The Institutionalization of Political Parties in Russia from a Regional Perspective

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Abstract

This thesis analyzes the level of institutionalization of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and *United Russia* in Russian regions. The institutionalization is the process by which the party develops from being a tool with which particular interests of party elite are achieved to an entity, independent of its founders.¹

To be considered well institutionalized, a political party should have strong internal organization, sound ideological basis and a balanced financial scheme as well as possess a stable mode of communication within a particular environment. This thesis argues that the two parties are relatively institutionalized across Russian political landscape. However, they display certain internal and external weaknesses, which challenge their further institutionalization. Should the *CPRF* and *United Russia* be able to overcome their organizational and ideological weaknesses, the prospects of their deeper institutionalization will significantly improve.

¹ Moisei Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties: England*, vol. I (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964), p. xix.

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Note on transliteration and style

For transliteration of Russian names of authors and regions, I use a modified Library of Congress system with some minor modifications. Specifically, some names are spelled according to their most common usage, i.e. Yeltsin instead of Eltsin, Yegor instead of Egor, Yekaterinburg instead of Ekaterinburg and Nizhniy instead of Nizhnii, etc.

The Communist Party of the Russian Federation is abbreviated as the *CPRF*, starting with ‘C’ (denoting its connection to the ‘Communist’), and not with ‘K’ as it is often used by the scholars.

To improve readability of the text, names of political parties, social movements and businesses are given in italics, i.e. the *CPRF* or *United Russia*.

List of Abbreviations

CP RSFSR	Communist Party of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
CPRF	Communist Party of the Russian Federation
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
gorkom	City Committee of the CPRF
Komsomol	Young Communist League
LDPR	Liberal Democratic Party of Russia
NDNG	Our Home is Our City
NDR	Our Home – Russia
OVR	Fatherland-All Russia
PPO	Primary Party Organization (basic party unit)
raikom	District Committee of the CPRF
RKRP	Russian Communist Workers' Party
SMD	Single Member District (State Duma elections)
SPS	Union of Rightist Forces
VCIOM	Russian Center for Public Opinion Research

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INTRODUCTION

Political parties have played and still play an important role in the process of post-Communist transition to democracy. As Seymour Martin Lipset stated, political parties and creation of a stable party system are indispensable conditions of democracy.¹ In this respect, preservation and institutionalization of political parties are vitally important processes for the survivability of democracy in Eastern Europe per se.

Political parties are existentially important as they give legitimacy to the newly established political system. Parties, however weakly organized and personalistic in nature, provide citizens with political choices. The existence of different political parties educates the masses and facilitates raising awareness of democratic procedures and institutions among the electorate. Parties help mobilize society on policy issues, work as “agencies of mobilization and as such [help] to integrate local communities into the nation of the broader federation,”² and provide access to state power for politicians; at the same time they control individual political actors, help order the legislative life of the country and provide human resources for the state bureaucratic apparatus as well as fulfill many other social and political tasks. In sum, parties are an indispensable part of the transitional period and are an existential necessity in an established democratic regime.

¹ Seymour Martin Lipset, “Cleavages, parties and democracy,” in Party Systems and Voter Alignments Revisited, ed. Lauri Karvonen and Stein Kuhnle (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 1. See also Zvi Gitelman, “Russian Democratization in Comparative Perspective,” in Developments in Russian Politics, ed. Stephen White, Alex Pravda and Zvi Gitelman (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 289. Of course, other conditions also have to be fulfilled such as existence of civil liberties, acceptance of the rules of the game by all participants, existence of a vivid opposition, etc. See Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments: An Introduction,” in Party Systems and Voter Alignments: A Cross-National Perspectives, ed. Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan (New York: Free Press, 1967), p. 5.

² Lipset et al., “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments: An Introduction,” in Party Systems and Voter Alignments: A Cross-National Perspectives, p. 4.

Close attention was devoted to political parties in Russia. In light of revolutionary changes across the post-Soviet space, scholars tried to predict possible outcomes of the transition by looking at various dimensions of political processes. One group of political scientists preferred to examine Russia's party system and political parties at the national level.³ They analyzed the process of party formation in Russia, looking at it within the framework of national institutions (i.e. degree of party representation within state bodies, influence of parties on policy outcomes), electoral system (impact of electoral system on the number of political parties, nature of political parties) or a party's performance in national elections. Such attention to political parties at the national level is understandable as the majority of political scientists were interested in the prospects of democratic consolidation in Russia:

*The literature on political parties in Russia has tended to concentrate on the functional and social cleavage approach to political parties, not only because it has been the dominant approach of the Western literature but also principally because of concern for the consolidation of democracy in Russia.*⁴

The second group of political scientists, i.e. Richard Sakwa, Grigorii Golosov, John Ishiyama and Luke March, has devoted its attention to the analysis of party

³ Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, The Limited Reach of Russia's Party System: Under-Institutionalization in Dual Transitions (working paper on-line, Princeton University, 2000), available at <http://www.princeton.edu/~kesw/partysystem.pdf>; Internet. See also Michael McFaul, "Explaining Party Formation and Non-Formation in Russia: Actors, Institutions and Chance," in Comparative Political Studies (vol. 34, no. 10, December 2001), pp. 1159-1187, available at http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/~filippov/courses/L32_3131/Explaining%20Party%20Formation%20and%20Nonformation%20in%20Russia.pdf; Internet. Peter Lentini, Elections and Political Order in Russia (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1995). Sergei Zaslavskii, "Формирование многопартийности и реформа избирательной системы" [Party System Formation and Reform of Electoral System], in Party System Formation in Russia, ed. M. McFaul, S. Markov and A. Riabov (Moscow: Moscow Carnegie Center, issue 22, July 2003), available at <http://www.carnegie.ru/ru/pubs/books/volume/22729807ar-02sz.pdf>; Internet. Timothy J. Colton, Babes in Partyland: the Riddle of Partisanship in Post-Soviet Russia (Harvard University: paper, presented at the World Democratization Conference: Re-thinking Democracy in the New Millennium, 2000), available at <http://www.uh.edu/democracy/coltonp.pdf>; Internet. Robert G. Moser, "The Impact of Parliamentary Electoral Systems in Russia," in Contemporary Russian Politics, ed. Archie Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 195-207. Thomas Reisinger, "Political Conflict and Institutional Design: Paths of Party Developments in Russia," in Party Politics in Post-Communist Russia, ed. John Löwenhardt (London: Frank Cass, 1998), pp. 201-223.

⁴ Frederic J. Fleron, Jr., Richard Ahl and Finbarr Lane, "Where now in the study of Russian political parties?" in Party Politics in Post-Communist Russia, pp. 227-228.

organization.⁵ This group analyzed the history and ideological evolution of political parties, their organizational development and membership, electoral success and patterns of relationship with other political actors, such as the state, the bureaucracy and the electorate. However, when analyzing party organization, only a few of them looked into the Russian regions.⁶ As Grigorii Golosov states:

While political parties continued to be viewed as national political phenomena scarcely related to regional life, regional studies justly paid little attention to influences as insignificant as political parties appeared to exert. This [...] has made regional party life almost terra incognita of contemporary Russian studies.⁷

Therefore, the subject of this study has been chosen as a response to the small amount of information available on the institutionalization of Russian political parties at the regional level. The focus on Russian regions is not accidental. One might find the argument that political parties in the Russian provinces show considerable institutional weakness as compared to the Russian center.⁸ For instance, the Russian political scientists I.M. Bunin and G.M. Mikhaleva argued that the *CPRF* and *United Russia* could be considered relatively institutionalized at the national level; they are represented through fractions in the Parliament, have head offices in Moscow, various assets and claim to have large electoral support in the national legislative elections. It also can be argued that the

⁵ See Richard Sakwa, "Left or Right? The *CPRF* and the Problem of Democratic Consolidation in Russia," in *Party Politics in Post-Communist Russia*, ed. John Löwenhardt (London: Frank Cass, 1998), pp. 128-158. Grigorii Golosov, "Who Survives? Party Origins, Organizational Development, and Electoral Performance in Post-Communist Russia," in *Political Studies* (vol. 46, no. 3, 1998), pp. 511-543. John Ishiyama, "Candidate Recruitment, Party Organization and the Communist Successor Parties: the Cases of MSzP, the *CPRF*, and the *LDDP*," in *Europe-Asia Studies* (vol. 52, no. 5, 2000), pp. 875-898. Luke March, *The Communist Party in post-Soviet Russia* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002).

⁶ Among those few who focused on party organization and regional party life, one can name Vladimir Gelman and Grigorii Golosov, "Regional Party System Formation in Russia: The Deviant Case of Sverdlovsk Oblast," in *Party Politics in Post-Communist Russia*, ed. John Löwenhardt (London: Frank Cass, 1998), pp. 31-53. Cameron Ross, "Political Parties and Regional Democracy in Russia" (London: Paper for the Political Studies Association – UK 50th Annual Conference, 10-13 April 2000), available at <http://www.psa.ac.uk/cps/2000/Ross%20Cameron.pdf>; Internet. Darrell Slider, "Russia's Governors and Party Formation," in *Contemporary Russian Politics: A Reader*, ed. Archie Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 224-243.

⁷ Grigorii Golosov, *Political Parties in the Regions of Russia: Democracy Unclaimed* (London: Boulder, 2004), p. 7.

⁸ Stoner-Weiss, *The Limited Reach of Russia's Party System: Under-Institutionalization in Dual Transitions*, available at <http://www.princeton.edu/~kesw/partysystem.pdf>; Internet.

ideological shift of almost all national political parties to the center of the ideological spectrum and the tendency to stress similar issues in political debates prove that the process of institutionalization of political parties and the political party system is successfully underway.⁹ However, despite such promising tendencies in the center, the process was not followed by similar processes in the regions. As a member of the parliamentary faction *People's Deputy* in the Third State Duma, S.I. Kolesnikov, commented:

... If you consider party groups in [regional] parliaments, then except for United Russia, there are no other [national] parties: there are [groups] "For Rossel", "For business union", "Business-Elite" etc. There are no other groups. Maybe in one or two out of 89 regions there exist SPS [Union of Rightist Forces], or People's Party, or the CPRF.¹⁰

The tables Int.1.1. and Int.1.2. show that the majority of political actors who participated in regional legislative and executive elections did so with no party affiliation and that the national parties that won in the national elections (the *CPRF*, *Yabloko* and the *LDPR*) failed to gain substantial support in the regions.

Table Int. 1.1. Breakdown by party affiliations by oblast and krai, republic and autonomous regions in legislative and executive elections since 1995-1997

Territorial Delineations	Percent Deputies with All-Russian Party Affiliations	Percent Deputies with Local Party Affiliations	Percent Deputies with No Party Affiliations
Krais, Oblasts+Moscow and St.Petersburg	17.0	6.4	76.6
Autonomous Okrugs and Oblast	5.7	4.3	90.0
Republics	9.9	2.5	87.6

Source: Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, *The Limited Reach of Russia's Party System: Under-Institutionalization in Dual Transitions* [working paper on-line] (Princeton University, 2000), available at <http://www.yale.edu/ycias/events/decentralization/papers/stoner-weiss.pdf>; Internet.

⁹ Minutes of the roundtable entitled "Is there a "Party of Regions" in Russia?", organized by the Russian Institute of Regional Problems and Center of Political Technologies in Moscow on 3 June 2003. *Is there a "Party of Regions" in Russia?* (Moscow: Center of Political Technologies, 2003), pp. 10 and 22-24.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Table Int. 1.2. National Parties in Regional Legislative Elections 1993-1999

Leading Parties Years of Legislative Elections (Number of regions holding elections)	CPRF	NDR [RC in '93-4]	Yabloko	LDPR	APRF	Other	Percent Deputies with All- Russian Party Affiliation	Percent Deputies with Local Party Affiliations	Percent Deputies with NO Party Affilia- tions
Dec. 1993- Dec. 1994 (79)	6.3	N/A [1.4]	0	0	1.6	5.7	13.8	N/A	86.2
Jan. 1995-1997 (72)	7.3	0.3	0.5	0.1	1.1	2.2	11.5% (336)	5.3 % (155)	83.2 %

Source: Stoner-Weiss, <http://www.yale.edu/ycias/events/decentralization/papers/stoner-weiss.pdf>

This research will focus on two Russian political parties – the *CPRF* and *Unity/United Russia*, selected according to the following criteria:

- a) participation in 1999 and 2003 parliamentary elections;
- b) these parties represent opposite cases that are worth examining and comparing: one is the party of power and the other is an official oppositional party;
- c) both parties are considered to be more or less institutionalized in the center;
- d) both parties **claim** to have some degree of institutionalization in the regions.¹¹

The timeframe for the research is 1999-2003. However, attention will also be paid to the origin of the two parties. The study starts in 1999 – the year when *Unity* was founded.

The geographical focus of the study is limited to two Russian regions: Sverdlovskaya and Nizhegorodskaya oblasts. These regions were selected according to a combination of scholarly and practical criteria, namely

1. stable ethnic environment – the majority population of both regions are ethnic Russians with few ethnic tensions;
2. different modes of regional transition -- ‘elite settlement’ in Nizhegorodskaya oblast and ‘struggle over the rules’ in Sverdlovskaya oblast (the type of each region will be discussed in chapter two);
3. varying electoral success of the *CPRF* and *United Russia*;
4. access to comprehensive periodical information.

The principal hypothesis of this thesis is that the causes for weak institutionalization of national political parties in the regions are twofold: political parties suffer from organizational and ideological/programic weaknesses on one hand, and face

¹¹ Stoner-Weiss, <http://www.yale.edu/ycias/events/decentralization/papers/stoner-weiss.pdf>.

strong regional elites that wish to preserve their power against federal expansion on the other. Should these two factors go hand in hand, the prospects of a party's survival in a given region are questionable. Alternatively, organizationally and ideologically coherent parties are able to withstand even the pressure of regional elites.

In testing the hypothesis, the thesis will focus on two questions. Primary attention will be paid to the question "How are the *CPRF* and *United Russia* organized in the center and the regions?" An analysis of the organizational structure of the central and regional branches will be conducted as well as the mode of communication between the regional elites and regional branches and party leadership and regional branches described. As I analyze the parties, the second question will be answered – "What are the challenges to institutionalization of national political parties in the regions?" This is a principal question as we will identify whether it was internal or external problems or a combination of the two that weakened the prospects of successful party institutionalization in the regions.

In order to make the project feasible, the number of variables that will be assessed in determining the causal factors that influenced the process of party institutionalization at the regional level has been limited. A summary of major variables is given below, where IV is the independent variable, CV is the controlled variable and DV is the dependent variable.

The organization of the thesis reflects the logic described above. The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is devoted to a theoretical framework for examining the level of party institutionalization in Russia from a comparative regional perspective. It focuses on theories developed by Duverger, Huntington, Janda and Panebianco. Based upon this theoretical framework, a table of criteria with which to judge the level of institutionalization of political parties will be designed.

The second chapter pays attention to controlled variables and describes the general framework at the federal and regional level within which the Russian political parties developed. This chapter discusses the institutional and legislative environment at the federal and regional levels.

The third chapter provides an overview of the political situation in Nizhegorodskaya and Sverdlovskaya oblasts and analyzes the mode of communication between the regional elites and the federal power as well as the regional elites and the regional branches of the *CPRF* and *United Russia*.

The fourth and fifth chapters are dedicated to the analysis of the *CPRF* and *United Russia*'s organization. They are divided into three sections – party origin, party organization and party ideological and financial issues. The chapters conclude with a summary of the strengths and weaknesses found in the level of the parties' organization.

The conclusion summarizes the results of the research, describes the major challenges which are faced by the political parties in the regions, and concludes with a brief speculation on the possible evolution of the two parties in the foreseeable future.

I

THEORY: INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES

1.1. Defining a Political Party

The concept of a political party is multifaceted and can be defined in a number of ways. Often the definition depends on the angle from which the party is analyzed: according to a party's societal purpose, its goals or its structure.¹ To start with, a party is a social organization. In that sense, a party serves as a bridge between society and the government/state and represents the masses. It tries to mobilize people on behalf of a common set of ideologies or interests to influence the direction of government politics. According to Neumann,

*a political party is the articulate organization of society's active political agents, those who are concerned with the control of governmental power and who compete for popular support with another group or groups holding divergent views. As such, it is the great intermediary, which links social forces and ideologies to official governmental institutions and relates them to political action within the larger political community.*²

This definition, however, fails to answer one essential question: why does a political party need to mobilize the public and organize public interests? The answer depends on the party's goals and ideology. Viewed from this perspective, the political party is a rational actor, which exists in order to fulfill its ideological goals.³ In sum, an organization is considered a political party if it seeks to obtain voter support and power in decision-making. From this perspective, parties usually are driven by the goal of winning elections. Therefore, they formulate policies that they hope will win elections.

¹ An explicit analysis of different party definitions is given in Moshe Maor, Political Parties and Party Systems: Comparative Approaches and the British Experience (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 3-16.

² Sigmund Neumann, "Toward a Comparative Study of Political Parties," in Comparative Politics: A Reader, ed. H. Eckstein and D.E. Apter (New York: The Free Press, 1963), p. 352. Also in Maor, Political Parties and Party Systems: Comparative Approaches and the British Experience, p. 5.

³ Anthony Downs, An Economic Theory of Democracy (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), p. 28.

The third group of scholars defines a party in institutional terms. What are the distinctive features of a party compared to other social organizations? Following Fred Riggs, this paper will define an organization as a political party if it nominates and runs candidates for an elective office.⁴ To run political candidates, a party has to have certain procedural and behavioral discipline and organizational coherence, which would allow the process of candidate selection to go smoothly. Moreover, each party, should it ever succeed in its political campaign, must have its own way of running the government, solving the inter-parliamentary debates and maintaining contacts with the party's extra-parliamentary groups.⁵ Hence, to allow the elections to go smoothly, the party is supposed to show certain "recurring patterned ways of doing things" within its internal and external environment, which is often referred to as party institutionalization.⁶

1.2. Three Approaches to Analyzing Party Institutionalization

Party institutionalization is the process of a party's evolution, or, depending on whether we examine the party institutionalization as a continuing or a static process, it is the final stage of a party's evolution – when a party becomes "the thing in itself." Starting from the date of its foundation, a party develops through elections from an organization of people united "to promote the national interest upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed" into a perfect bureaucratic machine."⁷ As Seymour Martin Lipset observed, over time certain political parties have the tendency to grow into organizations independent of their founders. They develop into permanent organizations staffed by

⁴ Fred W. Riggs, "Comparative Politics and the Study of Political Parties: A Structural Approach," in Approaches to the Study of Party Organization, ed. William J. Crotty (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1968), p. 51.

⁵ Maor, pp. 10-12.

⁶ Ibid., p. 10.

⁷ The phrase belongs to Edmund Burke. He was quoted by Seymour Martin Lipset in an "Introduction" to Moisei Ostrogorski, Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties: England, vol. I (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964), p. xix.

various activists and professional politicians for whom party maintenance becomes full-time employment.

A party system in which political parties act in a more or less predictable way is good for the quality of democratic processes in a country, because such a system provides the citizens not only with democratic choice, but also with stability. As Mainwaring noted: “Institutionalization does not completely preclude change, but limits it.”⁸ There exist three approaches to analyze party institutionalization – historical, constructivist and multidimensional. The next section introduces each of these approaches.

1.2.1. The Importance of Party Origin: A Historical Approach

The concept of party institutionalization can be analyzed as a process or a state. Political scientists who dealt with the issue of party institutionalization primarily as a continuing process stressed the importance of the initial stages of a party’s formation for its further development. One such scholar was Maurice Duverger. Duverger was convinced that historical roots determined the organizational basis of a party. Speaking of Western European parties, he argued that political parties that originated outside of state institutions displayed greater internal organization and were able to withstand the pressure of the external environment.⁹

On the topic of party structure and organization, Duverger distinguished between parties with strong and weak articulation, and between the direction of this articulation – horizontal or vertical. According to him, articulation is the way in which a party is structured. Strong articulation presupposes that each basic element of a party is assigned an exact role in the overall party machine. Alternatively, parties with weak articulation

⁸ Scott P. Mainwaring, Rethinking Party Systems in the Third Wave of Democratization: The Case of Brazil (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 25.

⁹ Maurice Duverger, Political Parties (London: Methuen, 1954), pp. 4-60, passim.

“resemble an incoherent agglomeration of associations linked by vague and variable bonds, resultant upon hidden intrigues, rivalries between cliques, struggles amongst factions and personalities.”¹⁰ An important note to remember is that articulation per se does not indicate weaker or stronger institutionalization of a party. It only shows that, if a party emerged as a party with strong articulation, a shift in the opposite direction may indicate internal party instability or even crisis. One has to be very careful when analyzing such sudden shifts in party articulation, distinguishing whether these changes were caused by internal or external factors. Whereas shifts in articulation caused by internal changes may be associated with a party’s internal instability or even crisis, changes caused by external factors could characterize a party’s quick organizational adaptability to external environment.

Speaking of the direction of party articulation, Duverger stated that “vertical links and horizontal links define ways of coordinating the basic elements of which the party is made up.”¹¹ Strongly articulated parties usually tend toward vertical links. Among parties that had only vertical links are the Communist and Fascist parties. In contrast, socialist parties had mixed links. This is important because horizontal links allowed socialist parties to remain in contact with organizations sympathetic to them such as trade unions, or women movements.¹²

The last concept to which Duverger devoted attention is the concept of party internal centralization and decentralization, which he defines as “the way in which power is distributed amongst the different levels of leadership.”¹³ As he notes, socialist parties that originated outside the European parliament displayed greater centralization as they had to survive and organize masses. In reference to the concept of decentralization, there

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 42.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 52.

¹² Ibid., pp. 49-52.

¹³ Ibid., p. 52.

exist different dimensions of it: local, ideological, social or federal.¹⁴ Local decentralization means that attention is mostly paid to local interests, that party cadres are recruited from local elites and that the center has little control over local party branches. Ideological decentralization means a certain degree of ideological freedom within the party. Social decentralization means class decentralization or interests' decentralization. The middle class, upper class, or peasantry usually have different interests and, therefore, tend to create various interest groups within a party. Finally, federal decentralization is often caused by the federal structure of the state.

Duverger's analysis contributed greatly to our understanding of what a political party is and is not. He has proven that analysis of party origin and initial patterns of party evolution are indispensable to the study of party institutionalization.

Another political scientist who assumed views similar to Duverger about the continuing process of party institutionalization was Samuel Huntington. Huntington divided the process of party institutionalization into four stages: factionalization, polarization, expansion and institutionalization.¹⁵ According to him, factionalization is the phase when political parties are weakly organized and personalist in nature. Such parties are disconnected from the masses and act in an exclusive political environment. During the second stage – polarization, parliamentary groupings are forced to seek contact with other social forces. This causes party expansion beyond the parliament. As a consequence, the former “parties-in-parliament” change their tactics and develop new ways of attracting the electorate.¹⁶ The last phase in party evolution is party institutionalization, which is considered a final stage in party's development.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁵ Huntington's concept of party institutionalization is elaborated in Maor, p. 68.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Huntington proposed to measure the level of institutionalization of a particular organization “by its adaptability, complexity, autonomy, and coherence.”¹⁷ Adaptability is the way a party reacts to external changes: the more adaptable a party is, the more institutionalized it is. Complexity is used to define the institutional and ideological structure of the party: the more complicated the organizational structure, the more institutionalized is a party. Autonomy characterizes how well established the party is at the national and regional levels: the extent to which a party is able to exist independently of its external environment and the extent to which all related social groupings are integrated into the party’s structure. In other words, an institutionalized party possesses a high level of integrity and has a patterned way of doing politics. Coherence explains the extent to which all party members and party branches work together to achieve the group’s goals.¹⁸

In sum, both political scientists, Duverger and Huntington, perceive the process of political party institutionalization as dynamic and continuous, and both call for a deeper examination of party origin and evolution.

1.2.2. Janda’s Theory of Party Institutionalization: A Constructivist Approach

Many political scientists criticized the theory of party institutionalization viewed as a continuing process that evolves from point A to point B. For instance, Janda argued that this approach does not take into account various patterns of organization building of political parties found in western democracies. For Janda, an institutionalized party is

¹⁷ Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), chapter 1, *passim*. Or in Jin Seok Bae, “Why Not Organization?: Toward a Definition of Party Institutionalization (The University of Texas at Austin, prepared for delivery at the 2003 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, 3-6 April, 2003), available at <http://mpsa.indiana.edu/conf2003papers/1032165098.pdf>: Internet.

¹⁸ Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, chapter 1, *passim*.

“one that is reified in the public mind so that “the party” exists apart from its momentary leaders, and this organization demonstrates recurring patterns of behavior valued by those who identify with it.”¹⁹ Often, he argued, parties that originated in the same political environment and evolved in a similar external environment varied greatly in the way they were organized as well as in their degree of political success. In addition, as a response to Huntington, Janda pointed out that “a party can be highly institutionalized but lack the independence of other groups (Huntington’s “autonomy”), as was the case with the Labor Party in Great Britain.”²⁰ Thus, although an analysis of historical evolution is useful in studying party institutionalization, it is insufficient for a comparative analysis of party institutionalization.

Janda developed an extended set of criteria used to measure the degree of party institutionalization. He suggests judging party institutionalization according to six criteria: year of origin, name changes, organizational discontinuity, leadership competition, legislative instability and electoral instability.²¹ Party name changes are accepted as long as a party’s ideology has not changed significantly. Certain party name changes may speak of a party’s adaptability to external environments and its wish to establish new links with the electorate, whereas high frequency of name changes or radical party name changes are considered to be associated with weaker party institutionalization.²² When talking about organizational discontinuity, Janda explains that a party usually has a leader, close party activists, and party supporters. Thus, a party is considered institutionalized if “there is a large degree of overlap between the two sets of activists at both time points – with “activists” defined as leaders plus their active

¹⁹ Kenneth Janda, Political parties: a cross-national survey (New York: Free Press, 1980), p. 19.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² By radical party name changes, I mean changes that cannot be traced to the previous party name (where there are no recognizable words from the old party name).

supporters.”²³ Another measure of institutionalization is leadership competition. As Janda suggests, an institutionalized party possesses “(1) unambiguous identification of the legitimate party leadership at the national level and (2) change of personnel in the top leadership position over time.”²⁴ This measure assumes that the lack of leadership change leads a party to become personalistic in nature. Thus, the fewer the number of leadership changes, the less adaptable and hence less institutionalized the party is as an organization. The next criterion for judging the degree of party institutionalization is stability in legislative representation. Legislative instability is understood as the strength of the party's representation for the country in which it operates during the entire period studied.²⁵ The last criterion is electoral instability. Janda rightly suggests that parties, which have a weak connection to the electorate, cannot be considered highly institutionalized, simply because they fail to represent the interests of the population against the state. Parties that fail to participate in two or more elections are more likely to be weakly institutionalized. Parties that participate in elections should be judged upon the degree of their success in each election reflected by the fluctuations in the percentages of votes received by a party over time.²⁶

Janda also introduces the concept of the complexity of the organization. According to him, organizational complexity involves two dimensions: intensiveness and extensiveness. Intensiveness refers to the smallest unit in the party structure, while extensiveness denotes the geographical coverage of the party organization.²⁷ Janda proposes that the party type is easily recognizable when looking at the smallest unit of party organization. A similar thought was expressed by Duverger:

²³ Ibid., p. 20.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 24.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 26.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 101.

*The choice of the cell as the basis of organization entails a profound change in the very concept of the political party. Instead of a body intended for the winning of votes... the political party becomes an instrument of agitation.*²⁸

To summarize the argument, the more complex the vertical organizational structure of a party is, the more institutionalized it is. The extensiveness of party organization involves the geographic coverage of the party – the more regions that have established party offices, the higher is the degree of party institutionalization.²⁹

Duverger, Huntington and Janda have greatly contributed to the evolution of the concept of party institutionalization. Their approaches were synthesized by Angelo Panebianco, who developed a complex theory of party institutionalization.

1.2.3. Angelo Panebianco: Toward a Multidimensional Concept of Party Institutionalization

The theory of institutionalization of political parties by Angelo Panebianco is one of the most comprehensive theories developed on this subject so far. Institutionalization is described by Panebianco as ‘solidification’: the relative stabilization of the party organization.³⁰ He treats the process of party institutionalization as both a continuum as well as a static phenomenon, while simultaneously looking at a party’s inner and outer environments. Like Duverger, Panebianco believes in the great importance of initial stages of party formation for its further evolution. As Panebianco notes, during the initial stages of party formation, party organization is characterized by personalistic relations centered on a party leader. The leader is necessary to formulate the ideological basis and build the fundament of the future party. In sum, during its formative phase a party is not yet an organization per se, but merely a “rational model” of a possible future party, which

²⁸ Duverger, p. 35.

²⁹ Janda, p. 101.

³⁰ Angelo Panebianco, Political parties: organization and power (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 49.

could develop out of the model.³¹ Panebianco describes the transformation of such a model into an institution as follows:

*The organization slowly loses its character as a tool: it becomes valuable in and of itself, and its goals become inseparable and indistinguishable from it. In this way, its preservation and survival become a "goal" for a great number of its supporters.*³²

During the initial transformation period, three factors are important: 1) the model of development – through penetration, diffusion or mixed form; 2) the existence of an external supporter; 3) and the existence of an initially charismatic leader.³³

As Panebianco notes, there are two ways in which a party is formed: through the process of diffusion or the process of penetration. The former can be described as a bottom-up process, where various local groups integrate into a national political party. The process of penetration is a downward process with the center expanding deliberately to the regions.³⁴ Based on these considerations, Panebianco suggests that parties formed through the process of penetration are more centralized, cohesive and have a clearly identifiable party elite; whereas parties formed based on local organizations usually undergo a difficult process of leadership formation and organizational centralization. An example of the parties formed through the process of penetration would be conservative or communist parties, whereas socialist and confessional parties developed based on the process of diffusion.

The existence of an external sponsor partially corresponds to Duverger's direct and indirect parties. If party formation is monitored and/or financed by external organizations such as trade unions, then a party is likely to be considered as an appendix to it.³⁵ Moreover, in parties formed with the help of other organizations, its members tend to express "indirect loyalties" – first they are loyal to the external organization and only

³¹ Ibid., pp. 53 and 53-59.

³² Ibid., p. 53.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 50.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 51.

secondarily to the party itself, which is likely to undermine party legitimacy and cohesion.³⁶

The last factor that Panebianco discusses in relation to the process of party formation is the issue of charisma. He believes that the role of a charismatic leader is very important for a political party. Many parties relied on charismatic leaders during the initial stages of their evolution. It is understandable, since such leaders could facilitate quicker recognition of the party on the political scene. However, the association of a party with one particular leader for too long could mean possible “death” of this party if the leader decides to leave it. In sum, for a party to make its way to institutionalization, there should always be a moment of possible break-off of the party from its initial founders. It is in this context that Panebianco warns us to distinguish between “pure charisma” and “situational charisma”. The term “situational charisma” “refer[s] to instances where a leader-personality of non-messianic tendency evokes a charismatic response simply because he offers, in a time of acute distress, leadership that is perceived as a source and means of salvation from distress.”³⁷ “Pure charisma” can be found in cases of small-marginalized parties that fail to transform themselves into fully institutionalized parties where the authority is accentuated in a party and not in a particular person.

Ideology is indispensable in the existence of any party. An institutionalized party rests upon ideology and structure. Here ideology, or in other words a set of identified goals and ideas, serves as the major component that keeps party members together and hence maintains the functioning of the party. It facilitates the formation of a so-called “collective identity”³⁸, common organizational interests and organizational loyalty.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 52.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 54.

Resting upon ideology, these factors facilitate the survival and institutionalization of the party. Ideology, however, would be useless, if it were not supported by the rational incentive system meant to attract people to the party and keep them there.³⁹ The incentive system is designed to provide benefits and career opportunities for people with different interests and goals. The incentive system may include selective and collective incentives. Selective incentives are aimed at persons looking for party career possibilities or prestigious positions. These incentives, however, help to solve the problems only in the initial stages of party institutionalization, as the longer a party exists, the more future loyal party elites will be “raised”.⁴⁰ Collective incentives are aimed at activists and party supporters and meant to give them the feeling of social belonging. These incentives are based upon ideological unity and supported by a party’s communication network, i.e. through party periodicals, conferences, and regular meetings. To summarize, Panebianco agrees with Janda when he argues that the more the party institutionalizes, the more organized and stable its membership becomes.

In his analysis, Panebianco draws upon Weber’s studies of organizations and concludes that a political party, to be able to function smoothly, requires a hierarchical structure – a leader and his followers who are “interconnected in a relation of unequal exchange”.⁴¹ Here he notes that the level of dedication and activism tends to decrease as one goes down to local branches.⁴² To stimulate people’s participation in small local branches a party may try to develop, along with collective and selective incentives, additional incentives such as recreational activities.⁴³ In other words, how a party recruits its cadres and maintains an active support base tells us a lot about the level of party institutionalization. As Panebianco writes:

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 30-32 and 53-54.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 54.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 30-32.

⁴² Ibid., p. 28.

⁴³ Ibid.

*The combination of loyalty and of interests sustained by organizational incentives is the reason why the leaders are able to obtain, through exchanges and vertical power plays, the participation, which is indispensable to the smooth functioning of the organization.*⁴⁴

As is the case with party cadres, a party has to maintain a smooth functioning of its structure. This refers particularly to problematic zones in party structure, known as “zones of uncertainty”.⁴⁵ Some such zones are party communication, control of formal rules, and financing issues. The last zone seems to be the most important in determining the degree of party institutionalization. Theoretically, a party can receive financing either from one source or from many different uncoordinated sources. Neither of these two options is beneficial for a party: in the first case, the party would evidently be completely dependent on an external actor, which will not facilitate its autonomy vis-à-vis its environment, and in the end undermine party legitimacy. The other extreme would make a party’s position very insecure, as there would not exist a fixed schedule of regular funding. The solution is to ensure balanced funding coming from different reliable sources. Hence, for a party to be autonomous vis-à-vis its environment, a balanced structure of financing is required.⁴⁶

A party requires an organizational stability, which is, according to Panebianco “the conservation of the party’s internal authority channels, i.e. its configuration of legitimate power”.⁴⁷ Panebianco discusses the hypothesis that “party leaders always attempt to increase their organization’s power”.⁴⁸ He criticizes the hypothesis for failing to acknowledge that the expansionist agenda may, [or may not, depending on the type of the party], contribute to the weakening of party cohesion and eventually lead to party internal collapse. Panebianco seems to postulate that although organizational stability matters, there is no clear-cut solution to preserving it. Stability depends on external

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 30.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 33.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 35.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 42.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 43.

circumstances. For some parties, expansion, (in other words “increasing environmental domination”), is the best way to ensure party stability and consolidation. In contrast, other parties avoid expansion, being afraid that increased party membership and domination would undermine the party’s organizational stability and coherence.

Panebianco notes that it is important to realize that the process of party institutionalization is better understood along a continuum. There are hardly any cases where a party reaches an ideal level of institutionalization. Even more, there is hardly an ideal, final stage in the process of institutionalization. In fact, the level and direction of party institutionalization can vary depending on external or internal factors. Sometimes, in cases of internal crisis or unstable external circumstances a high level of institutionalization may even endanger a party’s survival. For example, if a party is highly centralized and a crisis erupts in one of its sub-units, the whole party will be affected, whereas in parties with highly decentralized structure, the damage can be localized.⁴⁹

That is why Panebianco proposes measuring the degree of party institutionalization along two scales: 1) the degree of a party’s autonomy vis-à-vis its environment, and 2) the degree of systemness, that is the degree of interdependence among its internal actors.⁵⁰ The degree of party autonomy refers to the party’s relations with its external environment, in particular in financial issues. When talking about party’s inter-systemness, the author refers to the party’s intra-organizational coherence. Ideological or financial independence of internal actors from the center is considered common for parties with weak institutionalization. In contrast, should party sub-units rely on the central office in such matters as financial and logistical support or recruitment of party members, party cohesion is considered high. Panebianco notes that in parties with a

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 57.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 55.

low level of internal cohesion, party sub-units tend to differ from each other, whereas parties with higher level of internal cohesion tend toward greater homogeneity among its units.⁵¹ It is important to note that the degree of autonomy and systemness are interrelated. The greater is party centralization, the more independent from its external environment it is. Consequently, the less centralized a party is, the lower is the level of its autonomy vis-à-vis its environment, and the more party sub-units are dependent on local elites.⁵²

To summarize, Panebianco develops six criteria to judge the degree of party institutionalization:

- 1) the degree of development of the central extra-parliamentary organization: the level of bureaucratic centralization;
- 2) the degree of homogeneity of organizational structures at the same hierarchical level: in higher levels of party institutionalization, regional sub-units usually resemble the organizational structure of the central branch, and to follow on this idea, the less institutionalized a party is, the more organized are its internal sub-groups;
- 3) how the organization is financed: the more institutionalized party has more secure and diverse financing sources;
- 4) the level of autonomy in relation with external organizations: according to Panebianco, “a highly institutionalized party dominates its external organizations”;
- 5) the degree of correspondence between a party’s statutory norms and its “actual power structure”: in other words, the legitimacy of all leading actors in a party;⁵³
- 6) the mode of elite recruitment. Panebianco distinguishes between a centripetal and centrifugal elite recruitment. Centripetal elite recruitment is present when a career-oriented member has to comply with the center directives and has to be supported by all central/national elite to rise vertically to a higher position in the party. Centrifugal elite recruitment is present, when a career-oriented member has to identify itself with one of the party’s various factions and hence can be promoted by only a small part of the party apparatus. The more vertical the process of elite recruitment, the more centralized and institutionalized a party is, and consequently, the more decentralized a party is, the greater is the discontinuity in career paths as well as the chances for rapid opportunistic careers.⁵⁴ Horizontal integration of elites is characteristic for parties with weak centralization.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 57.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 58-59.

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 60-61.

Panebianco's theory combined the principal criteria, developed by Duverger, Huntington and Janda, while simultaneously adding some new elements to the concept. The majority of these criteria will be used to analyze the institutionalization of the *CPRF* and *United Russia*.

1.3. Concluding Remarks: Summary of the Main Criteria for Party Institutionalization

The analysis of party institutionalization is divided into three fields: party origin, internal environment and external environment. The section on party origin will discuss party initial evolution. The internal environment is subdivided into three subcategories: party organization, ideological coherence, and party finances – the three main pillars of party institutionalization. When analyzing the external environment, attention will be paid to the mode of party communication with federal and regional elites. To summarize the principal points of the approaches described so far, a complex set of criteria is presented below.

Table 1.1. Summary of the Main Criteria for Party Institutionalization

Dimension of Party Institutionalization	Characteristics	
1. Party Origin	General: a) Year of origin b) Way of original set-up (penetration, diffusion, mixed) c) Existence in the history of the party of splits, mergers, changes in name or image d) Role of external organizations and/or individual personalities during the formative years of the party	
2. Internal Environment	2.1. Party Organization	a) Type of the party (autocratic vs. democratic, existence of factions within the party) b) Party architecture <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Degree of party homogeneity: institutional design in the center and in the regions (party statute and its applicability in practice) ii. Geographical scope of a party: number of branches across the country iii. Functionality of regional branches: existence of an office with appropriate equipment, number of active members, conduction of meetings on a regular basis

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Party leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Presence of clearly identifiable party leader ii. Mode of election of party leader (according to party statute) iii. Mode of elections of heads of regional branches iv. Degree of congruence in the mode of leader elections at the national and regional branches d) Mode of recruitment of party members in the center and in the regions: centripetal vs. centrifugal methods; recruitment incentives: selective vs. collective
	2.2. Ideological/ Programic Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Existence of clearly defined party ideology b) Existence of clearly defined party goals (party program) c) Correspondence of regional regulations/activities with party program and ideology d) Support of party ideology and goals by the members of the regional branches, i.e. priority of national interests over local interests, support of party's officially elected candidates in local as well as national elections, level of candidates running as "independents" although being members of a particular party e) Existence of ideological literature and its territorial coverage
	2.3. Party Financing and Spending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Existence of written regulations of party finances (according to party statute) b) Known sources of party's finances c) Party's overall wealth (judged upon number of functioning offices across the country, amount of assets across the country, spending on public meetings, briefings, political campaigns, party periodic, advertisement, etc.) d) Distribution of party finances: spending in the regions as compared to spending in the center, i.e. on regional political campaigns, meetings and periodic covering regional news
3. External Environment	3.1. Mode of communication within a political community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Party and the state: federal environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. party in power vs. oppositional party ii. influence on the legislative and executive decision-making processes iii. presence of party members in the parliament and the government iv. adaptability to state-enforced changes, i.e. "Law on Political Parties" and federal reform b) Party and regional elites: governor's party affiliation as an indicator of possible integration of the party in the region c) Party and other political organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. party's self- and external identification along an ideological continuum ii. experience in coalition building at the national and regional levels

II

OVERVIEW OF RUSSIA'S EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT AT THE FEDERAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS

2.1. Russian Federalism and its Impact on Regional Environment

The formation of the Russian party system as well as the process of party institutionalization was affected by the nature of the federalism during the initial stages of transition.¹ In the beginning of transformation, the Russian federal system was described as officially equal, but practically asymmetrical. Specifically, although all federal subjects were proclaimed equal before the law (Art. 5, the Russian Constitution), in practice there existed a historical and rather symbolic division between republics and other legal entities. The division was rooted in the fact that each of the twenty-one ethnically based republics had the right to elect its own President and pass its own Constitution already in 1991-1992, whereas the heads of administration of territories, provinces, and autonomous districts were appointed by the federal executive up until 1995. The republics were also the first federal entities to sign bilateral agreements with the federal center that granted these republics specific rights.² Regions elected their governors for the first time in 1995, (although the first series of gubernatorial elections

¹ According to the Russian Constitution of 1993, Article 65, the Russian Federation consists of eighty-nine federal units, among which are twenty-one republics, six territories, forty-nine provinces, two federal cities, one autonomous province, and ten autonomous districts. For the full list of federal subjects, please consult the Constitution of the Russian Federation. You may also review the recent changes in the names of the republics at the website Garant, available at

[http://www.constitution.garant.ru/DOC_10003000_sub para N 3000.htm](http://www.constitution.garant.ru/DOC_10003000_sub_para_N_3000.htm); Internet.

² The first gubernatorial elections were conducted in 1993, when eight governors were elected (in Krasnoyarskii krai and Amurskaya, Brianskaya, Lipetskaya, Orlovskaya, Penzenskaya, Cheliabinskaya, and Smolenskaya oblasts). This first try was recognized as unsuccessful, as in the majority of the regions, Yeltsin's protégés failed. In one of the regions – Chelyabinsk, Yeltsin even refused to recognize the outcome of the elections and appointed his own candidate. See Darrell Slider, "Politics in the Regions," in Developments in Russian Politics 5, ed. Stephen White, Alex Pravda, Zvi Gitelman (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 151. The full list of gubernatorial elections in Russia, starting from 1991, is available at Politika (Electronic Periodical), the official Internet address <http://www.cityline.ru/politika/>. This information was taken from its section "Gubernatorial elections 1993," available at <http://www.cityline.ru/politika/vybory/rre93t.html>; Internet.

had already taken place in 1993).³ After 1995, the legal difference between republic and other federal entities completely disappeared. The symbolic difference was, however, preserved.

The process of federal transformation was accompanied by the collapse of federal institutions and the inability of Yeltsin to control powerful regional elites. In many cases, these elites have remained in their positions since Soviet times. Vladimir Gelman and Inessa Tarusina noted that one peculiarity of Russia's transition was the remarkably low level of elite change.⁴ As Lilia Shevtsova wrote:

*Russia's revolutionary transition to the liberal-democratic rules of the game in the early 1990s was dubious. The anticommunist opposition in Russia was too weak and the nomenklatura too strong to achieve reforms on the basis of consensus. The irony and drama in Russia's postcommunist transformation were related to the fact that its engine and its base were still the old Soviet-born establishment. Continuity in the new Russia explained the nature of change.*⁵

Witnessing the weakness of the federal center, the regional elites often engaged in an endless bargaining process with the center over such issues as who had greater control over economic and political decisions affecting particular regions, and how much tax the region should contribute to the federal budget. Moreover, regional elites demanded greater freedom in the decision-making process at the regional level and viewed federal authorities with suspicion.⁶ Yeltsin tried to preserve the unity of the country and regulated center-periphery relations with the help of bilateral agreements. Such a practice led to an obvious neglect of the institutional mechanisms of control and promoted informal relationships between the center and the regions.

In sum, Russian federalism facilitated the rise of highly independent regional elites and was considered an institutional limit to the development of independent federal

³ Slider, "Politics in the Regions," in Developments in Russian Politics 5, p. 151.

⁴ Grigorii Golosov, Political Parties in the Regions of Russia: Democracy Unclaimed (London: Boulder, 2004), p. 2.

⁵ Lilia Shevtsova, Putin's Russia (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003), pp. 61-62.

⁶ Gail W. Lapidus, "Asymmetrical Federalism and State Breakdown," in Post-Soviet Affairs (vol. 15, no. 1, January-March 1999), p. 78.

political parties in the Russian regions. The old elites tried to legitimize their positions in the new offices through elections, and as they slowly accumulated a great deal of economic and political influence, many became afraid of any progress in the process of democratic consolidation and transparency of political processes.⁷ As Steven Solnick writes:

*the coincidence of political transition with property re-distribution, as a distinctive feature of the Russian transition, created strong incentives for elites to secure their own share of the transitional spoils. Once they did this, the process of 'democratic' institution-building was subordinated to their desire to protect the power already accumulated.*⁸

Although the regional elites hindered the process of party system formation in the Russian regions, there were still some chances for political parties to develop in the regional environment. It depended on the inter-regional political layout and the changes in the balance of power between competing elite groups within the region. Vladimir Gelman described four possible scenarios of regional transition and their impact on the process of party formation in the regions – “winner takes all”, “elite settlement”, “struggle over the rules”, and “war of all against all”.⁹ The table 2.1. provides an overview of the major characteristics of each type.

⁷ Shevtsova, pp. 7-43. Steven Solnick mentions briefly the power game, which unfolded in the upper echelons of power in Russia in 1996-1999. See Steven Solnick, “Russia’s “Transition”: Is Democracy Delayed Democracy Denied?” in *Social Research* (Fall 1999), available at http://www.findarticles.com/cf_dls/m2267/3_66/58118480/p1/article.jhtml?term; Internet.

⁸ Solnick, http://www.findarticles.com/cf_dls/m2267/3_66/58118480/p1/article.jhtml?term.

⁹ Vladimir Gelman, “Regime Transition, Uncertainty, and Prospects,” in *Contemporary Russian Politics: A Reader*, ed. Archie Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 504.

**Table 2.1. Scenarios of outcomes of uncertainty and characteristics of new regimes.
The case of Russia's regions**

Scenario of outcome of uncertainty	Consequences of outcome of uncertainty	Characteristics of the new political regime	Prospects for the process of party formation	The cases of Russia's regions
War of all against all	Initial chaos, complete collapse of institutions. Later - authoritarian regime, or civil war	Use of force, criminal, arbitrary rule	Political parties have few means to develop in the context of such transition.	Primorskii Krai
Winner takes all	Three options are possible: - Authoritarian situation; - Unstable environment with constantly recurrent political conflicts; - emergence of stable political regimes only nominally resembling democratic and with the supremacy of informal institutions.	Monopoly of a dominant actor, informal institutions, often use of force to impose its will	Political parties have two options: either to unconditionally support the administrative elite, or have influential external means of supporting itself. In the second option, a harsh political competition is possible.	Saratovskaya oblast', Moscow, Kalmykia
Elite settlement	Political actors are forced to share the power, since none of them possesses enough resources to dominate the others. Hybrid regime.	Sharing of powers between dominant and subordinated actors, orientation at compromise, informal institutions.	Political parties, which are in opposition to regional elites, may achieve greater representation in legislative and executive regional political bodies. Nevertheless, to maintain this balance of power, parties have to follow the unwritten rules of unofficial loyalty to the regime.	Nizhegorodskaya, Tomskaya, Omskaya oblasts
Struggle over the rules	Democratic situation	Political actors have exhausted all aggressive strategies. Thus, they are left with the only option of pursuing their interests through institutions. Competition of actors, formal institutions, moving toward rule of law	Political parties have all means for fair competition. "Institutions become a 'weapon' for the actors," ¹⁰ whereas the position of political actors is uncertain, thus resembling most the meaning of democracy.	Udmurtia, Sverdlovskaya oblast

Source: Vladimir Gelman, "Regime Transition, Uncertainty, and Prospects," in *Contemporary Russian Politics: A Reader*, ed. Archie Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 509.

With the arrival of Vladimir Putin on the Russian political landscape, the strength of the regional elites was shaken. Putin engaged in an ambitious process of re-centralizing the country. First, on the initiative of the then Prime Minister, the federal law of October 1999 ended the era when the governors ruled their regions like their personal

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 507.

fiefdoms by limiting them to two five-year terms in office.¹¹ Further, Putin engaged in a complicated process of centralizing the country and restoring the authority of the federal center in the regions. The first attempt to centralize power was made in February-March 2000, when he toured the republics and publicly condemned the state of legal chaos in the country pointing to thousands of legal acts passed at the regional level that contradicted the federal constitution and federal laws.¹² Soon after, Putin launched his federal reform. On his initiative, the country was divided into seven districts – Central, North West, North Caucasus, Volga, Urals, Siberia and Far East. One presidential representative was appointed to each of the regions. His main responsibility was to control appointments in the local departments of federal agencies such as the prosecutor's office and the tax police as well as to monitor the political situation in the district.¹³ This innovation, combined with the closer monitoring of the regional legislature by the Constitutional Court, pointed to the existing will of the federal center to subordinate the stubborn regional elites.

Moreover, the President tried to weaken the regional elites in the Federation Council by replacing the heads of regional executive and legislative power by their full-time representatives. Since 1995, the chamber had been formed by the heads of the executive and legislative branches of each constituent unit of the federation.¹⁴ The change, initiated in 2000, aimed at strengthening the power of the federal government vis-à-vis the regions.¹⁵

¹¹ James Hughes, "From Federalization to Recentralization," in *Developments in Russian Politics 5*, ed. Stephen White, Alex Pravda, Zvi Gitelman (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 144. And Slider, "Politics in the Regions," in *Developments in Russian Politics 5*, pp. 147-168.

¹² James Hughes, p. 139.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

¹⁴ Thomas F. Remington, "Parliamentary Politics in Russia," in *Developments in Russia Politics 5*, ed. Stephen White, Alex Pravda and Zvi Gitelman (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 59.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Regional elites met the reforms with discomfort. The governors complained that the new federal substructure was meant to marginalize the regional authorities and introduce a more stringent central control of budget transfers to the regions and tax returns to the center.¹⁶ Yet only a few of them chose an open conflict with the federal center (i.e. the governor of the Primorskii krai Nazdratenko). As for the President, he perceived these measures as just the beginning of the planned centralization of the country. Further steps were undertaken in the sphere of electoral engineering.

2.2. Legislative Engineering and its Impact on Regional Environment

The Russian Federation is a semi-presidential republic. The federal Constitution of 1993 made the President Head of State, granted him the right to appoint the Prime Minister and ministers, chair government sessions, head the Security Council and “issue decrees, which are binding on the entire territory of the Russian Federation.”¹⁷ Consequently, the President became the most powerful figure in Russia.

In contrast to such a strong executive, the power of the legislative branch is limited to the legislature. According to the Constitution (Art. 93-109, chapter 5), the Russian parliament consists of two chambers: the lower chamber – the State Duma, which is composed of 450 deputies elected according to the mixed electoral system, and the Federal Assembly, representing the executive and legislative bodies of the eighty-nine regions.

The first parliamentary elections, conducted according to the mixed electoral system, occurred in 1993. The electoral law was issued by Yeltsin on 1 October 1993, right in the midst of the October confrontation between the President and the legislative

¹⁶ James Hughes, p. 140.

¹⁷ Refer to J.L. Black, “Foreword” to The Constitution of the Russian Federation (CRCR Bibliographic Guide/Documents Series, No. 6, September 1995), p. 2. The Constitution of the Russian Federation, Chapter 4 (Art. 80-93).

branch. According to this law, the 450 deputies of the State Duma are to be elected in two halves: the first 225 members are to be elected from federal party lists based on proportional representation with the 5 % threshold (PR), whereas the other 225 members had to contest the vote according to the majoritarian system in single-member districts (SMD).¹⁸ The two halves of Russia's mixed electoral system were independent of one another and not linked through a system of compensatory seats.¹⁹

The impact of such an electoral system on Russian political parties in the aftermath of the 1993 elections was twofold. First, PR fulfilled its mission and facilitated the creation of political parties. Nevertheless, since Russia's electorate was not experienced in strategic voting, votes were often cast for parties that had little chance to overcome the 5 % threshold; as a consequence, many votes were wasted. In addition, PR facilitated the rise of aggressive nationalist parties, which had little chances for victory in SMD, but could attract votes with their active federal political campaigns and populism, (i.e. the *LDPR*).²⁰ Second, the results in the SMDs showed that the plurality tie failed to reduce the number of parties to two and the number of independent candidates running at the district level to a manageable number. It was beneficial for candidates to run as independents even if they were members of a political party. Once in the State Duma, the independents united into fractions, thus significantly increasing the number of parliamentary blocs in the legislature.²¹ Overall, the system has not facilitated the stabilization of Russia's party system. Of all the parties that participated in the 1993, 1995 and 1999 elections, the *CPRF* was the only party that was equally strong on federal

¹⁸ A detailed explanation of Russia's electoral system and its consequences on Russian party system can be found in Robert G. Moser, "The Impact of Parliamentary Electoral Systems in Russia," in Contemporary Russian Politics: A Reader, ed. Archie Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 195-214. Or in Robert G. Moser, "The Electoral Effects of Presidentialism in Post-Soviet Russia," in Party Politics in Post-Communist Russia, ed. John Löwenhardt (London: Frank Cass, 1998), pp. 54-75.

¹⁹ Moser, "The Impact of Parliamentary Electoral Systems in Russia," p. 196.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

²¹ Moser, "The Electoral Effects of Presidentialism in Post-Soviet Russia," in Party Politics in Post-Communist Russia, p. 61.

lists as well as in SMDs. The table 2.2. summarizes the results of all parliamentary elections for major federal parties.

Table 2.2. Results of Elections to the Russian State Duma

	12 December 1993			17 December 1995			19 December 1999			7 December 2003		
	Votes		Seats	Votes		Seats	Votes		Seats	Votes		Seats
	List	SMD	List SMD Total%	List	SMD	List SMD Total%	List	SMD	List SMD Total%		List	SMD Total%
Valid Votes	50.6	50.6		64.4	62.9		60.5	60.3		98.44% of votes cast		
Invalid Votes	3.7	4.0		1.3	1.4		1.2	1.3		1.56% of votes cast		
Total Votes (% of electorate)	54.3	54.6		65.7	64.3		61.7	61.6		55.67% of the electorate		
CPRF	11.6	3.2	32 16 10.7	22.3	12.6	99 58 34.9	24.3	13.4	67 46 5.1	12.61	40 12 11.6	
Unity/United Russia	--	--	-- -- --	--	--	-- -- --	23.3	2.1	64 9 6.2	37.57	120 102 49.3	
LDPR	21.4	2.7	59 5 14.3	11.2	5.4	50 1 11.3	6.0	1.5	17 0 3.8	11.45	36 0 8.0	
Motherland	--	--	-- -- --	--	--	-- -- --	--	--	-- -- --	9.02	29 8 8.2	
Russia's Choice	14.5	6.3	40 30 15.6	3.9	2.6	0 9 20	--	--	-- -- --	--	-- -- --	
Women of Russia	7.6	0.5	21 2 5.1	4.6	1.0	0 3 0.7	2.0	0.5	0 0 0	--	-- -- --	
Yabloko	7.3	3.2	20 3 5.1	6.9	3.2	31 14 10.0	5.9	5.0	16 4 4.4	4.30	0 4 0.9	
Agrarian Party of Russia	7.4	5.0	21 12 7.3	3.8	5.9	0 20 4.4	--	--	-- -- --	3.64	0 2 0.4	
NDR (Our Home is Russia)	--	--	-- -- --	10.1	5.5	45 10 12.2	1.2	2.6	0 7 1.6	--	-- -- --	
Fatherland-All Russia	--	--	-- -- --	--	--	-- -- --	13.3	8.6	37 31 15.1	--	-- -- --	
Union of Rightist Forces (SPS)	--	--	-- -- --	--	--	-- -- --	8.5	3.0	24 5 6.4	3.97	0 3 0.7	
Independents	--	45.2	-- 146 32.5	--	31.2	-- 77 17.1	--	41.7	-- 114 25.3	--	-- 68 15.1	
Against All	3.9	14.8	-- -- --	2.8	9.6	-- -- --	3.3	11.6	-- -- --	--	-- -- --	
Total	100	100	225 224* 100	100	100	225 225 100	100	100	225 225 100	100	225 225 100	

* One seat left vacant in Chechnya due to political situation.

Source: the data was compiled from How Russia Votes (a joint project of the Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde and Levada Center), available at <http://www.russiavotes.org/>; Election Guide, available at http://www.ifes.org/eguide/resultsum/russia_par03.htm; and The Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation, available at www.cikrf.ru.

Turning now to the regional level, one notes that up until 2003, the majority of regional assemblies were elected according to the plurality system. If, in the ideal case, such a system should have facilitated the establishment of a strong two-party system, many Russian regions witnessed the formation of a quasi two-party system. Specifically, candidates in the regional elections faced a dilemma – to either collaborate with strong regional elites or turn to relatively weak political movements and parties, which usually

lacked the support of regional administrative elites. In the end, the majority of regional politicians preferred to be backed by regional elites/administration, rationally calculating that none of the existing parties would enhance their chances for success. Consequently, many regional assemblies were divided into small number of candidates nominated from political parties (usually the *CPRF*) and the overwhelming majority of independent runners. Since the majority of the candidates were backed by regional elites, the regional assemblies were usually controlled by the executives, which has significantly limited their legislative power in most of Russia's regions.

The political situation started changing with the arrival of Putin and the creation of the party of power *Unity*. In 2001, an innovative electoral reform was launched. On the initiative of the President, the State Duma passed the new electoral law *On Political Parties* (Federal Law of 11 July 2001 No. 95-F3).²² According to the new law, to be eligible for federal registration, the political party has to have at least 10,000 people registered as party members. The law states that parties should have branches in no less than half the subjects of the federation and no less than 100 members in each regional branch (Art. 3). The law introduced a new regulation into the Russian electoral system, according to which parties or blocs receiving more than three per cent of the list vote or of the presidential vote or, if not meeting that condition, successfully electing at least 12 SMD deputies, will be financed on an annual basis from the federal budget. The law explicitly allows the formation of blocs (Art. 36). It came into force immediately in 2001, (except for Article 33 on party financing, which was scheduled to come into effect no later than 1 January 2004, and Article 36.1., stating that political parties are the only public organizations able to nominate candidates for public office, which, under a derogation of the 2002 electoral law *On the Main Guarantees of Electoral Rights and*

²² The full version of the law *On Political Parties* (Federal Law No.95-F3 of 11 July 2001) is published by [Democracy.ru](http://democracy.ru), official website http://democracy.ru/english/library/laws/parties_fz95_eng/; Internet.

Rights to Participate in a Referendum of Citizens of the Russian Federation, comes into effect only in 2007). Overall, the Central Election Commission believed that the law would reduce the number of registered political parties by eliminating small regional parties and marginalized political movements, thus making the Russian political system more transparent and manageable.

In addition, the electoral law *On the Main Guarantees of Electoral Rights and Rights to Participate in a Referendum of Citizens of the Russian Federation* (Law No. 67-F3) was adopted on 12 June 2002. This was an updated version of Russia's basic law on elections, passed in 1993. This law is especially interesting for our research as it stated that from now on governors and presidents of republics must be elected in no fewer than two rounds and that starting in summer 2003 regional legislatures must have half their deputies elected from party lists.²³

The two federal laws aimed at changing the Russian political layout, strengthening the role of federal political parties in Russian regions, facilitating their deeper regional institutionalization and diminishing the role of regional elites. It was hoped that such innovations would stabilize the Russian party system and strengthen the process of centralization of power in Russia. In addition, recently the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation announced that it was considering passing the right to schedule elections of regional governors to regional legislative assemblies. Keeping in mind the federal law of 2002, which ordered the regional assemblies to elect half of its members from party lists, such a regulation would completely change the political layout in the regions by strengthening the role of regional legislative assemblies and the role of federal political parties in regional politics. Should the last proposal be realized, it could possibly raise the chances of escalation of conflicts between regional

²³ Alexander Veshnyakov, *Избирательное право и избирательный процесс в Российской Федерации* [Electoral Law and Electoral Procedure in the Russian Federation], (Moscow: NORMA, 2003), p. 379.

executive elites and regional legislatures, thus putting more pressure on federal political parties. Alternatively, the political elites might reluctantly agree to further limitations of their power due to unwillingness to challenge their relationship with the federal center.

2.3. Institutional and Legislative Changes: an Analysis

For the purpose of a more comprehensive analysis of the recent changes in the Russian federal and electoral system, it is necessary to look at the issue from the position of political actors affected by the laws – regional elites and federal political parties. It is likely that the recent as well as the possible upcoming reforms will create a greater interest amongst regional elites in the federal political parties. It is, however, still early to say whether this interest will be of a cooperative nature. On the one hand, since federal political parties would be able to influence the local issues and the position of the governor, the regional bosses are likely to seek closer collaboration with them. However, on the other hand, in some cases regional elites might show reluctance for deeper cooperation. This may possibly be the case in the regions with great economic potential and large enterprises. Strengthening of the federal power means greater influence of federal economic elites in Russian regions and consequently a diminishing role of regional administration in controlling the leading enterprises. Thus, reasoning from the position of the regional elites, the political laws work in favor of the federal political parties. Indeed, greater penetration of the federal political parties into the regional environment means strengthening their position across Russia.

On a separate note, the readiness of the regions for such changes is questionable. The opinions of experts vary from very negative to very optimistic. For instance, in Nizhegorodskaya oblast, some regional political scientists felt that the region was not ready for establishing a multiparty system and that its residents were not yet prepared for

voting according to party lists. The problem was that there existed virtually no viable parties, except for the *CPRF*. Since the *CPRF* is the only party that has the ability to unite people from below, there cannot be any valid party system for at least a few more years.²⁴ However, other political scientists have argued that the new system has certain benefits. Foremost, it creates a necessary legal framework for the creation of three or four political parties, which would have all-Russian legitimacy and be able to unite people, organize their ideological preferences and stabilize the political attitudes not only at the federal, but also at the regional level. As Anatolii Nekrasov, director of the Law Department at the Volgo-Vyatskaya State Academy in Nizhegorodskaya oblast stated:

*I am very positive about the law. It is the right time to start building political parties not following the top-down principle but starting in the regions. When we elected political parties at the federal level, but knew that there were few real political parties operating in Russian regions, the whole system was just a fake. The law gives an opportunity for the parties to get institutionalized in Russia's regions. If someone is afraid that the law would benefit the Communists, well there is nothing wrong with that. Parties exist to be elected.*²⁵

In sum, introduction of new electoral laws means transformation of political regimes at the regional level. Some regions accepted the new federal laws as a matter of fact, as they already had elected their regional assemblies from party lists (i.e. Sverdlovskaya oblast). Yet the majority of the regions, including Nizhegorodskaya oblast, have to undergo a significant transformation process. Although recent laws aimed at stabilizing and unifying the political processes across Russian regions, many differences remain. These differences were caused foremost by different political regimes established in the Russian regions. Thus, what we were witnessing in the recent years is the double-layered process of transformation of regional political environments. On the vertical axis, (because of the federal reform), the settled model of regional-federal relations was changing toward greater centralization. On the horizontal axis, because of the ongoing process of bringing regional electoral systems into accordance with the federal laws, a

²⁴ "Party Lists. Public Opinion," in *Ezenedelnik Monitor* (Nizhniy Novgorod, no. 016, 29.04.2002), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

²⁵ Ibid.

process of transformation of the regional political system was once again under way.

The next chapter will introduce the reader to the peculiarities of the transitional environment in Nizhegorodskaya and Sverdlovskaya oblasts and analyze the mode of communication between the regional elites and *Unity/United Russia* and the *CPRF*.

III

OVERVIEW OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN SVERDLOVSKAYA AND NIZEGORODSKAYA OBLASTS: THE REGIONAL ELITES AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE PROCESS OF PARTIES' INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Since Communist times, Sverdlovskaya and Nizegorodskaya oblasts were considered to be two of the most industrialized regions in Russia. Thanks to abundant industrial resources, Sverdlovskaya oblast had a strong financial basis and is currently one of the Russian donor regions, which barely gets any transfers from the federal budget.¹ Nizegorodskaya oblast is also highly industrialized and urbanized. The region is located in an area that is advantageous for its economic development – close to Moscow and the intersection of all major roads, which further lead to Ural and Siberia. During Yeltsin's presidency, Nizegorodskaya oblast was quite successful in attracting foreign capital and became known as the “capital of economic reforms” of Russia.

Both regions are considered liberal. The table 3.1. illustrates the electoral preferences in the two regions during the federal parliamentary elections, as compared to the federal results.

¹ Nikolai Petrov, Nikolai Titkov and A. Mukhin, “Sverdlovskaya oblast,” in Политический альманах России: Социально-политические портреты регионов [The political almanac of Russia: the socio-political portrait of the regions], ed. Michael McFaul and Nikolai Petrov (Moscow: Moscow Carnegie Center, 1998), available at <http://www.carnegie.ru/ru/pubs/books/volume/224768sverdlov.pdf>; Internet.

Table 3.1. Overview of Electoral Preferences of the Voters in Sverdlovskaya and Nizhegorodskaya Oblasts (federal party lists)

State Duma Elections (12 December 1993)				
#	Political Party or Movement	Sverdlovskaya Oblast (%)	Nizhegorodskaya Oblast (%)	Russian Federation (%)
1.	<i>Russia's Choice</i>	22,20	13.96	15,51
2.	<i>LDPR</i>	15,61	19.91	22,92
3.	<i>Movement for Democratic Reforms</i>	8,22	4.36	4,1
4.	<i>"Women of Russia"</i>	7,39	9.73	8,1
5.	<i>Yabloko</i>	7,15	12.23	7,86
6.	<i>CPRF</i>	5,10	11.58	12,40
State Duma Elections (17 December 1995)				
1.	<i>Fatherland Reform*</i>	12.07	0.19	0,49
2.	<i>LDPR</i>	9.20	12.07	11.18
3.	<i>Our Home – Russia</i>	8.32	10.47	10.13
4.	<i>CPRF</i>	8.25	18.71	22.30
5.	<i>Yabloko</i>	6.65	10.56	6.89
6.	<i>Party of Workers' Self-Management</i>	5.74	2.47	3.98
State Duma Elections (19 December 1999)				
1.	<i>CPRF</i>	11.98	24.41	24.29
2.	<i>Unity</i>	25.47	19.84	23.32
3.	<i>Fatherland-All Russia</i>	6.47	6.76	13.33
4.	<i>SPS</i>	12.58	16.50	8.52
5.	<i>LDPR</i>	7.24	6.16	5.98
6.	<i>Yabloko</i>	8.61	4.77	5.93
State Duma Elections (7 December 2003)				
1.	<i>SPS</i>	7.0	6.76	3.97
2.	<i>Yabloko</i>	6.0	2.96	4.30
3.	<i>Rodina</i>	6.5	9.97	9.02
4.	<i>LDPR</i>	13.9	10.39	11.45
5.	<i>United Russia</i>	34.1	31.96	37.57
6.	<i>CPRF</i>	7.9	14.27	12.61

* *Fatherland Reform* is a movement, created by Eduard Rossel, governor of Sverdlovskaya oblast, on the eve of the parliamentary elections.

Source: the data was compiled from the Election Commission of Nizhegorodskaya Oblast, Electoral Passport of the Region, available at <http://www.nnov.izbirkom.ru/way/929519.html>; Internet. And Elections. Statistics (site designed by an employee of the Moscow Carnegie Center), available at <http://www.electoral.newmail.ru/statistics/>; Internet.

Table 3.1. illustrates that both regions displayed high level of support for liberal political parties. Yet there also existed certain regional peculiarities in voting. Specifically, in Nizhegorodskaya oblast, the position of the *CPRF* was almost as strong as that of the liberals. In contrast, the support for the *CPRF* in Sverdlovskaya oblast was traditionally low. Further, the regions differed from each other in the level of regional autonomy demanded. Strong autonomy movements existing in Sverdlovskaya oblast were virtually

absent in Nizhegorodskaya oblast, which never perceived itself separately from Russia and the federal center.² This is not to say that Nizhegorodskaya oblast has always followed the Kremlin line in its regional policy. For instance, during the first war in Chechnya, the governor of Nizhegorodskaya oblast Boris Nemtsov openly refused to send local conscripts to fight in the Caucasus.³ Nevertheless, it was Sverdlovskaya oblast, which was first granted the right to elect its governor.

In sum, the preliminary analysis indicated that the federal parties would probably have an easier time integrating in Nizhegorodskaya than in Sverdlovskaya oblasts with its highly liberal and independent population and regional elites. Since the attitude of the regional elites toward the federal power played an important role for the prospects of successful institutionalization of the federal parties in the regions, we now turn to analysis of political situations and the strength of the regional elites in the two regions.

3.1. Transformation of Political Regime in Nizhegorodskaya oblast

Up until 1991, Nizhegorodskaya oblast was headed by the Communist Gennadii Khodyrev, who was then replaced by Boris Nemtsov. Boris Nemtsov was a young liberal who started his career in the green movement and was elected to the Supreme Soviet in 1989. After Khodyrev was removed from his post, the Communist movement in the region was led by Sklyarov, deputy of Russia's Congress and First Secretary of the Communist Party in the city of Arzamas. It was evident that he and his circle would not

² A political scientist from Nizhniy Novgorod, Sergei Borisov, argues that residents of Nizhegorodskaya oblast have never viewed their region as existing independently from Russia. For them, Nizhniy Novgorod and Russia are almost identical entities. Therefore, the majority of the residents of Nizhegorodskaya oblast has never supported small regional political movements. In Sergei Borisov, "Актуальный политический режим в Нижегородской области: становление в 90-е годы" [Current political regime in Nizhegorodskaya oblast: its formation in the 90s], in *Polis* (vol. 1, no. 9, 1999), available at <http://www.politstudies.ru/fulltext/1999/1/9.htm>; Internet.

³ Bryon J. Moraski and William M. Reisinger, Does Economic Diversity Breed Political Competition? A Look from Russia's Regions (A paper presented at the 35th National Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies in Toronto, Canada, November 20-23, 2003), p. 2.

give up their power without a fight. To avoid a political deadlock, Nemtsov chose another path and was able to reach an informal agreement with the Communists to divide the powerful positions in the regional administration between representatives of both groups.⁴ Shortly after the agreement was made, the majority of the Communists from the Sklyarov team left the Communist Party. As a result of this agreement, in 1991 the newcomers governed only in six out of forty-eight regional districts, and the rest were administered by previous heads of local governments, (by that time already non-Communists).⁵ The cooperation between the elite groups became known as the “Nemtsov-Sklyarov pact” and facilitated the establishment of a new – and in practice relatively stable – regional political regime.⁶

The first regional Duma was elected on 27 March 1994. Along with independent candidates, three major political parties and movements were active – the electoral bloc *Vesna*, *CPRF* and *LDPR*. *Vesna* was created on the eve of the elections to ensure a pro-Nemtsov majority in the regional Duma. As a consequence, 18 deputies, who simultaneously held positions either in regional or city administration and were unofficially supported by the electoral bloc *Vesna*, were elected to the legislative assembly.⁷ The first regional Duma was fully controlled by Nemtsov.⁸ It is enough to say that there was only one deputy representing a federal political party – the *CPRF*.

The first regional gubernatorial election happened in Nizhegorodskaya oblast in December 1995, during which Boris Nemtsov was re-elected with a majority of votes.

⁴ Vladimir Gelman, Sergei Ryzhenkov, Michael Brie, Vladimir Avdonin, Boris Ovchinnikov and Igor Semenov, Making and Breaking Democratic Transitions: The Comparative Politics of Russia's Regions (Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), p. 111.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., p. 110.

⁷ Nizhegorodskaya Oblast (Moscow: Carnegie Endowment Foundation, Report), available at <http://pubs.carnegie.ru/books/1998/11np/PDF/54nizhny.pdf>; Internet.

⁸ The first regional Duma consisted of the executives, who after being elected to the Duma, deleted from the regional statute the provision prohibiting deputies to hold posts simultaneously in the executive branch. Thus, the first Legislative Assembly did not exert any significant independent influence. See Gelman et al., Making and Breaking Democratic Transitions, pp. 118 and 112.

Shortly before his re-election, in April 1995, the regional Duma adopted the statute of Nizhegorodskaya oblast.⁹ According to the statute, the governor heads the regional government and appoints members of government.¹⁰ The unicameral legislative branch was composed of 45 members elected in single-member districts for the four-year term (Chapter 6. Art. 21). The regional Duma was to be a permanently standing body. The frequency of the meetings of the regional Duma was decided by the deputies themselves and not monitored by the statute. This indicated an attitude that the regional legislature was viewed as being less important than the executive branch.

In sum, in the beginning of the transition, the party system in Nizhegorodskaya oblast experienced a deep political crisis, significant even if compared to other weak regional party systems.¹¹ The Nemtsov regime, although not obviously limiting mass political participation, failed to formalize institutional relations by transforming the political groups into viable parties. Reluctance to establish a regional party of power or rely on federal political parties was more than justified from the view of the Nemtsov elite. Since Nemtsov was able to arrange everything unofficially by bargaining with his opponents, he did not need any support from established political organizations, such as political parties. This would have transferred the dominant actor's relationships within the framework of the "elite settlement" from vertical patron-client relations to a horizontal accountability of one dominant actor to other, (no longer subordinate), actors, thus undermining the "Nemtsov-Sklyarov elite settlement."¹² This is why the Nemtsov ruling group was never formalized as a political party.

⁹ The Statute of Nizhegorodskaya Oblast is available at Фонд развития парламентаризма в России [Foundation for the Development of Parliamentarism in Russia], published at <http://www.legislature.ru/ruconst/nizhniy.html>; Internet.

¹⁰ Nizhegorodskaya Oblast (Moscow: Carnegie Endowment Foundation, Report), available at <http://pubs.carnegie.ru/books/1998/11np/PDF/54nizhny.pdf>; Internet.

¹¹ Gelman et al., Making and Breaking Democratic Transitions, p. 116.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 117.

The main features of the Nemtsov regime were

- a) the dominance of the executive over the representative branch of power;
- b) the contract of mutual loyalty between the center and the head of the regional executive;
- c) indirect control of the executive over mass media;
- d) the neutralization or suppression of real potential centers of opposition in the region;
- e) patronage exercised over public associations by the regional executive in exchange for the public support of the latter.¹³

The second period started after Nemtsov left the region for Moscow in 1997. His departure made Sklyarov the only significant political actor of regional importance. In the 1997 gubernatorial elections, Sklyarov won in the second round with 52% of the vote. The new governor relied heavily on the directors of regional enterprises, and promoted them to the regional Duma of the second convocation. As a result, the second regional Duma, elected on 29 March 1998, was once again subordinate to the regional administration.

In reference to the composition of the regional Duma, 42 out of 45 elected deputies were from an unofficial gubernatorial list.¹⁴ The majority of the candidates elected to the second regional Duma ran as independents and did not announce their party affiliation. Only two deputies nominated by the *CPRF* declared their political affiliation during the campaign. Thus, the representation of the *CPRF* in the second regional Duma was marginal. Such results pointed to a permanent exclusion of the *CPRF* from the power politics in the region. However, the exclusion did not mean lack of political activities conducted by the regional branch. In fact, the Communists ran thirty candidates during the political campaign to the second regional Duma. The situation of the regional branches of the *LDPR* and *Yabloko* looked no better. None of the 18 candidates put up by

¹³ Vladimir Gelman, "Russia's Elites in Search of Consensus: What Kind of Consolidation?" in *Elites and Democratic Development in Russia*, ed. A. Steen and V. Gelman (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 29–50, available at <http://www.eu.spb.ru/socio/staff/socio4.htm>; Internet. Alternatively, Vladimir Gelman, "Сообщество элит и пределы демократизации: Нижегородская область" [Elite Community and the Limits of Democratization: Nizhegorodskaya oblast], in *Polis* (vol. 1, no. 8, 1999), available at www.politstudies.ru/fulltext/1999/1/8.htm; Internet.

¹⁴ Gelman et al., *Making and Breaking Democratic Transitions*, p. 120.

LDPR and of the six put up by *Yabloko* received sufficient votes.¹⁵

Initially, the second regional Duma did not have any factions. The first two factions were established in December 2000, two years after the Duma was elected. These factions were formed based upon the regional branches of *Unity* and *SPS*, (a liberal union of right-wing political forces). The *Unity* faction consisted of ten people and the *SPS* faction of six people.¹⁶ The sudden initiative of the deputies to create two factions was explained by the events that occurred in the region in 2000. In particular, in May 2000, the co-founder of *SPS* Sergei Kirienko was appointed as the presidential representative to the region. Soon after his arrival in the region – in June 2000, a regional branch of *SPS* was established. A little bit earlier, in May 2000, *Unity* also conducted its first constitutive regional meeting.¹⁷ Overall, the creation of the two factions was considered as nothing else but the expansion of the federal power to the regional legislature.

The arrival of the then Communist Gennadii Khodyrev as the new governor in 2001 completely changed the regional political situation. Khodyrev's victory was to a certain extent accidental.¹⁸ In 2001, the political spectrum of Nizhegorodskaya oblast was divided into two major blocs: the democratic bloc and the Communists. The Communists were active on the ground. In contrast, the democratic bloc was preoccupied with securing their place within the regional elite and thus mainly disinterested in work with the electorate. The democratic bloc was divided into two groups – the gubernatorial and the mayoral. The pro-gubernatorial regional democratic group was composed of the regional branch of *Unity* and the regional *SPS* branch. This bloc promoted the acting

¹⁵ Nizhegorodskaya Oblast (Informational Center *Panorama*, Report), available at <http://www.panorama.ru/works/fed/nizh.html>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ See comments by Dmitrii Pinsker, "Губернатор волею случая" [Governor by chance], in *Itogi* (03.08.2001), available at <http://itogi.lenta.ru/profile/2001/08/03/hodyrev/>; Internet.

governor Sklyarov, who was easily controllable by Kirienko and had not challenged the interests of the Moscow business groups in the region. To secure his victory, in May 2001, the two parties established the electoral bloc *Compass*.¹⁹

Sklyarov competed against Vadim Bulavinov, promoted by the mayoral political forces. As a result, the two irreconcilable opponents – the mayor and the governor, engaged in a constant battle against each other using dirty PR techniques and irrevocably discrediting each other in the eyes of the electorate. The popularity rating of almost all candidates rocketed down, while candidate Khodyrev, supported by the *CPRF*, remained outside this dirty PR game. In the end, Khodyrev won the elections in the second round with an overwhelming majority (59,80% against 28,25% received by Sklyarov and with 10,42% of the votes cast for the virtual candidate “against all”).²⁰

Together with this beneficial situation during the electoral campaign, Khodyrev’s victory could also be attributed to the devastating regional economic situation. Specifically, economic reforms, launched by Nemtsov, came to a standstill during the Sklyarov regime. Corruption and clientelism became widespread in the upper echelons of regional power, which seriously undermined the popularity rating of Sklyarov.²¹ People looked for alternative candidates to replace him. The graph below displays the shift in public attitude toward the political elites at the regional level.

¹⁹ Nizgorodskaya oblast (Informational Center *Panorama*, Report), available at <http://www.panorama.ru/works/fed/nizh.html>; Internet.

²⁰ Election Commission of Nizgorodskaya oblast, *Electoral Passport of Nizgorodskaya oblast*, available at <http://www.nnov.izbirkom.ru/way/929519.html>; Internet.

²¹ Irina Tikhonova, “Политический дефолт нижегородской демократии” [Political Default of Nizgorodskaya Democracy], (Nizhniy Novgorod: Institute of Social Political Psychology), available at <http://www.ispp.ru/articles/pdefault.shtml>; Internet.

Figure 3.1. Dynamics in the level of trust expressed by the residents of Nizhegorodskaya oblast toward major political parties in 2001

Source: Alexander Kudinov, “Кумачовый стяг столицы Приволжья (размышления о судьбах нижегородской демократии)” [The calico banner of the Volga capital (thoughts about the destiny of Nizhegorodskaya democracy)], (Nizhniy Novgorod: Institute of Social Political Psychology), available at <http://www.ispp.ru/articles/stag1.shtml>; Internet.

However, joy over the victory on the part of the Communists was short-lived, because shortly after the election, Khodyrev announced the suspension of his membership in the *CPRF*. A year later, he left the party protesting against the expulsion of Seleznev, then speaker of the State Duma, from the party. It seems that Khodyrev’s decision was more pragmatic than appeared from first sight. Specifically, the federal reform of 2000 and electoral reforms of 2001-2002 had significantly reduced the power of regional bosses and forced many governors to change their position of open confrontation with the federal center toward extensive compliance with the federal policy line.²² The compliance manifested itself in open support of the party of power *Unity* and later *United Russia* by many regional governors. In this respect, Khodyrev did not fall out of the general trend. In 2001, the region was in a state of complete bankruptcy – out of 16

²² Peter Reddaway, “Will Putin be able to consolidate power?” in *Post-Soviet Affairs* (vol. 17, no.1, January-March 2001), pp. 32-33.

billion of annual budget, nine billion had to be paid to the creditors.²³ Only by having the support of the President could Khodyrev hope to get the region out of this financial crisis:

*The majority of the residents of the region support the political reforms pursued by the President of the Russian Federation. If we want to reach some results in our region, we have to work closely with the President, the government and the party of power.*²⁴

Soon after gubernatorial elections, on 31 March 2002, the third regional Duma was elected. It had two large political factions – *United Russia* and *SPS*. The *CPRF* did not have any representation in this regional Duma. As previously, the majority of the deputies contested the elections as independent candidates and revealed their real political affiliation once in the regional Duma by forming two political factions. The table below summarizes the proclaimed and real party affiliation of the regional deputies in the second and third regional Duma convocations.

Table 3.2. Actual and Declared Party Affiliation by the Deputies of the Nizhegorodskaya Regional Legislative Assembly

Region	Second Convocation (29 March 1998)		Third Convocation (31 March 2002)			
	Party affiliation declared on the moment of electoral campaign	%	Party affiliation declared on the moment of electoral campaign	%	Actual party affiliation of the deputies in the third Duma	Actual party affiliation of the deputies of the third regional Duma (%)
Nizhegorodskaya Oblast	2 out of 45 (<i>CPRF</i> affiliation)	4,4 %	3 out of 45 (2 deputies from People's Party, one candidate from the Agrarian Party)	6,7%	27 out of 45 (<i>United Russia</i> - 13, <i>SPS</i> - 9, Agrarian Party - 1, <i>Yabloko</i> - 1, People's Party - 1) ²⁵	60%

Source: Table "Партийный состав законодательных собраний субъектов РФ, избранных до 2003 года по мажоритарной системе" [Party Representatives in Regional Assemblies elected before 2003 according to the majoritarian system], in *Democracy.ru*, available at http://democracy.ru/library/practice/candidates/parties_in_regions_2003/table_1.rtf; Internet.

²³ Elena Maslova, "Нижегородские сюрпризы партийных списков" [Surprises on party lists in Nizhegorodskaya oblast], in *Nizhegorodskie Novosti* (no. 175, 24.09.2003, code PLR/y2003_2/AB94906F-E735-4070-8293-5EDDE23F62C1), available at www.public.ru; Internet. See also Alexander Volgin, "Губернатор недоволен партстроительством" [Governor is dissatisfied with the process of party formation], in *Gorod i Gorozane* (Nizhniy Novgorod, no. 053, 20.11.2002), available at www.public.ru; Internet. Viktor Khamraev, Ilya Bulavinov, "История партии" [Party History], in *Kommersant-VLAST* (no. 4, 2-8 February 2004), p. 19. Orkhan Dzamal, "Нечаянный Ходырев" [Unexpected Khodyrev], in *Novaya Gazeta* [newspaper online] (22.07.2002), available at <http://2002.novayagazeta.ru/nomer/2002/52n/n52n-s23.shtml>; Internet.

²⁴ Elena Maslova, "Нижегородские сюрпризы партийных списков" [Surprises on party lists in Nizhegorodskaya oblast], www.public.ru.

²⁵ The full list of the deputies is available from the Election Commission of Nizhegorodskaya oblast, *Electoral Passport of Nizhegorodskaya oblast* at <http://www.nnov.izbirkom.ru/way/929519.html>; Internet.

The third regional Duma was quite productive – it met regularly and passed 300 resolutions, 60 laws with regional status, 65 laws of social orientation, and introduced seven social programs.²⁶ However, in its relations with the regional executive branch, the regional Duma launched a politics of opposition to the regional administration. Being dominated by the factions of *SPS* and *United Russia*, the Duma resisted any influence exercised by the governor and former Communist Gennadii Khodyrev. In fact, the regional Duma tried to evolve into an organ of opposition to the regional administration. This tendency was described by Evgenii Lulin, (chair of the regional Duma and leader of the regional branch of *United Russia*), as follows:

*Our relations [with the regional executive branch] sometimes flare up; there exist some disagreements, or to put it differently, debates. But this is a normal situation, keeping in mind that the Legislative Assembly is trying to exercise functions, which are spelled out in the regional statute, namely legislature and control over the activities of the regional executive branch.*²⁷

The confrontation between the regional executive and legislative branch was inevitable because the new governor Khodyrev, while supporting Putin, refused to be controlled by Kirienko. Khodyrev tried to negotiate the issues with the federal center over the head of the presidential representative, which very much annoyed Kirienko. Logically, since Kirienko indirectly controlled the regional Duma through the factions of *SPS* and *United Russia*, the conflict between the regional Duma and the governor was unavoidable.

In sum, in 2001-2003, the regional elite was divided into three layers: the Khodyrev team tried to undermine the authority of the presidential representative Sergei Kirienko and his federal team, centered around the regional *SPS* branch, as well as to oppose the legislative initiatives of the regional Duma, chaired by the first secretary of

²⁶ Olga Kasyanova, “Спикер Люлин: вписался энергично и органично” [Speaker Lulin: played energetically and organically], in *Nizgorodskaya Pravda* (no. 038, 05.05.2003), available at <http://www.public.ru>; Internet. To note, the third regional Duma was elected according to the plurality system. The first elections to take place according to the new electoral system are scheduled for 2004.

²⁷ Ibid.

the regional branch of *United Russia* Evgenii Lulin.²⁸ While doing so, Khodyrev pledged loyalty to the President and visited the high-level meetings of *United Russia* in Moscow.

To summarize, during Sklyarov and Khodyrev's regimes, the regional politics in Nizhegorodskaya oblast existed in two different dimensions. On the vertical axis, the regional politics were divided into power politics, dominated by the regional elites, and politics on the ground/mass politics, led by the *CPRF*. On the horizontal axis, the various groupings within the regional elite competed against each other protecting their own interests. Overall, the regional elites in Nizhegorodskaya oblast did not protest against the expansion of the federal party of power into the regional politics. Moreover, the majority of them joined the party of power and facilitated its quicker integration into the regional politics. The problem was rooted in the lack of cohesion within the regional elite itself. As a consequence, permanent conflicts within the regional elite challenged the cohesion of the regional branch of *United Russia* from within.

As to the position of the *CPRF* in the region, the Communists were excluded from the regional power politics. The phenomenon of the *CPRF* position in the region consisted of the fact that, while being extremely active on the ground, the party lacked access to administrative resources to be able to promote its candidates. In fact, occupied with their power games, the regional elites neglected and underestimated the Communists. This allowed the *CPRF* to organize an active campaign during the 2001 gubernatorial election and lead its candidate to victory. When Khodyrev left the party and started publicly supporting the President, it turned out that the *CPRF* lost its member not to the regional opponents, but rather to the federal power.

²⁸ Rustam Bikmetov, "Нижегородская область: конец "Эры Немцова" [Nizhegorodskaya oblast: the End of the "Nemtsov Era"]", in *Democracy.ru* (13.01.2003), available at <http://www.democracy.ru/article.php?id=241>; Internet.

3.2. Transformation of Political Regime in Sverdlovskaya Oblast

If Nizhegorodskaya oblast was known in Russia as the cradle of economic reforms, then Sverdlovskaya oblast became famous because of its demands for greater autonomy and a regional institutional design that is unusual for Russia. Specifically, the regional legislative branch is composed of two chambers – the lower chamber (regional Duma) and the upper chamber (House of Representatives). The candidates to the regional Duma are elected according to the PR system using party lists in one electoral district (Art. 34, regional statute). Political parties have to overcome the 5% barrier to be eligible for the seats in the regional Duma. The deputies are elected for a four-year term, whereby every two years half of the Duma members is rotated. The Duma is chaired by the Chair, who is also elected for a four-year term and has two vice-chairmen. Deputies of the House of Representatives are elected in 21 electoral districts according to the plurality system for a four-year term, (Art. 34, regional statute).²⁹ The House of Representatives is chaired by an elected Chair who serves a four-year term on a full-time basis.

The executive branch was composed of the governor and the government. As the Article 44 of the statute of Sverdlovskaya oblast states, “the governor is the highest official in the region and the leader of the executive branch.”³⁰ The governor is elected in one SMD according to the majoritarian system for a four-year term.³¹

Because of such institutional design, Sverdlovskaya oblast had one of the most developed party systems in Russia, as well as one of the strongest regional elites. The

²⁹ Up until 2000, the deputies were elected for a two-year term. However, in April 1999 the parliament passed the law according to which the period was extended to a four-year term.

³⁰ The Statute of Sverdlovskaya oblast, available at <http://www.legislature.ru/ruconst/sverdlov.html#5>; Internet.

³¹ The Statute of Sverdlovskaya oblast at <http://www.legislature.ru/ruconst/sverdlov.html#4>; Internet. Alternatively, see B. Guseletov, “Становление партийно-политической системы на региональном уровне на примере Свердловской области” [Formation of the party system at the regional level: Sverdlovskaya oblast as a case study], in Russia. Political Demands of the 21st century (Papers presented at the Second All-Russian Congress of Political Scientists, 21-23 April 2000) (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002), pp. 318-328.

transitional period in Sverdlovskaya oblast was influenced by the head of the administration Eduard Rossel, appointed by the President. Rossel is a very independent regional politician who in 1991-1992 tried to create an Ural Republic. He was able to reach an agreement with heads of other Ural regions, (such as Chelyabinsk, Perm, Orenburg, Kurgan, and Tyumen oblasts), according to which he would become the President of the new Ural Republic. However, Rossel's efforts failed after the new Russian Constitution of 1993 was adopted. The Ural Republic was declared officially defunct and Rossel was removed from his official duties.³² Removal from official position did not stop Rossel. It forced him to seek power by other means – in this case, using legal means. He established his own political movement *Transformation of the Urals*, which over time became one of the leading regional political forces. The support of the movement facilitated Rossel's victory in the 1995 and 1999 gubernatorial elections.

Rossel's victory in the 1995 gubernatorial elections meant that the idea of regional autonomy once again gained popularity. The governor engaged in an ambitious process of restructuring the regional institutions and the relations between the center and the region. On his initiative, an agreement was signed with the federal government that distinguished between regional and federal jurisdiction for oversight and enforcement duties. Rossel was also smart enough to specify the activities of the regional organs of executive authority and federal offices located within the region.³³ With regard to regional institutions, Rossel re-named regional departments and administrations into regional ministries and regional committees. Such an action carried a symbolic meaning. Overall, Rossel's efforts were aimed at centralizing power within the region.

³² Yaroslav Startsev, "Gubernatorial Politics in Sverdlovsk Oblast," in *Post-Soviet Affairs* (vol. 15, no. 4, October-December 1999), p. 337.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 337-338.

It seemed that regional autonomy was needed to secure regional economic benefits. As it was mentioned earlier, Sverdlovskaya oblast is one of the few profitable regions in Russia. It possesses significant oil resources and is residence to many oil producing companies such as *Lukoil* and *Sibneft*. The recent battle, which the energetic governor started, was on the distribution of taxes between the region and the capital. In particular, the Russian law states that the branch offices of Muscovite enterprises pay taxes according to the official address of the home office, (which is usually Moscow), and not according to the branch offices. This causes a significant outflow of finances from Sverdlovskaya oblast to Moscow's pockets. Rossel's complaints resulted in a brusque warning from Moscow, which in the end he had to obey.³⁴

The feverish activity of Rossel in the economic sphere was accompanied by no less active work in politics. Rossel's political movement *Transformation of the Urals* was officially called a "non-party social and political union" and perceived by the press, the opposition and regional political analysts as the regional party of power. The movement was based upon the idea of a single cultural and moral unity made up of the region's inhabitants. The list of the new cultural values was quite traditional: the Orthodox faith, collective repentance for the bloody excesses of the Soviet past, the mobilization of youth for the arts and cultural events, and the creation of an authentic Ural culture.³⁵ The party's economic platform was plain and easy to comprehend for ordinary people: securing regional prosperity with the help of the well-developed military-industrial complex.

Transformation of the Urals competed on the regional scene against other regional political actors. One of them – a regional political movement *May* was formed upon a large and disorganized public protest group, which became especially active

³⁴ Ibid., p. 339.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 345.

during the 1998 financial crisis.³⁶ Social unrest and dissatisfaction with the economic situation even caused an assassination attempt aimed at Rossel in January 1998.³⁷ Noticeably, the *CPRF* was not able to gain control over this unorganized mass of the dissatisfied population, because they often demanded greater autonomy for Sverdlovskaya oblast and the Communists viewed such aspirations as separatist. In the end, such hyperactivity of the regional masses did not go unnoticed by Rossel's regional opponents who tried to organize the protest actions. During the gubernatorial elections of 1999, Alexander Burkov, a previously unknown businessperson with political aspirations, was able to organize these temporary strike committees into a political movement *May*. Supported by the movement, Burkov came into the second round of gubernatorial elections, where he lost to Rossel.

Rossel was challenged not only by *May*, but was also exposed to regular political attacks from his political challengers such as rival politicians, oppositional political parties within the regional legislative assembly, and challengers from within the business community. The most known political rival was the mayor of Yekaterinburg Arkadii Chernetskii. Chernetskii had also created his own political organization *Nash Dom – Nash Gorod (NDNG) (Our Home is Our City)*, which was set upon the regional branch of the federal party *Nash Dom – Rossiya (NDR) (Our Home is Russia)*, the national political party headed by Viktor Chernomyrdin. *NDNG* quickly gained political autonomy from the national organization representing only the interests of the mayor.³⁸ Another movement, which challenged Rossel's governorship, was the so-called movement *Gornozavodskoi Ural (Mining Factory Ural)*, which represented the interest of the mining regions.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 346-347.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 349.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 350.

In sum, although Rossel was able to win the 1995 and 1999 gubernatorial elections, he was not able to control the political processes in the region per se. Existence of other active and strong regional political actors, (with whom hardly any informal deals could be made), led to the formation of strong political oppositions of various orientations, thus creating the most democratic transitional environment across Russia's regions.³⁹ The creation of regional political movements led to the formation of a unique environment, in which regional parties of power were able to overcome the federal parties in power. Up until 1999, only the *CPRF* played a certain role in regional politics, albeit not a significant one.

The arrival of *Unity* in 1999 in the region had only slightly affected the regional political layout. Since the position of the regional elites was extremely strong and the electorate preferred regional politicians to federal ones, *Unity* had a hard time establishing itself in the region. To achieve certain electoral success, it had to unite with either *Transformation of the Urals*, or *Our Home is Our City*, two regional parties of power. The performance of all regional political parties as well as federal parties active in Sverdlovskaya oblast is summarized in the table below.

Table 3.3. Elections to the Regional Duma in Sverdlovskaya Oblast

Elections to the Regional Duma – April 1996			
#	Political Party or Movement	Votes	%
1.	<i>Transformation of the Urals</i>	368211	35.41
2.	Our Home is Our City	162135	15.59
3.	<i>CPRF</i>	161877	15.57
4.	Mining Factory Ural	128352	12.34
5.	Zyablitsev-Foundation	51740	4.98
6.	<i>Yabloko</i>	41083	3.95
7.	<i>LDPR</i>	32062	3.08
8.	Against all	94481	9.09

³⁹ Vladimir Gelman and Grigorii Golosov, "Political Parties in Sverdlovskaya Oblast," in *Polis* (1998), pp. 133-144.

Table 3.3. (continued) Elections to the Regional Duma in Sverdlovskaya Oblast

Elections to the Regional Duma – April 1998			
#	Political Party or Movement	Votes	%
1.	Our Home is Our City	242445	21.11
2.	<i>CPRF</i>	135835	11.83
3.	<i>Transformation of the Urals</i>	108160	9.42
4.	Our Home – Russia	95736	8.34
5.	Mining Factory Ural	86183	7.50
6.	Industrial Union	62982	5.48
7.	Social Help and Support	59494	5.18
8.	Educational Workers	56237	4.90
9.	<i>LDPR</i>	52737	4.59
10.	Social Party of Workers	33580	2.92
11.	Against all	53868	13.4
Elections to the Regional Duma – March 2000			
1.	<i>Ural Unity</i>	478312	22.21
2.	<i>Our Home is Our City</i>	310905	14.44
3.	MAY	265933	12.35
4.	<i>CPRF</i>	211973	9.84
5.	<i>Yabloko</i>	104243	4.84
6.	Social Help and Support	99177	4.61
7.	The new course – the rightist forces	83255	3.87
8.	Educational Workers	83132	3.86
9.	Mining Factory Ural	70760	3.29
10.	<i>SPS</i>	61688	2.87
11.	The Agrarian Party of Russia	47993	2.23
12.	Against all	219231	10.18
Elections to the Regional Duma – April 2002			
1.	<i>Coalition of the Communists and Agrarians</i>	47613	4,18%
2.	<i>Coalition Unity and "Fatherland" (regional branch of the federal party of power and mayoral movement)</i>	208970	18,36
3.	<i>Coalition "For the Ural" (Rossel's movement)</i>	334971	29,43
4.	<i>Yabloko</i>	43698	3,84
5.	<i>CPRF</i>	83307	7,32
6.	<i>SPS</i>	40,935	3,6

Source: B. Guseletov, "Становление партийно-политической системы на региональном уровне на примере Свердловской области" [Formation of the party system at the regional level: Sverdlovskaya oblast as a case study], in *Russia. Political Demands of the 21st century* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002), pp. 323-325. And A.V. Kynev, "Смешанные выборы в российских регионах: опыт 1993-2002 годов. Проблемы и перспективы" [Mixed elections in Russian regions: the experience of 1993-2002. Problems and Perspectives], in *Role of the Media in the regional elections of 2001* (from the report on the IRIS Conference 4-5 March 2002) (Moscow: 2002), the report is available at [Democracy.ru](http://www.democracy.ru/library/practice/media/media_in_regelect_2001/) at http://www.democracy.ru/library/practice/media/media_in_regelect_2001/; Internet. The chapter by Kynev is published at http://www.democracy.ru/library/practice/media/media_in_regelect_2001/page4.html; Internet.

It is evident from Table 3.3. that the region had two major centers of power – the party of the governor and the party of the mayor. The party of the governor – *Transformation of the Urals* – experienced a crisis in 1998, when it scored even less than the *CPRF*. The failure was a response to the ongoing conflict between the mayor and the governor, in which Rossel constantly attacked the mayor. In the end, the residents preferred the mayor Arkadii Chernetskii. The position of the gubernatorial bloc improved in 2000, when it collaborated with the regional branch of *Unity*, and having formed the electoral bloc *Ural Unity*, won the regional elections. Nevertheless, *Ural Unity* was a temporary creature, which fell apart shortly after the election. The separation was the initiative of Rossel who refused to publicly subordinate himself to the federal authorities.

Abandoned by the governor, the position of the federal party of power in the region remained unstable until 2002. Only after the regional movement *Our Home is Our City* announced that it would merge with the regional branch of *United Russia* in 2002, did the federal party of power reach some degree of integration into the regional environment. Specifically, it gained control over all logistical and administrative resources of the former mayoral movement. And yet even after the merger with the mayoral movement, the regional branch of *United Russia* was not able to defeat Rossel and his coalition *For the Ural* in the 2002 regional elections. The pro-gubernatorial bloc won the elections and received the majority of the seats in the regional Duma (17 deputy mandates).⁴⁰ As the newly elected deputy, Konstantin Karyakin, stated:

*This victory proved that the most popular politician in Sverdlovskaya region remains the governor Eduard Rossel. It is not about the fact that we knocked the “presidential forces” over. We have simply proven that demagoguery around the name of the President is valueless.*⁴¹

⁴⁰ Viktor Belimov, “Россель не тонет” [Rossel does not sink], in *Vremia Novostei* (Moscow, no. 067, 16.04.2002, code PLR/y2002_1/B82E3DCA-EF3F-4F6C-99D2-9F2D71F82730), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

⁴¹ Ibid.

In sum, Sverdlovskaya oblast was one of those unique regions where the success of the federal party of power depended on the willingness of Rossel to cooperate with it. Although *United Russia* had openly showed the governor its interest in allying with the regional gubernatorial elites, the rapprochement happened only when it was needed by the governor. For instance, in 2000, when Putin was imposing his will and authority on all regional leaders, Rossel was quick enough to realize that the ongoing federal and political reforms challenged his position in the region. To secure his chair, Rossel agreed to closer cooperation with the federal center, at least in words. Yet two years later, during the 2002 regional elections, Rossel and his team publicly criticized the presidential representative to the region Pavel Latyshev, member of the party of power.⁴² Later on, on the eve of the upcoming 2003 gubernatorial elections, Rossel once again became favorably disposed toward the regional branch of *United Russia*, because he knew that the federal center could easily promote other regional leaders – a step, which would significantly endanger the prospects of his re-election.⁴³ Rossel even announced himself a supporter of *United Russia* and offered the party access to administrative facilities of his regional movement. As a consequence, by 2003, both rivals – the mayor and the governor, found themselves supporting the President and the federal party of power.

In sum, by 2003, the situation in Sverdlovskaya oblast resembled the situation in Nizhegorodskaya oblast – the majority of regional groups publicly supported the federal party of power. However, due to constant ongoing conflicts within the regional elite between the governor and the mayor, the internal cohesion of the regional branch of

⁴² Guseletov, p. 325. See also Sergei Teplov, “Улыбка на лице и фига в кармане” [With a smile on the face and crossed fingers in the pocket], in *Uralskii Rabochii* (Yekaterinburg, no. 075, 23.04.2002, code PLR/y2002_1/11DE219C-A7FD-4C10-8A81-49CF32126FA8), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

⁴³ It is worth mentioning in this context that when the movement *Ural Unity* received the majority of the votes in the 2002 elections, Rossel was able to pressure the deputies for altering the regional statute so that it would allow him to be nominated to the position of the governor for the third time.

United Russia was undermined.⁴⁴ For instance, during the last mayoral elections, which took place simultaneously with the elections to the Fourth State Duma on 7 December 2003, a difficult battle unfolded between the mayor Chernetskii and Rossel's protégé Osintsev. The elections split the regional branch of *United Russia*, which refused to support party member Arkadii Chernetskii and agreed to Rossel's demands to support the person from outside – Osintsev, who by that time was not even registered as a party supporter.

In sum, in the beginning of transition the party system in Sverdlovskaya oblast was more developed than in Nizhegorodskaya oblast. It had strong regional political parties/movements, which competed against each other on equal terms, because none of them was able to fully dominate the political environment. However, such strong regional autonomy significantly complicated and slowed down the process of integration of the national political parties into the regional environment. The position of some of the regional political actors was so strong, that even after the regional branch of *United Russia* merged with the one of the largest regional movements *NDNG*, it lacked sufficient resources to dominate the regional environment. The problem was rooted in the key regional figure – the governor, who played a “cat and mouse” game with the federal party of power. In the last year, the governor became more positively disposed toward the federal party of power and agreed to head its regional party list in the 2003 parliamentary elections. This, however, did not strengthen the internal cohesion of the regional branch, which was often challenged by the ongoing conflict between the mayor and the governor. In sum, *United Russia* faced much higher resistance from the regional elites in Sverdlovskaya oblast.

⁴⁴ Dmitrii Noskov, “ВВ” РОССЕЛЬ И “ЕДИНОРОССЫ”: ЛЮБОВЬ С ИНТЕРЕСОМ” [V.V. Rossel and *United Russia*: Love Story with Interest], in *Vechernie Vedomosti* (Yekaterinburg, 19.11.2002), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

Speaking of the *CPRF* integration into the regional environment, a situation similar to the one found in Nizhegorodskaya oblast is in place. While the regional elites publicly opposed any expansion of the federal parties into the region, the *CPRF* was excluded from the regional power games, yet left to operate freely on the ground and even compete in the elections. It seemed that no one ever believed that the *CPRF* could come to power in the region. One could speculate that the prospects of the *CPRF* integration into the regional power politics would have been higher if the party adopted a more locally oriented political program supporting regional aspirations of its citizens.

3.3. Concluding Remarks

The analysis has shown that with the arrival of Putin in 1999, the regional regimes underwent a significant political transformation. The federal authority was determined to subordinate the regional elites to the federal center and establish in the regions stable regimes controllable from the federal center. The federal and electoral reforms launched by Moscow eased the process of integration of the federal party of power into the regional environment. Over time, even such strong regional elites as in Sverdlovskaya oblast had to accept the existence and participation of the federal party of power in regional politics. The ongoing process of centralization and the vigor with which it was implemented forced Eduard Rossel to re-consider his position of independence from the center and Gennadii Khodyrev to abandon his life-long membership in the *CPRF*. Thus, one could speak about a certain “solidification” of the regional environment in its relation to the federal center and the federal party of power.

However, the “solidification” of the regional elites in their relations with the federal center failed to make the regional political environment monolithic and united. The federal reforms have only succeeded in changing the mode of communication

between the regional elites and the federal center, yet were not able to eliminate interregional conflicts. Moreover, it seemed that the process of centralization and the arrival of the federal party of power in the regions escalated the conflict among regional elites, which now had to compete for the benevolence of the federal center and accommodation of the federal “envoy” – *United Russia*.

As to the position of the *CPRF*, the reforms had not had any positive impact on party performance in the regions. Although after the arrival of Putin, the external environment has changed from an openly anti-Communist rhetoric to a more pragmatic position, it did not benefit the *CPRF*. The party still had to rely primarily on its internal strength. In this context, it was to the *CPRF*’s benefit that it was able to preserve its leading position as a mass party on the ground. One can speculate that only close communication with the masses could secure party survival in the given environment.

To summarize, over time, the challenge posed by the regional elites to the deeper institutionalization of the federal parties of power in both regions has diminished and the regional political regimes became more or less alike. Such developments have significantly eased further institutionalization of *United Russia* in the regions. In light of the ongoing reforms, it is likely that further stabilization of regional politics and the domination of the federal party of power in the regions will take place. As to the prospects of the *CPRF* in such a regional environment, its institutionalization will solely depend on party internal strength and party ideological attractiveness for the masses.

The next chapters will analyze the internal environment of the two parties to single out the internal challenges faced by each party.

IV

THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE *CPRF*: A CROSS-DIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS

4.1. Party Origin

The organization of chapter IV follows the criteria designed in chapter I. For the convenience of the reader, part of this table is displayed below.

Party Origin	a) Year of origin b) Way of original set-up (penetration, diffusion, mixed) c) Existence in the history of the party of splits, mergers, changes in name or image d) Role of external organizations and/or individual personalities during the formative years of the party
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4.1.1. 1985-1991: Collapse of a Monolith

Initiated in 1986 by Gorbachev, the policies of “perestroika” (restructuring) and “glasnost” (openness) speeded up the internal disintegration of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (*CPSU*). During the March 1989 elections to the Congress of People’s Deputies of the Soviet Union, the *CPSU* experienced a deep internal crisis, which became especially evident during the June 1991 presidential elections in Russia, when the Communist Party produced four candidates – Ryzhkov, Tuleev, Makashov and Bakatin, who represented different trends within the disintegrating party and all of whom fared poorly. Yeltsin won with 57.3% of the vote.¹

Along with *Democratic Russia*, which was considered the first non-Communist opposition to the Communist regime, the *CPSU* was also challenged from within, when the liberal wing of the party formed *Democratic Platform*, with Vladimir Lysenko and Yegor Chubais being its initiators.² Overall, the *CPSU* experienced an internal split into at least eight ideological trends varying from social democrats to hardline Stalinists or

¹ 1991 Presidential Elections (NUPI, Center for Russian Studies, CRS Database), available at http://www.nupi.no/russland/elections/1991_presidential_elections_Russia.htm; Internet.

² *Democratic Platform*, being officially part of the *CPSU*, was also supported by such moderate Communist leaders as Nikolai Travkin, Boris Yeltsin, Yurii Afanasiev, and Gavriil Popov, many of whom later left the organization to set up their own independent political entities and assume governing positions. Michael McFaul and Sergei Markov, The Troubled Birth of Russian Democracy: Parties, Personalities, and Programs (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1993), pp. 8 and 9-10.

nationalists.³ In the end, the highly conservative wing within the Communist Party initiated the coup of 1991, which drastically changed the political surface of the Soviet Union, ending the history of the USSR and the *CPSU*.

4.1.2. 1991-1993: Communists Fight for the Right to Existence

On 23 August, shortly after the attempted coup of August 1991, the President of the Russian Federation Boris Yeltsin banned the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (*CP RSFSR*), established in June 1990.⁴ The ban lasted for nearly two years, during which Russia's political situation was paralyzed because of the confrontation between the President and the Congress of People's Deputies, elected in 1990. The confrontation ended in a violent conflict between the President and the Parliament in the autumn of 1993 and a call for new elections to the new Russian parliament, the State Duma; elections were held in December 1993.⁵

Despite the ban of the *CPSU* in 1991, the Communists were quick enough to re-emerge on the political scene creating all possible Communist movements, based upon the factions that existed within the former *CPSU*, namely

- The *Russian Communist Workers' Party (RKRP)*, created in November 1991, 150,000 members⁶;
- The *Communists' Union*;
- The *Socialist Workers' Party*;
- The *Working Russia movement (WR)*, led by Anpilov (the leading street agitator, organized dozens of street demonstrations in 1991-1993 demanding re-establishment of the Communist party);⁷
- The *Socialist Party of Workers (SPW)*, organized in October 1991 on the base of moderate leftist intellectuals such as the historian Roy Medvedev and deputies from the

³ Luke March, The Communist Party in post-Soviet Russia (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 27.

⁴ Grigorii Golosov, Political Parties in the Regions of Russia: Democracy Unclaimed (London: Boulder, 2004), p. 27.

⁵ Derek S. Hutcheson, Political parties in the Russian regions (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), pp. 10-19, *passim*.

⁶ Golosov, Political Parties in the Regions of Russia: Democracy Unclaimed, p. 27.

⁷ March, p. 30.

Russian parliamentary fraction "Communists of Russia",⁸ etc.

Although the ban initially split the Communist movement along regional and vertical lines, by 1992 the Communists were able to re-build the broken relations between different movements as well as establish vertical ties between the masses and the elites. It seemed that the ban saved the *CPSU* from complete disintegration. It motivated the Communists to seek closer cooperation with the purpose of defending their right for future existence as well as their ideology. Since all of them regarded the *CPSU* as their predecessor, defending the *CPSU* meant defending Communist ideology.

In the end, the Communists, led by the elites, appealed to the Constitutional Court seeking the lifting of the ban imposed on the party by Yeltsin. In late 1992, the Constitutional Court of Russia upheld Yeltsin's decision banning the *CP RSFSR*.⁹ The decision to re-legalize the party was solely the decision of the Constitutional Court chair Valerii Zorkin to focus on the period starting in March 1990, thus limiting the danger of turning the hearings into a "trial of communism".¹⁰

On 13-14 February 1993 at the Second Congress of the Communists of Russia, organized by the leading Communist parties, the *CP RSFSR* was re-established under a different name – the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (*CPRF*).¹¹ Thus, the *CPRF* became the official heir of the *CPSU* and the *CP RSFSR*. According to the *CPRF*'s platform:

*CPRF originated from RSDRP [Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party], RKP [Russian Communist Party], VKP [All-Russian Communist Party], CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union], KP RSFSR [Communist Party of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic]. Originated on the initiative of the Communists from the CP RSFSR and CPSU, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), continuing the activity initiated by the CPSU and CP RSFSR, is its legal successor on the territory of the Russian Federation.*¹²

⁸ Ibid., p. 28.

⁹ Golosov, Political Parties in the Regions of Russia: Democracy Unclaimed, p. 27. And in almanac The Communist Party of the Russian Federation, available at <http://www.panorama.ru/partie/book6001.shtml>; Internet.

¹⁰ March, p. 32.

¹¹ The Communist Party of the Russian Federation, available at <http://www.panorama.ru/partie/book6001.shtml>; Internet.

¹² Program of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (St. Petersburg: *CPRF*, 2002), p. 13.

The *CPRF* re-built its organizational structure upon local Communist organizations and left-wing movements.¹³ As Luke March states, “the *CPRF* emerged very quickly as the only party in Russia with a universal regional presence and strong local structure in eighty-eight federal units.”¹⁴

Gennadii Zyuganov played an important role in the process of unification of splintered Communist groups into a united movement. Zyuganov’s path to becoming chair of the Central Committee of the *CPRF* was rather consistent. In June 1990, at the First Inaugural Congress, when the *CP RSFSR* had been founded, Zyuganov was elected secretary of the Central Committee, member of the Communist Party Politburo and chair of the permanent commission of the Russian Communist Party Central Committee on humanitarian and ideological problems.¹⁵ After the party ban was enforced, he worked as a mediator between different Communist movements.¹⁶ Because of his active work, in February 1993 Zyuganov was elected chair of the Central Committee of the *CPRF*.¹⁷

To summarize the results of the analysis, the *CPRF* was officially created in 1993 based on several splinter groups, which emerged after the ban of the *CPSU* and the *CP RSFSR*. The groups, which facilitated the re-birth of the Communist Party, could hardly be called external sponsors, as all of them were successors of the former *CPSU* and the *CP RSFSR*. Thus, there was a certain historic continuity in the *CPRF*’s origin. The *CPRF*’s set-up could be characterized as mixed, since both the center and the regions worked on to re-establish the party. Although the party changed the name from the *CP RSFSR* to the *CPRF*, the change did not affect the meaning of the party’s name – the key word ‘Communist’ was preserved. Efforts of the Communists, and Zyuganov in

¹³ Golosov, *Political Parties in the Regions of Russia: Democracy Unclaimed*, p. 27.

¹⁴ March, p. 136.

¹⁵ Zyuganov Gennadii Andreevich: *Biography* (National News Center), available at <http://www.nns.ru/e-elects/e-persons/zyugan.html>; Internet.

¹⁶ March, p. 34.

¹⁷ Zyuganov Gennadii Andreevich: *Biography*, <http://www.nns.ru/e-elects/e-persons/zyugan.html>.

particular, to rebuild and rehabilitate the party were rewarded – the party came third in the first post-Soviet elections of 1993 and first in the 1995 parliamentary elections.

4.2. Party Organization

The next section will analyze party organization following the criteria designed in chapter I. An overview of the criteria analyzed in this section is displayed below.

Party Organization	Type of the party (autocratic vs. democratic, existence of factions within the party)	
	Party architecture	
	i.	Degree of party homogeneity: institutional design in the center and in the regions (party statute and its applicability in practice)
	ii.	Geographical scope of a party: number of branches across the country
	iii.	Functionality of regional branches: existence of an office with appropriate equipment, number of active members, conduction of meetings on a regularly basis
	Party leadership	
	i.	Presence of clearly identifiable party leader
	ii.	Mode of election of party leader (according to party statute)
	iii.	Mode of elections of heads of regional branches
	iv.	Degree of congruence in the mode of leader elections at the national and regional branches
Mode of recruitment of party members in the center and in the regions: centripetal vs. centrifugal methods; recruitment incentives: selective vs. collective		

4.2.1. Party Architecture

According to Duverger and Panebianco, how a party originated and consolidated has a great impact on the party's institutional set-up. As we noted earlier, the *CPRF* was an official successor of the *CPSU*. Thus, it is logical to assume that the structure of the *CPRF* resembled the organization of the *CPSU*, at least to a certain extent. This is why it seems worth analyzing the degree of organizational continuity in the structure of the *CPRF*, comparing it to that of the *CPSU*. The structure of the two parties will be analyzed relying on the parties' statutes.¹⁸ In the case of the *CPRF*, the statute updated at the VIII Extraordinary *CPRF* Congress on 19 January 2002 will be taken as the foundation. The structure of the *CPSU* will be analyzed according to the *CPSU* statute.

The statute of the *CPRF* states that the party rests upon the fundamental Communist principle of “democratic centralism”. The principle of “democratic

¹⁸ The statute defines the rules of the party, the relationships between different party organs, and the degree of autonomy enjoyed by the regional and local organizations. Hutcheson, p. 56.

centralism”, as described in the statute of the *CPSU*, contains five elements (Art. 13, *CPSU* statute):

- 1) the election of party bodies from the lowest to the highest;
- 2) periodic reports of lower bodies to the higher ones;
- 3) strict party discipline and the subordination of the minority to the majority;
- 4) the obligatory nature of decisions of higher bodies for lower ones;
- 5) the personal responsibility of party members to fulfill their duties and party assignments.¹⁹

The statute of the *CPRF* contains the same principles, with some additional paragraphs about freedom of criticism and attention to minority rights, when taking certain decisions (Art. 1.2, *CPRF* statute). In sum, the *CPRF*’s principle of “democratic centralism” is a mixture of old traditions and new demands. On the one hand, the old tradition, inherited from the *CPSU*, presupposed that democratic discussion was allowed only before the decision was taken, while later the party expected from its members binding obedience and unity of action in implementing the decision that had been taken.²⁰ On the other hand, trying to adjust to the changed environment, the re-established *CPRF* added some new principles to its statute, namely freedom of criticism. This principle became widely used within the party – party bosses could often hear criticism addressed personally to them. In sum, the hybrid nature of the *CPRF*’s founding principle reflected the complexity of the party’s transformation and shed light on the party’s internal dilemmas.

Speaking of the *CPRF* structure, it resembled the structure of the *CPSU*. The table 4.1. displays party architecture in a user-friendly format.

¹⁹ The Statute of the *CPSU*, available at <http://www.kpss.ru/ustav2.htm>; Internet. Alternatively, see Hutcheson, p. 57.

²⁰ March, p. 135.

Table 4.1. The Structure of the CPRF

Central Party Organs		
Party Organ	Party Organ Responsibilities	The structure of the organ and its correspondence with the structure of the CPSU (if applicable)
Congress	The Congress deals with fundamental party matters such as: 1) adoption of party program and statute as well as passing changes and amendments to them; 2) setting out the party strategy; 3) choosing candidates for Presidential office and federal level elections, members for the Central Committee for a four-year term, and members of the Auditing Commission; 4) assessing the work of the Central Committee and Auditing Commission; 5) taking decisions about re-organization or liquidation of the party (VII. Art. 7.2., CPRF statute).	1. As it was in the CPSU's structure, the highest body is the Congress, which meets at least once every four years, in contrast to every five in its predecessor (Part III. Art. 3.6., VII. Art. 7.1., CPRF statute). 2. The Congress of the CPSU fulfilled similar responsibilities. ²¹ 3. The "bottom-up" method of election of Congress delegates was similar to the method employed by the CPSU – lower bodies elected only those immediately above them.
Central Committee - a permanent standing body operating between the Congresses (Part VIII. Art. 8.1., CPRF statute), chaired by the Chair of the Central Committee (currently Gennadii Zyuganov)	The Central Committee is responsible for: 1) elaboration of documents of high socially-economic importance; 2) implementation of the decision taken at the Party Congress; 3) elaboration of proposals on issues related to party's external and internal politics; 4) designing party strategy; 5) overlooking the work of the party in the State Duma and regional legislative bodies; 6) communication with social movements; 7) election of chairperson, first deputy chairperson, vice-chairmen as well as ordinary members of the Presidium; etc. (VIII. Art. 8.3., CPRF statute).	1. The Central Committee consists of 159 members elected by secret ballot at the Party Congress. 2. The Central Committee operates until the next Congress and meets at least once every four months (Part VIII. Art. 8.4., CPRF statute).
The Presidium of the Central Committee -- substitutes the Central Committee between meetings	1) Fulfills similar to the Central Committee duties (see Part VIII. Art. 8.7., CPRF statute). 2) It is also responsible for work with the citizens, the media, for submitting annual reports about party membership and number of candidates nominated by the party to run in elections of federal status to the Ministry of Justice (Part VIII. Art. 8.7., CPRF statute).	1. Comparing the structure of CPRF to the structure of CPSU, one notices only cosmetic changes – so for example, the Politburo was re-named into Presidium. ²² 2. Similar to the CPSU, the Presidium of the CPRF consists of the Chair of the Central Committee, First Deputy Chair of the Central Committee and other members of the Presidium (VIII. Art. 8.7., CPRF statute). 3. The Chair of the Central Committee is automatically the Chair of the Presidium (Part VIII. Art. 8.9., CPRF statute).
The Secretariat	1) Maintains everyday tasks (Part VIII. Art. 8.10., CPRF statute).	1. The structure and responsibilities of the Secretariat are similar to the structure and responsibilities fulfilled by the Secretariat of the CPSU (see Art. 38-40, CPSU statute). 2. The Secretariat is responsible to the Presidium and specifically to the Chair of the Presidium (Part VIII. Art. 8.10., CPRF statute).
Central Auditing Committee	The Central Auditing Committee - controls the adherence of party members and branches to party statute, - monitors execution of party regulations by party members and party branches, - controls party financial resources and considers complaints by party members.	1. The responsibilities and structure of the Central Auditing Committee of the CPRF are similar to the ones of the CPSU (see Art. 36, CPSU statute). 2. The members of the Central Auditing Committee are elected at the Party Congress (Part VIII, Art. 8.13., CPRF statute).

²¹ The Statute of the CPSU, available at <http://www.kpss.ru/ustav3.htm>; Internet.

²² Ibid.

The Vertical Structure	
Party Organ	Structure and Responsibilities of the Party Organ
<u>The Regional Level</u>	Regional branches of the party require state registration, operate in all 89 federal subjects.
1. The Regional Conference	<p>The Regional Conference meets at least once every two years.</p> <p>The Regional Conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is responsible for all questions of regional importance; - discusses the position of the CPRF on federal issues in the State Duma; - elects members to the Regional Auditing Committee; - elects delegates to Party Congress; - nominates deputies to the local and regional elections; etc. (Part VI. Art. 6.3., CPRF statute).
2. Regional Committee – the permanent regional organ between the Regional Conferences	<p>Regional Committee meets at least once every three months.</p> <p>Members of the Regional Committee are elected at the Regional Conference every two years.</p> <p>Regional Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is responsible for propaganda of party ideology and program at the regional level; - facilitates stable communication between the Regional Committee and the District Committees; - calls for Regional Conferences and determines the dates and place of the Conference; - monitors the activities of the District Committees and local PPOs; etc. (Part VI. Art. 6.7., CPRF statute).
3. Regional Bureau	<p>Regional Bureau meets once a month.</p> <p>The Regional Committee and the Regional Bureau are headed by the First Regional Secretary, who is elected from the Regional Committee.</p> <p>The Regional Bureau is responsible for maintaining all organizational, legal and financial issues of the regional branch (Part VI. Art. 6.11., CPRF statute).</p>
<u>The District Level</u>	
1. District Conference/General Meeting	<p>District Conference meets at least once every two years.</p> <p>District Conference decides upon all issue of local importance and is responsible for party propaganda (Part V. Art. 5.3., CPRF statute).</p> <p>District branches are allowed to decide “independently on all questions with the exception of those within the competence of the supreme and central organs of the party.”²³ They have the right to adopt their own programs and statutes, so long as these do not contradict the central one (V. Art. 5.17., CPRF statute).</p>
2. City Committee (gorkom) / District Committee (raikom)	<p>Committees meet at least every three months. The City and District Committees are headed by First Secretaries (Part V. Art. 5.13. and 5.14., CPRF statute).</p>
3. Bureau of City Committee or District Committee	<p>Bureaus meet at least once a month and are responsible to the Committee (Part V. Art. 5.12., CPRF statute).</p>
<u>Primary Party Organization (PPO)</u> ²⁴	<p>PPOs operate on the ground within a restricted territory and are not required to be registered with the state (Part III. Art. 3.4., CPRF statute). Each PPO has a democratically elected bureau, which meets at least once a month (Part IV. Art. 4.7., CPRF statute).</p> <p>PPOs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fulfill simple administrative tasks; - are responsible for cadres recruitment and propaganda of party ideology and program on the ground (Part IV. Art. 4.4., CPRF statute). <p>The responsibilities of maintaining everyday activities of the PPO are assigned to the Secretariat (Part IV. Art. 4.10., CPRF statute).</p> <p>In terms of decision-making, decision of the PPO can be overturned by a higher party organ, (except for decisions relating to personnel), (Part IV. Art. 4.13., CPRF statute).</p>
<u>Coordinating Councils</u>	<p>Facilitate horizontal communication between the regional branches within one area (Part VI. Art. 6.19., CPRF statute).</p>

Source: compiled on the basis of the CPRF statute.

²³ Hutcheson, p. 58.

²⁴ There are approximately 17,000 PPOs operating on the ground. March, p. 137.

Comparing the organizational structure of the *CPRF* to the one of the *CPSU*, small changes in the party structure are observable. If the *CPSU* set up their PPOs at the factories and in the army, (see *CPSU* statute), then *CPRF*'s primary organizations were established at residence places. Although this was partially explained by the fact that the Communist Party lost its hegemonic position, such change nevertheless pointed to a certain shift in the party's ideology. In particular, it is known that in classic Leninist understanding, the Communist party was seen primarily as a primary source of revolutionary movement. This is why the *CPSU* was very selective in its cadres.²⁵ In contrast, the *CPRF* proclaimed that it was open to freedom of criticism and debates. Moreover, party leadership repeatedly emphasized that the party was open to all citizens. In sum, the *CPRF* has dropped its revolutionary image and become an organization that prioritizes social issues and appeals to the socially and economically deprived strata of society.

Turning now to the analysis of the *CPRF*'s organization at the regional level, it is important to keep in mind that the *CPRF* has never played a significant role in power politics in either Nizhegorodskaya or Sverdlovskaya oblasts. Yet this does not mean that the party lacked vivid party life. In Nizhegorodskaya oblast alone, there were 59 gorkoms and raikoms and 364 local PPOs, set up in the apartments due to the lack of financial resources.²⁶

The phenomenon of the *CPRF* consists of the fact that the purity of party organization and ideology was monitored not only from the center, but also from the regions. In fact, Zyuganov and the central apparatus of the *CPRF* turned to be the most moderate party members, whereas regional branches of the *CPRF* displayed views that

²⁵ March, pp. 134-135.

²⁶ "Растёт число коммунистов" [The number of Communists is growing], in *Nizhegorodskaya Pravda* (no. 235, 25.12.2001, code PLR/y2001/364E0B6B-5EF6-43E2-A55E-OC22CD3D5E6F), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

were far more radical. Regional branches often criticized the Central Committee for altering the organization of the party and Zyuganov for his supposedly soft ideological party line. In many cases, Zyuganov had no other option but to support the position of the regional branches. In sum, the organization of the *CPRF* is strict and the rules have to be followed by every branch and party member, including party leadership. If a party member committed a deed which violated the statute or could seriously damage the image of the *CPRF*, then his/her deed and membership was discussed during the meeting of the local PPO at which he/she was registered or, in the case of a member who is in the public eye, at the meeting of the Central Committee. Often, people were expelled from the party. Some of them disputed the expulsion in the Auditing Committees.

The most famous organizational crisis of federal importance happened in 2002, when some party members led by Seleznev left the party. The incident started in the State Duma, when the centrist and rightist parliamentary factions decided to review the agreements about the committee appointments during which the Agrarians and the Communists were discharged from the posts of the chairpersons of the State Duma committees. As a response, Zyuganov stated that the *CPRF* would reject any appointments in the committees of pro-Putin orientation and ordered the remaining Communists holding posts in the Duma to abandon their positions. This party order also referred to the speaker of the State Duma Gennadii Seleznev. Since Seleznev refused to leave the chair of the speaker, the party at the Extraordinary Plenum of the Central Committee expelled him from the party.²⁷ The decision of the Central Committee to exclude Seleznev from the party was supported in the regions.²⁸ During the voting, the members of the Central Committee split into a small percentage of those who supported

²⁷ "CPRF Central Committee Letter to the Party's Members," in *Johnson's Russia List* (12 June 2002), available at <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/6303-14.cfm>; Internet.

²⁸ Yurii Nikiforenko, "Отход на рысях" [Otchod na rysiach], in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* (Moscow, no. 065, 15.06.2002, code PLR/y2002_1/3D0C8C7C-22BE-407E-8D0A-2D855131C1E9), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

Seleznev and the overwhelming majority who believed that party decisions had to be followed. In the end, a small bunch of people headed by Seleznev left the party, (or were deprived of party membership), and announced that they would create a party of social democratic orientation geared towards building a social order similar to the one found in Sweden. Overall, the Seleznev crisis did not cause party split or massive suspension of party membership. Rather, it displayed party intention to preserve its cohesion and strict organization.

A similar situation happened in Nizhegorodskaya oblast in 2002 where the regional branch collectively decided to formally expel the governor Gennadii Khodyrev from the party. The decision of the local PPO was the response to the statement made by Khodyrev, in which he harshly criticized the decision of the Central Committee to expel Seleznev. His criticism caused the regional PPO to call an extraordinary meeting, at which Khodyrev was officially expelled from the party. The official explanation read as follows: “for actions discrediting the party organization, damaging the image of the party, and being incompatible with the position of a Communist”.²⁹ Partially, the expulsion was also the reaction to Khodyrev’s earlier decision to suspend party membership shortly after his victory in 2001 gubernatorial elections. In 2002, the regional branch reminded the governor of his deed, which was perceived as a sudden stab in the back. Here is an excerpt from a letter written by the members of the Nizhegorodskaya party branch and sent to the All-Russian newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* in 2002:

We, the Communists from the Gorodetsk district [...] tell you that your deed in regard to the people, who just yesterday believed in you, is like a stab in the back. We have the right to express our claims. During the last gubernatorial elections, we did our best; we devoted all our time and health to your victory, and we were able to help you to win in our district. We convinced people that you were a decent person, devoted Communist, and experienced manager. How huge was our happiness when we saw you winning the elections. Then we witnessed how you decided to suspend the membership. People who voted for you were worried, and said that they were voting for the Communist. Then we saw how you completely distanced yourself from us and in fact simply threw out the team, which

²⁹ Orkhan Dzamal, “Нечаянный Ходырев” [Unexpected Khodyrev], in *Novaya Gazeta* [newspaper online] (Moscow, 22.07.2002), available at <http://2002.novayagazeta.ru/nomer/2002/52n/n52n-s23.shtml>; Internet.

brought you to power. Don't you understand what you did? You stabbed not Zyuganov, [...] but ordinary Communists in your region that fought for you in the back. How can we now look in the eyes of those who voted for you? The treason hurts, especially the treason committed by the person who we believed in. You hurt us from within. Nevertheless, we will survive, because except for us, there is no one who can defend ordinary people.

We are ashamed of you, Gennadii Maksimovich.

Gorodetsk Raikom of the CPRF. Passed at the Raikom meeting on 5 June 2002.³⁰

Khodyrev's deed caused protests all around the region and even beyond. As *Sovetskaya Rossiya* reported, all PPOs in Nizhegorodskaya oblast gathered for extraordinary meetings to discuss Khodyrev's deed and write letters of condemnation. Letters from individuals were also sent – they were arriving from the Army, from young and old Communist members. Such organizational and ideological unity was remarkable. In fact, it has proven that the CPRF strength was rooted in its organization.³¹

On a similar note, in September 2002 the regional branch in Sverdlovskaya oblast removed Vyacheslav Teplakov from the position of the First Secretary of the city branch. This was done because he refused to follow a party decision to oppose the amendment to the regional statute, which would allow Eduard Rossel to be nominated for a third term. Teplakov was the only party member who openly supported this amendment.³² Although Teplakov placed an appeal to the Central Auditing Committee arguing that the party procedures were violated, he was not restored to his previous position. The Central Auditing Committee had only ordered the regional party branch to restore the membership of Teplakov.³³

The Communists paid a lot of attention to the importance of regional meetings during which party goals and problems were discussed. Leaders of regional branches tried to invite not only ordinary members of the regional branches to such meetings, but

³⁰ “Сверху красный, внутри белый...” [Red on the outside, white on the inside...], in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* (Moscow, no. 068, 22.06.2002), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Dmitrii Noskov, “Синдром Селезнёва” [The Seleznev syndrome], in *Vechernie Vedomosti* (Yekaterinburg, no. 179, 30.09.2002, code PLR/y2002_2/B32ABA5A-F894-481B-9765-543E57EDDD36), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

³³ “Теплякова разжаловали в рядовые коммунисты” [Teplakov was reduced to the rank of a regular member], in *Vechernie Vedomosti* (Yekaterinburg, no. 218, 25.11.2002, code PLR/y2002_2/83F54296-9172-4EA3-9267-7B66EFEBB946), available at www.public.ru; Internet. Also Noskov, “Синдром Селезнёва” [The Seleznev syndrome], www.public.ru.

also representatives from other regions as well as assistants to the Communist deputies in the State Duma. In Nizhegorodskaya oblast, such meetings usually happened at least once a year over a weekend.³⁴ The agenda of such meetings was devoted to the analysis of party activity over the last year. At one of these meetings, in December 2001, the regional branch praised the work of the local PPOs, which were able to raise the number of members of the *CPRF* in Nizhegorodskaya oblast to 9,000 thousand people.³⁵

Turning now to our table displayed in the beginning of this section, several points have to be made. First, it can be concluded that the actual structure of the *CPRF* strictly followed the statute of the party, meeting deadlines were observed and regulations followed. Thus, from the very beginning the party showed a strong level of articulation, in which every party member, as well as party unit knew its role. Such internal coordination and cohesion facilitated the re-birth of the party in 1993 and its triumphant parliamentary victory in 1995. However, as the political environment changed after 1999, the party leadership seemed to be caught between the need to adjust to the changed environment on the one hand and the demands of the radical regional branches to preserve party organization and ideology unchanged on the other. In sum, the party organization was challenged from within by an internal dilemma embedded in the party organizational principle of “democratic centralism”. Since every party member had the right to be heard in party debates, it created an ambiguous situation when ordinary party members, often very radical in their views, imposed their wish for a stricter isolationist policy line at the federal level on the Central Committee. This has facilitated a slight weakening in party articulation leading to internal dilemmas of mainly ideological nature.

³⁴ Valerii Orlov, “И опыт, и молодость” [Experience as well as youthfulness], in *Pravda-CPRF* (Moscow, no. 087, 7.08.2001), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

³⁵ Vyacheslav Sotnikov, “News Digest,” in *Nizhegorodskaya Pravda* (22.12.2001), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

Yet it has to be said that although the party displayed some weakness in articulation, it still was one of the most organizationally and ideologically centralized parties in Russia.

Overall, the *CPRF* seemed to “suffer” from extreme “internal democracy” embedded in the principle of freedom of criticism. Frequent debates revealed the fractured nature of the *CPRF* – a sign of a democratic, rather than an autocratic party. The debates unfolded between representatives of three different movements within the party: the national patriots, social reformists, slowly evolving into social democrats, and orthodox Communists. Since Zyuganov adhered to the ideology of national patriots, the ideology of this group became the official party ideology. What united all these factions within the party was the perceived hostility of the outside world, in particular of the state, toward them.³⁶

Overall, party organization proved to be intensively and extensively complex with complete geographical coverage of all the Russian regions and a significant level of activity in almost all regional branches regardless of the challenges imposed on them due to external regional situations.

4.2.2. Party Leadership

One of the key elements in any party structure is the position and the status of the party leader. In the *CPRF*, the tasks of the party leader are assigned to the Chair of the Central Committee, who is currently Gennadii Zyuganov. The party leader serves as the coordinating body between the Central Committee, Presidium and Secretariat, represents the party's interests at the federal and international levels, organizes meetings of the Presidium, signs various documents, petitions etc. in the name of the *CPRF*; monitors the

³⁶ Gennadii Zyuganov, Серьёзный урок для всех нас. Обращение ко всем партийным организациям КПРФ [A Lesson for All of Us. To All Party Organizations within the *CPRF*], in Gazeta.ru (online newspaper), available at <http://www.gazeta-pravda.ru/prros/Prros03.html#СЕРЬЕЗНЫЙ%20УРОК%20ДЛЯ%20ВСЕХ>; Internet.

work of the party's central organs and members (VIII. Art. 8.9., *CPRF* statute). The party leader is usually in office until the next Congress, which meets at least once every four years. He/she is elected from within the Central Committee. The party leader at the federal, regional or district levels is usually elected by secret ballot, with victory going to the person who gathered the majority of the votes. Leaders of regional branches are elected at the Regional Conferences from within the Regional Committee. Upon election, the regional branches are responsible for informing the federal level of the cadre changes. In the majority of the cases, the Central Committee cannot change decisions of the regional or district branches related to party cadres, even if it wants to.³⁷

Analyzing the position of the leader in the *CPRF*, one notices obvious prioritizing of structure over personalities. Indeed, despite Zyuganov's great contribution to the party, he was not its founder. He was chosen by the majority of the Communists to represent the party before the state. Yet the *CPRF* would certainly not fall apart, should Zyuganov step down. In fact, Zyuganov was aware that the party had alternative figures to possibly replace him. One alternative was Kuptsov, who, however, showed little willingness to replace Zyuganov as party leader preferring to remain his right hand man.³⁸ Zyuganov's leadership lasted because of his ability to maneuver between different factions within the party and because of the absence of ambitions on the part of Zyuganov's party compatriots to challenge his authority. In sum, the *CPRF* was not the party of personalities, but of organization. The party leader played an important role, yet had to obey the party rules and observe the principle of freedom of criticism. As Luke March noted, Zyuganov perfectly fit to the position of the leader of the Communist Party:

³⁷ Vladislav Yurchik, "Сознательная дисциплина коммунистов – несущий стержень организаций КПРФ" [The conscious discipline of the Communists is the fundament of the *CPRF* organization], in *Pravda-CPRF* (Moscow, no. 123, 28.10.1999, code PLR/y1999/020990C5-A034-4B04-A283-6AC57E2088A6), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

³⁸ Aleksei Makarkin, "КПРФ накануне выборов" [*CPRF* on the eve of the elections], in *Politkom* (Center of Political Analysis), available at <http://www.politcom.ru/2003/partii27.php>; Internet. And March, pp. 145-149.

Zyuganov's leadership was a case in point. His much remarked lack of charisma actually marked him as an ideal communist 'collective leader' with little independence from the party hierarchy, thereby well representing the party's collectively worked-out political position.³⁹

In Nizhegorodskaya oblast, the regional branch was first headed by the professor at the Nizhegorodskaya Technical University Vladimir Petrovich Kirienko, who in the end of October 1998 was re-placed by the head of the Department of Social Philosophy at the Nizhegorodskii University, Nikolai Anatolievich Benediktov. Benediktov lacks charisma and is unknown to the residents of the region.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, Benediktov is a self-disciplined and organized party member, who devotes most of his time to party life and carries out the major work of organizing and maintaining party activities in the regions. He is also the one who maintains relations with the trade unions and helps them in organizing mass meetings. However, despite his active party work, Benediktov is unable to mobilize the masses. Because of the lack of a charismatic leader, the regional branch appealed to the electorate relying on other Communists known in the region such as Oleg Kotelnikov, Vladimir Pachenov, Communist director of the factory *Krasny Yakor* Alexander Malyshko and Communist director of Surovatchinskii instrument making factory Vasilii Peshekhonov.⁴¹ Speculating about the reasons Benediktov was elected party leader, observations similar to the ones found in the central office can be made. Just as in the center, the organization dominated over personalities and the leader was elected not according to the level of his charismatic appeal, but rather based upon such criteria as devotion to party ideology, goals, loyalty, honesty and team work. Benediktov perfectly fit all of these criteria.

The situation in Sverdlovskaya oblast looks quite similar. The current leader of the regional party branch is Vladimir Kadochnikov, elected in 1996. He is a dedicated

³⁹ March, p. 149.

⁴⁰ Sergei Pudov, "Красным поясом у нас не пахнет" [We are unlikely to become the red-belt region], in *Pokrovka*, 7 (newspaper online, no. 7, 20 - 27 February 2003), available at http://www.pokrovka7.nnov.ru/2/527_1.php; Internet.

⁴¹ Orlov, "И опыт, и молодость" [Experience as well as youthfulness], www.public.ru.

Communist who devotes most of his time to party life. Having worked the greater part of his life at a factory, Kadochnikov earned great respect among the Communists. Therefore, since 1996 the regional Committee annually confirmed Kadochnikov's status as the First Secretary of the regional branch in a vote of confidence. Compared to Nizgorodskaya oblast, where the regional branch had, along with the official party secretary, numerous unofficial public leaders, the regional branch in Sverdlovskaya oblast was centered on the figure of Kadochnikov. Kadochnikov seems to be a more colorful figure, who, aside from the aforementioned criteria, also possesses charisma and strength to centralize authority in the regional branch around himself. Overall, the finding made at the federal level about the dominance of structure over personalities is confirmed at the regional level.

4.2.3. Party Membership and the Mode of its Recruitment

Party membership is one of the fundamental concepts upon which the party caucus is built. A mass party is strong as long as it has a devoted core of party members. The *CPRF* would not be considered a mass party if it did not have such an organized and active core of party activists and members. Officially, the statute of the *CPRF* regulates the process of recruitment of party members. According to it, the right to recruit new members is given only to the primary party organizations (PPOs). Any citizen of the Russian Federation aged 18 or over has the right to apply for membership in the party. The candidate submits his application to the local PPO along with a letter of recommendation from two *CPRF* members, whose membership has lasted for at least one year. The application is considered and the final decision is usually taken at the general meeting of the PPO.

Party regulations are strictly followed in practice. Local PPOs conduct regular recruitment campaigns during which all interested citizens can obtain information and apply for membership.⁴² In exceptional cases, the application can be submitted directly to the committees of district or regional branches, and not to PPOs. Once accepted to the party, the new member is expected to adhere to the party's ideology and principles as described in its program, follow the party regulations and be a disciplined and active member of the PPO, in which he/she is registered, as well as pay regularly party dues (II. Art. 2.2., 2.3., 2.4., 2.6., *CPRF* statute). However, people with low income are usually exempted from the obligation to pay party dues.

The party possesses an organized scheme of recruitment incentives. In fact, the *CPRF* is an excellent example of a political party that offers its candidates the collective incentive of belonging to an ideologically united group of people. The most active and devoted party members are awarded certificates, diplomas, memorable notes or money gifts (II. Art. 2.9., *CPRF* statute). Usually awards are processed by the PPO with which the member is registered. In exceptional cases, awards are announced by the Presidium of the Central Committee of the *CPRF*. Members, who were active party members for more than 30 years, are awarded a rank of "Party Veteran" and a memorable plaque. Certainly, to an ideologically indifferent person, such incentives would hardly be a motivation for more activity. Yet since most of the *CPRF* members are devoted Communists, any recognition of their ideological loyalty is thankfully received.

The party also tries to use alternative incentives to attract new members and keep the old ones. For instance, in dealing with the young party members, the regional branch

⁴² Pavel Chernikov, "Если проиграю, считайте меня коммунистом" [Should I lose, please count me as a Communist], in *Kommersant-VLAST* (17-23 November 2003), p. 70.

organized short weekend camps for youth interested in the activities of the *CPRF*, or helped the *Komsomol* members find decent employment.⁴³

On top of that, the party tries to provide the most active party members with career opportunities within the party hierarchy. This is especially important for the younger generation, which often did not want to simply follow regulations given by the older party members, but wanted to participate in designing party goals and strategy. While trying to provide youth with some career opportunities, the party also tries to protect itself from career opportunists with the help of a strict vertical cadre's promotion. Specifically, in promoting its active members, the party operates according to the centripetal model. Any *CPRF* member, who wants to reach a certain position within the party hierarchy, has to start from the local PPO and be promoted by its members to a higher position. This is done to preserve the quality of party cadres as well as their ideological unity.

The party benefited from the fact that the majority of its core members are former *CPSU* apparatchiks. Although their skills were not related to operation within modern democratic institutions, these people possessed excellent organizational skills and leadership experience. In particular, in the context of limited financial resources, these people were smart enough to allocate to the party's needs the parliamentary faction's resources to advance party goals. In accordance with the federal law, deputies in the State Duma are allowed to have up to five assistants: one in Moscow and four in Russia's regions. The maintenance of these assistants is paid directly from the state budget.

⁴³ Almost all regional branches of the *CPRF* organized summer schools or clubs. See Aleksei Myasnikov, Marina Selina, Anton Klinovskii, Anton Melikhov and Svetlana Saltanova, "Работа с молодёжью дело тонкое" [Working with youth is a very responsible affair], in *Zabaykalskii Rabochii* (Chita, 29.10. 2003, code PLR/y2003_2/E6290B75-35C9-4745-B500-B956C23930C6), available at www.public.ru; Internet. Igor Nelyubin, "Делу – время в СКМ" [Business time for the *Union of the Communist Youth*], in *Kirovskaya Pravda* (Kirov, no. 132, 28.10.2003, code PLR/y2003_2/729E4C8D-CC0D-4511-8BFB-B140E091C349), available at www.public.ru; Internet. Oleg Nikolaev, "Мы никогда не оставим товарища в беде" [We never let our comrades down], in *Pravda – CPRF* (Moscow, no. 122, 26.10.2001, code PLR/y2001/4A6112A0-07D8-4F70-A6D2-47CF2D4B5489), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

According to *Komsomolskaya Pravda* – one of the leading Russian dailies, the *CPRF* was the only party in the parliament, which hired real professionals for these positions – secretaries of raikoms and gorkoms, and not family members and friends.⁴⁴ These assistants formed the organizational core of the *CPRF*. On top of that, party funds added additional one hundred paid activists who used the channels of communication of the Duma to maintain operational contacts between the centre and the periphery.⁴⁵ The Communists have also extensively used their free deputies' travel privileges, spending "a third of their time" on re-establishing party links and reaching out to new social groups, reactivating and financing the *Komsomol*, strengthening links with trade unions and women's movements, and beginning to court businessmen.⁴⁶ On the ground, the most trusted party activists were engaged in the process of recruitment of new party members. While being selective in who is accepted to the party, the *CPRF* proved to be much more open to new members than its predecessor or even some liberal parties, such as *Yabloko*.⁴⁷

Designing party recruitment methods, the *CPRF* relied on traditional door-to-door propaganda, but also tried to appeal to the younger generation using postmodern techniques such as emails to frequent visitors of their website, or internet talks with the leader of the party Gennadii Zyuganov. The fact that the *CPRF* was the first party that virtually went on-line in communication with the younger generation, speaks for itself. For instance, the *CPRF* was the only political party in Russia that sponsored internet games, such as "Strike back", when two commands competed against each other in cyber space under the label of the *CPRF*. The winner received a prize of four hundred dollars.

⁴⁴ Olga Gerasimenko, Tatiana Filippova, "Вертикаль компартии от ЦК до райкома – оплачена из кармана налогоплательщика" [*CPRF*'s Vertical Structure from the Central Committee down to raikom – paid by taxpayers], in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (Moscow, no. 055, 26.03.1996, code PLR/y1996/564B64D5-13B5-4E10-85E7-BDB9C913F08A), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

⁴⁵ March, p. 138.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Hucheson, p. 88.

The *CPRF* honestly paid the awards. With the help of such campaigns, the *CPRF* was able to attract some supporters from the younger generation.⁴⁸ Yet, as the party members publicly admitted, the need for younger party cadres was high and the party had to work hard to attract new members. Overall, only 8% of party members are under the age of thirty, 45 percent, thirty to fifty, and 47 percent over fifty.⁴⁹

Looking down to the regions, one notices that the core membership of the *CPRF* branch in Nizhegorodskaya oblast consisted mainly of academic and professional teachers usually possessing degrees in social sciences.⁵⁰ As to the members of Sverdlovskaya branch, they were in their 50s and mainly employed in or retired from the industrial sector.

The recruitment program designed by the PPOs in Nizhegorodskaya oblast employed collective, alternative and selective incentives to attract the new cadres and focused on various age groups. According to the First Secretary of Nizhegorodskaya branch Benediktov, the party had constantly conducted numerous recruitment programs, which lead to significant increase in submitted applications. Monitoring of the recruitment program was entrusted to well known and respectable party members. So, the leader of one of the regional PPOs Lydia Ugolnikova, who is the lecturer at the local college, is engaged in active promoting of Communist collectivist ideas at her college.⁵¹ Similarly, other PPOs have also focused their work on youth and the middle-aged population. Especially known for their deeds is the *CPRF* gorkom in Nizhniy Novgorod, which has established a branch of the *Union of the Communist Youth*. The organization amounted to 300 people. This organization served as an umbrella for all patriotically oriented youth who were considering applying for membership in the *CPRF*. The youth

⁴⁸ Pavel Chernikov, "Если проиграю, считайте меня коммунистом" [Should I lose, please count me as Communist], in *Kommersant-VLAST* (Moscow, 17-23 November 2003), p. 70.

⁴⁹ Hutcheson, p. 90.

⁵⁰ Orlov, "И опыт, и молодость" [Experience as well as youthfulness], www.public.ru.

⁵¹ Ibid.

movement has a very diverse public life – it organizes different forums, concerts, meetings with different people, and helps during election campaigns. It is quite remarkable that when the city branch of the *CPRF* lacked financial and logistical means to create an internet station for party members, the young Communist and *Komsomol* members devoted their personal savings to the branch. With this money an office was rented and a computer with internet access established. Consequently, with the help of the youth, the regional branch of the Nizgorodskaya oblast had a vivid “virtual” life.⁵²

Speaking of alternative incentives, the regional branch of the *CPRF* in Nizgorodskaya oblast tried to diversify the social life of the Communists and, with help of the Nizgorodskaya Architectural-Constructional Academy, organized the so-called “Peoples’ University”, where people regularly gather and discuss historical, social, and political issues, learn economics, and meet with the professors. Frequently, “Peoples’ University” made field or recreational trips.⁵³

Similar tendencies are found in Sverdlovskaya oblast. To date, Sverdlovskaya oblast has one of the most active Communist youth organizations in Russia, albeit not the most numerous. Its young leader Ludmila Jouravleva is believed to have a great political future due to her excellent organizational skills and strong ideological position:

*Our major goal is to be a reliable partner of the Communist Party. Its reserve. So that our ideological opponents would shut up and not say that the CPRF has no future.*⁵⁴

The *Union of the Communist Youth* works very closely with the regional branch of the *CPRF*. In 2002, the youth and the Communists of Sverdlovskaya oblast organized a conference devoted to the *CPRF* itself. The conference attracted representatives from other regional branches and some young *Komsomol* leaders. At the conference, members

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Sergei Riabov, “Вокруг да около” [Beating around the bush], in *Pravda-CPRF* (Moscow, no. 039, 04.04.2003, code PLR/y2003_1/AC2E5A44-A837-4966-9B7E-9257AB72BC45), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

of the *Union of the Communist Youth* screened a modern documentary about the *CPRF* entitled “*CPRF – peoples’ party*”. The documentary was met with great interest not only by party members, but also by citizens not affiliated with the party who attended the film.⁵⁵

A similar situation is found in other Russian regions. For instance, as the newspaper *Pravda Rossii* reported, in 2001, 14,5 thousand young people received party cards of the *Komsomol* and the *CPRF*. The majority of them were either youth or able-bodied young workers. The highest increase in party membership was reported in Moskovskaya, Volgogradskaya, Rostovskaya oblasts. Over the period 2001-2002, the Moscow party branch set-up 33 new local PPOs – a fact that is revealing in itself.⁵⁶

Similarly active are regional *CPRF* branches in their work with the school-age generation. Nizhegorodskaya oblast is known for its strong pioneer movement. The pioneer movement started on the initiative of school teachers, who were concerned about the drinking, smoking and other bad habits of the local youth. The teachers approached the local *CPRF* branch and asked for help in organizing kids’ free time. Soon after, the regional branch of the *CPRF* set up various recreational clubs (i.e. art clubs, which organize different concerts; patronage clubs, in which the youth help the older generation in everyday life; or green-movement clubs, which help to keep parks, squares, or cultural places clean and attractive). Today, such pioneer organizations exist in all regional districts of Nizhegorodskaya oblast.⁵⁷

Similar initiatives were undertaken in Sverdlovskaya region. Here, despite certain challenges posed by the regional administration, (such as unwillingness to rent the housing facilities), the regional *CPRF* branch was able to establish a local pioneer

⁵⁵ “Партия прирастает молодёжью” [The party grows because of youth], in *Pravda Rossii* (Moscow, no. 002, 16.01.2002, code PLR/y2002_1/8868AD17-72FD-4AAE-9FED-8E3F82A1DF4B), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Orlov, “И опыт, и молодость” [Experience as well as youthfulness], www.public.ru; Internet.

organization. In 2001, the local pioneer organization amounted to 200 members. Despite its small team and the young age of the members, the Sverdlovskaya pioneer organization was known for its active propaganda activities and frequent meetings with the representatives of the local *Komsomol* movement and the Communist party.⁵⁸

Having discussed the concept of party membership at the federal and regional levels, one notices that the *CPRF* tried to be as diverse as possible in its recruitment methods. It appealed to peoples' sense of unity and responsibility for the sake of the future generations. While doing so, it also tried to boost peoples' interest in the party by opening some career opportunities to them. Moreover, in the recent years, the *CPRF* re-oriented its recruitment tactics from people of the older generation – former *CPSU* members, toward the younger generation. As a researcher from the VCIOM Lev Gudkov noted:

*Over the last years in Nizhniy Novgorod as well as in many other Russian regions the Communists succeeded not only in their work with the older generation, but also conducted successful work with the electorate of the middle age and with those who have a high level of education.*⁵⁹

The shift symbolized the realization by the *CPRF* leadership of the necessity to renew its cadres and attract fresh ideas and active members. As leading Russian political scientists and PR-consultants note, this re-orientation could in fact save the *CPRF* from possible marginalization in the future. According to a well-known Russian PR-consultant Ivan Zasurskii:

*Right now, the CPRF has great perspectives! The defeat, which the CPRF suffered in the elections, can be the beginning of a new really left Communist party – a party of young rebels, people with “burning hearts”. There is a real demand for such a party among the youth.*⁶⁰

⁵⁸ “Новые пионеры произнесут клятву верности” [New pioneers will swear fidelity], in *Vechernii Yekaterinburg* (no. 049, 19.05.2001, code PLR/y2001/A6F72EE1-E3E8-40F5-B300-A3FC4BCF8515), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

⁵⁹ Leonid Nikolaev, “В России коммунисты возвращаются” [The Communists are back in Russia], in *Nizgorodskaya Pravda* (no. 108, 27.09.2001), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

⁶⁰ Nikolai Krupskii, “Кто-то теряет, а кто-то...” [Someone loses, someone...], in *Moskovskii Komsomolets in Nizhniy Novgorod* (Nizhniy Novgorod, no. 064, 19.12.2003, code PLR/y2003_2/51510A20-AF69-4835-9395-FEE60B36DE74), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

In sum, the *CPRF* relied upon all three methods of recruitment strategies and could, in fact, be regarded as one of the most innovative parties in Russia. Its main failure was its earlier fixation on the older generation and the perception that the young electorate was not interested in the Communist ideas. However, in the recent years, the party realized that without a radical renewal of party cadres, the party was doomed to marginalization. This has spurred party interest in youth affairs and modern recruitment methods. On a last note, the ability of the party to slowly adjust its recruitment tactics to the “young market” indicates that the “*CPRF* label” can be successfully promoted in the current ideological vacuum. In this context, it is interesting to analyze the current developments in the *CPRF*’s ideology/program and finances.

4.3. Big Money and Party Ideology – Are They Reconcilable?

Party institutionalization depends on the viable ideological basis and balanced sources of financial support. In the case of the *CPRF*, up until recently the party was able to compensate for a lack of finances with party organizational capacities and willingness of party members to volunteer for the sake of promoting party ideology. As a consequence, we discuss the issue of party finances simultaneously with the analysis of party ideology and program. As a reminder of the framework within which the two concepts will be discussed, a section from the table 1.1. is displayed below.

Ideological/Programmatic Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Existence of clearly defined party goals (party program) b) Correspondence of regional regulations with the central program of the party (in print) c) Support of party goals by the members of the regional branches, i.e. priority to national interests over local interests, support to party’s officially elected candidates in the local as well as national elections, level of candidates running as “independents” although being members of a particular party d) Existence of ideological literature and its territorial coverage
Party Financing and Spending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Existence of written regulations of party finances (according to party statute) b) Known sources of party’s finances c) Party’s overall wealth (judged upon number of functioning offices across the country, amount of assets across the country, spending on public meetings, briefings, political campaigns, party periodic, advertisement, etc.) d) Distribution of party finances: spending in the regions as compared to spending in the center, i.e. on regional political campaigns, meetings and periodic covering regional news

As Panebianco notes, the institutionalization of a political party depends on the sources of party financing. For a party to be autonomous vis-à-vis its environment, a balanced structure of financing is required.⁶¹ The *CPRF* statute devotes a separate chapter to the party's financial and technical matters. The statute states that the budget of the party is formed upon various financial sources such as

- 1) membership and initiation fee;
- 2) the funds allocated from the state budget in accordance with acting legislation;
- 3) donations, processed by the party in accordance with the acting legislation;
- 4) revenues from social events and entrepreneurial activities conducted by the party i.e. publishing;
- 5) from other activities, not prohibited by the state laws (X. Art. 10.6., *CPRF* statute).

It is known that up until recently the *CPRF* existed mainly on the money gathered from membership dues, (see table 4.2. below).

Table 4.2. Report about the financial income and expenditures of the *CPRF* in 2002 (submitted after Tax Police inspection, in rubles)

Financial Income in 2002									
Total	Membership Dues		Donations from physical bodies		Donations from corporations		Party's entrepreneurial activity		
24,788.4	13,740.17		3,411.52		5,249.7		745.30		
Party Expenditures in 2002									
Total	Organization of party meetings, conferences and congresses	Expenditures on Central Committee	Expenditures on regional branches	Preparation to the elections	Expenditures on publishing, TV programs, educational centers	Public meetings and lectures	Informational propaganda activities (advertisement, pamphlets)	Charity activities	Other not prohibited by law expenditures
17,429.95	108.3	1,440.8	0	88.8	340.4	300.19	2,160.54	306.9	12,684.02
<p>- Donations from citizens, who donated more than 20 thousand rubles at one time (the total sum in rubles/number of citizens): 1,322.73 / 47.</p> <p>- Names of legal entities who donated more than 400 thousand rubles (total sum in rubles/ title of the legal entity): 0 / none.</p> <p>- Financial operations, which exceeded 800 thousand rubles (total sum in rubles /expenditure type): 2,252.8 / reacquisition of non-living premises.</p> <p>- Listing of elections in which party participated in 2002: elections to the Legislative Assembly in Krasnodarskii krai, Primorskii krai, Kostromskaya oblast, Lipetskaya oblast, Smolenskaya oblast; elections to the Kostormskaya City Assembly and Smolenskaya City Duma.</p>									

Source: the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation at www.cikrf.ru; the full report is available in Excel at http://gd2003.cikrf.ru/etc/sved_kprf_nov.xls; Internet.

⁶¹ On party financing see Angelo Panebianco, *Political parties: organization and power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 35.

As seen in Table 4.2., although the primary source of party revenue was party membership fees, the regional branches received nothing from the party budget and thus had to survive in virtually beggar's conditions. Yet the central office had also possessed little money to cover everyday party needs and secure successful and modern political campaigns. Their political campaigns were and still are the cheapest compared to the high spending of *United Russia*.⁶² According to the reports submitted by the parties to the Central Election Commission, during the last 2003 parliamentary campaign, the *CPRF* spent 76 million rubles, whereas *United Russia* spent 226,885.262 million rubles.⁶³ As Ivan Melnikov, the head of the *CPRF*'s election campaign, noted in November 2003, the *CPRF* decided not to participate in the billboard advertisement campaign and commercial TV-debates due to their elevated expense and supposed ineffectiveness. Instead, the party conducted a number of meetings and demonstrations across the country, participated in free debates, and ran an advertisement campaign on regional channels.⁶⁴ Besides, the party relied on its traditional grass-roots campaigning, "door-to-door" leafleting and local meetings and demonstrations, thus minimizing the costs of the campaign. In sum, the main resource of the party turned out to be not financial, but organizational and management resources.⁶⁵

Nevertheless, in recent years the *CPRF* realized that poor financing means inability to compete on equal terms with other political parties, which conducted their campaigns professionally, using modern PR techniques. As a consequence, following the

⁶² Denis Babichenko, "Блеск и нищета кандидатов" [Glamour and poverty of the candidates], in *Itoги* (no. 44 (386), 4 November 2003), pp. 28-32. And Denis Babichenko, "Деньги для диктатуры электората" [Money for financing the electoral dictatorship], in *Itoги* (no. 46 (388), 18 November 2003), pp. 16-20.

⁶³ For financial reports of the *CPRF* and *United Russia*, please visit the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation at <http://gd2003.cikrf.ru/way/76797927>; Internet. Also Aliya Samigullina, "Дума любит экономных" [Duma likes money-saving parties], in *Gazeta.ru* (Russian News Agency online, 27 January 2004), available at http://www.gazeta.ru/2004/01/27/oa_110335.shtml; Internet.

⁶⁴ Irina Nagornyykh, Suzanna Farizova, Yurii Chernega, "Мозговые штурманы" ["Campaign Managers"], in *Kommersant-VLAST* (17-23 November 2003), pp. 30-32.

⁶⁵ For financial reports of the *CPRF* and *United Russia*, please visit the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation at <http://gd2003.cikrf.ru/way/76797927>; Internet.

1996 presidential elections, the *CPRF* tried to establish links with representatives of various sectors in Russian business.⁶⁶ In the end, the *CPRF* succeeded in attracting some leading businesspeople to join the party. Among them were Sergei Muravlenko, (one of the shareholders of *Yukos* stocks), Viktor Vildmanov, (the director of the leading Russian Agricultural Industrial Construction Company (*Rosagropromstroï*) – responsible for the construction of housing and industrial complexes in rural areas all across Russia), Igor Annenskii, (shareholder of the stocks of the consulting company *Alba*), and Igor Linshits, (shareholder of the stocks in such companies as *Extra-M* and *The 6 Channel*).⁶⁷ Some of these businesspeople appeared on party lists, for instance Muravlenko, Annenskii and Linshits, whereas others, such as Vildmanov, were considered the right hand men of Zyuganov on financial issues.⁶⁸ None of them has ever hidden their political affiliation with the *CPRF*. The decision to attract leading Russian businesspeople to join the party should be seen as a revolutionary decision and an indication that the party was reconsidering its ideological stance. In sum, the party's financial needs raised the problem of compatibility between the sources of party finances and ideology.

The problem became further complicated on the eve of the 2003 parliamentary campaign when media sources released information that was supposedly hidden from the public about the collaboration between the *CPRF* and the richest Russian oil company *Yukos*. Moreover, at approximately the same time, the well-known *CPRF* donor Viktor Vildmanov was accused of widespread corruption in his company. The initiative to conduct an extraordinary tax inspection of the company was launched by the members of the *United Russia* faction in the State Duma in October-November 2003. To note, shortly

⁶⁶ Vladimir Gelman, "The Iceberg of Political Finance," in *Contemporary Russian Politics: A Reader*, ed. Archie Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 183.

⁶⁷ Denis Babichenko, "Блеск и нищета кандидатов" [Glamour and poverty of the candidates], in *Itoги* (no. 44 (386), 4 November 2003), pp. 28-32. Mark Zavatskii, "Предъявите ваших олигархов" [Show us your oligarchs], in *Journal* (no. 46, 24-30 November 2003), pp. 20-21.

⁶⁸ Zavatskii, pp. 20-21.

after the elections, the whole issue of corruption was dropped from *United Russia* official statements and has disappeared from the federal media. While not discussing the possibility of Vildmanov being corrupt per se, the timing of the accusations suggests that this was done to discredit the *CPRF* in the eyes of the electorate.

Objectively, the importance of financial issue goes far beyond the simplistic accusations of the *CPRF* accepting the money from the oligarchs. The issue is whether the *CPRF* is ready to publicly accept the financial support of big business and, by doing so, alter the Communist ideology. Thus, the issue of party finances is directly linked to party ideology and program and even its organizational structure. In particular, as Panebianco noted, an institutionalized party rests upon ideology and structure. In the case of the *CPRF*, ideology and structure are intertwined, because Communism was often described as an ideology of organization.⁶⁹ In the end, the issue is whether the *CPRF* is willing to commit itself to changes in its ideology and structure as well as whether the end product would be worth such changes.

In this respect, it seems important to analyze the evolution of the party ideology and program over the recent years. It should be noted here that the concept of “ideology”, used in this research, is defined as “a framework of thought through which individuals and groups construct an understanding of the political and social world, and a guide to practical political and social conduct.”⁷⁰ Zyuganov understood well the importance of ideological concepts. He embarked upon designing a modified ideology, which would be able to re-habilitate Communists yet also provide some basis for survivability in current turbulent conditions. In searching for a suitable angle from which to present the Communist ideology, Zyuganov invented a bold concept of “statist Communist ideology”. The concept was based upon the idea of state patriotism, which should take

⁶⁹ March, p. 54.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 48.

precedence over all individual, ideological, social, class, religious and ethnic interests in the face of national crisis.⁷¹ Trying to rehabilitate the Communist ideology, the Communists developed an idea of historical continuity, emphasizing the logical evolution of the tsarist Russian empire toward the Soviet Union and, hopefully, toward the strong Russian state. The *CPRF*'s ideological concept was based upon two ideas – the Communist ideology and the Slavophile philosophical traditions. As the *CPRF*'s program stated, folkish nationalism ('narodnost'), religious spirituality ('sobornost'), devotion to the state ('derzhavnost') and predisposition to social justice (Communism) were indispensable characteristics of the Russian people (*CPRF* program, part 2). On top of that, the party accepted pluralism, multipartism and private property, (yet with some restrictions on what can be privately owned and what not). Trying to re-habilitate Communist ideas, Zyuganov appealed to religious beliefs. In Zyuganov's thought, socialism could be represented as a logical continuity of religion. He became, if one may express it this way, a Slavophile Socialist, praising the spiritual and collectivist values promoted by Orthodoxy and Socialism. There is no doubt that he deployed such tactics to attract religious and economically disadvantaged people in Russian provinces. Tired of reforms, the people longed for stability and security. This was what Zyuganov has tried to offer the people. Rejecting the historically revolutionary nature of the Communist party, Zyuganov spoke of stability, security and equity. Such a position indicated a certain flexibility, but also confusion of the Communists on ideological issues. By appealing to the disadvantaged, Zyuganov spoke of them as "patriots" and "builders of new Russia", while labeling the political elites as "wild reformers of capitalism" and "traitors of Russia".⁷²

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 71-72.

⁷² Personal observations during the 1999 parliamentary elections.

The party also possessed a comprehensive political program. The *CPRF*'s program identified the fundamental principles of the party, namely

- 1) grass-roots democracy;
- 2) justice, meaning guaranteed right to work, free education, medicine, and social security;
- 3) social equity;
- 4) patriotism;
- 5) civil responsibility;
- 6) communism as the only possible option for humankind (*CPRF*'s program).

The Communists hope to implement these principles, conducting the following policy:

- 1) active participation in public life with the goal of educating people and influencing their political will to win power and secure real grass-root democracy;
- 2) national propaganda of the *CPRF* position by appealing to people of different social background;
- 3) strengthening and promoting the *CPRF* as the only party that represents the people;
- 4) participation of party candidates in elections of federal, regional and municipal levels;
- 5) securing our financial and technical resources with the purpose of securing party's independence from state pressure (*CPRF*'s program).

In sum, the results of the *CPRF*'s efforts to modernize its image, while keeping its ideological fundamentals intact, are twofold. On the one hand, the party proved that it was able to partially transform itself and adjust to the new realities. Advantageous to the *CPRF* was its ability to keep its ideological concept as broad as possible to allow greater flexibility on certain issues. Nevertheless, the 2003 parliamentary elections have shown that the party ideology and program designed in 1993-1995 were not sufficient for maintaining the party's success because the external environment has drastically changed since then. From 1993 to 1999, the party operated in an environment, divided into Communists and non-Communists. In such an environment, ideology and structure were sufficient tools to compete head-to-head with the party of power. With the arrival of Putin, the situation has changed. The ideological battle was re-placed by a battle of administrative positions and PR techniques. Consequently, the *CPRF* found itself caught between the devil and the deep sea – it had to reconcile demands of party members to keep the classic party ideology unaltered with the necessity to upgrade its electoral tools.

A rapid shift toward a social democratic position was dangerous, because members of regional branches, who are far more radical and orthodox in their views than actual party leaders, demanded preservation of the classic Communist ideology.⁷³ On the one hand, failure to respond to the current trend of “professionalization” of political campaigns endangered the prospects of party success at the federal level.⁷⁴ The dilemma is existentially important for the *CPRF* and the question is when the appropriate timing for reform is. Rapid ideological changes and acceptance of the existence of oligarchic money in the party’s finances could de-stabilize the electorate that is loyal to the Communists. On the other hand, belated reform could endanger the very existence of the party, as there already exist some parties of social democratic orientation, which would gladly accept the dubious money from oligarchs.⁷⁵

It may be argued that the *CPRF* started the process of slow transformation from Communism to the more moderate socialist position when it placed some well-known Russian oligarchs on party lists. The danger is, however, that such moves could cause severe crisis within the party itself. As became evident during the last parliamentary elections, the party was deeply divided over the issue of its further development.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, it seems that the party has great potential for further reform. Specifically,

⁷³ Sergei Mikhailov, “Чьи деньги, Зин?” [Whose money, Zin?], in *Rossiyskie Vesti* (Moscow, no. 006, 19.02.2003, code LR/y2003_1/57364485-DF2A-4C19-81FD-FF185FE9DCA1), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

⁷⁴ Sergei Mikhailov, “Чьи деньги, Зин?” [Whose money, Zin?]. See also Nikolai Leonov, “Уроки наших выборов” [Our election lessons], in *Gudok* (Moscow, no. 229, 17.12.2003, code PLR/y2003_2/9BEE5E0C-3232-45C4-BE9F-9C93F74D0B3A), available at www.public.ru; Internet. Or Nikolai Kozanov and Viktor Kozemiako, “Отвечая на крутые вызовы времени” [Responding to tough current challenges], in *Pravda-CPRF* (Moscow, no. 148, 30.12.2003, code PLR/y2003_2/821EB6B8-F951-43C1-836D-A6E1D8539B6B), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

⁷⁵ Sergei Mikhailov, “Чьи деньги, Зин?” [Whose money, Zin?], www.public.ru.

⁷⁶ For instance, after the supposed fact of accepting money from the Russian oligarch Khodorkovskii became known to a wider audience, the *CPRF* became divided over the issue of how to react to the leaked information. Some suggested that since they openly placed some oligarchs on its party lists, *CPRF* was clean in front of its electorate. All of the oligarchs made a conscious decision to help the party. As a consequence, the party should do nothing. Others, such as Vildmanov and Zyuganov, said that they would sue the initiators of such slanderous blackmailing, thus proving that they considered the issue very delicate. See, for instance, Mark Zavadskii, “Предъявите ваших олигархов” [Show us your oligarchs], in *Journal* (no. 46, 24-3- November 2003), pp. 20-21.

shortly after the 2003 parliamentary elections, the party called an extraordinary meeting entitled “On the political results of the elections to the State Duma and the tasks of the party”, at which the mistakes and lessons of the last parliamentary campaign were discussed. Similar meetings were conducted in each regional branch and local PPO. The self-criticism at the federal as well as the regional levels was even more revealing than the accusations that came earlier from party opponents. Three main issues were discussed at the meeting: the issue of oligarchs, the changed external environment, and the influence of the first two factors on the internal party structure and ideology.⁷⁷ First, the Communists reminded themselves as well as the public that the *CPRF* program stated that the party accepted all forms of ownerships. Thus, there formally existed no challenges to the rich businessmen joining the party. Party members expressed an opinion that the Russian businessmen who joined the party did so voluntarily. Thus, the *CPRF* should not hide but present this fact as a victory. Indeed, the Communists would hardly be able to convince the rich Russians to join a Communist party oppositional to the current regime if this was not their conscious decision. Remarkably enough, members of regional branches have also spoken out to support a definite party position on the issue of acceptance of regional businessmen to the party. As Nikolai Ezerskii, member of the Sverdlovskaya party branch and the deputy of the regional assembly, stated:

*In Sverdlovskaya oblast, the home of Yeltsin, the Communists are not especially loved. [...] What would I like to hear from the leaders of the CPRF? A clear statement in regards to patterns of ownership. If we accept economic multiformity, let us speak it aloud. For instance, why are we accused of having a director of an organization, a Communist, who is supposedly exploiting the workers? Today the constructively thinking Communists think that market relations cannot be abolished; however it is important that the benefits are distributed justly, and are not lined in one pocket, as is usually the case in Russia.*⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Nikolai Kozanov, Viktor Kozemiako, “Отвечая на крутые вызовы времени” [Responding to tough current challenges], in *Pravda-CPRF* (Moscow, no. 148, 30.12.2003, code PLR/y2003_2/821EB6B8-F951-43C1-836D-A6E1D8539B6B), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

⁷⁸ Sergei Riabov, “Вокруг да около” [Beating around the bush], in *Pravda-CPRF* (Moscow, no. 039, 04.04.2003, code PLR/y2003_1/AC2E5A44-A837-4966-9B7E-9257AB72BC45), available at www.public.ru; Internet. Sergei Riabov, “Урал – опорный край державы” [The Ural is the pivotal region for the country], in *Pravda-CPRF* (Moscow, no. 124, 30.10.2003, code PLR/y2003_2/BF8EE7FF-1C04-47B2-9334-CCF3279E54DF), available at www.public.ru; Internet. “Слово делегатам” [The floor for the delegates], in *Pravda-CPRF* (Moscow, no. 141, 05.12.2000, code PLR/y2000/DC4BF297-15BE-47EE-94FC-B355CDB1379F), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

Overall, the members of the party agreed that the current ideology and program should be reviewed and suggested creation of a special party commission, which would first deal with the issues of party ideology and propaganda.⁷⁹ Apropos, such a committee has never existed in the structure of the *CPRF* so far. In contrast, the *CPSU* had a committee responsible for ideology and propaganda. In sum, contrary to the arguments that the *CPRF* remained deaf to the criticism, the Congress showed that the party is ready to face its problems and is willing to work on improving them. As the secretary of the Ryazanskii regional branch stated:

*The most important thing is not to lose courage in this new environment, not to get stuck in internal conflicts, not to become divided. We cannot loose our stand!*⁸⁰

The complexity of the situation at the regional level was also great. As was mentioned earlier, the members of the regional branches remained the staunchest Communists who monitored the purity of the Communist ideology and goals. In their everyday activities, (for instance during the demonstrations), a certain prioritization of national issues over local ones is noticeable. However, it would be wrong to argue that the regional branches of the *CPRF* neglected regional issues. Rather, the majority of the Communists believed that the regional, social, and economic problems were mere consequences of the failure of the current political regime. Hence, to solve the regional problems one should start by changing the government and the President.

The Nizgorodskaya branch of the *CPRF* sometimes tried to combine regional events with nationally organized protest demonstrations and meetings. For instance, in November 2003, all regional branches of the *CPRF* organized demonstrations devoted to the 86th anniversary of the October Revolution. Simultaneously with the celebration of the anniversary, the Nizgorodskaya branch of the *CPRF* also conducted protest pickets against the absolutism of regional elites.

⁷⁹ Kozanov et al., "Отвечая на крутые вызовы времени" [Responding to tough current challenges], www.public.ru.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

In some cases, emphasis on the party's national agenda challenged the party's regional electoral success. Such was the case in Sverdlovskaya oblast, where the regional branch failed to address the regional inspirations of the residents, thus paving the way for Eduard Rossel to consolidate the region around the regional movement *Transformation of the Urals* and force the *CPRF* to the sidewalk of regional power politics.

Turning to the delicate issue of finances and its influence on the level of party institutionalization in the regions, two points can be made. First, based upon scattered information gathered from the regional newspapers, it seems that the financial issue is one of the most acute for the majority of the *CPRF* branches. While all of them exist on the money gathered from membership fees, these funds are hardly enough to even rent offices and pay full-time activists. The party lacks sufficient financial resources to conduct political campaigns at the regional and municipal levels. While the classic propaganda methods employed by the Communists such as door-to-door leafleting or demonstrations and pickets are low-cost actions, the party faces the necessity of paying for printed media. Lacking access to regional TV and radio due to either their high costs or trivial obstacles posed by the regional elites, the *CPRF* had to search for other methods to promote their ideological position. Printing Communist newspapers, bulletins or leaflets is one such method. Yet often regional branches lack money even to fund tiny monthly bulletins and leaflets with the upcoming events.⁸¹ In Nizhegorodskaya oblast, the regional branch has money only to print two monthly four-page news lists. And in Sverdlovskaya oblast, the regional branch is lacking resources to maintain the circulation of its regional Communist newspaper *Echo of the Day*, published twice a month, at ten thousand copies (it was reduced to five thousand copies). None of the branches has an official car. The disastrous financial situation of the party in the regions was often

⁸¹ Sergei Riabov, "Зимние смотрины" [Winter monitoring], in *Pravda-CPRF* (Moscow, no. 012, 03.02.2004, code PLR/y2004_1/D44C4874-3283-41A4-9DC9-47FF9ED30ED9), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

discussed at the regional meetings. Recently, a revolutionary suggestion was made by the members of the regional branch in Sverdlovskaya oblast to allow the branches to look independently for financial sponsors.⁸² No answer from party leadership was received yet. As a consequence, while the Communists are still relying solely on their organizational capacities, the realization is growing that the lack of sufficient financial resources during the time of expensive PR techniques threatens the very existence of the party in the long term.

4.4. Concluding Remarks

The analysis of the internal environment of the *CPRF* revealed some interesting findings, which are summarized, based on the criteria developed in our theoretical section.

The *CPRF* is a democratic party. Although the statute does not allow the existence of official factions within the party, unofficially there exist three ideological movements within the party raging from hardline Communists to moderate Socialists. The intensity of its internal debate, open criticism and willingness to discuss sensible issues point to the democratic nature of the party. Yet the *CPRF* is also a cohesive party. Specifically, it believes that democratic processes should follow some order and once a final decision is taken, everyone has to follow it. Consequently, if someone breaks a rule after it has been agreed upon by the majority of the members, he/she is likely to face expulsion. In some cases, the right to open criticism of the party and the need to obey the general rules clashed leading to situations of internal crisis (i.e. Seleznev issue, Tepliakov issue).

⁸² Ibid.

Party structure at the federal as well as at the regional level almost perfectly resembles the institutional design set up in the statute. Such institutional homogeneity combined with cross-national representation and presence in virtually all of the Russian regions, indicate an almost perfect organizational structure. Moreover, the *CPRF* maintains a high level of activities on the ground and observes a regular schedule of party meetings. On top of everything, party structure is maintained by the regular party members who believe that only a cohesive party staffed with self-disciplined members can achieve political success.

The *CPRF* is a party of organization. It has a clearly identifiable party leader, yet the existence of the party is not dependent on his leadership. One might argue that to a certain extent the figure of Zyuganov lacks situational charisma. Although this is true, it cannot endanger the existence of the party per se, since the strength of the *CPRF* is rooted in its organization and only secondarily in its leader. The situation with party leaders at the regional level confirms the findings. In the case of Nizhegorodskaya oblast, the *CPRF* regional leader is not charismatic, but is intelligent and a devoted party member – values that are esteemed by the Communists more than charisma. As to the leader of Sverdlovskaya party branch, he displays greater leadership qualities. It seemed that the *CPRF* lacked leaders who could rescue party image in emergency situations. It is true that often the lack of charisma displayed by party leaders at the federal and national levels weakened the party's chances for higher popularity ratings. It is possible to assume that a change in party leadership for more charismatic party leaders at the federal as well as at the regional levels would enhance party chances for success.

The concept of party membership experienced slow transformation over the last couple of years. Specifically, while still paying attention to the problems of the old and the poor, the *CPRF* turned its attention to youth and people of middle age. Trying to

attract youth, the *CPRF* mastered new methods of recruitment and thus significantly increased its chances for greater membership inflow in the upcoming years. Overall, the party displayed a high level of innovative thinking and flexibility when designing its new methods of recruitment campaign.

The party is very much restrained in its finances. This is one of the pressing issues for the *CPRF* as it is extremely important in the age of professionalized campaigns to have access to modern methods of campaigning. However, the necessity to strengthen the party's financial resources is challenged by the party's ideological dilemma. Should the party leadership accept the help of businessmen, it would significantly endanger internal party cohesion as many party members are against collaborating with the rich. On the other hand, an opinion exists within the party that because this is their voluntary and conscious decision, the *CPRF* cannot reject them. As a consequence, the party is currently in the midst of a slow ideological transformation. It is likely that the need to adjust to the modern demands of the external environment will force the *CPRF* to slightly modify its ideological concept. Taking into account the intensity of the debate on this topic in the aftermath of the December 2003 parliamentary elections and the openness with which party members discussed it, the *CPRF* has a strong potential to overcome this challenge successfully.

In summary, based upon the analysis of the internal environment of the *CPRF*, it can be said that the party displayed a high degree of internal institutionalization. Despite some obvious weaknesses such as lack of charismatic leaders, financial limitations and pressing ideological dilemmas, the *CPRF* remains one of the most organizationally strong political parties.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF UNITED RUSSIA: A CROSS-DIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS

The structure of chapter V follows the same logic as applied in chapter IV. First, attention will be paid to party origin. The second section is devoted to the analysis of party organization. Finally, party ideology and finances will be discussed. As a reminder of the criteria used to analyze the level of party institutionalization, one can refer to the table 1.1. on pages 25-26.

5.1. Party Origin

The 1999 parliamentary elections marked the birth of a new party of power, which was built by the Kremlin and claimed no other ideology than support of then Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. The 1999 parliamentary elections were seen by all political actors as crucial for Russia's future development. Approaching the end of his second term, Yeltsin was hastily looking for a possible successor to the "throne". After numerous attempts to find a suitable successor, he had his eye on a then unknown KGB apparatchik Vladimir Putin, who was destined to replace Sergei Stepashin in August 1999 as the new Russian Prime Minister. Soon Yeltsin became confident that he had found a perfect successor. The problem was how to secure his election as the new President of the Russian Federation. It was evident that in the case of scheduled presidential elections, Yeltsin's protégé would compete not only against a strong Communist opposition, but also against the movement *Fatherland*, newly emerged in December 1998, led by Moscow mayor Yurii Luzhkov and composed of regional leaders, who were willing to consolidate the autonomy gained during the Yeltsin years.¹ On the eve of the 1999 parliamentary elections, *Fatherland* united with its rival movement *All-Russia*, led by Tatarstan President Mintimer Shaymiyev and St. Petersburg Governor Vladimir Yakovlev, to form a grand coalition called *Fatherland-All Russia (OVR)* with former

¹ Peter Rutland, "Putin's Path to Power," in *Post-Soviet Affairs* (vol. 16, no. 4, October-December 2000), p. 324.

premier Primakov as its leader.² Yeltsin had to move quickly, or otherwise face the threat of Putin losing in the elections to Primakov or even Luzhkov.

Such was the environment in which the idea of creating a new party of power was born. The idea belonged to the business magnate Boris Berezovskii, who was close to the Kremlin and very afraid of the possibility of Primakov coming to power due to personal dislike between the two.³ Berezovskii suggested the formation of an inter-regional movement, which would be composed of regional leaders and represent Russia's provinces, thus creating an image of a pragmatic, de-ideologized movement with no other goal than serving people during difficult times. Berezovskii was experienced enough in politics to notice that many voters were skeptical of both leftist and rightist ideologies and tired of the same faces appearing on TV screens. Up to a point, this was a real "one-man-show", with Berezovskii traveling across the country and convincing the regional governors and local political movements or parties to join the newly established Kremlin movement.⁴ Eventually, thirty-nine regional leaders supported the movement.⁵ Moscow politicians also became very interested in the new movement.⁶ As the parliamentary elections of 1999 were approaching, there were reports of some politicians and businessmen switching sides from *OVR* to *Unity* and *Our Home is Russia* carrying out some under-the-rug negotiations with *Unity* with the purpose of joining the coalition.⁷

In sum, *Unity* was formed upon a number of marginal political organizations in the regions, unknown to the majority of the Russian citizens, and Moscow politicians who saw an opportunity to join the party, which was likely to become the next party of

² Ibid.

³ Lilia Shevtsova, *Putin's Russia* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003), p. 44.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Timothy J. Colton and Michael McFaul, "Reinventing Russia's Party of Power: *Unity* and the 1999 Duma Elections," in *Post-Soviet Affairs* (vol. 16, no. 3, July-September 2000), p. 205.

⁶ Ibid., p. 206.

⁷ Elena Danilova, Nikolai Ulyanov, "Шойгу поведёт Единство на парламентские выборы" [Shoigu is to lead *Unity* to parliamentary elections], in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (Moscow, 28 September 1999), available at <http://www.ng.ru/politics/1999-09-28/Unity.html>; Internet.

power.⁸ *Unity*'s position was secured when the then Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin openly supported the movement stating that he would vote for *Unity* "as a citizen and friend of Sergei Shoigu."⁹

The initiative group was established on 24 September 1999 when Sergei Shoigu, an active and energetic Russian minister of emergency, was invited to head the party.¹⁰ The movement was labeled *Medved*, the word for *Bear* in Russian, which was an abbreviation for *Mezhregionalnoe Dvizenie Edinstvo*, or *Interregional Movement Unity*. The names *Medved* (*Bear*), and *Edinstvo* (*Unity*) were used interchangeably throughout the 1999 campaign.

The efforts of skillful Moscow campaign managers led by Boris Berezovskii played its role – in the 1999 Duma elections the party managed to come second with 23 % of the votes, surpassed only by the *CPRF* with 24 % of the votes. *Fatherland-All Russia* (*OVR*) received 13.3% of the vote.¹¹

In the end, the two primary contenders in the 1999 elections – *Unity* and *OVR* turned into the closest allies in the 1999 Duma. The turn is largely explained by the pragmatism of the *OVR* members. Finding itself in a deep organizational crisis after the election, *OVR* faced the necessity of positioning itself toward the new party of power and the President. Since *OVR* consisted mainly of regional leaders and some high-positioned Moscow politicians, it was not to *OVR*'s advantage to be in opposition to the Kremlin. Therefore, the majority of regional leaders who were members of the *OVR* openly supported Vladimir Putin and the government and expressed their wish to create an

⁸ Ibid. Small regional organizations were willing to sacrifice their independence for the opportunity to get to the Duma. Among them were such organizations as *In Support of Independent Deputies*, *All-Russian Union in Support of Small and Medium Business*, *My Family*, *Generation of Freedom* and two parties – the *National Patriots* and the *Russian Christian Democratic Party*.

⁹ Shevtsova, p. 46.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 45.

¹¹ Vladimir Gelman, *United Russia: Ruling Party or Emperor's New Clothes?* (PONARS Policy Memo No. 255, October 2002), available at http://www.csis.org/ruseura/ponars/policymemos/pm_0255.pdf; Internet.

independent pro-government faction in the Duma.¹² Later on, on the eve of the 2000 presidential elections, both parties and their allies, i.e. faction *Russia's Regions*, established a pro-government coalition in the Duma.¹³ In late spring 2001, *Unity* and *Fatherland-All Russia* announced their decision to form a common “front” outside the parliament to support the legislative program of President Putin. The reason behind the merger was that by joining the party of power *Fatherland-All Russia* deputies would then share in the benefits that the Kremlin could dispense to loyal Duma members and the government would gain even more control over the legislature.¹⁴ The merger was formalized during a joint conference in early December 2001, when a new political entity was formed – *United Russia*.¹⁵ Later on, in February 2002, the three movements that formed *United Russia* proclaimed their voluntary dissolution.

The new party had three leaders who previously were leading figures in *Unity* (Sergei Shoigu), *Fatherland* (Yurii Luzhkov) and *All-Russia* (Mintimer Shaymiyev). *United Russia* kept the symbol of *Unity* – the bear – intact, as well as preserved the key word *United* in its name. Neither had changed the external image of the party – the new party was promoted as a young, pragmatic and active party loyal to the President. The party's slogans such as “war on impoverishment”, “protection of the rights of budget-funded employees” tried to promote the social de-ideologized character of *United Russia*.

Comparing the origin of the *CPRF* and *United Russia*, several points have to be made. First, the process of the *CPRF* establishment is better understood according to the

¹² Elena Egorova, Elena Korotkova, “Поход из ряда вон: почему губернаторы предали ‘Отечество’” [Leaving the party: why the governors betrayed *Fatherland*], *National News Line*, reprinted from *Moskovskii Komsomolets* (24.12.1999), available at <http://www.nns.ru/Elect99/analit/comments/kom161.html>; Internet.

¹³ Gelman, *United Russia: Ruling Party or Emperor's New Clothes?* Available at http://www.csis.org/ruseura/ponars/policymemos/pm_0255.pdf; Internet.

¹⁴ “Recent Changes to Electoral Law,” in *How Russia Votes?* (joint project of the University of Strathclyde and VCIOM), available at <http://www.russiavotes.org/electorallawchange3.htm>; Internet, last updated 16 July 2003.

¹⁵ Official website of *United Russia*, available at <http://www.edin.ru/section.html?rid=296>; Internet.

mixed model – when both the Communist elites as well as the masses jointly worked toward achieving a common goal. In regards to *Unity*, its original set-up could be described as penetration, as it was high Moscow officials and PR-consultants who worked on promoting the party in the regions. Presented as an inter-regional party, *Unity* was rather a political appendix to the Kremlin.

Unity also differed from the *CPRF* in the importance of an external sponsor for the party's further survival. The *CPRF* was established without the help of any influential and wealthy sponsors, while the existence of *Unity* was secured solely with the help of the Kremlin. In sum, the *CPRF* owed its re-birth largely to ideology and strong organization, whereas *Unity's* origin was in the hands of young technocrats and businessmen.

Moreover, the *CPRF* and *Unity* differed in the role of party leader and his importance for party's survivability. In the *CPRF*, Zyuganov played an important, though not an existentially vital role. In contrast, *Unity* originated as a party focused on one person – Vladimir Putin. Moreover, lacking well-defined structure and classic ideology, the party relied on political consultants and known public figures, such as sportsmen, singers, and politicians to boost party ratings.

5.2. Party Organization

The section analyzes the three fundamental criteria of party institutionalization – party organization, party leadership and membership.

5.2.1. Party Architecture

In an interview with *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* in 2002, Gennadii Zyuganov stated that he did not consider *United Russia* a political party, because it did not possess an ideological basis, devoted party members and a well-developed party structure. In his

words, *United Russia* was “not a party, but a mess.”¹⁶ To evaluate, whether he was right, we now turn to an analysis of the organization of the party of power. Since *Unity* transformed itself into *United Russia* in December 2001, there have existed two different statutes. *Unity*’s statute was passed in May 2000. The statute of *United Russia* was adopted in May 2002, half a year after the party was formed. It is important to note that although the process of creation of *United Russia* was presented in the media as a merger of three centrist blocs, it would be more practical to speak about absorption of the two other parties by *Unity*. Therefore, when analyzing the structure of the party of power, primary attention will be on the *United Russia*’s statute with some attention also being paid to the *Unity*’s statute. This will allow us to objectively evaluate the degree of the party’s organizational evolution since its founding in 1999.

The structure of *United Russia* is displayed schematically in a table below.

Table 5.1. The structure of *United Russia*

Central Party Organs		
Party Organ	Organ Responsibilities	Structure and Composition of the Unit and its resemblance with the <i>Unity</i> structure (where applicable)
Supreme Council	Supreme Council - represents the party in front of the state authorities, in the media, etc. (Art. 7.5.2., <i>United Russia</i> statute); - advises the General Council upon the most urgent question of national and international importance (Art. 7.5.3., <i>United Russia</i> statute); - advises the Congress upon the most suitable candidates for the positions within the General Council and Central Political Council (Art. 7.5.5., <i>United Russia</i> statute); - recommends candidates to the electing offices, for instance to the Presidency and the State Duma (Art. 7.5.6., <i>United Russia</i> statute); - recommends changes or amendments to party statute (Art. 7.5.8., <i>United Russia</i> statute); - serves as the link between the party and the leading federal authorities (Art. 7.5.9., <i>United Russia</i> statute).	- <i>Unity</i> structure did not contain any unit similar to the Supreme Council. - Currently, there are 35 members of the Supreme Council, among whom are the Chair of the Supreme Council, and three deputy chairs. - Elected for a four-year term by open ballot in a simple majoritarian system at the Party Congress (Art. 4.2., <i>United Russia</i> statute). - Members of the Supreme Council do not need to be party members. They, however, have to support Putin reforms. As party statute states: “The Supreme Council is elected among the most prominent political figures of the Russian Federation. Members of the Presidium of the General Council belong to the Supreme Council as well” (Art. 7.3., <i>United Russia</i> statute).
Party Congress	The Congress - adopts the party statute and program; - passes changes or amendments to it;	- <i>Unity</i> structure possessed similar party organ (Art. 7.1., <i>Unity</i> statute).

¹⁶ Roundtable entitled “Есть и такая партия – КПРФ” [There also exists such a party as the *CPRF*], in *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, available at http://www.rg.ru/Anons/arc_2002/1225/1.shtml; Internet.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - elects party leaders, members of the Political Council for a two-year term, members of the General Council for a four-year term; the Central Auditing Committee for a four-year term; and - nominates candidates to run in federal elections (Art. 8.3.5., <i>United Russia</i> statute). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meets every two years and is called either on demand of the Presidium, Political Council, Central Auditing Committee or on demand of at least one third of party's regional branches (Art. 8.3.1., <i>United Russia</i> statute).
Central Political Council	<p>The Political Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - elaborates party election platform as well as other ideological documents; - serves as a bridge between the party and federal organs, other political movements; - coordinates the communication between the center and regional branches; - takes decisions about reorganization of political branches or their closure; - reports to the Congress about the conducted work (Art. 8.4., <i>United Russia</i> statute). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political Council is the highest permanently standing party organ between the Congresses. - <i>Unity</i> structure possessed similar organ called Political Council (Art. 7.3., <i>Unity</i> statute). - One hundred members of the Political Council are elected by secret ballot for a two-year term at Party Congress (Art. 8.4.2., <i>United Russia</i> statute). - The Political Council meets at least once every six months (Art. 8.4.6., <i>United Russia</i> statute). - The activity of the Political Council is organized by the Secretary of the General Council (Art. 8.4.5., <i>United Russia</i> statute).
General Council	<p>The General Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - elects Presidium and the Secretary of the General Council, who automatically become members of the Supreme Council and belong to the Bureau of the Supreme Council; - controls the political activity of the party; - takes decision about calling the Congress; - nominates the manager of the Central Executive Committee on suggestion of the Council; - nominates candidates for presidential and parliamentary elections; - communicates with regional branches on different administrative issues; - interacts with the organs of the federal power, other political parties and movements; - passes the regulation on membership recruitment program; - elaborates party budget; - sets up publishing houses; information agencies; other media sources. <p>The Council reports to the Congress about the conducted work (Art. 8.5., <i>United Russia</i> statute).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General Council is the permanently standing body between sessions of the Political Council (Art. 8.5.1., <i>United Russia</i> statute). - <i>Unity</i> possessed a unit – the Presidium, which in its responsibilities resembled the General Council (Art. 7.4., <i>Unity</i> statute). - Fifteen members of the Council are elected at the Congress by simple secret vote for a four-year term. Members of the General Council are members of the Political Council.
Central Executive Committee	<p>Central Executive Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - implements the decisions of the Party Congress, Political Council and the General Council; - is responsible for all organizational issues of the party at the federal level; - reports to the General Council about execution of party orders (Art. 8.6.5., <i>United Russia</i> statute). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Central Executive Committee is the permanent executive party organ. - <i>Unity</i> structure possessed similar organ called Central Executive Committee (Art. 7.6.3., <i>Unity</i> statute).
Central Auditing Committee	<p>Central Auditing Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitors the financial activity of the party and is responsible for submitting financial annual reports; - is responsible to Party Congress (Art. 8.7., <i>United Russia</i> statute). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Central Auditing Committee is the permanent revisioning organ of the party. - <i>Unity</i> structure had similar party organ (Art. 9., <i>Unity</i> statute). - Members of the Central Auditing Committee are elected at Party Congress for a four-year term by secret ballot (Art. 8.7.2., <i>United Russia</i> statute).

Regional Party Organs		
<u>Regional Level</u>		
Regional Conference	<p>The Regional Conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - has the jurisdiction over all questions, which are related to regional issues such as election of member of the regional Political Council, nomination of candidates to run in the regional executive and legislative elections and nomination of delegates for the Party Congress (Art. 9.7.7., <i>United Russia</i> statute). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Unity</i> structure at the regional level resembled the organization of <i>United Russia</i> at the regional level (Art. 6.3., <i>Unity</i> statute). - The Regional Conference meets at least once every two years.
Regional Political Council	<p>Regional Political Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - takes decisions related to regional issues; - passes the budget of the regional branch; - monitors the activity of the district branches; - monitors the electoral activities of the party in the regional and district elections (Art. 9.8.8., <i>United Russia</i> statute). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional Political Council is a permanent standing body between the Regional Conferences (Art. 9.8., <i>United Russia</i> statute). - Members of the Regional Political Council are elected at the Regional Conference for a two-year term (Art. 9.7.7.3., <i>United Russia</i> statute). - Regional Political Council meets at least once in four months (Art. 9.8.3., <i>United Russia</i> statute).
Regional Executive Council	<p>Regional Executive Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organizes all regional activities; - is responsible for all logistical and organizational issues; - finalizes regional budget, etc. (Art. 9.9.5., <i>United Russia</i> statute). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional Executive Council is a permanent executive organ of the regional branch (Art. 9.9.1., <i>United Russia</i> statute).
Regional Auditing Committee	<p>Regional Auditing Committee monitors the financial activities of the branch and is responsible to the Regional Conference (Art. 9.10., <i>United Russia</i> statute).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members of the Regional Auditing Committee are elected at the Regional Conference for a two-year term (Art. 9.7.7.4., <i>United Russia</i> statute).
<u>Inter-Regional Coordinating Party Council</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inter-regional Coordinating Party Council is established to strengthen horizontal cooperation among regional branches (Art. 9.11., <i>United Russia</i> statute). - The Inter-Regional Coordinating Party Council is monitored by the General Council and is staffed with Coordinating Secretary, his assistants and Secretaries of Regional Political Councils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Similar unit is found in <i>Unity</i> structure (Art. 6.6., <i>Unity</i> statute).
<u>The District Level</u>		
District Conference	<p>The District Conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - elects members of the District Political Council; - elects members of the District Auditing Committee; - elects delegates to the Regional Conference; - nominates candidates to run in regional elections (Art. 10.6., <i>United Russia</i> statute). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The organization of <i>United Russia</i> at the district level resembled the organization of <i>Unity</i> (Art. 6.2., <i>Unity</i> statute). - The District Conference meets at least once a year (Art. 10.5.1., <i>United Russia</i> statute).
District Political Council	<p>District Political Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - elects from within the Council a Secretary for one year term; - serves as the communication bridge between various state organs and the party; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - District Political Councils is a permanent organ between the District Conferences (Art. 10.7.1., <i>United Russia</i> statute). - Members of the District Political Council are elected at the District Conference for one year

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - coordinates the activity of the regional PPOs; - reports about the conducted work to the District Conference; - organizes local political campaigns (Art. 10.7.5., <i>United Russia</i> statute). 	(Art. 10.7.2., <i>United Russia</i> statute).
District Executive Committee	<p>District Executive Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organizes the activity of the district organization; - implements the decisions of the District Conference; - helps in organizing political campaign at the district and local levels; - is responsible for all logistical issues at the district level, (Art. 10.8.5., <i>United Russia</i> statute). 	- District Executive Committee is a permanent executive organ at the district level (Art. 10.8.1., <i>United Russia</i> statute).
District Auditing Committee	District Auditing Committee monitors the activity of the district branch (Art. 10.8.6.1., <i>United Russia</i> statute).	District Auditing Committee is elected at the District Conference for one year (Art. 10.8.6.2., <i>United Russia</i> statute).
<u>PPO</u>	<p>PPOs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recruit party members; - elect deputies to the District Conference and candidates to local elections, etc. (Art. 11.7., <i>United Russia</i> statute). 	Meetings of regional PPOs are conducted at least once a month (Art. 11.5., <i>United Russia</i> statute).

Source: compiled based upon the statute of *United Russia*.

In summary, in regard to party central organs, their structure is sometimes confusing and the responsibilities of many organs overlap. For instance, the chair of the Central Executive Committee is also the member of the Political Council and the General Council, and the chair of the Political Council sat on the Central Executive Committee (Art. 7.3.3. and 7.6.2., *United Russia* statute).

On the vertical axes, *United Russia*'s structure proved to be similar to the one of *Unity*. Regional branches were usually set up on the initiative of the party's central organs, often from scratch. District branches were initiated on the initiative of the regional branch in coordination with the central party organs. Local PPOs were set-up on the initiative of the district organization. Further, comparing the statutes of *Unity* and *United Russia*, one notices that the statute of *United Russia* pays greater attention to the local PPOs, devoting a large section of the statute to them, (Article 6.2.13., *Unity* statute and Article 11, *United Russia* statute).

Having analyzed the organizational structure of *United Russia*, one notes that although the party was promoted as a regional movement, it was set-up as a party with a strong center and weak regional branches. Officially, the regional branches were controlled by the central office and were responsible to the Central Executive Committee and required to report regularly on party activity in the region (Art. 6.5. and 6.7., *United Russia* statute). Thus, the structure of the party was highly centralized and built in favor of the upper levels at the expense of grass-roots branches.

Despite such strict vertical articulation and subordination, the party lacks the unity of organization in practice. The communication between the center and the regions is weak and depends on persons as binding party elements, thus promoting informal relations among party members.¹⁷ Moreover, the complexity of the structure at the top of the party hierarchy often led to confusion on the part of regional branches about which Committee was responsible for what.¹⁸ Overall, it seemed that the organization of *United Russia* reflected a rather autocratic party model. Specifically, its leadership has not welcomed party debates or any criticism of party platform. Ordinary party members had few chances to influence the direction of party policy. Moreover, although nominally led by four leaders, the party was practically oriented toward serving one man – Vladimir Putin. Such personification of the party in one leader as well as a lack of coordination between the center and the regions weakened the inner organization of the party. As political scientist, Yurii Korgunyuk of the *Indem* think tank said: “*United Russia* itself is not strong; the power lies in the [external] groups whose interests it reflects.”¹⁹

¹⁷ Gelman, *United Russia: Ruling Party or Emperor's New Clothes?* Available at http://www.csis.org/ruseura/ponars/policymemos/pm_0255.pdf; Internet.

¹⁸ Svetlana Dobrynina, “Единство построили” [*Unity has been built*], in *Novye Izvestia* (Moscow, no. 228, 20.12.2002, code PLR/y2002_2/B8A1E548-EF3A-423A-9338-A56C7EFFE372), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

¹⁹ Natalia Yefimova, “*United Russia* Boosts Its Roster,” in *St. Petersburg Times* (no. 856, 1 April 2003), available from http://www.times.spb.ru/archive/times/856/top/t_9112.htm; Internet.

In sum, the organization of the party in the center displays certain weaknesses. The organization of the regional branches is even more obscure. Initially, in 1999-2000, the regional branches of the party of power resembled “sleeping cells”. According to one regional party functionary, many local PPOs were established in the following manner: Some official of the municipal or regional organization would find an acquaintance who agreed to handle all organizational matters in establishing a cell (students are usually employed for that). When the “cell” is formed, it exists only on paper. The higher organization, which was supposed to be the donor, does not send any money until the elections. The cells are re-activated only on the eve of federal or regional elections.²⁰

The organizational weakness of regional branches is evident from the experience in Sverdlovskaya and Nizhegorodskaya oblasts. In Nizhegorodskaya oblast, the *Unity* branch was established in 1999. It was set up by four people known in the region, namely Alexander Kosarikov, deputy of the State Duma, his secretary Alexander Sysoev, Georgii Molokin, a bold PR consultant, who has organized political campaigns for many regional political figures, and Dmitrii Bednyakov, deputy of the regional Duma and former mayor of Nizhniy Novgorod.²¹ They formed the core team of the regional branch. In 1999 and the beginning of 2000, the branch was mainly pre-occupied with the issue of building up close relations with the regional elite in order to secure Putin’s victory in the region in the upcoming presidential elections. Because of this, the branch had not conducted any local meetings, social activities or recruitment programs, but rather devoted all its attention to promoting the party on regional TV and in the newspapers. During this time, the branch more closely resembled a PR-company for the Putin political campaign. The situation changed since Putin was elected president and *Unity* became the party of power. Shortly

²⁰ Mikhail Vinogradov, Alexander Sadchikov, “A BLOWN BUBBLE. A new power party: between triumph and failure,” in *Johnson’s Russia List* (July 30, 2002), available at <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/6377-12.cfm>; Internet.

²¹ *Nizhegorodskaya oblast* (Informational Center *Panorama*, Report), available at <http://www.panorama.ru/works/fed/nizh.html>; Internet.

after the elections, in May 2000, *Unity* conducted its first constitutive regional meeting and launched a frantic campaign of establishing a stable regional caucus.²² Soon after the conference, in December 2000, the regional branch, with the help of Dmitrii Bednyakov, created a *Unity* faction in the regional Duma. This has secured *Unity*'s place within regional elites and strengthened party influence on regional politics in general.²³

It is important to note that the process of establishing regional branches was closely monitored from the center and was going on simultaneously in many Russian regions. Revealing in this context is the authoritarian mode of communication, adopted by the central party branch in its communication with the regional branches. For instance, in the end of 2000, the central office passed to the regional branches a directive to realize party organizational agenda. According to this agenda, branches had to be established in all 89 Russian regions and each regional branch had to form a "supreme party school", an "electoral technology center", set-up 10,000-12,000 PPOs, set up a public reception center in each district, form youth branches, create inter-regional centers for party construction, form deputy factions in regional legislatures and start its own sport clubs.²⁴ All this had to be done within a year after the directive had been passed to the branch. The regional branch had to fulfill the directive without questioning it, even if some of the directives did not fit into that particular regional environment.

The domination of the center in party organization was also obvious from how regulations were issued. For instance, when one of the party leaders Franz Klintsevich visited Nizhegorodskaya oblast in November 2002, he expressed his concern that over the least a couple of months only 167 people became party members. He then immediately issues an order, which stated that by 1 January 2003 the regional branch had to grant

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Derek S. Hutcheson, Political parties in the Russian regions (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), p. 77.

admission to 1% of all voters in the region, the equivalent of 28 thousand people.²⁵ Moreover, Klintsevich ordered the branch to search primarily for educated members – from the intelligentsia circles and administrative corpus.²⁶ In sum, claiming to be a party that represented Russia's regions and ordinary people, *United Russia* operated according to the top-down model and neglected feedback from the regional branches.

The directives were strictly observed by the regional branches. In September 2001, while preparing for the transformation of *Unity* into *United Russia*, the regional branch in Nizhegorodskaya oblast reported on the completion of the some of the organizational tasks. Specifically, the branch announced that it had succeeded in recruiting new members, establishing a faction in the regional Duma and was actively working on setting up local PPOs. In 2002, the Nizhegorodskaya branch set up regular office hours, provided material support to local communities of disabled people and launched a Sunday athletic program “Mother, father, and I are an athletic family.”²⁷ In addition, according to the chair of the regional committee Alexander Weinberg, the Nizhegorodskaya branch of *United Russia* tried to build up close cooperation with representatives of various social classes and professions. As an example, Weinberg pointed to the cooperation between the branch and the *Union of Party Supporters*, which was headed by the director of the one of the biggest Russian car-producing companies GAZ Nikolai Pugin.²⁸

In contrast to the situation in Nizhegorodskaya oblast, where the regional branch did not face any challenges stemming from the external environment and was quite successfully integrated, the fate of the party of power in Sverdlovskaya oblast depended

²⁵ Sergei Anisimov, “Чиновникам не верят, но они не теряются” [Bureaucrats are not trusted, yet they do not get embarrassed], in *Nezavisimaya gazeta – regiony* (Nizhniy Novgorod, no. 240, 11.11.2002, code PLR/y2002_2/D404E926-48B4-4FE1-A764-7EC9CE962D14), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ The official website of *United Russia*, The membership of United Russia in Nizhegorodskaya oblast amounts to 3,5 thousand people, available at <http://www.edin.ru/news.html?rid=1834&id=536>; Internet.

²⁸ Ibid.

very much on the benevolence of the regional governor and elites. One could claim that in the beginning of the process of party formation in the region, the *Unity* branch faced an explicitly hostile regional environment. Because of such hostility, the regional branch was barely functioning. Progress occurred at the end of 2001, when the regional *Unity* branch succeeded in allying with the regional movement *Our Home is Our City*, led by the mayor of Yekaterinburg Arkadii Chernetskii.²⁹ In the end, the regional branch of *Unity* built its structure on the already existing organizational caucus of the *NDNG* movement. *NDNG* had one of the most developed organizational structure in Sverdlovskaya oblast. *United Russia* used logistical, cadres and administrative resources of the mayoral movement to advance the party's integration into the regional elite.

In the beginning of 2002, a separate regional branch of the newly established *United Russia* was formed, which the regional branches of *Unity* and *Fatherland* immediately joined. Slowly, the branch absorbed the resources of *Unity*, *Fatherland* and *NDNG* and embarked on an ambitious plan of becoming the dominant political force in the region. On 28 February 2002, the regional branch of *United Russia* conducted its first Regional Conference, during which the delegates discussed the initial steps of the party in the region.³⁰ The Conference elected the leader of the regional branch – Sergei Nosov, as well as 28 members of the Regional Political Council. To note, all 28 candidates were deputies in the regional Duma and were recommended from the central office.³¹ None of the candidacies caused any debates and all of them, including the proposed leader of the newly established branch, were elected unanimously. The regional journalists speculated that the principal decision was taken in Moscow, while the regional branch did not have

²⁹ Alexander Zadoroznii, "Единая Россия сыграла политические поминки Эдуарда Росселя" [*United Russia* politically buried Eduard Rossel], in *Strana.ru* (National Informational Network online, 25.01.2002), available at <http://www.strana.ru/stories/01/12/18/2221/106209.html>; Internet.

³⁰ See the analysis of the regional political landscape by the regional *Yabloko* branch, "Информационная карта дня 28.02.2002" [Informational agenda of the day 28.02.2002], available at http://www.sverdlovsk.Yabloko.ru/media_reviews/print.phtml?id=302; Internet.

³¹ Ibid.

any choice but to legitimize this decision. The second part of the meeting was devoted to organizational questions. It was decided to focus on setting up local PPOs and work on attracting new members.³²

The next Conference of the regional branch was conducted in September 2002, when the branch leadership reported on the results in the process of establishing local PPOs and launching an active recruitment campaign. The meeting happened over the weekend behind closed doors with intense security measures in a suburban recreational center “Star”. Circa 100 members of the regional party branch, mostly leaders of the city and local PPOs, gathered to discuss party activity in the region. The reported results of the regional branch were not optimistic. Despite all efforts, the regional branch was not able to dominate the regional environment. Because of that, the branch was forced to seek closer collaboration with other organizationally strong political movements, in particular the gubernatorial movement. On a positive note, the party announced that it designed a well-thought out recruitment program, (which, however, was not revealed to the public).³³

In reference to party discipline and the mode of decision-making, the words of Franz Klintsevich in February 2002 are revealing. Specifically, during the first Regional Conference in Sverdlovskaya oblast in February 2002, he advised the members of the regional branch to leave all regional conflicts outside of party organization, or face the threat of being expelled from the party. Demanding greater discipline from party members, the party leadership was against any independent initiative of party members: “All current members of the regional branch were carefully selected in Moscow. If party members will display excessive independence, they will be expelled from the party”,

³² Ibid.

³³ Pavel Viktorov, “Когда нечего сказать, то приходится скрывать” [When there is nothing to say, one keeps it secret], in *Oblastnaya Gazeta* (Yekaterinburg, no. 189, 19.09.2002), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

Franz Klintsevich stated.³⁴ The words were followed by deeds at the federal as well as regional level. For instance, in November 2003, the central Party Committee expelled the deputy of the Moscow City Parliament Evgenii Balashev, and a successful businessperson from Archangelsk Vladimir Krupchak. Officially, both were expelled for flagrant violation of the party statute.³⁵ After expelling the unreliable, *United Russia* promoted to the regions candidates from the central office such as Dmitrii Zelenin, the former first deputy minister in the Ministry of Sport, who was nominated by *United Russia* to the position of governor in Tverskaya oblast.³⁶

In November 2003, the Supreme Council advised Sverdlovskaya branch to exclude from the party the leader of the *United Russia* faction in the Yekaterinburg City Duma Vladimir Kritskii and the member of the regional Politburo Vladimir Dmitriev. The “advice” was immediately followed. As the secretary of the regional party branch, Sergei Nosov commented on the issue, party members were excluded because they were very independent, took their own initiatives and did not follow the orders coming from above.³⁷ According to Vladimir Kritskii, he was excluded because he often criticized the way in which political campaigns were conducted in the region.³⁸ To note, Kritskii and Dmitriev were not invited to the regional meeting at which their cases were discussed.

The dominance of the central office over the regional branches was also obvious during the last mayoral elections in Yekaterinburg in December 2003. According to the statute of *United Russia*, candidates to the regional legislative and executive positions are

³⁴ *Yabloko*, “Информационная карта дня 28.02.2002” [Informational agenda of the day 28.02.2002], available at http://www.sverdlovsk.Yabloko.ru/media_reviews/print.phtml?id=302; Internet.

³⁵ Mikhail Kondygarov, “Великая октябрьская кадровая эволюция” [The Great October Cadre Evolution], in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* (Moscow, no. 224, 05.11.2003, code PLR/y2003_2/62EFA59B-5A39-45FD-A55F-00C8B6218789), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Sergei Stepanchenko, “Он даже в партию для этого вступил” [He even became party member], in *Uralskii Rabochii* (Yekaterinburg, no. 219, 22.11.2003, code PLR/y2003_2/6ED6AC77-622C-4F71-A0E2-716533BF9712), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

nominated during the Regional Conference (Art. 9.7.7.8.). Moreover, the party statute guaranteed party members support during the elections. The primary criteria, according to which the candidates were nominated, was their support for Putin's reforms and acceptance from the central party office on the suitability of the candidacy. The internal conflict, which unfolded during the 2003 mayoral election within the Sverdlovskaya branch, pointed to the existing arbitrariness in the process of candidate nomination and total dependence of the regional branch on decisions taken in the center.³⁹ In particular, the conflict unfolded during the Regional Conference in November 2003, at which the candidates that were to run in the mayoral elections were nominated. On the one hand, the city branch of the party proposed to nominate the current mayor of the city, official member of *United Russia* and popular politician Arkadii Chernetskii. Instead, the leadership of the regional party branch suddenly suggested the nomination of an unpopular politician from the gubernatorial camp Yurii Osintsev. Osintsev was believed to have ties to the criminal world and was neither a member nor a supporter of *United Russia*.⁴⁰ After a heated debate and protest on the part of the leaders of the city branch, the Conference decided to support the governor's protégé. During the voting, one third of all members of the regional branch voted against the candidacy of Osintsev. Moreover, it was known that all members of the city branch voted against Osintsev. Nevertheless, the candidacy of Osintsev was accepted as the official candidate from *United Russia*.⁴¹ As the situation showed, the wishes of the members of the city branch were neglected because of strategic interests of the party in the region. 2003 was the year when the governor of the region Eduard Rossel displayed willingness for closer collaboration with

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Kseniya Sashina, "Горожане выбрали главу" [Citizens voted for the mayor], in *Vechernii Yekaterinburg* (no. 239, 23.12.2003, code PLR/y2003_2/FC50E8C7-BAAE-4659-929E-B5D3D4DDA05), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

⁴¹ Stepanchenko, "Он даже в партию для этого вступил" [He even became party member], www.public.ru.

the party of power. The leadership of *United Russia* was glad to accept Rossel's offer of friendship, hoping in such a way to improve party integration among the regional elites. To prove the friendship, the regional party branch had to support the candidate most suitable for Rossel. In contrast to Chernetskii, who was known to be in an open political opposition to the governor, Osintsev would be an obedient executor of Rossel's goals. In the end, the decision was taken by the leadership of the regional branch to convince the members of the Conference to vote for Osintsev.⁴² As the leader of the regional branch, Sergei Nosov stated:

*This was the decision of the General Assembly of United Russia, which placed confidence in the leader of the Sverdlovsk party list Rossel in all questions related to the State Duma elections. His opinion was also taken into account during the nomination of the party candidate in the mayoral elections in Yekaterinburg.*⁴³

However, despite all efforts by *United Russia* to secure the victory of Yurii Osintsev, Arkadii Chernetskii won the mayoral elections, (which happened on the same day that the parliamentary elections took place – on 7 December 2003).⁴⁴ The victory of Chernetskii caused a scandal within the regional branch. Angry about the failure of its candidate, the regional branch announced that they would seek exclusion of the newly elected mayor from the party. The reaction of Arkadii Chernetskii was as follows:

*I did not compete against United Russia. I am not an impulsive young teenager, who goes to extremes. I have stable relations with people.*⁴⁵

To summarize, the party was set up according to the top-down model. It had fairly a strong vertical articulation, where the regional branches were fully subordinated to the center. The subordination was nevertheless partially artificial because in many cases the

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Igor Kuleshov, "Аркадий Чернецкий выиграл у Единой России и может поплатиться за это билетом" [Arkadii Chernetskii knocked *United Russia* over and may pay for this with his party membership], in *Kommersant* (Moscow, no. 233, 23.12.2003, code PLR/y2003_2/B5C14DA9-D260-4810-9ACB-16BO63324DF9), available at www.public.ru; Internet. See also Svetlana Dobrynina, "Анти-Россель" [Anti-Rossel], in *Russkii Kurier* (Moscow, no. 177, 23.12.2003, code PLR/y2003_2/EBE8DA75-FC51-4BB3-AA37-ADCF9DB0558A), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

⁴⁵ Viktor Tolstenko, "Стабильность и прогресс" [Stability and progress], in *Vechernii Yekaterinburg* (no. 239, 23.12.2003, code PLR/y2003_2/C4E9470D-A381-4577-B136-253F2043A61E), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

regional branches existed only on paper. Thus, while having nominally extensive geographic coverage, the party often showed a low level of organizational intensity in the regions. As a consequence, because of the initially weak regional organization, the center had to rely on persons to communicate with the branches. Centered on one primary goal, that is supporting Putin's reforms, the party of power possessed a certain cohesion, which nevertheless was not based upon ideology, but rather upon the temporarily coinciding interests of party members. Party preservation was necessary to advance the goals of its members.

Speaking of party institutionalization, one can notice a certain evolution in party organization starting from *Unity*, which had barely functioning regional branches, to *United Russia* with its active regional branches. The party has significantly increased the level of its involvement in regional affairs, set up offices with office hours and actively worked on increasing its membership. As a consequence, by the end of 2003, regional branches of *United Russia* were almost as active as the regional branches of the *CPRF*. Overall, by the end of 2003, the party displayed a certain instability in the mode of communication between the center and the regions, as often regulations or decisions, related to the regional affairs, were issued without consulting the regional branches. In fact, such arbitrariness in the process of decision-making indirectly pointed to the high level of party bureaucratic centralization. To sum up, despite certain flaws in its organization, *United Russia* has significantly improved the level of its internal intensity, indicating increasing organizational institutionalization of the party of power in the regions.

5.2.2. Party Leadership

As Panebianco noticed, strong and charismatic party leadership is existentially important for the party in the initial stages of party formation. However, orientation on one leader for a longer period indicates a party's internal stagnation and challenges party prospects for further institutionalization.

Speaking of the organization of *Unity/United Russia*, one can state that the party possessed a very complex concept of leadership. Initially, the *Unity* statute of 2000 stated that the party had a leader who did not need to be a party member and was elected at the Party Congress (Art. 7.2.2., *Unity* statute).⁴⁶ The *Unity* leader did not sit on any of its ruling committees (Art. 7.2.4., *Unity* statute). Such a strange regulation was needed to accommodate the leader Sergei Shoigu already chosen by the Kremlin, who was a government minister, and therefore not allowed to participate in party affairs.⁴⁷ The statute of *United Russia*, adopted in 2002, is even more confusing as it does not contain any regulations about party leader. It turns out that the party can have multiple leaders, (even the exact number is not specified), who are elected for a four-year term in an open ballot by a simple plurality vote at the Party Congress (Art 7.2., *United Russia* statute). The leaders are also members of the Supreme Council, specifically its chair and co-chairmen (Art. 7.5.1., *United Russia* statute). The current Supreme Council is composed of 35 people. Among members of the Supreme Council are the ministers of the Russian Federation, governors of Russia's regions, and well-known sportsmen. The majority of them are not party members, but its supporters. An opportunity to join the higher party organs was possible because the statute was designed in such a way as to allow party supporters, who had to suspend their membership because of their belonging to category "A" (state employee of higher rank), to assume leading party positions (Art. 4.4.1.,

⁴⁶ The Statute of *Unity* is available at <http://www.indians.ru/drafts/edinstvo/ust7.shtml>; Internet.

⁴⁷ Hutcheson, p. 65.

United Russia statute). This led to a high density of high-ranking politicians within the party's leading organs and made political scientists suspect that the structure at the top of the party was designed with the purpose of accommodating as many high politicians loyal to the President as possible.

Despite the ambiguity associated with the status of party leadership, *Unity* tried to promote a charismatic identifiable leader. Reliance on a charismatic party leader was especially evident in 1999. Having been forced to build the party on unknown regional movements, the Kremlin needed a recognizable face, someone having an image of an active, honest and close to ordinary people politician. Sergei Shoigu fitted this image perfectly.⁴⁸ As Panebianco notes, relying on a charismatic leader in the initial stages of party formation is justifiable. Indeed, Shoigu has certainly contributed to a quicker recognition of *Unity* on the political scene of Russia. However, the party was even more associated with another non-member, but "supporter" of the party – Vladimir Putin. As McFaul and Colton state, it was the positive ratings of Putin and his open association with *Unity*, which facilitated the party's victory in the 1999 parliamentary elections.⁴⁹ In sum, *Unity*'s success could primarily be attributed to the high popularity ratings of its charismatic leader Sergei Shoigu, and the support of the President.⁵⁰

After *Unity*'s transformation into *United Russia*, in November 2002, Boris Gryzlov, Minister of Interior Affairs, re-placed Sergei Shoigu, Minister of Emergency Situations, as the chair of the Party Supreme Council and the public face of the party. In contrast to Shoigu, Gryzlov lacks charisma and is seen by the majority of the Russian population as a plain apparatchik, trained to execute orders without questioning them.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Timothy Colton et al., "Reinventing Russia's Party of Power: *Unity* and the 1999 Duma Elections," in *Post-Soviet Affairs* (vol. 16, no. 3, July-September 2000), p. 210.

⁴⁹ From an interview by Itar-Tass, 1 December 1999. Ibid., p. 216.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 218.

⁵¹ Yekaterina Larina, "Gryzlov chosen to strengthen *United Russia*," in *The Russia Journal* (22.11.2002), available at <http://www.therussiajournal.com/index.htm?obj=29297>; Internet.

Rumors were heard that the change was initiated by the members of the former parties *Fatherland* and *All-Russia*, who were dissatisfied with the supposedly dominant position of the former *Unity* members within the party of power. Therefore, a compromised figure – Boris Gryzlov, was chosen to unite members of the three former movements. Gryzlov, nevertheless, had to share the seat in the bureau of the Supreme Council with Luzhkov, Shaymiyev and Shoigu, who now became his co-chairmen. Thus, nominally the party had four leaders. On top of that, the party repeatedly emphasized the support of the President, especially after Putin's attendance of the *United Russia* Congress in September 2003.⁵² The leader of the *United Russia* faction in the third State Duma, Pekhtin, is also often quoted as one of party leaders. Looking at the leadership of *United Russia*, some concerns arise. First, it is known that political parties that have two or more political leaders are more likely to suffer from internal crises, which in extreme cases may lead to the party's split. From this perspective, the existence of four leaders pointed to the lack of cohesion within the party and the presence of at least three established groups within the party. If we are to speculate on the possible consequences that multiple leaders may have for further institutionalization of *United Russia*, a not very promising picture arises. Specifically, it is hard to predict what would happen to the party, should Vladimir Putin – the unifying factor for all party members and major employer of its cadres – lose his popularity or turn to another political party for support. Keeping in mind that the two party leaders are directly subordinated to the President, and another two represent the most powerful regions in Russia – Moscow and Tatarstan, the prospects of the party's long-term unity and cohesion remain, at least hypothetically, questionable. Speaking of the responsibilities of party leaders, it is important to note that they do not have

⁵² Francesca Mereu, "Putin Attends *United Russia* Meet as 'Sign of Gratitude,'" in *St. Petersburg Times* (no. 904, September 23, 2003), available at http://www.times.spb.ru/archive/times/904/news/n_10404.htm; Internet.

fundamental influence over the formulation of party ideology and party goals. In fact, they, as well as the party, only serve as transmitters of Presidential decisions. In sum, party institutionalization is weakened because of the existence of multiple leaders who are not ideologically united.

Speaking of the regional leaders, they are elected at the Regional Conferences for a two-year term. In contrast to the central office, regional branches elect only one regional leader, who assumes the position of secretary of the regional branch (Art. 9.8.10, *United Russia* statute). Although the statute states that regional secretaries are elected during the Regional Conferences independently from the center, advice is often passed down to the regional branches recommending whom to nominate for the position. Thus, indirectly the process is monitored by the central party organs. Expressed in form of recommendations, the central committee always expects regional branches to follow the advice.⁵³

As the current deputy assistant of the secretary of the Inter-regional Coordination Council of *United Russia* Alexander Kosarikov stated in one interview, the nomination of candidates to the position of regional secretary depends solely upon the willingness of regional candidates to pursue Putin's line in the regional legislative assembly.⁵⁴ Thus, two aspects play an important role during the process of election of regional leaders – the benevolence of the central party organs toward the potential candidate and candidate connections in the legislative regional organs.

Following these criteria, the Nizhegorodskaya branch elected its new regional secretary in May 2003. The Regional Conference nominated Evgenii Lulin,

⁵³ Elena Maslova, "Партии и движения. "Единая Россия": статья востребованной" [Parties and Movements. *United Russia*: in demand], in *Nizhegorodskie Novosti* (no. 105, 17.06.2003, code PLR/y2003_1/C4F232DF-4F40-4712-B95D-F58D9E6248AE), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

⁵⁴ Elena Maslova, "Новости первой полосы. Политчас. "Единая Россия" претендует на титул чемпиона" [News Line. Political News. *United Russia* is aiming for the title of champion], in *Nizhegorodskie Novosti* (no.094, 29.05.2003, code PLR/y2003_1/1DCDDD84-2873-4EF1-8455-C490985B05AC), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

recommended by the Central party organs. At the time of his nomination, Lulin was the chair of the Regional Legislative Assembly. In his interviews, Lulin emphasized his orientation toward close and cooperative relations with the federal center, which, in turn, would positively influence the regional economic situation.⁵⁵ “I am centrist in my views and support stable yet dynamic development of the country, which I am witnessing recently. And the faction of *United Russia* in the State Duma pursues exactly such a position,” said Lulin.⁵⁶ In sum, Lulin was seen as a coordinating bridge between regional and federal party elites. Moreover, Lulin always emphasized that the party could not exist without the support of the people:

We have to work to make the party more popular among the residents. We have learned how to promote the party in the media. This is surely necessary, yet this should not be our primary activity. To raise the party's popularity ratings, we have to deal with everyday concerns of ordinary citizens. There is a lot of work in the region. We have to help veterans, disabled, orphanages, and senior centers. These are troublesome issues, but tackling such difficult issues should become the priority on the agenda of every local PPO.⁵⁷

It was believed that the new secretary of the regional committee of *United Russia* and the chair of the regional Legislative Assembly Lulin would be able to consolidate the power in the region.⁵⁸

Little was known about the leader of the *Unity* branch in Sverdlovskaya oblast Valerii Yazev, who headed the regional branch up until 2001. The new leader was elected in February 2002, soon after the regional branch of *United Russia* was established and the regional branches of *Unity*, *Fatherland* and *All-Russia* joined the branch of *United Russia*. On 28 February 2002, the newly established branch elected a new regional leader – Sergei Nosov, the director of the Nizhniy Tagil Metallurgic Plant. At that time, Sergei Nosov was a new person in politics. However, shortly after his election, the new leader showed remarkable leadership qualities as well as the ability to remain loyal to Moscow

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Maslova, “Партии и движения. “Единая Россия”: статья востребованной” [Parties and Movements. *United Russia*: in demand], www.public.ru; Internet.

⁵⁸ Maslova, “Новости первой полосы. Политчас. “Единая Россия” претендует на титул чемпиона” [News Line. Political News. *United Russia* is aiming for the title of champion], www.public.ru; Internet.

party apparatchik. Moreover, he proved to be a very bold politician. From being the director of one of the largest metallurgic plants in Russia, Nosov inherited quite a complicated relationship with the governor. However, being the leader of the regional branch, Nosov had to put aside his personal dislikes and build up a cooperative relationship with Rossel to secure the party's successful integration into the regional environment. As Nosov stated on the day of his election, his relationship with Eduard Rossel would depend on the abilities of the two leaders to show respect, self-restraint and decency toward each other.⁵⁹ In the end, the relationship between the two leaders had its up and downs, especially after the journalists started speculating on the possibility of Nosov running against the governor in the gubernatorial elections in September 2003.⁶⁰ Closer collaboration between the two leaders became possible when the governor showed greater interest in collaboration with *United Russia*, which led the party of power to support Eduard Rossel during the gubernatorial election and keep Nosov as regional party leader. Nosov, as a devoted party member, accepted collaboration with Rossel to advance party goals of deeper integration into the regional politics.⁶¹

Nosov is considered one of the most important figures in regional politics, who expresses a clear pro-presidential position. Overall, it seems that Sergei Nosov became a highly respected politician and businessman in the region. Nosov seems to be one of the few leaders who puts party interests above his own. Moreover, he combines a charismatic

⁵⁹ Interview with the leader of Sverdlovskaya party branch Sergei Nosov see in "В Свердловской области появилась новая политическая фигура" [Sverdlovskaya oblast has a new political figure], available at http://www.sverdlovsk.Yabloko.ru/media_reviews/print.phtml?id=302; Internet.

⁶⁰ Commentary by Konstantin Kiselev, "Скандал вокруг Сергея Носова повышает его рейтинг как кандидата на пост свердловского губернатора" [Scandal around Sergei Nosov raises his popularity ratings as possible candidate for the gubernatorial post], in *Regions.ru* (Russian Agency of Regional News, 3 July 2002), available at <http://www.regions.ru/newsarticle/news/id/781150.html>; Internet.

⁶¹ Interview with Sergei Nosov "За такие вопросы могут и бока намять!" [Such questions may lead to a fight!], in *UralPolit.ru* (Yekaterinburg, 14.01.03, news online), available at http://www.uralpolit.ru/sverd/article_id=4977; Internet.

appeal and an attractive look with loyalty to party goals. As such, he is very much esteemed by party members in the region as well as in the center.⁶²

The conclusions derived from this analysis are as follows. At the federal level, the articles discussing party leadership were designed to fit the high-ranking politicians. The existence of four official party leaders indicated a certain weakness in party organization at the top. As for the regional branches, they often lacked opportunity to enjoy a free and competitive process of leadership nomination and election. The domination of the central party organs over all organizational processes at the regional level often led to arbitrary decisions and passivity of the members of the regional branches even on such important questions as elections of regional leaders or candidates to the regional assemblies. To summarize, the analysis has proven that the process of nomination of regional leaders as well as their further activities were fully controlled by the center.

5.2.3. Party Membership and the Mode of its Recruitment

The last concept, which is important to analyze when speaking of party internal organization, is the concept of membership. The concept of membership, developed by the party of power, is as complex as its leadership concept. In particular, the statute of *United Russia* divides party members into two categories – party members and party supporters (Art. 4., *United Russia* statute). Anyone aged 18 or over can become a member of *United Russia*. To apply, one needs to submit an application to the local PPO branch, regional branch or, in exceptional cases, to the General Council (Art. 4.2.1., *United Russia* statute). Neither recommendation, nor probationary period is required. The

⁶² Kiselev, "Скандал вокруг Сергея Носова повышает его рейтинг как кандидата на пост свердловского губернатора" [Scandal around Sergei Nosov raises his popularity ratings as possible candidate for the gubernatorial post] at <http://www.regions.ru/newsarticle/news/id/781150.html>; Internet. Interview with Sergei Nosov, "В Свердловской области появилась новая политическая фигура" [Sverdlovskaya oblast has a new political figure], available at http://www.sverdlovsk.Yabloko.ru/media_reviews/print.phtml?id=302; Internet.

decision is to be taken within three months since the date of application either at the meeting of the local PPO or at the meetings of the regional Political Council or General Council.

Officially, a party member has the right to nominate, be nominated for and elected to the party's organs, freely express his opinion, openly discuss party issues at party meetings at all levels, and submit suggestions on any party-related issues (Art. 5, *United Russia* statute). In turn, the party member is expected to observe the statute, regularly pay membership dues, actively participate in the activities of the local PPO at which he/she is registered, regularly take party courses, and help at organizing political campaigns either at the federal, regional or local levels (Art. 5.2., *United Russia* statute). Party members can be excluded from the party if they break the statute regulations or discredit the image of the party (Art. 4.3.2., *United Russia* statute).

Beside party members, there also exist party supporters. It is commonly assumed that supporters are those who vote for the party, yet remain outside of its organizational structure. In the statute of *United Russia*, party supporters are those people who either temporarily suspended their party membership and registered as a party's supporters or any citizen of the Russian Federation who supports the party program (Art. 4.6., *United Russia* statute). However, having introduced the concept, the statute does not specify either supporters' rights or responsibilities. It only states, "specificities of the status of party supporter, the procedure of its acquisition as well as its forfeiture, the communication model between party members and party supporters are specified in regulations passed by the General Party Council" (Art. 4.6.4., *United Russia* statute). Such obscurity of the concept allows the party leaders to manipulate it as they wish, adjusting the regulations to fit this or that Kremlin apparatchik. In fact, party supporters often head party regional lists and influence party internal politics. This, in turn, raises

the question of legitimacy. If people who are officially not party members can monitor the activities of party members, then the whole concept of membership loses its value.

The goal of becoming the leading mass party in Russia was stated by *Unity* already in 1999. However, the successful recruitment program was launched only after *Unity* was transformed into *United Russia*. As of December 2003, membership of *United Russia* amounted to 736,283 members.⁶³ Looking at the incentives that motivated people to join the party, a controversial picture appears. At the level of high-ranking politicians, selective incentives prevailed. One had to secure his/her position as a politician, regional leader or businessperson etc. by joining the party of power. As one journalist from the Russian weekly magazine, *Novoe Vremia* noticed:

*Out of all numerous versions of the possible causes of the birth of party of power, we are compelled to focus on the one, which corresponds with our value system: the bureaucrats, who compose the core of our parties of power, use the parties first of all as tools for earning capital.*⁶⁴

To add, “capital” should be understood as a broad definition of financial and political benefits: “The nomenklatura uses the party of power just like the *CPSU* was used: it was needed for career growth, demonstration of loyalty to the higher party officials and in the end – for securing its own stability and prosperity.”⁶⁵ Speaking of the ordinary citizens and middle-ranking politicians and apparatchiks, selective incentives such as securing job and career became intertwined with the bandwagon effect. There also existed members who joined the party guided by idealistic motives of contributing to the process of rebuilding and stabilizing present-day Russia. Nevertheless, it seems that the percentage of such idealists was not significant. Besides, there were also known cases when ordinary

⁶³ Official website of *United Russia*, available at <http://www.edin.ru/section.html?rid=1834&p=5>; Internet.

⁶⁴ Andrei Naletov, “Кризис-2. Игры с президентом” [Crisis-2. Games with the President], in *Novoe Vremia* (Moscow, no. 042, 20.10.2002, code PLR/y2002_2/12BC4157-0FA5-4587-BC21-660D26302C4C), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

people were obviously forced to join the party.⁶⁶ For instance, in March 2003, the Communist newspaper published an article, which accused *United Russia* of almost authoritarian methods of cadre recruitment. The article referred to the letter, which was sent out to the management of factories and plants with the following text:

Dear manager!

*On the eve of the II Congress of United Russia, which is to be held on 29 March 2003, the party conducts an All-Russian recruitment campaign. [...] The Supreme Party Council and Party Central Executive Committee recommend you to set-up on the basis of your organization a PPO and insure that at least 5% of your team joins the party. The application form is attached. [...]*⁶⁷

In sum, the majority of party members joined the party guided by pragmatic interests. However, the nature of this pragmatism was different. Some were oriented toward making political careers and using the party hierarchy as a springboard into the Kremlin or the State Duma. Others tried to secure their stable existence and working place. In contrast to the *CPRF*, which tried to protect the party from career opportunists, *United Russia* seemed to care little about the hidden motives that guided party members. In some cases, joining the party of power was a financially profitable deal. *United Russia* spent a lot on PR-campaigns organizing different shows and devoting lots of time to promotion of the party on TV and radio, etc. This was used by the Russian artists, singers and sportsmen, who were willing to propagandize for the party of power for a certain amount of money and even become its members.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ I have heard of such practices from my father, Viktor Maltsev, who is the engineer at one large Siberian Metallurgic Plant. According to him, on the eve of parliamentary elections, the workers were pressured to join *United Russia* and vote for the party. In some cases, ordinary workers were called to the management and agitated for the party at the work place. In fact, such practices resemble the methods of the former *CPSU* and heavily discredit the image of the party of power. Whereas I do not propose that such practices existed everywhere or that party leadership planned them, the example shows that the party had all possible means to achieve the desired political and electoral success.

⁶⁷ Janna Kasyanenko, "Бывает ли Медведеву стыдно?" [Is the *Bear* ever ashamed?], in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* (Moscow, no. 033, 27.03.2003, code PLR/y2003_1/30BD388E-4028-4871-8173-3B084A5B749D), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

⁶⁸ See, for instance, a revealing article by Sergei Stepanchenko, "Партийная дисциплина и цыгане с медведями" [Party discipline and Gypsies with Bears], in *Uralskii Rabochii* (Yekaterinburg, no. 121, 8.07.2003, code PLR/y2003_2/A7B14D03-E442-4746-8308-C8CB1F361D7E), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

Speaking of the mode of recruitment, *United Russia* operated according to the centrifugal method. Although *United Russia* tried to build a strong vertical articulation, this process was challenged by the lack of internal cohesion. As a consequence, internal party communication as well as cadres promotion depended on the existence of working links between different personalities. To make a career within *United Russia*, one had to be promoted by one of its leaders or an influential regional group, and not necessarily by the local PPO, at which the member was registered.

To summarize, *United Russia* was built upon various walks of Russian society – starting from bureaucrats and professional politicians to artists, businesspersons and ordinary people. Such diversity could certainly benefit the party, if not for the fragility of unity due to a lack of collective incentives. Lack of collectivist spirit was especially evident in the regions, where party branches virtually become battlefields between various competing groupings, which literally tried to destroy each other.

To fulfill the directive from the center and ensure that enough people became party members, the regional branches of *United Russia* launched an active recruitment campaign. It is interesting to note that the success of the recruitment program was measured by the ability of party branches to overcome the membership of the *CPRF* in a particular region.⁶⁹ Lacking a well-defined ideological program, upon which to base mass support, *United Russia* tried to mobilize the masses on the opposition to the old-fashioned ideology of the Communists. For instance, on 7 November 2002 - the day, which many Russians associate with the October Revolution of 1917 the Nizhegorodskaya party branch organized and conducted a demonstration, devoted to an historic event of regional

⁶⁹ Dmitrii Skvortsov, “Единство выходит из-под контроля” [*Unity gets out of control*], in *Ezenedelnik Monitor* (Nizhny Novgorod, no. 045, 11.12.2000), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

importance, which dated back to the 17th century.⁷⁰ This was done to counterweight the demonstration conducted by the *CPRF* and devoted to the commemoration of the October Revolution. The leaders of the regional branch, the mayor of Nizhniy Novgorod, as well as representatives of regional legislative and executive branches, attended the meeting, which, however, gathered few ordinary citizens.⁷¹

The situation in Sverdlovskaya oblast was even more peculiar. First of all, the Sverdlovskaya branch of the *CPRF* was much weaker than in Nizhegorodskaya oblast. Second, the majority of the residents were in favor of greater regional autonomy. As a consequence, it would be unwise for *United Russia* to build its recruitment tactic on an open opposition to the *CPRF*, as it probably would leave the majority of the electorate indifferent toward the campaign. However, it was also politically unwise to build its recruitment campaign on opposition to the regional movements of the governor and the mayor. As a consequence, the Sverdlovskaya branch of *United Russia* restrained from any ideological motives in its recruitment campaign, and focused solely on the so-called “Program of Actual Deeds”.⁷² The program was meant to build communication between the federal and regional elites and the population and, by doing so, raise the popularity rating of the party in the region. For instance, in Sverdlovskaya oblast, the regional branch of *United Russia* tried to earn people’s respect by monitoring the regional situation of regular wage payments and, in case of some unexplained wage delays, reporting to the central party branch and even to the President. It also tried to help in

⁷⁰ Specifically, *United Russia* devoted its demonstration to the Nizhegorodskii front led by Kozma Minin and Dmitrii Pozarskii, who defended the Kremlin against the Lithuanian-Polish invaders.

⁷¹ The official website of *United Russia*, “Численность членов “Единой России” в Нижегородской области составляет 3,5 тысячи человек” [The membership of *United Russia* in Nizhegorodskaya oblast amounts to 3,5 thousand people], available at <http://www.edin.ru/news.html?rid=1834&id=536>; Internet.

⁷² Gulnara Akhmetshina, “Партия идей большинства” [Party of the ideas of the majority], in *Krasnyi Sever* (Salechard, no. 102, 10.10.2002, code PLR/y2002_2/7917FB41-9506-4BE0-989D-A83032F36A3F), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

building economic connections for some of the regional factories, which were unable to find a suitable niche for their products on the domestic as well as international markets.⁷³

However, the main battle for the new members was led with the help of modern and expensive PR techniques and unfolded in the media. For instance, the Sverdlovskaya branch of *United Russia* turned to help of the children. Possessing access to city TV, the regional branch of *United Russia* organized a TV show called “Primary elections – ask the children!”.⁷⁴ The children were given party platforms of all major political parties in Sverdlovskaya oblast and they had to decide which party was especially close to their political position, supporting their answers with paragraphs from the programs.⁷⁵ The show was broadcasted during prime time. Despite the proclaimed objectivity of the show, the children were not given the platforms of *SPS* and the *CPRF*.⁷⁶ On a similar note, in Nizhegorodskaya oblast, the children were used to advertise party concerns about the future generation. On 9 December 2002, the leaders of the regional branch along with all major regional TV channels and newspapers visited orphanages in Nizhniy Novgorod. As the leader of the party stated to the cameras, there exist 51 orphanages in Nizhegorodskaya oblast and *United Russia* promised to patronize them all! In this context, the leaders called upon all residents of Nizhegorodskaya oblast to join the party in this charitable beginning.⁷⁷

On the eve of Putin’s 50th birthday in October 2002, *United Russia* launched a campaign “Write to the President!” For this matter, the regional branch of *United Russia* in Sverdlovskaya oblast bought thousands of post cards with children’s drawings and

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ “Детей используют по-чёрному” [Children are used in “dirty” PR], in *Vechernie Vedomosti* (Yekaterinburg, no. 056, 04.04.2002, code PLR/y2002_1/9F87CB9A-7EE3-4E6B-8D94-B9D0C B52A 786), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ The official website of *United Russia*, available at <http://www.edin.ru/news.html?rid=1834&id=1145>; Internet.

invited the residents of the region to come to the post offices where they could choose a post card, write wishes and send it to the President. Along with a post card, the residents could receive any additional information about the activities of the party in the region from members of the regional branch.⁷⁸ Moreover, the party agreed with the regional schools to organize a day devoted to the life and achievements of President Putin.⁷⁹

Similar to the *CPRF*, *United Russia* tried to attract new members by organizing party supporters movements. In Nizhegorodskaya oblast, the branch set up a *Consultative Union of Social Organizations* and invited the regional *Union of the Veterans of the Afghanistan War* and the *Union of the Veterans of War and Work* to join the newly established Union.⁸⁰ The chair of the Union was elected the richest businessman in Nizhegorodskaya oblast, Nikolai Pugin, who was registered as an unofficial supporter of *United Russia*. The Union passed its own statute and elected a committee consisting of 14 people. As Pugin noted, the Union was established to increase the interest of ordinary citizens toward the federal party of power.⁸¹

Overall, it seems that the PR techniques worked well in Nizhegorodskaya oblast. By January 2003, the membership of the regional branch almost equaled the regional membership of the *CPRF* and stabilized at 7,000 people.⁸² As for Sverdlovskaya oblast, no exact data is available, yet one may assume that after the mayoral movement “*Our Home is Our City*” merged with the regional branch of the party of power and Rossel’s movement announced close cooperation with the regional branch of the federal party of

⁷⁸ Larisa Khaidarshina, “Президента Путина завалят открытками” [President Putin will be deluged with post cards], in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (Yekaterinburg, no. 179, 01.10.2002, code PLR/y2002_2/31777872-513F-4C14-9419-B0D574931560), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

⁷⁹ “Напиши президенту!” [Write to the President!], in *Gazeta* (Moscow, no. 185, 7.10.2002, code PLR/y2002_2/7BA89596-97BE-4521-AE8E-A83E0A24D5E2), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

⁸⁰ The official website of *United Russia*, “A Decent Datum” [News Line], available at <http://www.edin.ru/news.html?rid=1834&id=545>; Internet.

⁸¹ Anna Glushovskaya, “Новости первой полосы. Партии и движения. “Единая Россия” обрастает попутчиками” [News Line. Parties and Movements. *United Russia* increases the number of its supporters], in *Nizhegorodskie novosti* (Nizhniy Novgorod, no. 018, 31.01.2003, code PLR/y2003_1/79FF7BB3-721E-4C74-AEC0-E452D97A4ECF), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

⁸² Ibid.

power, *United Russia* became the strongest party in the region. Speaking of *United Russia*'s recruitment campaign between 2002 and 2004, it relied upon the significant financial and administrative resources of the party, which allowed them to launch sound and expensive PR actions at the federal and the regional levels. Overall, the recruitment campaign of *United Russia* could be described in one word – pragmatic. The question is whether pragmatism is enough to keep the interest of party members. In this context, it seems important to analyze the conceptual fundament of *United Russia*.

5.3. Ideology and Party Finances: Can Money Re-place Ideology?

As was mentioned in our theoretical part, party institutionalization depends on the existence of a viable ideology and balanced scheme of financial support. In the case of the *CPRF*, the party was able to substitute the lack of finances with the existence of strong organization and ideology. The case of *United Russia* seems to be the opposite of the *CPRF* – the party relied upon its finances to impress the electorate and win the elections. Thus, this section discusses the issues of party ideology and finances.

Unity was often criticized for the lack of ideology. As Lilia Shevtsova writes:

Unity was a virtual creation. Right up to the elections, it had no ideology and no structures. It was a ghost movement. One could have gotten the impression that previous political waves had exhausted the country's intellectual potential and left the Bears with the refuse of the political process. These new type of politicians shared, however, one amusing characteristic: self-confidence. They did not have to pretend to have wise thoughts or ideas or even ambition. They wanted only to be Putin's supporters and were sure this would guarantee them victory in the upcoming elections and afterward some role within the Kremlin network.⁸³

Nevertheless, despite the lack of ideology the party came second in the 1999 parliamentary elections and first in the 2003 parliamentary elections. In the 1999 parliamentary campaign, the party relied upon the "Basic Theses of Inter-Regional Movement *Unity (Bear)*", which were

- 1) the state organs have to stop the immense abuse of the law (it resembled Putin's phrase to "bring order to the country"),
- 2) revive Russian economy;

⁸³ Shevtsova, pp. 45-46.

- 3) revive Russian industry;
- 4) Russian politics needs “new faces” – the country’s old leaders have discredited themselves and need to be re-placed by the younger generation.⁸⁴

These theses were openly anti-Kremlin. In fact, there was nothing surprising about that: the dissatisfaction of the majority of the Russian population with the development of Russia was obvious. Thus, to secure Putin’s victory, the Kremlin decided to build its campaign upon criticism of the old regime. The campaign unfolded around three major issues: Putin, Chechnya and the associated threat of the country’s collapse and the so-called “need for change.”⁸⁵ The bloc avoided the dangerous topic of economic reforms and spoke a lot on the issue of Chechnya and Russian internal security. Indirectly, the issue was tied to the weakened image of the country on the international arena. The message was clear: we have to restore order within the country and then restore the image of the country on the international arena. Keeping in mind that monitoring the Chechen operation was Putin’s responsibility, the Kremlin had all resources at hand. As *Itogi* wrote on 23 December 1999:

*The Duma election campaign of 1999 enriched Russian political science with one indisputable revolutionary discovery: A large-scale military operation, it turns out, can be cold-bloodedly used as an election technique.*⁸⁶

The message has reached the electorate: the majority of the Russian population agreed that Russia had to exterminate the terrorists.

Unity skillfully played with people’s feelings. The experiences of the previous years – the default of the ruble in 1998, the escalation of the situation in Chechnya, corruption and lack of any perspectives in the country’s development frustrated and exhausted the majority of the population.⁸⁷ Thus, the bold PR consultants presented *Unity*’s campaign as an attack on the old regime and the need for the new cadres. Overall,

⁸⁴ A. Tsuladze, “Парадоксы поведения российских избирателей” [Paradoxes in the behavior of the Russian electorate], in Russia. The Political Demands of the 21st century (The Second All-Russian Congress of Political Scientists) (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002), pp. 291-292.

⁸⁵ Ibid, pp. 290-294.

⁸⁶ Shevtsova, p. 48.

⁸⁷ A. Tsuladze, pp. 290-294.

one might argue that the 1999 parliamentary campaign of *Unity* was designed as a perfect “catch-all strategy”, organized around the issues with populist slogans and easily recognizable symbols of stability exemplified by Vladimir Putin. As Sergei Shoigu said after the party’s Founding Congress on 28 December 1999: “Many people call us Putin’s party. Well, it’s true.”⁸⁸

The *Unity* program was adopted after the parliamentary elections of 1999, in October 2000. In the classic sense, the party program represents a party’s ideological position, beliefs and values. *Unity*’s political program only slightly resembled a program in its classic understanding. Composed of a set of slogans and populist phrases, it could be seen, rather, as self-advertisement.⁸⁹ Suffice it to list the titles of some of the chapters: *Unity* is the Party of Common Sense; *Unity* is the Party of Truth; *Unity* is the Party of Justice; *Unity* is the Party of Responsibility and Stability; *Unity* is the Party of the Present and the Future; *Unity* is the Party of the President; *Unity* is a grass-roots Party.⁹⁰ Further chapters went on in similar style: the party promised to build a strong state, grass-roots democracy, to keep the federal system of the Russian state in place, to revive Russia’s economy, and to get rid of corruption and oligarchs.⁹¹

At this point, it is important to distinguish between party ideology and party program. Usually, party ideology influences party program, which defines party position on certain policy issues. To give the party credit, later *United Russia* tried to develop its own ideology. The party proclaimed itself a centrist party. Soon after, the higher echelon of power within *United Russia* became divided into the liberals and the social democrats, both sides debating over what it meant to be a centrist party. It was evident that party

⁸⁸ Rutland, “Putin’s Path to Power,” pp. 325-326.

⁸⁹ Interestingly enough, once, in an interview, Gennadii Zyuganov accused *Unity* in stealing the *CPRF* slogans: “They can only steal the slogans, line their pockets, they are not ready for anything else.” Please refer to “Есть и такая партия – КПРФ” [There also exists such a party as the *CPRF*], in *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, available at http://www.rg.ru/Anons/arc_2002/1225/1.shtml; Internet.

⁹⁰ Please see *Unity Manifest* at <http://indians.ru/drafts/edinstvo/pp1.shtml>; Internet.

⁹¹ *Unity Manifest* at <http://indians.ru/drafts/edinstvo/pparty.shtml>; Internet.

leaders had different views on the ideology of centrism: Luzhkov wanted to have a party propagating socialist values, the President of Tatarstan, Shaymiyev, advocated a more conservative ideological position and Shoigu spoke of statehood and “a patriotic ideology”.⁹² In the end, Luzhkov’s position gained more popularity and the socialist values such as war on impoverishment and protection of the rights of budget-funded employees were incorporated into the political program of *United Russia*, which was adopted at the Party Congress held in April 2002.⁹³ The program of *United Russia* announced its orientation toward building a strong state with strong presidential power, an independent civil society and an independent judicial branch, securing the quality of democracy in the country, creating a just society with a well-developed network of social guarantees, providing support for scientific and technological research, and re-assertion of Russian might on the international arena (*United Russia*’s program).

The last effort to define party ideology was launched during the news conference given by the leaders of *United Russia* in February 2003. The official position of the party was described as follows:

*United Russia is based on a basic ideological principle, that is, an effective state. Only a strong state can provide democracy and human rights in Russia. That’s our opinion.*⁹⁴

This statement was further elaborated in the speech of Yurii Luzhkov, who stated that *United Russia* adhered to the “ideology of centrism”, understood as follows:

*The most important thing for the party is to make itself heard, to take part in the social protection of our citizens, to take part in social processes, to take part in the development of a market economy, and not to allow these swings to the extreme left or, on the other hand, to the kind of liberalization that counteracts the interests of the common person.*⁹⁵

“The common person” was defined in very broad terms:

⁹² Mikhail Vinogradov, Alexander Sadchikov, “A BLOWN BUBBLE. A new power party: between triumph and failure,” in *Johnson’s Russia List* (July 30, 2002), available from <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/6377-12.cfm>; Internet.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Gregory Feifer, “Russia: Main Pro-Kremlin Party Battles Accusation That It Has No Platform,” in *Johnson’s Russia List* (no. 12), available from <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/7072-12.cfm>; Internet.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

One cannot define the majority of our supporters – they change, and will change, depending on the actual socio-economic and political situation. Overall, these are people of various age and professional background, having varying social status – those who already adjusted to the market, and those who are still experiencing the challenges of the transitional period. This is why interests and expectations of these people differ. This is why we cannot adopt either traditional left or liberal ideology. [...] Yet, despite such difference in opinions, all people, who belong to our constructive majority, are united in their worry for our country, while believing in its future.⁹⁶

In fact, Luzhkov was the first party leader who tried to move beyond populist phrases and define party ideology in more concrete terms, rather than empty party slogans. In an interview given in February 2003, he stated that the party was against government moves to raise highly subsidized utilities rates and for hikes in state wages and pensions. However, this opinion was also stated by Putin.

By the end of 2003, it was evident that despite efforts of some party leaders to develop an independent ideology and party program, the party ended up supporting the general policy line of the President. It was not able to break off from its dependency on the Kremlin. According to many Russian political scientists, this problem brought into question the legitimacy of *United Russia* as a political party. As Yurii Korgunyuk, director of the *Indem* political research group in Moscow stated:

United Russia isn't a party at all. It is not an independent political force. Political power belongs to those who stand behind Unified Russia: the presidential administration, governors, the community of various bureaucratic clans, and corporations. They are the real power, and [United Russia] is only decoration and is, itself, nothing.⁹⁷

Nevertheless, this opinion of the political scientists was irrelevant to the majority of the Russians who voted for the party in December 2003. What political scientists perceived as ideological failure and programic weakness, the voters viewed as an honest position, as a position of the men of action, who do not spend time talking but work on improving Russia's economic situation. Such an image of the party was supported by Boris Gryzlov during the last 2003 parliamentary election:

⁹⁶ Report by Boris Gryzlov at the II Congress of *United Russia* (Moscow, 29 March 2003), available at <http://www.edin.ru/archive/news.html?rid=2098&date=21-02-2004&id=2780>; Internet.

⁹⁷ Feifer, "Russia: Main Pro-Kremlin Party Battles Accusation That It Has No Platform" at <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/7072-12.cfm>; Internet.

*Our ideology is the ideology of national success. From the party's point of view, that means the success of every Russian family and every individual Russian citizen. Today, thanks to the efforts of the president and United Russia, our country is one of the most stable countries in the world.*⁹⁸

The key word in *United Russia*'s success turned to be "stability". For the majority of Russian citizens it was enough.

Looking at the ideological component of party life at the regional level, a similar picture unfolded. Trying to integrate itself into the regional environment in Nizhegorodskaya oblast, the regional branches spoke of the party's centrist position. The centrism was understood quite broadly, as the regional branches tried to attract the electorate from the right as well as from the left. On the right, the regional branches focused their attention on the electorate that was ideologically close to *SPS* and former mayor Nemtsov. On the left, they tried to attract the members and sympathizers of the *CPRF*. By 2000, *SPS* was slowly losing its support in the region. *United Russia* tried to take advantage of this tendency by attracting former liberals into the centrist party. The results were obvious – many former *SPS* members, among whom were businesspeople and administrative workers, switched from *SPS* to *United Russia*.⁹⁹ The former leader of the Nizhegorodskaya branch Kosarikov explained the tendency in the region arguing that Russian business has reached such a state when the businesspeople are no longer interested in reforms, but rather in maintaining the stability already achieved and strengthening the verticality of power.¹⁰⁰

Besides, *United Russia* tried to catch some part of the electorate from the leftist camp by propagating the strengthening the role of the state.¹⁰¹ As the regional journalist Dmitrii Skvortsov noted, in Nizhegorodskaya oblast the tendency was such that if

⁹⁸ Natalia Yefimova, "United Russia Boosts Its Roster," in *The St. Petersburg Times* (no. 856, 1 April 2003), available at http://www.times.spb.ru/archive/times/856/top/t_9112.htm; Internet.

⁹⁹ Dmitrii Skvortsov, "Единство выходит из-под контроля" [*Unity gets out of control*], in *Ezenedelnik Monitor* (Nizhny Novgorod, no. 045, 11.12.2000), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

previously the *CPRF* fully controlled the initiative on the left, it now has to partially share the leftist electorate with *United Russia*.¹⁰²

Trying to attract voters, the Nizhegorodskaya branch of *United Russia* partially copied the tactics of the *CPRF* in promoting their candidates as skilled managers and administrators. The difference between the techniques was primarily of ideological nature. For instance, the *CPRF*, while supporting the two older former Communist directors of regional factories and plants, refused to support the younger and more successful director of one Nizhegorodskaya factory, although the platforms of all three candidates were almost identical.¹⁰³ The refusal was justified due to the yet unformed ideological preferences of the younger director. Shortly after, the leadership of *United Russia* suggested that the young director run under the label of the party of power.

Thus, the regional branches of *United Russia* simply tried to act as counterweight to the *CPRF*. For instance, on the eve of the parliamentary elections of 2003, the Nizhegorodskaya branch of *United Russia* announced the goal of dismantling the *CPRF*'s popularity in the oblast, as well as in other regions of the Red Belt. The action was blessed from the center and the regional branch organized a meeting for the regional leaders of *United Russia* from the Red Belt regions. The center delegated Valerii Bogomolov, the secretary of the General Council, to help with the organization of the meeting.¹⁰⁴ During the meeting, Bogomolov stressed the importance of "disclosing the demagoguery of the *CPRF*" by revealing the sources of the *CPRF*'s financing. Moreover, he called upon regional branches to tell the truth about the devastating social and economic situation in the Red Belt regions. To prove this, Bogomolov suggested using the statistics provided by the State Statistics Committee as evidence, showing that in all

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Elena Maslova, "Партии и движения. "Единая Россия": статья востребованной" [Parties and Movements. *United Russia*: in demand], in *Nizhegorodskie Novosti* (no. 105, 17.06.2003, code PLR/y2003_1/C4F232DF-4F40-4712-B95D-F58D9E6248AE), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

regions where the Communists are in power, an acute economic and social crisis is in place.¹⁰⁵ The leader of the Ryazanskaya party branch explained the anti-Communist initiative of *United Russia* by arguing that the party was fighting for equal opportunities for all federal parties in the regions!:

*We are protesting against exploiting by the CPRF the administrative resources, against their monitoring of regional media with the purpose of limiting the flow of oppositional information and against political discrimination in the regions.*¹⁰⁶

At the end of the meeting, with the purpose of undermining the activities of the CPRF, *United Russia* decided to establish an information center, to which each party branch had to submit information about the deconstructive activities of the CPRF with its further publication in the federal and regional media.¹⁰⁷

In sum, it is possible to conclude that a vaguely designed party ideology and the lack of an independent standing on policy issues was compensated for with a worn-out anti-Communist rhetoric of the early 1990s and the use of PR techniques. As the director of the Moscow Center of Political technologies Igor Bunin commented on the campaign tactics of *United Russia* in Russian regions:

*Criticizing the Communists has always boosted popularity ratings of other political parties. This is an eternal problem of United Russia— to find and put in practice at least one worthy idea. Do you remember how in the beginning Unity criticized the work of the government? Promotion of this idea would certainly not benefit the party of power now, because the voters would hardly vote for the party, which criticizes its own ministers. Thus, another idea was needed to mobilize the electorate.*¹⁰⁸

Ideology is necessary not only to serve as the bridge between power and the masses, but also to facilitate party internal cohesion and unity. Although certain variations of ideological position of the party members are possible, it is expected that all of them will put party interests and success as priority goals. In this respect, the internal conflicts between varying regional groups within the regional branches described so far

¹⁰⁵ “Единая Россия” объявила войну коммунистам” [*United Russia declared war on the Communists*], in *Leningradskaya Pravda* (09.06.2003, code PLR/y2003_1/8BC054E9-964B-4A3C-BC31-C48AE51551DE), available at www.public.ru; Internet.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

revealed a lack of ideological cohesion between its party members. Neither the pictures of Putin in the offices of the regional branches nor statuettes of the bear and statements by party leaders on the bulletin board were able to hide the party's internal ideological emptiness.

In sum, one notices that *United Russia* lacked a strong ideology upon which to unite its members. Speaking of its centrist position, *United Russia* designed its program simply to support President's reforms. As for the regional branches, they worked on advancing the party's primary goal, which was strengthening the role of the state and the President. However, acute internal crises within the regional branches challenged their performance in the regions. To note, whereas certain degree of conflict is possible in any political party, the conflicts within *United Russia* were conducted with especial fury. Trying to knock out the opponents, party members neglected the possible impact of such conflicts on party image. In such circumstances, the only way the party could secure its popularity ratings was by relying on party administrative and financial resources. This is why we now turn to an analysis of party finances and ways of its spending.

The issue of party finances is the most delicate and the least transparent, although, to give credit to Russian parties, in the recent years, the situation has become a little bit more open. The *United Russia* statute states that the party receives funds from a number of sources, namely:

- 1) from publishing and advertisement;
- 2) selling party souvenirs and renting its property, and other entrepreneurial activities;
- 3) membership fees;
- 4) federal budget funds;
- 5) donations from legal entities as well as individuals (Art. 13, *United Russia* statute).

Table 5.2. summarizes the major sources of income and spending of *United Russia*.

Table 5.2. Report about the financial income and expenditures of *United Russia* in 2002 (submitted after Tax Police inspection, in rubles)

2002 (Submitted after Tax Police inspection, in rubles)

Financial Income in 2002									
Total	Membership Dues	Donations from physical bodies	Donations from corporations	Party's entrepreneurial activity					
418,053.00	7,684.00	3,842.00	406,505.00	0					
Party Expenditures in 2002									
Total	Organization of party meetings, conferences and congresses	Expenditures on Central Committee	Expenditures on regional branches	Preparation to the elections	Expenditures on publishing, TV programs, educational centers	Public meetings and lectures	Informational propaganda activities (advertisement, pamphlets)	Charity activities	Other not prohibited by law expenditures
411,289.00	0	140,831.00	151,144.00	0	0	0	0	51	119,205.00
Donations from physical bodies, who donated more than 20 thousand rubles in one time (total sum in rubles/number of physical bodies): 3055.3 / 11.									

Source: the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation at www.cikrf.ru; the full report is available in Excel at <http://gd2003.cikrf.ru/etc/sved edin nov.xls>; Internet.

From Table 5.2., it is evident that the party earned comparatively little from membership dues. The majority of donations arrived from legal entities. The Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation published a full list of donors who sponsored *United Russia* in 2002 – the list included regional as well as Moscow-based companies.¹⁰⁹ It is logical to assume that regional companies sponsored the regional branches of *United Russia*. As to the Moscow-based sponsors, the majority of the Russian journalists believe that the party's financial support comes mainly from the companies and physical bodies who support the President and want to have direct access to him. According to the newspaper *Izvestia*, in Moscow the primary donors of the party are representatives from the upper echelons of the executive branch of government, where *United Russia* had the support of a deputy director of the presidential administration.¹¹⁰ Unidentified political opponents of *United Russia* in the upper echelons of power say that the executive branch of government, through associated companies,

¹⁰⁹ See the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation at www.cikrf.ru; the full report is available in Excel at <http://gd2003.cikrf.ru/etc/sved edin nov.xls>; Internet.

¹¹⁰ Mikhail Vinogradov et al., "A BLOWN BUBBLE. A new power party: between triumph and failure," available from <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/6377-12.cfm>; Internet.

allocated almost \$5 million to the centrists in summer 2002 alone.¹¹¹ Some serious sums come from business tycoons, such as Khazret Sovmen, the President of the Republic Adygeya, who earned 9 billion rubles in 2002.¹¹² Regional branches receive financing from local businessmen.¹¹³

The available information allows us to analyze *United Russia*'s last parliamentary campaign, during which *United Russia* spent the largest sum of money. According to some PR specialists who monitored the last 2003 parliamentary campaign, by the end of November 2003, in each of 162 electoral districts the party spent from \$ 80,000 up to \$235,000 dollars, depending on the district.¹¹⁴ Overall, as it was mentioned earlier, *United Russia* spent 226.885,262 million rubles, thus displaying the second highest spending results. *SPS* had the highest amount of spending, which rose to 227.731 million rubles by the end of the campaign.¹¹⁵ The *CPRF* showed the lowest results – 76 million rubles.¹¹⁶ *United Russia*'s highest source of expenditures were advertisements on TV, in the newspapers, and on the radio, as well as for organizing various propagandizing shows and concerts, inviting celebrities to the regions, etc. – 95 million rubles, which represented almost half of all *United Russia*'s finances.¹¹⁷ In comparison, the *CPRF* spent 26 million rubles, which was a third of the funds available to the *CPRF*.¹¹⁸ *United Russia* also had the highest spending in comparative terms on actual propaganda literature such

¹¹¹ Although this figure may seem unrealistic to the Russian reader, because it is estimated that the budget of a properly staffed Duma party usually amounts to \$1 million in a non-election year, the existence of numerous functions organized by *United Russia* indicate that this might be true. The information was taken from Mikhail Vinogradov et al., "A BLOWN BUBBLE. A new power party: between triumph and failure," <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/6377-12.cfm>; Internet.

¹¹² Denis Babichenko, "Блеск и нищета кандидатов" [Glamour and poverty of the candidates], in *Itogi* (no. 44 (386), 4 November 2003), p. 30.

¹¹³ Mikhail Vinogradov et al., "A BLOWN BUBBLE. A new power party: between triumph and failure," <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/6377-12.cfm>.

¹¹⁴ Irina Nagornyykh, Suzanna Farizova, Yurii Chernega, "Мозговые штурманы" [Campaign managers], in *Kommersant-VLAST* (vol. 45, 17-23 November 2003), p. 30.

¹¹⁵ Aliya Samigullina, "Дума любит экономных" [Duma likes money-saving parties], in *Gazeta.ru* (Russian News Agency online, 27 January 2004), available at http://www.gazeta.ru/2004/01/27/oa_110335.shtml; Internet.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

as bulletins, pamphlets, newspapers – 79 million rubles, whereas the *CPRF* spent 16 million rubles.¹¹⁹ Moreover, *United Russia* along with *SPS* was one of the parties that relied heavily on billboards and related “street” advertisement across Russia, whereas the *CPRF* did not spend a penny on billboard and “street” advertisements.¹²⁰ In sum, the general picture is that *United Russia*’s campaign was one of the most professionalized campaigns, monitored from the center and with impressive financial investments. One might conclude that while lacking ideological depth, *United Russia* impressed the electorate with the quantity of populist slogans and organized shows.

Little is known about the financial situation of the regional branches of the party of power. From scattered information available on the topic, it is possible to conclude that the central office subsidizes the regional branches relatively poorly. The regional branches receive financing mainly from regional sources such as local businessmen and regional elites.¹²¹ It is known that the goal of the regional branches is their successful integration into the regional environment and control over the regional executive and legislative regional bodies. Thus, the central office expects the regional branches to satisfy their financial needs independently from the central office having achieved full control over the regional environment. The scattered information available from Nizhegorodskaya oblast tells us that the regional branch in Nizhegorodskaya oblast was able to draw financial help from many local businessmen. Among them was one of the richest regional businessmen Nikolai Pugin, who organized a *Unity of Party Supporters* that mainly consisted of local businessmen.¹²² As for Sverdlovskaya oblast, the regional branch was only partially able to integrate into the regional elite, yet had secured

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Irina Nagornykh et al., “Мозговые штурманы” [Campaign managers], in *Kommersant-VLAST* (no. 45, 17-23 November 2003), p. 30.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² *United Russia* website, “Численность членов “Единой России” в Нижегородской области составляет 3,5 тысячи человек” [The membership of *United Russia* in Nizhegorodskaya oblast amounts to 3,5 thousand people], available at <http://www.edin.ru/news.html?rid=1834&id=536>; Internet.

financing because its leader Sergei Nosov was the director of one of the largest metallurgic plants in Russia. Unfortunately, any other information on the financial situation in the regions is not available.

In sum, on paper, the party had a balanced scheme of finances. However, in practice, the party finances were coming primarily from sources controlled by the Kremlin. The dependence of the party of power on the Kremlin in financial issues partially explains party problems in the sphere of designing a clear ideology. Having originated in the corridors of the Kremlin and relying greatly on administrative resources, *United Russia* was not a party of power, but a party to support power.¹²³ Further, the party spent most of the funds in the center transferring little to the regional branches. The regional branches as well as regional candidates often had to rely on their own strength and ability to merge with the powerful regional elites and local businessmen and in such a way secure smooth running sources of financing. It is known that financial independence of regional branches from the center means weak party institutionalization as the party leadership has few means to monitor regional branches. In this respect, the situation of *United Russia* is intriguing. Being practically independent from the central office in financial matters, the regional branches nonetheless followed the directives from the center quite strictly. It is possible to explain such a phenomenon by pragmatic personal interests of party members who joined the party of power out of personal calculations. To summarize, financial independence did not lead to greater autonomy of regional branches. If one wanted to be a member of the federal party of power, one had to obey the central directives.

Speaking of party ideology, one notes that party ideology existed, yet was weak and dependent on outside forces. Nevertheless, *United Russia* still has a potential to

¹²³ Feifer, "Russia: Main Pro-Kremlin Party Battles Accusation That It Has No Platform," in *Johnson's Russia* (no. 12), available at <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/7072-12.cfm>; Internet.

strengthen its ideological fundament. It is possible that the more the party transforms itself into a bureaucratic machine, the greater will be the need for an independent stand on policy issues, as PR techniques will no longer be able to secure the party's homogeneous political image. Up until now, the party has proven that it was possible to maintain party ratings based solely upon PR techniques. The problem is that the longer the party exists on the national arena, the greater will be the need to develop a viable party ideology and political program.

5.4. Concluding Remarks

The analysis of the organization of *United Russia* revealed the following results. *United Russia* is an autocratic party in the sense that the party central office possesses full dominance over the regional branches. Although the statute regulates the procedure of the nomination of regional leaders and candidates, in practice the process is monitored from the center. Overall, the structure of the party is relatively well organized with regional branches resembling in their architecture the party in central office. The single structural difference was rooted in the complicated organization of party leadership at the top and weak regional leaders. The weakness of regional leaders was partially the consequence of the top-down party model with the powerful center and powerless regional branches. The subordination of regional branches was extraordinary – practically speaking, the branches lacked any freedom of action even on such important party matters as the election of regional leaders. Although centralization is usually perceived as a sign of greater party institutionalization, the unequal distribution of power between the regions and the center caused certain passivity on the part of the members of the regional branches and challenged the authority of regional leaders.

Speaking of party articulation, one could argue that the party possessed a strong vertical articulation, where each party unit was aware of its role in the party hierarchy.

However, the vertical party articulation was weakened by the existence of multiple party leaders at the top. The existence of multiple party leaders as well as their status within the party structure, (as being party supporters), pointed to a certain artificiality in party design.

In regard to party activities on the ground, we could argue that *United Russia* displayed obvious success in its ability to attract significant numbers of people. The party continuously worked at increasing the number of its local PPOs and attracting new members. The success of the *United Russia* recruitment model was rooted in the party's ability to apply various recruitment techniques. They have employed the classic methods used by the *CPRF*, such as working on the ground and founding various youth organizations as well as organizations of party sympathizers. On top of that, since the party possessed significant financial resources, it had the possibility to rely upon modern PR techniques. Finally, the party presented an opportunity for career-oriented regional politicians who used *United Russia* as a springboard into big politics. Overall, over the last years, the party showed a remarkable dynamic in the process of strengthening its internal organization.

United Russia is the richest party in Russia. Moreover, it is the party that has access to administrative resources and all national media. Large financial and administrative resources facilitated the rapid expansion of the party from the center to the regions. Using its finances, *United Russia* hired professional PR consultants to secure party national popularity ratings, forcing other political parties to adjust to the demands of the time. Overall, *United Russia* was virtually financed from one source, which diminished the level of its financial institutionalization. Speaking of the financing of the regional branches, the central office of *United Russia* transferred little financing to the regional branches, ordering them to search for regional sponsors. As a consequence, regional branches were practically independent from the center, yet obeyed central party

regulations anyway, displaying quasi-cohesion of the party's units and members. The cohesion was "quasi", because it rested upon the temporary coincidence of personal interests of party members, who used the party of power to advance their own personal goals, and was not rooted in any strong ideological concept. In fact, lack of independent and strong ideological fundament is the major problem, which *United Russia* faces right now. The party needs to identify a fixed set of values and beliefs, which would be considered the guiding line for the electorate in their decision to join or vote for the party. Solving this problem would immensely increase the party's chances for further institutionalization beyond Putin's presidency.

In sum, the process of the institutionalization of *United Russia* was challenged by a number of factors, such as the confusing concept of party leadership, lack of a balanced financing scheme and a weakly developed party ideology and subsequently lack of an independent position on policy issues.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has analyzed the level of institutionalization of the *CPRF* and *United Russia* in the two Russian regions of Sverdlovskaya and Nizhegorodskaya oblasts. It tried, following the criteria designed in the theoretical part of the thesis, to understand whether the internal or external environment had a greater impact on party institutionalization.

The findings of this research suggest that the situation is more complex than was anticipated in the hypothesis. Specifically, the research revealed that there does not exist a single fundamental factor (whether of internal or external nature) which could be said to be primarily responsible for the increasing or diminishing level of institutionalization of the *CPRF* and *United Russia*. Instead, the process of party institutionalization depended on a multiplicity of internal factors and the party's ability to adjust to the specific external environment.

Overall, the fundamental finding is that regardless of the internal weaknesses displayed by the parties, the two parties can be considered relatively well institutionalized. However, because of a number of problems, which became especially obvious over the last years, the level of the *CPRF* institutionalization has diminished slightly. As for *United Russia*, it has significantly improved its level of institutionalization.

Regarding the *CPRF*, the causes for weakening party institutionalization in the regions were dual in nature. From internal perspective, the party institutionalization was weakened because of leadership and cadre stagnation in party central organs, aging party membership, stagnation of party ideology and the alarming financial situation of the party in general and of its regional branches in particular. The most important problem was that the *CPRF* showed signs of a serious ideological crisis, which partially touched upon the

issue of finances and internal party cohesion. Restrained in its options by the very conservative regional branches, the party leadership was not able to fully adjust the party's ideological position to the changed external environment of the Putin era. This, in turn, led to worsening electoral success of the party in regional and federal elections and an internal party crisis.

Looking at the *CPRF* institutionalization within a particular regional environment, one should distinguish between the level of the *CPRF* institutionalization on the ground and at the top of regional politics. Although the party contested almost all regional elections, it was excluded from participation in power politics and lacked access to administrative resources. However, it is plausible to suggest that the exclusion of the *CPRF* from regional politics was partially voluntary, and not solely the result of the obstacles set up by the regional elites in order to make things more difficult for the Communists. In fact, occupied with their own power games, the regional elites often paid little attention to the *CPRF*. In contrast, the Communists perceived the external environment as being inherently hostile toward them and thus unwillingly forced themselves into exile. In contrast to the weak institutionalization at the top of the regional hierarchy, the party succeeded in keeping a close relationship with the masses. Party regional branches rather resembled "street agitators". As many Russian political scientists pointed out, should the *CPRF* be able to keep such a close contact with the masses and modernize its ideological appeal, the party could significantly improve the level of its institutionalization.

In contrast to the *CPRF*, *United Russia* has significantly improved its level of institutionalization over the last couple of years. Initially, *Unity* institutionalization was weak and the party experienced a deep organizational and ideological crisis. Lacking

strong representation in the regions, the party was a pure PR product with no connections to the electorate. The situation began to change on the eve of the party's transformation into *United Russia*. At the end of 2001 and the beginning of 2002, the party launched a complex program which focused on expanding the number of regional branches and PPOs, strengthening party internal organization and developing an active program of membership recruitment. With the help of regional elites and its large financial resources, the party succeeded in achieving positive results in all three tasks. Shortly after the party's transformation into *United Russia*, the positive developments in party structure were obvious – the party increased the number of its PPOs and membership, elected charismatic regional leaders and participated actively in regional politics.

However, despite such positive developments, *United Russia* faces serious organizational and ideological problems, which challenge party transformation into a complex and stable organization. Along with such serious problems as the personalist nature of the party and unbalanced financing scheme, the party has failed to present a well-developed ideology and an independent and stable party program. Although the party proclaimed adherence to a centrist ideology with an emphasis on defending the interests of the common people and providing state protection for ordinary citizens, the party did not develop a strong system of ideological beliefs and values. In organizational terms, the vagueness of the party's ideological concepts meant that *United Russia* lacked collective incentives with which to attract new party members. Moreover, it lacked internal unity and cohesion; the party name and structures were used to advance personal goals of party members. Taken together, these problems endanger the very existence of the party in the future and create a so-called "Problem 2008", when the next parliamentary and presidential elections are scheduled to take place.

The findings of the research are summarized in a complex table Con. 1.1. based on the criteria developed in chapter I.

Table Con. 1.1. Institutionalization of the CPRF and United Russia: an Overview

Criteria of Party Institutionalization	The CPRF		Unity/United Russia	
	Federal Level	Regional Level	Federal Level	Regional Level
1. Party Origin				
<i>1.1. Year of Origin</i>	1993		1999	
<i>1.2. Method of Creation</i>	Mixed		Penetration	
<i>1.3. Existence in the history of the party of splits, mergers, changes in name or image</i>	<p>1991 – establishment of the CP RSFSR</p> <p>1991-1993 – banning of the CPSU and CP RSFSR</p> <p>1993 – establishment of the CPRF on the basis of the former structures of the CPSU and CP RSFSR</p> <p>The key word in party name was preserved – Communist</p> <p>The party dropped the revolutionary aspect of the Communist movement</p>		<p>2001 – merger of <i>Unity</i>, <i>Fatherland</i> and <i>All-Russia</i> into <i>United Russia</i></p> <p>Party name was partially preserved (“<i>Unity</i>”=“<i>United</i>”)</p> <p>Party image remained almost unchanged</p>	
<i>1.4. Role of external organizations and/or individual personalities during the formative years of the party</i>	<p>Organized by the Communist movements</p> <p>Zyuganov played an important, though not an existential role</p>		<p>The idea and its implementation belonged to the Kremlin apparatchiks</p> <p>“Party of personalities”</p>	
2. Internal Environment				
2.1. Party Organization				
<i>2.1.1. Type of party</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mass party - Democratic - Existence of three unofficial factions within the party: statist, hard Stalinists and Social Democrats 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Catch-all party - Orientation to becoming a mass party - Autocratic - Existence of various political groupings competing against each other for the benevolence of the President 	

Table Con. 1.1. (continued) Institutionalization of the CPRF and United Russia: an Overview

Criteria of Party Institutionalization	The CPRF		Unity/United Russia	
	Federal Level	Regional Level	Federal Level	Regional Level
<p>2.1.3. Party Leadership</p> <p>a) Existence of clearly identifiable party leader and leaders of the regional branches</p> <p>b) Mode of elections of party leader and regional leaders</p> <p>c) Major Problems in Party Leadership</p>	<p>YES Party leader is a team worker, but lacks charisma</p> <p>Party leader is elected at the Party Congress, which meets every four years</p> <p>The leader is elected from within the Central Committee</p> <p>Election procedure – by secret ballot, with victory going to the person, who gathered the majority of the votes</p> <p>Stagnation of party leadership (since its rebirth, the CPRF had not changed its leader)</p>	<p>Partially true – regional leaders are not always known to the residents, because of the lack of charisma</p> <p>Elected at the Regional Meeting</p> <p>Election procedure – by secret ballot, with victory going to the person, who gathered the majority of the votes</p>	<p>Partially true, because there exists at least four official (known) party leaders Leaders lack charisma</p> <p>Lack of well defined procedure for election of party leaders</p> <p>Lack of regulations specifying the responsibilities of the leaders</p> <p>Leaders are elected for a four-year term during the Party Congress</p> <p>Election procedure – open ballot, simple plurality vote</p> <p>Too many leaders, which leads to fractioned nature of the party organization</p>	<p>YES Leaders of regional branches have charisma</p> <p>One leader (holds the position of the secretary of the regional branch)</p> <p>Elected at the Regional Conference for a two year-term</p> <p>Election procedure – open ballot, simple plurality vote</p> <p>Regional leaders are powerless in decision-making</p>
<p>2.1.4. Mode of recruitment of party members</p> <p>a) Existence of formal regulations about the process of membership requisition</p> <p>b) Mode of recruitment</p> <p>c) Recruitment incentives</p> <p>d) Major problems related to party members</p>	<p>YES</p> <p>Centripetal (to secure the purity of party cadres)</p> <p>Slow re-orientation in recruitment techniques on the younger generation</p>	<p>Selective, collective and alternative</p> <p>Very ideologically conservative membership</p>	<p>YES There exist two concepts of membership: members and supporters. Supporters can be elected as party leaders</p> <p>Centrifugal</p>	<p>Selective and alternative</p> <p>Lack of collective incentives Lack of internal cohesion</p>

Table Con. 1.1. (continued) Institutionalization of the CPRF and United Russia: an Overview				
Criteria of Party Institutionalization	The CPRF		Unity/United Russia	
	Federal Level	Regional Level	Federal Level	Regional Level
2.2. Ideology/Party Program				
<i>2.2.1. Existence of clearly defined ideology</i>	YES		NO Party occupies the centrist position on the ideological axis, yet lacks a well-defined ideological concept	
<i>2.2.2. Existence of sound party program</i>	YES		NO Party program is full of empty phrases	
<i>2.2.3. Correspondence of regional initiatives with party ideology and program</i>		Regional branches strictly followed the Communist ideology and were rigid to any alteration of party ideological positions and program		Regional branches were de-ideologized Regional branches were mainly concentrated on the process of integration into the regional environment and the process of cadre recruitment
<i>2.2.4. Major Problems</i>	Party ideology was not modified to fit into the changed context of the Putin era (mainly b/c the regional branches were opposed to any changes in party ideological position)		Lack of ideological concept and party program was dangerous for party existence – lacking unity and cohesion, the party could easily fall apart should major changes in its leadership happen	Paid little attention to local issues
2.3. Party Finances and Spending				
<i>2.3.1. Existence of written regulations about party finances</i>	YES		YES	
<i>2.3.2. Sources of party financing</i>	Mainly from membership dues Some money arrived from individuals and legal entities, yet not a significant amount	Regional branches were financed from the center Not allowed to search for independent sources of financing	The percentage of party budget coming from membership dues is insignificant Finances mainly coming from sources close to the Kremlin	Regional branches received very little from the central office Regional branches were allowed to search for independent sources of financing in the regions

Table Con. 1.1. (continued) Institutionalization of the <i>CPRF</i> and <i>United Russia</i> : an Overview				
Criteria of Party Institutionalization	The <i>CPRF</i>		<i>Unity/United Russia</i>	
	Federal Level	Regional Level	Federal Level	Regional Level
2.3.4. <i>Distribution of party financing</i>		Regional branches received little and had to rely only on their organizational and ideological capacities		Regional branches were poorly financed from the center as it was believed that they should integrate into the regional environment and find the necessary funding in the regions Therefore, the large portion of financing for the regional branches came from local Pro-Putin businessmen and individuals
3. External Environment				
3.1. Federal Environment				
3.1.1 <i>Party Status</i>	Official oppositional party		Party of Power	
3.2. Regional Level				
3.2.1. <i>Mode of communication between the regional elite and the party elite</i>		Usually in opposition to regional elites Excluded from regional power politics Active on the ground		Usually associated with the regional elites Regional elites become part of party elite, which transfers regional conflicts into the status of an internal affair of the party of power
3.2.2. <i>Party and other political organizations</i>		Collaboration with the regional branches of the <i>RKRP</i> and the Agrarian party		The majority of regional movements merged with the regional branches of the party of power

It remains to be seen how the parties will decide to deal with the existing problems. The recent developments allow us to speculate a little on the possible evolution of the two political parties. Speaking first about the *CPRF*, a revolutionary step was undertaken during the presidential elections of 2004, when the party, for the first time since its rebirth in 1993, nominated someone other than Gennadii Zyuganov to run in the elections. Specifically, the party decided to entrust such responsibility to the former

Agrarian and current member of the *CPRF*, Kharitonov. To the astonishment of the *CPRF* members themselves, Kharitonov came second after Putin (though having scored significantly less – 13,69 %).

Moreover, the actual reforms are already underway. On 27 March 2004, the Central Committee of the *CPRF* held its Plenum session at which public statements about possible change in party leadership were confirmed. According to Zyuganov himself: “I am thinking of how to prepare a team of young and strong leaders. I am very interested in that.”¹ The Plenum announced the decision to rotate the staff of the leading party organs by two thirds. Other decisions, revolutionary for the party organization, such as the decision of who is going to be the next party leader, are expected to be taken during the upcoming Party Congress, which is scheduled for June 2004. Currently, the Central Committee launched a so-called Party Cadres Commission, which is obliged to analyze the possible candidates for the leading positions within party organs according to such criteria as their loyalty to party ideals, charisma and ability to head the party. The report will be presented at the Party Congress in June 2004. As of today, there exist four possible candidates to replace Zyuganov – Valerii Rashkin, Ivan Melnikov, Vladimir Nikitin and Sergei Levchenko.² Of these four, Ivan Melnikov appears to be the most suitable candidate. He is a close friend of Gennadii Zyuganov and a loyal party member. Moreover, Melnikov has charisma and an attractive look. In the era of PR campaigns such things mean a lot for a party. Besides, Melnikov believes that the party, while keeping its ideology intact, should completely re-design its strategy of cadres’ recruitment and PR campaigns. In sum, it seems that Melnikov will be able to modernize the party while keeping its ideological fundamentals unchanged.

¹ Yurii Krasnoglaydov, “Пленум ЦК КПРФ нацелил партию на смену лидеров” [The Plenum of the Central Committee of the *CPRF* oriented the party towards a change in party leadership], in *Gazeta.ru* (Russian News Agency online), available at http://www.gazeta.ru/2004/03/27/oa_116055.shtml; Internet.

² Ibid.

On a final note, by launching such revolutionary reforms, the party has once again proven that it was organizationally one of the strongest parties in Russia. Following Duverger, one could state that having reacted to external challenges by launching such a radical organizational reform, the *CPRF* displayed that it was not afraid of falling apart. In sum, it is valid to argue that the *CPRF* has reached such a stage in its institutionalization when it is perceived as an entity in itself. Facing internal problems and witnessing recent developments on the left, such as the talk about creation of a new leftist patriotic movement initiated by the opponents of the current leader of the *CPRF* Gennadii Zyuganov, the majority of the *CPRF* members stood for preservation of the *CPRF* as an organization even if facing the need for radical reforms within party organization. Time will show whether the party succeeded in its endeavours.

Speaking of *United Russia*, the party has not yet developed into an entity independent from its founders. While being the party which received the majority of the seats in the Fourth State Duma and controls all parliamentary Committees, *United Russia* is still perceived as a Kremlin appendix. Moreover, the domination in party structure of federal and regional officials along with exclusion of ordinary members of *United Russia* from the decision making process make the party very vulnerable. Chances are that such detachment from ordinary party members, and, on a larger scale, from ordinary voters, could possibly cause party political collapse if the political situation in the Kremlin changes.

However, it would be false to believe that the party leaders do not realize the dangers of the present situation. There were some signs that the party leadership was willing to overcome the problem of political dependency and ideological vacuum and become a fully-fledged political party. For example, one of the members of the party central organs, Vladislav Surkov, announced in a speech before regional activists of

United Russia in spring 2002 that the major goal of the new party of power is the maintenance of the organizational continuity of the Russian elite beyond Putin's departure from the presidency (expected in 2008). Surkov suggested that "we should stay [in power]," and that if *United Russia* is unable to perform this task well, the solution could be found without the builders of that party.³

Further, in April 2003, the party leadership announced that the party would try to become a real mass party and build its organization from below, paying attention to opinions coming from the regional branches.⁴ As is known, the key to success of a mass party (in contrast to catch-all parties) is embedded in party ideology. Should *United Russia* succeed in its endeavors to become a grass-roots party, it could transform itself into a bridge between the regional elites and the federal power. Such a development would strengthen the party's position across Russia and diminish its dependency on the Kremlin and its resources, thus securing further party institutionalization and elaboration of an independent ideology and party program.

Lastly, speaking of *United Russia*'s prospects for further institutionalization, one can hope that the case of *United Russia*'s further institutionalization will not confirm the immortal phrase of Viktor Stepanovich Chernomyrdin, the father of the first party of power *Our Home is Russia*, who stated that "No matter how we build the party, we always end up with the CPSU."⁵

³ Vladimir Gelman, *United Russia. Ruling Party or Emperor's New Clothes?* (PONARS, Policy Memo no. 255), available at http://www.csis.org/ruseura/ponars/policymemos/pm_0255.pdf; Internet.

⁴ Evgenii Zerebenkov, "Партия местной власти" [Party of local power], in *Itogi* (no. 14, 2003), available at http://www.itogi.ru/paper2003.nsf/Article/Itogi_2003_04_08_11_1349.html; Internet.

⁵ Boris Kagarlitskiy, "Russian Bureaucracy Builds Its Own Party," in *ZNET: Daily Commentaries* (May 19, 2003), available at <http://www.zmag.org/sustainers/content/2003-05/19kagarlitsky.cfm>; Internet.

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