After the collapse of the Soviet Union, sub-national political developments in Russia became highly diversified and the political map of Russia's regions became multi-faceted. The period of 2000s demonstrated a drive on the part of the Kremlin to re-centralise politics and governance and to the demise of newly-emerging democratic institutions at both the national and sub-national levels. Yet, federalism and regionalism remain key elements of the research agenda in Russian politics, and the overall political map of Russia's regions is far from being monotonic. Rather, it is similar to a complex multi-piece puzzle, which can only be put together through skilful crafting.

International experts on Russian regional politics, including top scholars from Britain, Canada, Russia and the USA, provide critical evaluations of the multiple deficiencies to be found in Russia's sub-national authoritarianism, including: principal-agent problems in the relations between the layers of the 'power vertical', unresolved issues of regime legitimacy that have resulted from manipulative electoral practices and the inefficient performance of regional and local governments.

Contents
Preface; The dynamics of sub-national authoritarianism: Russia in comparative perspective, Vladimir Gel'man; The liberal and the authoritarian: how different are Russian regions?, Rotislav Turovsky; Regional democracy variations and the forgotten legacies of Western engagement, Tomila Lankina; Regional changes and changing regional relations with the centre, William M. Reisinger and Byron J. Moraski; The transition to managerial patronage in Russia's regions, Joan DeBardeleben and Mikhail Zherebtsov; NGOs and politics in Russian regions, Elena Belokurova; Pluralism, (un)civil society, and authoritarianism in Russia's regions, Christopher Marsh; Party politics in the Russian regions: competition of interest groups under the guises of parties, Alexander Kynev; Electoral practices at the sub-national level in contemporary Russia, Petr Panov; Sub-national elections and the development of semi-authoritarian regimes, Cameron Ross; Distributing sovereignty and property under Putin: a view from resource-rich republics of the Russian Federation, Gulnaz Sharafutdinova; State-business relations in Russia's regions; Natalia Zubarevich; Index.

About the Editor
Vladimir Gel'man, European University St. Petersburg, Russia and Cameron Ross, University of Dundee, UK

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