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Abstract

Delineating control over key assets located in the regions became one of the building blocs of Russia's asymmetrical federalism that emerged out of negotiations between the federal center and the regions in 1991-1996. This process benefitted particularly the more resourceful ethnic republics that had a higher administrative status in the complex institutional framework of the Soviet and then Russian Federalism. As a result of separate deals with the center, the rich ethnic republics and other well-placed federal units (such as Moscow) obtained control over major economic assets and created relatively autonomous systems of political economy and property regimes within their territories. The evolving relations between the federal and regional governments driven by the centralizing reforms instituted under Vladimir Putin have resulted in the redistribution of property rights from one set of actors to another and transformed, in some cases, the nature of regional political economic systems and property regimes that have been established earlier. This paper examines the most conspicuous changes in regional property relations that have (or have not) occurred in the last ten years in three resource-rich ethnic republics. The findings pertain not only to the changing nature of regional property regimes but, more generally, to Russia's political economy and property rights system.