



## An Evaluation of the Results of the Duma Elections

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### Abstract

The Duma elections were first and foremost a contest between the state executive, which made use of all administrative resources, and various societal groups forming the opposition. Ultimately, United Russia was able to win a majority, but the number of protest votes nevertheless increased significantly. Considerable variation in the results could be observed from region to region and even within individual regions. This can partly be attributed to the varying level of falsification in different areas. Overall, by falsifying the result of the vote, it is probable that United Russia was given 15 million extra votes, so that the true result for the party can be seen to stand at around 34% and not 49%.

### Executive Government as an Election Campaigner

The main peculiarity of the 2011 election to the State Duma was to be found in the fact that the central contest did not take place between the seven registered parties. Instead, one of the competing sides was the authorities at all levels, who threw all their resources into supporting United Russia.

The candidate list of United Russia was headed by the president. Additionally, it also bore the names of the head of the presidential administration, 8 members of the central government and 54 governors. The presidential administration assigned the regional administrations with the task of making sure that a high proportion of the vote went to United Russia. The heads of the regional governments, in turn, called their subordinates and their dependent officials and business leaders together, and issued corresponding assignments which included falsifying the elections. The same practice was continued at lower levels, which ultimately resulted in direct pressure being put on the voters.

### Resistance From Society

The other side in the contest was made up of those sections of society which wished for a change of power. It was no coincidence that Alexei Navalny, who publicly branded United Russia the "Party of swindlers and thieves" (this turn of phrase was used by practically all opposition parties in the election campaign) and who had called for people to vote for any party so long as it was not United Russia, became the most important ideological leader of the election campaign.

Many citizens reported violations of the electoral code being carried out by representatives of the administrations and documented their illegal actions in the election campaign with audio and video recordings. These materials have been uploaded on the internet and passed on to the media. On the Map of violations, a joint project run by GOLOS and the internet publication Gazeta.ru, more than 5,000 reports of violations were submit-

ted by election day; following election day the number of reports rose to 7,800.

### The Election Result

The following table shows the official results of the parties and a comparison with the 2007 Duma elections. According to official figures, United Russia received just under 50% of the vote and was able to command an outright majority of the mandates. By comparison with the last Duma elections, the party, however, lost over 12 million votes (over 15%) and 77 mandates (See table and figures on pp. 8 and 9).

The CPRF and A Just Russia were able to improve their results from 2007 by over 50%, whilst Yabloko more than doubled its share of the vote. The result for the LDPR was also noticeably better, and was their best since 1993. This should, however, in the opinion of many experts, not be considered a success of the party, but as the result of a significant number of protest voters who voted against United Russia.

The results for the Patriots of Russia and Right Cause remained little more than background noise. The Patriots of Russia were able to only marginally improve on their 2007 result. In 2011, Right Cause received fewer votes than two of the three parties, from which this party has emerged (Civilian Power and Union of Right Forces), received on their own at the 2007 elections.

### Regional Variation

The election results have become more regionally differentiated. Although United Russia retained the top position in all regions, the results vary considerably, namely between 29.0% in Yaroslavl Oblast and 99.5% in the Chechen Republic. The results for United Russia also varied in the regions with populations predominantly made up of ethnic Russians. Tambov Oblast heads up these regions with 66.7%.

United Russia received less than 35% in 15 regions, between 35% and 40% in 17 regions, between 50% and 60% in 10 regions, between 60% and 70% in 9 regions

(including 6 Russian Oblasts), between 70% and 90% in 7 regions (five Republics and two Autonomous Okrugs), and over 90% in the four Republics: Ingushetia, Dagestan, Mordovia and Chechnya. These regional differences can not so much be traced back to a corresponding will of the electorate as to the level of use of administrative resources, including direct election falsification.

The CPRF attained its best result in Oryol Oblast (32.0%), A Just Russia its best in Novgorod Oblast (28.1%), the LDPR in the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug (22.5%) and Yabloko in St. Petersburg (11.6%). At the same time, United Russia retained its support primarily in the north-western regions of the country, whilst the heartlands of the LDPR lie in Siberia and the Far East. It is worth noting here that the election results in these regions were those which suffered the least influence from manipulation.

The situation for the CPRF is less clear. In the 1990s, the communists found most support in the agricultural regions of Southern Russia, in the central black-earth region, in southern Siberia and in the Volga region, i.e. in the so-called red belt. In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century this pattern saw some decline, but nevertheless remained intact. In 2007, the following regions still represented the ten strongest CPRF heartlands: The Altai Region, the Oblasts Belgorod, Bryansk, Volgograd, Voronezh, Novosibirsk, Oryol, Ryazan, Samara and Tambov. At the most recent elections, only Oryol and Novosibirsk Oblasts were amongst the top ten. A broad range of areas can now be found amongst the regions with the highest support for the communists: the Moscow Region and the Oblasts of Irkutsk, Kaliningrad, Kostroma, Nizhny Novgorod, Omsk, Orenburg and Pskov, demonstrating an unmistakable drift to the north. This is partly due to the fact that the regions in the south were most severely affected by manipulation.

The Patriots of Russia and Right Cause failed to achieve more than three percent in any region. The best result for the Patriots of Russia came in the Republic of Ingushetia (2.54%) and the best for Right Cause in Sverdlovsk Oblast (2.07%), which can be explained by the specific party structures in those regions.

### Voter Behaviour in the Cities

Of particular interest are the election results in the large cities, where a trend has long since developed: In most regions, United Russia receives its best results on the agricultural outskirts and its poorest in the capital cities. At the 2011 election, this trend was maintained, but now with several exceptions.

Thus, the result for United Russia in 79 regional capitals (with the obvious exceptions of Moscow, St. Petersburg, and the Moscow and Leningrad Regions) stood

at a total of 41.25% and in the 30 largest cities (each with an electorate population of over 415,000) at a total of 39.66%. The opposition parties achieved their best results in the large cities, which was particularly evident in the case of Yabloko—the party received 6.76% of the vote in the 30 largest cities.

Of the regional capitals and the 30 largest cities, the worst result for United Russia could be found in Vladivostok (22.69%) and in cities with over 100,000 residents, the worst result was in Korolyov, near Moscow, (22.11%). Even worse were the results in several small science towns in the Moscow hinterland. Thus, the party received just 17.72% of the vote in Chernogolovka, where several leading physics and chemistry institutes are located.

United Russia had to concede its leading position to the CPRF in the cities of Vladivostok, Voronezh, Irkutsk, Kaliningrad, Kostroma, Novosibirsk, Omsk, Orenburg, Oryol, Pskov, Ryazan, Smolensk, Angarsk (Irkutsk Oblast), Dzerzhinsk (Nizhny Novgorod Oblast), Kolomna, Korolyov, Serpukhov (Moscow Region) and Tolyatti (Samara Oblast), to A Just Russia in the cities of Yekaterinburg, Novgorod and Rybinsk (Yaroslavl Oblast), and to the LDPR in Khanty-Mansiysk.

### Regional Centres and the Regional Periphery

Also of interest are the differences in the results for the leading parties between the regions as a whole and their capital cities. For United Russia there is, almost everywhere, an imbalance of support concentrated in the outskirts and away from the capital. In 2007, there was only one exception here, which was the Republic of Dagestan. In 2011, there were already more: Alongside Dagestan were four other Caucasian Republics (Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia-Alania and Chechnya), as well as the Komi Republic, Stavropol Region and the Oblasts of Astrakhan and Samara. As Syktyvkar, Stavropol, Astrakhan and Samara are, according to our data, amongst the regions most severely affected by violations of the electoral code during the voting and vote-counting processes, we can confidently assume that the results there can be put down to acts of falsification.

In most regional capitals, United Russia received fewer votes than in each region as a whole, with a difference of more than 10% in 27 regions. For the CPRF and A Just Russia, the results in the capitals of most regions (70 for CPRF, 65 for A Just Russia) were better than in the outskirts. The results for the CPRF followed this pattern in 48 regions.

### The Extent of Election Falsification

The fact that the vote and vote-counting processes were accompanied by widespread falsifications is proven both

by reports from citizens (members of the election commissions, election observers, media representatives and ordinary voters) who were witness to ballot stuffing and repeated voting, as well as by discrepancies between the copies of election protocols from the voting precincts and the official results for these precincts. Statistical analyses also come to this conclusion.

By mid-January, the association GOLOS had received certified copies of election protocols from 476 election precincts, which showed results different from those given by the official election results. In these precincts, United Russia were given 125,149 extra votes (an average of 263 votes per precinct), whilst A Just Russia had 22,792 votes taken away, the LDPR 15,443, Yabloko 10,108 and the CPRF 9,461. The election turnout had 66,209 extra voters added to it. According to our estimations, the real scale of the election falsifications, which took place during the transcription of the election protocols, is considerably larger.

The extent to which extra votes were stuffed into ballot boxes can be observed with a statistical analysis. Such an analysis has been carried out by various independent researchers. Most interesting is the work conducted by Sergei Shpilkin, who had already developed an original method in 2008, with which the scale of falsifications can be determined. According to Shpilkin's calculations, the artificial increase of the turnout alone (that is, without votes which were shifted around to the detriment of other parties) meant 15 million extra votes

being given to United Russia, meaning that their real total of the vote should be around 34 %.<sup>1</sup>

The extent of falsifications varies enormously from region to region. The region most severely affected by election falsifications was Moscow, where United Russia received 46.6% according to official figures, although, according to Shpilkin's calculations, the real figure was just 30.3% (several other projections also show the real share of the vote for United Russia to be little over 30%). The number of extra votes added to ballot boxes in the capital is estimated at a million. By comparison, the extent of falsifications in the Regions of Altai, Krasnoyarsk and Perm, as well as the Oblasts of Arkhangelsk, Vologda and Yaroslavl, and the Leningrad and Sverdlovsk Oblasts, stands at 1% of voters and therefore lies within the statistical margin for error.

These events have led to widespread mistrust in the election results and the electoral system on the whole amongst citizens, which expressed itself in the protest actions that took place in December throughout the country. The President's Council for the Development of Civil Society and Human Rights even passed a resolution on 23<sup>rd</sup> December, which discredits the moral and political basis of the electoral system and the lower house of parliament formed on the basis thereof; its demands include ensuring that new election laws are passed as soon as possible, in order to allow holding early parliamentary elections.

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#### *About the Author*

Arkady Lyubarev is doctor of jurisprudence and leading expert at GOLOS. The present text is a result of the cooperation between the Russian NGO "The Association of Non-Profit Organizations 'In Defense of Voters' Rights' GOLOS" and the European Exchange in Berlin for the purpose of observing the Russian Duma elections 2011, supported by the German Association for East European Studies (DGO) and the Heinrich Böll Foundation.

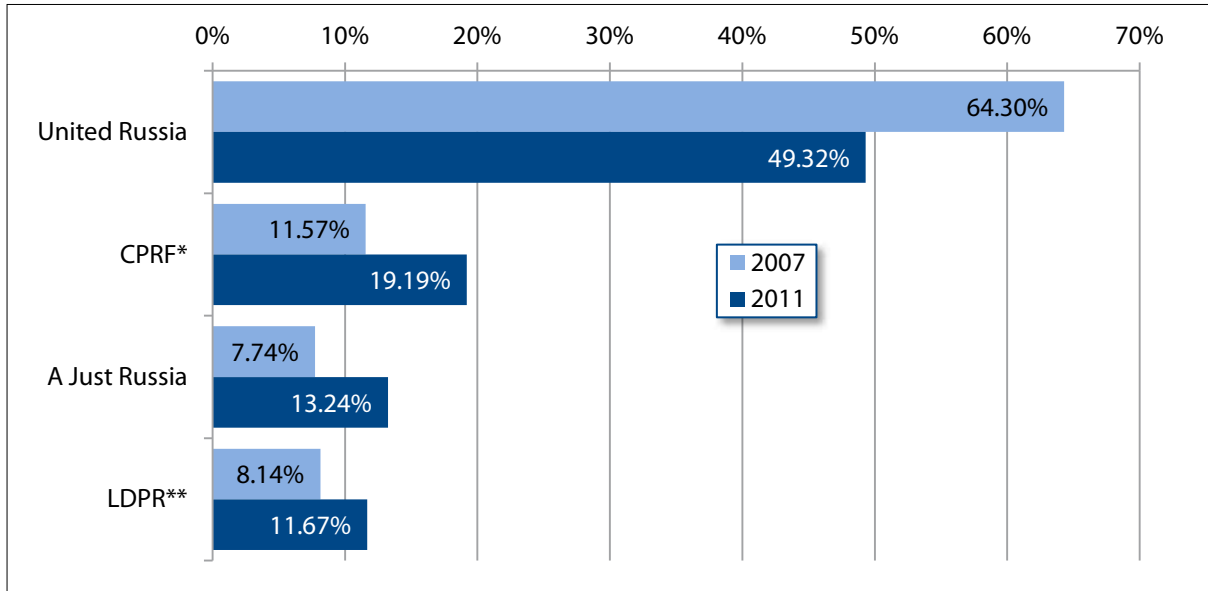
**Table 1: Results of the Election by Party Lists**

Party	2011			2007		
	Number of votes	Share of the vote	Number of mandates	Number of votes	Share of the vote	Number of mandates
United Russia	32,379,135	49.32%	238	44,714,241	64.30%	315
CPRF*	12,599,507	19.19%	92	8,046,886	11.57%	57
A Just Russia	8,695,522	13.24%	64	5,383,639	7.74%	38
LDPR**	7,664,570	11.67%	56	5,660,823	8.14%	40
Yabloko	2,252,403	3.43%	–	1,108,985	1.59%	–
Patriots of Russia	639,119	0.97%	–	615,417	0.89%	–
Right Cause	392,806	0.60%	–	–	–	–

\* = Communist Party of the Russian Federation, \*\* = Liberal Democratic Party of Russia

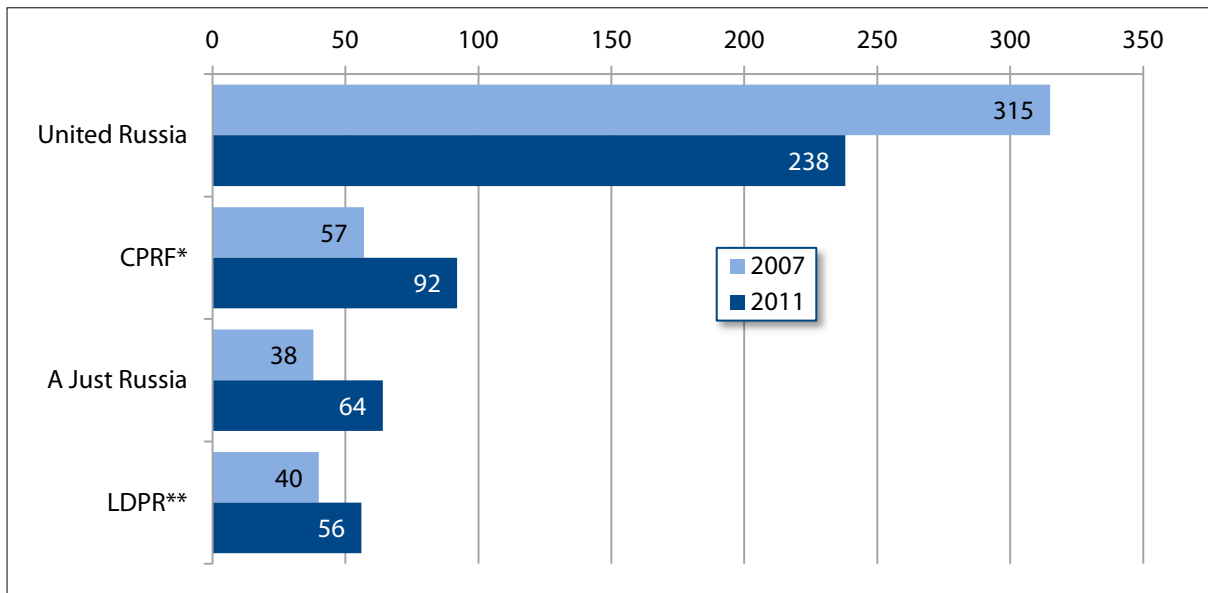
<sup>1</sup> Shpilkin, S. 'Matematika vyborov'. in: *Troitsky variant*, No. 25 (94), 20.12.2011.

**Figure 1: Share of the Vote of the Parties Represented in the Duma in the Duma Elections 2007 and 2011**



\* = Communist Party of the Russian Federation, \*\* = Liberal Democratic Party of Russia

**Figure 2: Number of Mandates of the Parties Represented in the Duma after the Duma Elections 2007 and 2011**



\* = Communist Party of the Russian Federation, \*\* = Liberal Democratic Party of Russia