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Summary of the doctoral dissertation entitled: “The territorial system of the Russian Federation: assumptions and practice”

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This doctoral dissertation is a theoretical and empirical study in the discipline of political science. The subject matter of this dissertation is an analysis of the territorial system of the Russian Federation. The main objective of the work is an attempt to classify the political form of the Russian's territorial system by answering the main research question: can the Russian Federation be classified as a federal state?

Four research hypotheses were identified. The first one entails that Russia, due to historical and socio-cultural factors, lacks liberal democratic political tradition. Liberal democratic political tradition is seen as a precondition for existence of an authentic federation. The second, suggests that Vladimir Putin's deviation from the constitutional order of 1993 order has been reverting Russia to a unitary state. This constitutional order nominally established Russia as a federal state. The third one indicates that the power in regions in Russia is held by local elites, which are integrated into the apparatus of the central power. The last hypothesis implies that the federal structure is used as a means to keep the unity of the state.

The dissertation comprises of five chapters. The first chapter is a theoretical introduction. It clarifies the methodological assumptions and the terminology relating to the concept of political system and especially to the concept of vertical separation of powers between the national and subnational governments. The second presents a historical background of the Russian Federation. It covers the period from the process of unification of the Russian lands and the formation of the Russian Empire, the existence of the Soviet Union, to the current times. This is an essential introduction for understanding the concept of Russian state. The analysis of the

normative and institutional dimension of the Russian' political system can be found in the third chapter. The chapter also highlights the distinctive feature of the party system in Russia with a leading role of pro-Putin United Russia party, that is classified as a "party of power". The fourth chapter focuses on the federal arrangements of the Russian Federation. It investigates the origins of the federal system, and it explains constitutionally entrenched provisions of vertical distribution of powers between the central and regional governments. Finally, it concentrates on the political practice revealing the mechanism driving the relations between the central and regional authorities. The last chapter shows the examples of the governance in the Kaliningrad Region, the Chechen Republic, the Republic of Crimea, and the Kemerovo Region. These regions and territories are located in different parts or varying extremities of Russia but at the same time they have political, economic, military or propaganda significance. They illustrate the dimension of central and regional inter-relations in political practice.

The dissertation concludes that the Russian Federation instead of forming liberal democracy has fallen into an authoritarian regime, consequently undermining the idea of federalism. Although Russia's constitution entrenched the federalism principles, the political decisions are concentrated in the central government. The regions and territories do not participate in the decision-making process. Thus, the dissertation indicates that the Russian Federation has reverted to a unitary state.

Keywords: Russian Federation, territorial system, federalism