td>2.07×10^{-6}-6.598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportional Rep.</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>-0.84</td>
<td>5.93×10^{-6}-123.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary</td>
<td>8937.0</td>
<td>36817.6</td>
<td>2.21**</td>
<td>2.783-2.87×10^{7}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td>22233.1</td>
<td>110782.2</td>
<td>2.01**</td>
<td>1.275-3.88×10^{8}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita (log)</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>-3.91***</td>
<td>0.045-0.357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (log)</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>.593</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>0.722-3.275</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 575

*significant at 0.10, **significant at 0.05, ***significant at 0.01

The Cox proportional hazard model displayed in Table 2, with conflict onset as failure, produces results supporting the asymmetry hypothesis with the onset of a conflict period as failure. Incongruence does not achieve significance, suggesting that incongruent federalism has a neutral effect on the onset of civil conflict, but an aggravating influence once conflict has begun. Asymmetry, like the ordered logit model, is significant, this time at a 0.05 level. Decentralization is not significant; suggesting that factors relating to the type of federalism a country employs influence the severity and onset and conflict more than the fiscal federal composition of a state.

The use of hazard ratios in conjunction with the Cox model in Table 2 can provide further insights about the substantive significance of the significant variable of asymmetry. Higher levels of asymmetry are associated with a 36% increase in civil conflict onset. Meanwhile, the non-significant incongruence variable is only associated with a 2% increase in onset likelihood. Both the models suggest countries that choose to give federal subunits specific powers separate from the most common federal designation stand a greater chance of not only the occurrence of civil conflict, but of that conflict being severe as well.
One aspect of the analysis conducted by Bakke and Wibbels is that they relied on the extensive use of interactive terms with their explanatory variables. The authors’ chief findings each come from the use of interaction terms (2006, 37). One of those findings concluded, “…fiscal decentralization’s contribution to ethnic peace is conditional on the distribution of wealth in federal states.” While fiscal decentralization is the only independent variable in common between my data and Bakke and Wibbels’, I decided to run models featuring interactions of decentralization and the created variables of incongruence and asymmetry. Based on my prior hypotheses, I would expect greater levels of decentralization in conjunction with the specific type of federalism to be associated with greater onset likelihood and severity.
## Table 3. Ordered logit model with interactive terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
<th>Std. Err</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>95% Conf. Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incongruence</strong></td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>1.78*</td>
<td>-0.004-0.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asymmetry</strong></td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>-0.138-0.213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decentralization</strong></td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>-0.51</td>
<td>-0.091-0.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incongruence</strong>*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.0004</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>-0.001-0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asymmetry</strong>*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>-0.003-0.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fractionalization</strong></td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>-1.92*</td>
<td>-10.01-0.114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SMD/Mixed</strong></td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>2.68**</td>
<td>0.993-6.386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proportional Rep.</strong></td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>-0.590-5.503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parliamentary</strong></td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>-1.85*</td>
<td>-5.240-0.148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presidential</strong></td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>-0.39</td>
<td>-4.211-2.828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GDP per capita (log)</strong></td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>-3.57***</td>
<td>-1.164-(0.339)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population (log)</strong></td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>4.14***</td>
<td>0.564-1.575</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N = 632, Pseudo $R^2 = 0.53$

*significant at 0.10, **significant at 0.05, ***significant at 0.01

The ordered logit model shown in Table 3, which again features conflict severity as the dependent variable, produced results with less significance than the non-interactive models. Incongruence was significant at just a 0.10 level, and none of the other explanatory variables or their interaction terms achieved significance.
Table 4. Cox proportional hazards model with interactive terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hazard Ratio</th>
<th>Robust Std. Err</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>95% Conf. Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incongruence</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.953-1.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymmetry</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.853-1.269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralization</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>.056</td>
<td>-1.86*</td>
<td>0.785-1.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incongruence*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>0.999-1.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralization</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>2.39**</td>
<td>1.002-1.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fractionalization</td>
<td>14.13</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.073-2727.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMD/Mixed</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>-0.43</td>
<td>0.013-15.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportional Rep.</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>7.16</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.006-893.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>184.5</td>
<td>1.98**</td>
<td>1.044-6555.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td>555.3</td>
<td>2246.7</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>0.200-154371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita (log)</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>-5.10***</td>
<td>0.025-0.194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (log)</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>0.741-4.751</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( N = 575 \)

*significant at 0.10, **significant at 0.05, ***significant at 0.01

The Cox model shown in Table 4, which featured interactive terms and conflict onset as failure, produced results somewhat in contradiction with the models involving non-interactive terms. Incongruence and asymmetry were each non-significant on their own, and decentralization was significant in the opposite direction. The term interacting incongruence and decentralization was not significant, but asymmetry and decentralization was at a 95% level of confidence. This result supports the suggestion from the prior models that asymmetric regions are more influential to conflict onset than incongruent regions, this time in conjunction with higher levels of decentralization. However, it should be noted that there was a wide variation in values for the interaction terms, ranging from 0 in a substantial number of observations to nearly 3,200 in some Bosnian country-years and 6,000 in some Belgian country-years. Thus, there reason to be skeptical about the explanatory power of the models featuring the interaction terms.
Furthermore, I also decided to run models isolating democratic and non-democratic country-years in the data based on the Polity scale. As touched upon in the literature review, research in the civil conflict literature has shown conflict to be more severe and more likely to occur in non-democracies (Hegre et al. 2001, Heger and Salehyan 2007). I also wanted to investigate if the type of federalism and decentralization had different effects on conflict with regards different regime types. I chose to use a cutoff for democracies at a Polity score of 6, based on the commonly used baselines for that metric (Jaggers and Marshall 2000). The variable was not put into the original models because the controls related to democratic institutions take autocracy into account in their coding. Ordered logit models were run for observations of six and above on Polity and observations below six. Due to the fact that the dropping of certain observations in the disrupted the necessary sequences needed for a Cox model, only the ordered logit models could be executed. The results for both the democratic and non-democratic country-years are shown below in Tables 5 and 6, respectively. In Table 5, the dummy variable for single-member district or mixed electoral systems was dropped due to collinearity.
Table 5. Ordered logit model with democratic country years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
<th>Std. Err</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>95% Conf. Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incongruence</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.116</td>
<td>-1.54</td>
<td>-0.406-0.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymmetry</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>0.482</td>
<td>3.26***</td>
<td>0.627-2.516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralization</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.085-0.082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fractionalization</td>
<td>$2.54 \times 10^{25}$</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>3.05***</td>
<td>20.92-96.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportional Rep.</td>
<td>$1.56 \times 10^{7}$</td>
<td>7.19</td>
<td>2.30**</td>
<td>2.469-30.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>-24.90-22.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td>$4.16 \times 10^{-9}$</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>-1.50</td>
<td>-44.44-5.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita (log)</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.936</td>
<td>-2.29**</td>
<td>-3.975-0.308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (log)</td>
<td>3754.8</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>3.29***</td>
<td>3.321-13.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$N = 451$, Pseudo $R^2 = 0.67$

*significant at 0.10, **significant at 0.05, ***significant at 0.01

Table 6. Ordered logit model with non-democratic country years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>95% Conf. Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incongruence</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>0.226</td>
<td>2.89***</td>
<td>0.211-1.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymmetry</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>0.521</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>-0.198-1.845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralization</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.120</td>
<td>-3.02***</td>
<td>-0.596-(-0.127)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fractionalization</td>
<td>$2.79 \times 10^{16}$</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>-7.322-83.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMD/Mixed</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.78*</td>
<td>-0.286-5.808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportional Rep.</td>
<td>$2.24 \times 10^{-10}$</td>
<td>11.53</td>
<td>-1.93*</td>
<td>-44.82-0.388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>-1.22</td>
<td>-9.428-2.180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td>$4.60 \times 10^{21}$</td>
<td>18.52</td>
<td>2.69**</td>
<td>13.58-3.159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita (log)</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>0.944</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>-0.541-3.159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (log)</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>-1.57</td>
<td>-11.94-1.321</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$N = 181$, Pseudo $R^2 = 0.66$

*significant at 0.10, **significant at 0.05, ***significant at 0.01

In the democratic model shown in Table 5, asymmetry was highly significant among the independent variables, once again suggesting its importance in the severity of conflict. For the non-democracies, two of the three explanatory variables were significant, with asymmetry
approaching significance at a 0.10 level of significance. Incongruence was significant in the hypothesized direction, but decentralization was significant in the opposite direction with a negative coefficient. In non-democracies, with the results displayed in Table 6, the type of federalism again appears to be an influential factor in the exacerbation of conflict, but decentralization in a non-democracy may be a way to mediate conflict. In the democratic model in Table 5, the \( p \)-value for incongruence of 0.12 approaches significance, but in the opposite direction as hypothesized. It is the only instance of either incongruence or asymmetry having a sign in the opposite direction as hypothesized among any of the six models. The disparate findings for regime types suggest that asymmetric federalism exacerbates conflict in democracies, but that incongruent federalism worsens conflict in non-democracies.

Out of the various models conducted from the data, some conclusions can be made about the effects of federalism and decentralization on civil conflict. First, it is clear that the two variants of federalism matters to both the onset and severity of civil conflict. Based on the data, both incongruent federalism and asymmetric federalism are associated with greater levels of civil conflict severity. Asymmetry has an especially harmful effect, when considering its significance in the onset models. Second, the results for decentralization were mixed at best, but there is evidence that policies of broader fiscal federalism can be a conflict mediator, especially in non-democracies. Third, there appears to be regime effects associated with the severity of conflict. In democracies, asymmetry performs much worse than incongruence and is significant as a conflict aggravorator. Meanwhile, in non-democracies, the significance of incongruence suggests it worsens conflict in those regimes. The data collected and analyses executed definitively show that neglected institutional federal factors, and not just fiscal factors, help explain civil conflict across the world’s federations.
The central theme of this work is that different types of federalism have an effect on the onset and severity of civil conflict. In the quantitative sections of this work, I have shown that both incongruence and asymmetry have statistically significant effects on increasing the likelihood of conflict onset and the severity of conflicts. Additionally, decentralization was shown to have less of an effect than previously hinted at in the literature. These results were based on the population of the world’s federations over a temporal domain covering more than 30 years in the latter part of the 20th century and early 21st century, when civil conflicts were especially prevalent (Fearon and Laitin 2003).

This section aims to take a more qualitative look at three federations whose federations have various institutional characteristics with regards to the central government-federal subunit relationship. Three countries were selected as subjects for this section: Ethiopia, Russia and Brazil. In each state, conflict and/or rebellion occurred at various points throughout the 20th century, becoming quite acute prior to the adoption of the current form of federalism. All were countries that engaged in some form of transition from authoritarian rule. Each of the three countries’ most recent federal constitutions came into effect within a 6-year period of one another, with Brazil’s in 1988, Russia’s in 1993 and Ethiopia’s in 1994. Most crucial to the purposes of this study is the fact that each state exemplifies a different variant of federalism. Ethiopia is nearly a completely incongruent federation featuring ethnically based subunits. Russia has extensive asymmetry, with a nontrivial amount of subunits given special status in relation to the other federal subjects and the central government. Meanwhile, Brazil demonstrates completely congruent and symmetric federalism. In the cases of Ethiopia and Russia, civil
conflict has continued to rage at various junctures since each state’s most recent constitution, often times being especially violent. In Brazil, a peaceful, stable federation exists.

My aim in outlining the form federalism takes, and conflict behavior, in these three countries is to provide a detailed examination as to how the form federalism has come about in these states, how it has evolved, and how each variant of federalism has influenced conflict.

Ethiopia

The historical experience of Ethiopia in the modern nation-state system is a unique one for the continent of Africa. With the exception of a five-year period around World War II when the country was under Italian occupation, Ethiopia has been independent since 1855. During the vast majority of that time, an Emperor who desired centralization has ruled the country. In the late 19th century, the traditional Abyssinian state of northern part of today’s Ethiopia was expanded in size to include regions to the south and more ethnicities. In the north, the Amhara and Tigray people were predominant, with the Amhara taking on a dominant role politically. In particular, the Amharic elite imposed Orthodox Christianity and the Amharic language upon the larger state (Merera 2003, 62). The imperial Ethiopian state, especially under long-time ruler Haile Selassie, was one characterized by economic exploitation by the north against south and forced assimilation to Amharic culture (Habtu 2004, Adegehe 2009).

Eventually, the emperor’s repressive ruling style led to student protests in the 1960s. Central to the student revolts’ cause was the desire to organize the state based on Stalinist and Marxist/Leninist principles of nationality and ethnicity. The Stalinist structure the student movement desired would have, in theory, called for self-determination and autonomy for various nationalities. The Derg military junta deposed Selassie in 1974. The junta promised self-
administration and equality for ethnic groups, but in reality ran a very centralized government, not unlike the policies of the past. However, in response to the growing insurgency, the Derg provided some decentralization by dividing the country into five autonomous regions in 1987. These changes only provided de jure autonomy and the Derg’s ruling Workers Party of Ethiopia continued to centralize authority. Additionally, the Amharic language remained ubiquitous in governmental affairs (Adegehe 2009). Some of The Derg’s best known policies involved the seizing of land and repression against ethnic organizations like the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF), Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) and Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). In 1991, helped by a civil war strategy of mobilizing the peasantry and military gains, the TPLF and EPLF forced the ouster of The Derg’s strongman, Mengistu Haile Miriam. Among the groups who fought against the ruling junta, the TPLF was the strongest. Prior to the end of The Derg, the TPLF established the Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) as a multi-ethnic coalition to prepare for national rule (International Crisis Group 2009). The EPRDF included groups like the Ethiopian People’s Democratic Movement (EPDM) and the Southern Ethiopia Peoples Democratic Front (SEPDF), but the TPLF was clearly the foremost group and played a significant hand in running the other groups that purported to make the EPRDF multi-ethnic. At the time of the downfall of The Derg, the Tigray ethnicity represented just six percent of the total Ethiopian population, a number that has remained fairly constant to the present day (Habtu 2003).

The assumption of power by the EPRDF began a three-year transitional period of governance, starting with a conference bringing together 25 political organizations. In 1992, the unelected Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) divided the country into 14 regions, based largely on ethnic and linguistic lines. Two years later, after a Constituent Assembly, a
constitution was ratified, outlining a commitment to federalism, liberal democracy and human rights. The transitional period was marked by the departure of groups like the OLF, who rejected the TPLF domination of the EPRDF and the transitional government. The new Ethiopian state was divided into nine states of Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromiya, Somali, Benishangul-Gumuz, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR), Gambella and Harar, and the city-state of Addis Ababa. Dire Dawa was later added as another city-state. The constitution transformed Ethiopia into an almost wholly incongruent federation.

There are as many as 84 distinct ethnic groups in Ethiopia (Habtu 2003). The two largest, the Oromo and the Amhara, make up over 60 percent of the Ethiopian federation. The seven largest ethnic groups comprise about 85 percent of Ethiopia’s population (Habtu 2005). Five ethnic groups have their own regions in the federation, forcing the cooperation of many ethnic groups in one region for the other four subunits. It should be noted that some are allocated zones in the Ethiopian federation, such as the Sidama in the Harari region. Nonetheless, the structure of federalism, especially in the very ethnically diverse zones, has led to ethnic struggles between communities over boundary issues and a restructuring of conflicts to below the federal level (Abbink 2006, 390). In the federation, even the federally administered city-state capital of Addis Ababa is subject to ethnic recognition, with the Oromo people being designated as having a “special interest” in the city per the 1994 constitution.

While Ethiopia is incongruent with regards to how the federal subunits are outlined, it is also incongruent with regards to the power structure of the state. With the minority Tigray ethnicity being the dominant political group associated with the governance of Ethiopia, and the Oromo People’s Democratic Organization (OPDO) and Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM) under the EPRDF umbrella “representing” the two largest Ethiopian ethnicities, the
federation does not fully act in accordance with the patterns of interest articulation and representation found in other federations around the world. While the current Ethiopian federation is, contrary to the stated constitution, an authoritarian state with extremely limited civil liberties, it does have a form of fiscal federalism that puts it more in line with other federations. However, it nonetheless emphasizes how incongruence in other contexts can harm a given federation and lead to possible conflict.

Funds are allocated to the Ethiopian states and regions by the form of block grants. Such forms of fiscal allocation in Ethiopia are given to the regions by the federal government and to the states to districts, or *wereda*. Since the establishment of the 1994 constitution featuring the nine Ethiopian states, a variety of fiscal federal formulae have been used, the first of which usually have been composed of three main variables: population size, level of poverty and revenue generation capacity (Adegehe 2009, 89). Later formulae borrowed from other federations, such as Australia and strived to make a region’s inability to provide basic services the top determinant of block grants. This change was postponed all the way from 2001 to 2007 due to the intractability of the larger regions opposing the smaller regions. Furthermore, regions have alleged in the past that the EPRDF is mainly focused on disproportionately helping out the Tigray region. The constitution gives little guidance on how to institutionally manage federal-regional conflict, except for by “settlement by bilateral agreement”. Adegehe (2009) shows that incongruence can be shown fiscally concerning certain ethnic groups in the Ethiopian federation. The Harari people are one of the groups that receive special status in the state, as they are recognized with their own region. Conversely, the Sidama are not recognized with a specific region, and are instead located within the SNNPR. The Harari people number 185,000, whilst the Sidama are nearly 3 million strong. In the 2006-07 Ethiopian fiscal year, the Harari region
received approximately 90 million Ethiopian birr (ETB) more (92). Similar anecdotes can be shown for ethnicities who strive for wereda status. The troubles that these particular ethnic groups display show that incongruence and ethnic federalism can be a recipe for grievance and potentially conflict if an ethnic group is not recognized as important enough by the federal government.

Another aspect of Ethiopia’s incongruent ethnic federalism is the constitutional ability to secede, which was also found in past regimes with a broadly ethnic federal structure like the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia that ultimately each failed. It should be noted that constitution does provide measures to guard against unilateral secession by any region or state, namely that the federal government is tasked with setting up referenda that would, if successful, transfer sovereignty to the given region. Thus far in the post-Derg era, only Eritrea has successfully seceded from the federation. Work that defends the right to secede (GebreAb 2003, Habtu 2005) loses sight of the fact that ethnic federalism has entrenched ethnicity in the federation and given groups an institutional base without a better way to address grievances at a federal level.

If the measure of the success of incongruent federalism in Ethiopia since 1994 is purely based on the number of casualties in civil conflict, then one could make the case that ethnically based federalism has been a very good thing for Ethiopia. For example, fatalities for the Ethiopian Civil War, which coincide with the dates of rule by The Derg, are estimated to be in the high six figures, at around 750,000 people (Sivard 1991, Brogan 1989, SIPRI 1992, Harff and Gurr 1988). By contrast, the most dangerous single conflict in Ethiopia since the transition to federalism numbers around 2,000 deaths (Marshall 2012). Turton (2006) made the argument for peace, saying, “When one considers the level of internal conflict, military violence and repression…that characterized Ethiopia under the previous regime, the restructuring of Ethiopia
has been an undeniable success.” He later says, “…for the first time in the history of Ethiopia, the legal foundation for a fully fledged democracy [has been laid]” (1-2). While Turton is constitutionally accurate on the latter point, Ethiopia is by no means a peaceful state as a result of the implementation of ethnic federalism. Since the beginning of the federalist era, EPRDF forces have clashed repeatedly with the OLF, who represent the largest ethnicity in the Ethiopian federation and have been banned by the EPRDF as a “terrorist organization”. Based on news reports, the OLF and EPRDF government forces have engaged in some sort of armed conflict of varying severity on a near-monthly basis (and many times much more often) since the beginning of the 20th century (ACLED 2010). Conflict between the Oromo and the Tigray-dominated forces reached it highest point in the midst of the Eritrean-Ethiopian War of 1998-2000, when Eritrean forces who invaded Ethiopia fought on behalf of the OLF’s stated aim of Oromia independence. The Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), members of a much smaller ethnic group by number in the Somali region of Ethiopia, have similar incidence rates of armed conflict with the government based on news reports. Despite the fact the Oromo region is one of the nine recognized, while Ogaden is not, both regions desire independence from the federation. This example shows how in incongruent, ethnic federalism, many groups of various significance may enact grievances against the central government for more autonomy.

An important point to reemphasize is just how undemocratic the current Ethiopian government is with regards to “guaranteeing a democratic order” as stated in the preamble of the 1994 constitution. The EPRDF, along with its “regional affiliates” claims to allow multi-party democracy and competition in the state. However, since the beginning of the TGE, true opposition groups have been intimidated from participating due to violence, intimidation and fraud (ICG 2009). In federal and regional parliamentary elections in 2000, legitimate options
were available to voters in some regions, while irregularities marred other locales (Tronvoll 2001, Pausewang et al. 2002). In May 2005, the EPRDF allowed a true adversary in the form of the Coalition for Unity and Democracy, a coalescence of four parties including opposition figures and former exiles from the previous regime. While the CUD endorsed ethnic federalism, the debate between the EPRDF and CUD involved questions such as land ownership, Eritrean relations and whether or not an opposition victory would recall the era of Amhara dominance. While the CUD and other opposition parties surprisingly won 172 seats to the EPRDF’s 372, the CUD protested irregularities and refused to accept many of the results. Opposition protests led to a government crackdown, culminating in nearly 200 deaths and 60,000 arrests. By 2010, Ethiopia again functioned as a one-party state in its elections, with questions about voter intimidation, media fairness and access prevalent (Human Rights Watch 2011, Amnesty International 2011). Additional studies focused on the political implications of fiscal federalism in the state (Ishiyama 2010), found that for areas where opposition to the EPRDF was high, the regime tried to “buy off” support in the form of additional block grants after the controversial 2005 poll.

In the population of federal countries, there are only two states in which nearly all of the federal subunits are ethnically based, incongruent divisions: Ethiopia and Belgium. In Belgium, the dynamics of federalism are much different due to the country’s respect for multi-party democracy and level of income. Additionally, Belgium will likely not be marred with civil conflict as this study defines it anytime in the near future. Its federal subunits are also clearly defined, with little room for the objection that produces so many problems in Ethiopia. Nonetheless, the country’s frequent intractability in affairs, such as recently taking 18 months after an election to form a government and near-ubiquitous speculation of separation, do not
offer significant support for incongruent federalism in any sort of peace-preserving context. While incongruent federalism offers intuitive benefits for the mediation of ethnic conflict, its experience in Ethiopia can at best be called a slight improvement over one of the world’s most brutal regimes of the past 50 years, and at worst be deemed an abject failure.

Russia

In imperial Russia, much like imperial Ethiopia, the ruling elite desired a singular, national identity for its subjects in a multi-ethnic state. After the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the Soviet Union was divided into 15 sub-national Soviet Socialist Republics (SSRs), all based on nationalities and ethnic groups. As touched upon previously, ethnicity and the question of nationality was important to the Stalinist ideology, at least in principle and especially early in his political life. In “Marxism and the National Question,” Stalin wrote, “A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture” (5). The work advocating ethnic autonomy in part was based on Stalin’s experience with the Austro-Hungarian federation. Furthermore, the Bolshevik “Declaration on the Rights of the People of Russia” supported “The equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia” and “he right of the peoples of Russia to free self-determination, even to the point of separation and the formation of an independent state” (see also Daniels 1985).

However, not even a decade later, in 1923, Moscow instituted a policy of korenizatsiya, or indigenization, aimed at making Soviet ideals more palatable and indigenous to the various nationalities (Liber 1991). While subunits such as the North Ossetian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic explicitly implied autonomy, the ruling national Communist Party of the
Soviet Union truly oversaw day-to-day operations and ran the country as a de facto unitary state, with any regional offices being installed by the central party.

On December 25, 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed and the Russian Federation officially became an independent state along with the other 14 former SSRs. Initially, the first years of the Russian Federation continued the legacy of a state with defined local subunits being ruled by a central government (Tanrisever 2009). In the immediate years of the Russian Federation, the focus was on transforming a command economy into a market-based economy based on neoliberal economic policies of “shock therapy”. The Federation Treaty of 1992 was the first major indicator of the extent of Russia’s post-Soviet asymmetric federalism in the 1990s. Russia is a society with over 100 different nationalities, with several of the aforementioned autonomous regions being regions where ethnicities are concentrated. The Federation Treaty as a whole recognized three main different classes of federal subjects in three separate treaties: respublika (ethnic republics), oblasts (provinces) and krai (territories). Additional categories such as autonomous okrugs, an autonomous oblast and the federal cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg were recognized, but the ethnic republics were the most significant subjects outlined in the treaty, in the hopes of containing ethnic nationalism.

With oblasts and krai functionally identical, the main source of asymmetry as a result of the 1992 Federation Treaty comes from the ethnic republics. Scholars in the past have gone so far as to say that the effect of the non-republic categories was such that it standardized the status of the remainder of the federal subjects (Luchterhandt 1995) and that it meant “23 million Russians will live in a federation, and another 124 million will live in a unitary state” (Theen 1999). As a result of the treaty, the right of the republics to have their own president with a separate legislature and constitution was recognized. Yet, the treaty was not palatable to every
one of the then 20 (there are now 21) ethnic republics, as Tatarstan and the Chechno-Ingush Republic refused to sign. Both regions had previously declared their sovereignty.

Then-President Boris Yeltsin believed that federalism was a valuable tool in the construction of the new federation and managing ethnic tension, saying, “Federalism is the guarantee of the state’s integrity, since the regions have no reason to seek to secede from Russia if their independent development is already guaranteed” (Rossiiskie vesti 1996, see also Tanrisever 2009). However, the president vacillated on the extent to which levels of autonomy were guaranteed for the various republics. In 1993, amidst conflict with the Supreme Soviet over an economy in turmoil that featured a whopping 19% drop in GDP the year before (Dabrowski and Antczak 1995), Yeltsin dissolved the parliament and made a variety of presidential decrees in contradiction to the 1978 Constitution that was still the law in Russia at the time. The president was able to push through his own constitution by referendum later that year, giving him far more powers than the previous constitution. Yet, despite his newfound singular power, Yeltsin took asymmetric federalism to another level in 1994 when the Kremlin negotiated a bilateral treaty with Tatarstan, which was still yet to accede to the Federation Treaty of 1992. The treaty allowed the Tatars to impose their own budget and act as a separate foreign country in regards to international affairs, foreign economic activities and deciding citizenship, among others, in exchange for giving up the claim for independence and ceding to the federation’s taxing authority (Malik 1994).

The Tatarstan treaty sparked a wave of bilateral treaties and highlighted a fundamental problem with federal asymmetry: that when one region gets special treatment from the central government, many others will likely try to follow suit. Furthermore, the ambiguity resulting from the Federation Treaty’s guarantee of autonomy and the new Constitution’s powers meant
republics could try to either receive concessions from the Kremlin or push for the autonomy previously guaranteed. Yet, it was not solely the republics that received concessions from Moscow. Barely two years after Tatarstan’s treaty, Trktitsk Oblast, Ust-Orda Burvat Autonomous Okrug, Chuvashiya, Perm Oblast, Komi-Permyats Autonomous Okrug, Khabarovsk Krai, the city of St. Petersburg, Leningrad Oblast, and the Nizhni Novgorod, Tver, and Rostov oblasts were all non-republics who participated in bilateral treaties (Huches 1996). The process continued until 1998 with 46 federal subjects ultimately agreeing to some bilateral concessions (Soderlund 1996).

The Tatarstan treaty in 1994 left Chechnya (by then a federal subunit of its own) as the only federal subject not to recognize the Russian Federation. The region declared full independence in 1993, and Russian forces tried to overthrow Chechen president Dzhokar Dudayev on repeated occasions. At the end of 1994, Russian forces invaded the region looking for a quick victory but instead were involved in prolonged fighting. Chechen separatists eventually forced the ouster of Russian forces in 1996. Exact figures are unknown, but as many as 100,000 Chechens may have been killed in the conflict (Peuch 2004), with as many as 500,000 displaced. In both the case of the Russians who invaded the region and the Chechens who desired independence, asymmetric federalism failed to promote an effective system to address conflict between the central government and an asymmetric region. While it is true that the Chechens claimed sovereignty before Russia became a well-defined federation, the asymmetric system appears to have provided little incentive for Chechnya to moderate its separatist demands in light of the special treatment that other regions in the federation received.

In 1999, Vladimir Putin took over for Yeltsin as president of the Russian Federation. Almost immediately, the ex-KGB agent set about a course that was decidedly less pro-western,
pro-democracy and pro-federal than what Yeltsin had espoused. In doing so, Putin put the federation more in line with the centralized policies it has known for much of its history, even in a multi-ethnic society. While Putin was still prime minister in 1999, he played a significant role in resuming conflict with Chechnya and the onset of the Second Chechen War. Shortly after Putin became president, one of his first orders of business was to limit the powers of the federal regions. The president took several main steps in this regard. One was to set up seven federal superdistricts to oversee various subsections of the 89 (now 83) federal subunits. Each superdistrict has an envoy, personally appointed by the president. The Federation Council, the upper house of the Russian parliament, underwent substantial changes in Putin’s first few years as president. In 2000, the president changed the composition of the body to include appointees instead of the heads of the executive and legislative branches from the various federal subunits.

Four years later, Putin gained the ability to appoint the heads of the various federal subjects, particularly governors. Further the president of the federation could now appoint a successor as president in an ethnic republic if that president of the ethnic republic was removed from office or had died in office. This effectively limited the ability for the ethnic republics to elect their own president. These reforms had the biggest effect of limiting the ability for the ethnic republics and other regions to clash with Moscow and allowed the Kremlin to institute its chosen policies within the regions. Additionally, electoral reform severely limited the potential power of regional candidates in State Duma elections. Where one-half of seats had previously been elected by majoritarian single-member district methods, those seats were replaced by a proportional representation party list format with an increased threshold for representation, ensuring that only a few select nationally based parties would achieve representation. Fiscally,
funds given to the regions have been fairly centralized by federal standards, albeit more so in the Putin era (Lavrov et al. 2000).

Various political patterns in the distribution of funds have also been observed, including tendencies of appeasement for areas where the central government was less popular in the early days of the Russian Federation (Treisman 1996) and rewarding areas of support more recently (Popov 2004).

Undoubtedly, Russia under Putin is less of a federal state than it was under Yeltsin. Yet, it is still a nominal federation with federal subunits that differ in relation to the center from others and a federal constitution. Federal arrangements now in Russia are more elite-driven, with the president picking federal actors for the subjects, an arrangement some have called “administrative federalism” (Zhuravskaya 2010). Such Scholars such as Andrei Zakharov (2010) have pointed to Russian federalism (in the more traditional sense of the word) as a “sleeping institution” whereby an event or series of events make the country a more complete federation by the traditionally defined sense of the word. However, in the recent Medvedev presidency, the now prime minister recognized regional identities to a greater extent than his predecessor (Makarychev 2009). Therefore, a more centralized federalism may be specific to Putin (again the president as of May 2012). Whatever the extent of federalism, there is still conflict in Russia, as the Second Chechen War continued at a massive level of brutality until 2009. While observations in the PRIO data from Russia did not show conflict in other areas than Chechnya, the rest North Caucasus region is a very common source of low-level conflict, insurgency and instability. These patterns suggest that asymmetric federalism in the Russian case does not have a conflict-mediating effect, regardless of whether or not regional government offices are installed by the central government or elected by the constituents of the asymmetric regions.
Brazil

Brazil’s historical tendencies regarding federalism resemble something of a heart rate monitor or a wavelength graph, whereby the type of rule has bounced in between unitary and federal structures. Immediately after the country received its independence from Portugal in 1822, Brazil had a monarchy for 67 years under the Brazilian Empire. The country was divided up into twenty provinces and municipalities where each subdivision elected its own council. However, these councils had no real power, and most of the authority over the subdivisions of imperial Brazil was invested in the monarch. Elections in the provinces were also commonly manipulated by the central government, and the administrative subdivisions did not have a say in national representation. Fiscal authority in the provinces was ruled on by the center as well.

Brazil’s first real independent experience with federal republican form of government came after a military coup in 1889 that gave the twenty former provinces a degree of autonomy and allowed for both fixed levels of representation and representation by population for the separate houses of the legislature.

The states had their own legislatures and were given the ability to raise their own taxes, borrow money and fund their own armies. The so-called “Old Republic” began to become less federal in nature by 1926 when a constitutional amendment was passed that expanded central government power in the operations of the federal states. By this point, Brazilian federalism was characterized mainly by the governors and conduct of the two large, affluent states of Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais and saw the federal government step in to help many of the smaller states. Getulio Vargas came to power in 1930, and tipped the scales back toward centralization. State flags, state leadership and state legislatures were all removed as part of Vargas’ Estado Novo (New State) dictatorship. Another military coup ushered in a brief era of democracy from
Vargas’ ouster in 1945 until 1964. Devolved powers were very similar to the previous era of federalism, albeit on this occasion with more fiscal structures in place to redistribute wealth to the poorer regions of the country in the Northeast and Amazon (Rosenn 2005). More centralized policies came back from 1964 to 1985, under another military government. In the latter part of the era, some federal institutions and characteristics returned such as elections for state governor and fiscal federal mechanisms to support lower-income regions. While civilian rule returned in 1985 with the election of Tancredo Neves, the current institutions of federalism were not set into place until the Constitution of 1988 came into effect.

The most important aspect of the 1988 Constitution as it relates to this study is that it was set up as a congruent and symmetric system (as opposed to the cases of Ethiopia and Russia). The document also substantially overhauled the revenue, tax and fiscal transfer processes, so that states were allocated a greater portion of expenditures. In Brazil, there are currently 26 states and one capital district. Powers guaranteed to the states and autonomy in the Constitution are guaranteed to all the states and not just some as in asymmetric federations. While Brazilian states are based primarily upon historical legacy and/or the original administrative boundaries under the Brazilian Empire, and may include many of the same ethnicity, they do not recognize a social or linguistic group as the foremost inhabitants of the region, as is the case in states with incongruence. Chapters 4 and 5 of the federal constitution set up the powers given to the states and municipalities, respectively, and go so far as to layout the composition and election dates for subnational legislative bodies or councils. The states have their own constitutions, but most are expected to adhere to the principles laid out in the federal constitution (Souza 2005).

One characteristic of the Brazilian federation that makes it somewhat inequitable (although not incongruent) is its malapportionment in both houses of the federal legislature.
Brazilian states’ populations range from as little as under 500,000 in the northernmost region of Roraima to over 40 million in Sao Paulo. A state is constitutionally limited to 70 representatives in the lower house, the Chamber of Deputies, meaning that although Sao Paulo has some 90 times more citizens than Roraima, it is not fully proportionally represented in the house based on population. However, the example found in the Brazilian Senate regarding the two states makes it one of the most disproportionate democratic chambers in the world. Each state is allotted three senators, meaning that a Senator from Roraima or the slightly larger Amapa may only represent an average of 100 to 200 thousand, while Senators from Sao Paulo or Rio de Janeiro may represent several million. However, this is not completely uncommon for federations, as the United States also has a system where disproportional representation occurs in both legislative chambers. Scholars have previously called this characteristic of Brazilian federalism “demos-constraining” (Stepan 2000) in that it violates the one citizen, one vote ideal of democracy.

Yet, there is a useful reason for the disproportionality. A central issue in Brazilian politics, through both military and civilian rule, and periods of high and low decentralization has been the inequality between regions. The poorer, more sparsely populated northern regions of the country have often desired more resources than the richer, densely populated south. By having the system of overrepresentation for smaller regions in place, especially in the Senate, where regional interests are articulated upon, Brazilian representation allows for regions to have a definitive say without explicitly entrenching regional identities, as happens in incongruent and asymmetric federalism.

In the realm of civil conflict in Brazil, there has been remarkably little violence since 1988. While the country has been deemed a highly decentralized federation by many international fiscal standards (de Mello 1999, 2000), there is no separatist threat present in the
country and the predominant concerns in the country regard economics and inequality (Souza 2005, 1). Ethnically, whites and mulattos are the two most prevalent races, with percentages of the two races varying somewhat wildly depending on region or state. Despite great recent economic successes and rising levels of GDP, the country still has significant economic inequality, albeit at a much less notorious level than in previous decades (Leahy 2010). As mentioned previously, regional inequality is a long-standing issue. In other words, there are factors present in the Federal Republic of Brazil that might indicate some level of civil conflict to exist, but it does not. While it would be easy to say that Brazil’s variant of federalism is solely responsible for its lack of conflict given the subject of this study, there are also many other factors likely at play, including the presence of a shared Brazilian identity (Arocena 2008), a de-emphasis on regionalism and ethnicity, and past experience with historical federal institutions. In any case, Brazil is one country in the world that employs a more basic type of federalism and has civil peace.
CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the form federalism takes and the onset and severity of civil conflict. Although there has been some work on decentralization and conflict (as well as other institutional choices and civil conflict) little or no attention has been paid to the form of federalism and conflict, although this is central to the work of such scholars as Lijphart (1999). In this thesis, I chose to look at two specific aspects of how federal institutions may vary: incongruent federalism and asymmetric federalism. Both of these forms of federalism involve granting greater levels of federal autonomy or recognition to certain regions, often with ethnicity in mind.

In sum, I found that the type of federal structure a state has empirically affects conflict onset and severity. In particular, most of the models, which varied based on dependent variable, interaction terms and regime classification, supported the hypothesis that asymmetric federalism leads to a greater likelihood of conflict onset and conflict severity. Additionally, incongruence was found to have a harmful effect on conflict severity. Asymmetry was found to have a more significant harmful impact on conflict than incongruence, although both were significant in the most basic model with conflict severity as the dependent variable. Results concerning fiscal decentralization were much less conclusive. Incongruence and asymmetry also had varying harmful effects on conflict severity, depending on regime type.

Qualitatively, I described the federal structures, characteristics and history of Ethiopia, Russia and Brazil. In all three, there were relatively high levels of conflict and instability prior to the adoption of the federal constitutions. In those case studies, I noted that Brazil, a country that does not recognize regions in an incongruent or asymmetric manner, has not had civil conflict.
On the other hand, Ethiopia and Russia, which employ high levels of incongruent and asymmetric federalism, respectively, have experienced moderate-to-high levels of conflict since adopting their most recent constitutional arrangements.

The implications of this study for scholarship and policy makers are far-reaching. The results of the analyses suggest not only that variables related to incongruent and asymmetric federalism should be studied to a greater degree, but that they have a great impact on the incidence and severity of civil conflict than to do some other measures of federalism, such as decentralization (see Bakke and Wibbels 2006). The immediate implications of the findings to policy makers are quite sobering: that federal institutions aimed at mediating conflict or preventing conflict by giving groups a level of autonomy as part of a region with the group’s name on it or special constitutions actually have the opposite effect in many cases, helping to cause conflict and worsen it. This finding can be due to a couple different factors. First, groups may feel more empowered with constitutional guarantees of regional autonomy or a special status under the constitution and desire sovereignty. Also, groups that are not recognized under incongruent or asymmetric federations may organize in protest to try to gain a greater level of recognition constitutionally. Regardless of the size of the group, the data in this study strongly suggests that entrenching group identity constitutionally under incongruent or asymmetric federalism is a recipe for greater conflict incidence and severity.

Assuming that policies of incongruent and asymmetric federalism are detrimental institutions, the key question for policy makers and constitution writers then becomes: What institutional policies are likely to produce peace? Based on the evidence from this work, it would be easy to simply suggest unitary governments for countries at risk of conflict. However, some states are much too large, with great levels of disparate geography and demography for singular
policies to be feasible or smart. A possible answer may lie in Brass’ (1991) suggestions based on his studies of India. The scholar found that policies that de-emphasized ethnicity were beneficial to a multi-ethnic, federal society such as India. Institutionally, Brass’ work suggests that federations in diverse societies should be willing to set up non-ethnic federal subjects that do not recognize a given people or give a region certain separate constitutional powers. Empirically, however, Brass’ example of India does not wholly hold up, as it was one of the worst performing countries in the conflict data. A non-conventional solution for civil conflict comes from Kaufmann (1996), who suggests partitioning various groups in a fractious state into “defensible enclaves”. While this prescription may be impractical and extremely costly for areas where many different groups living in a region, it may be more feasible in regions where single groups are homogenously concentrated and capable of self-governance. In truth, the desire for a definitive institutional solution to foster civil peace is a misguided conquest, even within the subset of federations. As Horowitz has stated, “fundamental conflicts cannot be bridged by constitution writing” (1985, 601). However, with work in the scholarship of what institutional characteristics are more likely to result in conflict, constitution writers could presumably usefully take into account.

Although this study has been innovative in several ways, there are some admitted limitations that should be addressed in future iterations of this work. For example, the variables of incongruent and asymmetric federalism were based on judgmental coding which should be subjected to some measure of intercoder reliability. Also, while the values for decentralization should be roughly accurate, there were still a number of country years that were front-filled and back-filled due to lack of availability. Other opportunities for future research in this topic could involve more in-depth investigation of how specific conflicts were affected by federal
institutions and constitutions. As this study only represented a temporal domain of approximately 30 years, more historical data may also be of great use.

Federalism is a relative rarity in the nation-state system, with only 22 countries employing the institution. Yet, these states include states of varying sizes and statuses, rich and poor, small and large, and Western and non-Western. Thus, studies of federations can be of great comparative utility in a variety of contexts. The specific context of studying federations in conjunction with civil conflict is an under-researched topic. Looking even further into the proverbial “black box” of specific institutional study, those works featuring federalism and civil conflict do not look at the different federal constitutional choices a state can make with regards to its federal subjects. This study has done so for the first time in the scholarship and found that the types of federalism a state employs are significant variables in explaining the incidence and severity of civil conflict. This study finds that incongruent and asymmetric federalism both pose harmful prospects for civil peace. The line of study conducted in this work is a promising and substantive start to a possible fruitful path for future research.


