

transitional phenomenon in the process of state and institution building, centralized subnational authoritarianism is much more stable. Its framework is based, first of all, on a concentration of the coercive and distributive capacities of the state in the hands of the ruling group in the Center, which is able to block efforts to undermine the status quo at the local level from above, and, second, the lack of influential actors capable of carrying out such an undermining from below. From this point of view, centralized subnational party authoritarianism can be stable. The experience of such regimes from southern Italy to Mexico shows that their undermining is more likely as a result of the collapse of the national regime and/or the party system, than under the influence of their internal evolution at the local level. Therefore one can predict that in the short-term there is little reason to expect that subnational authoritarianism in Russia will significantly weaken or fall of

its own accord. In fact, even the possible potential liberalization and democratization of the regime at the national level does not guarantee the undermining of the local regimes. In addition to the historical legacy of the Soviet (and pre-Soviet) period, the formation of a new institutional legacy in the 1990s and especially in the 2000s hinders the undermining of subnational authoritarianism in Russia.

One can expect that in the short-term, with the preservation of the current Russian national and local regimes, there will be a further conservation (if not stagnation) of subnational authoritarian regimes. Also, the chances for fully-fledged democratization of the Russian national political system and the chances for the effective state building needed to create the conditions for the successful development of its cities and regions depends ultimately on the overcoming of subnational authoritarianism in Russia.

About the Author

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Analysis

Who Governs?

The Transformation of Sub-Regional Political Regimes in Russia (1991–2009)

By D. G. Seltser, Tambov

Abstract

In the post-Soviet period, Russia's city and local district leaderships were variously appointed (1991–1994/1996) and elected (4 election cycles: 1994–1996; 1998–2001; 2003–2005; 2008–2010), leading to significant changes in these leaderships. Based on the oblasts of Ryazan, Samara, Tambov, and Ulyanovsk and the republics of Mordovia, Udmurtia and Chuvashia, this article examines the political transformations of local government regimes through an analysis of elites. It seeks to address the following questions: What changes have occurred in the make-up of city and district mayors? What are the dynamics for removing leaders? Who are these people? Who are their support base and who are they answerable to? Summarizing this data makes it possible to address the key question: Who makes political decisions in local government?

The Evolution of Local Government Leadership

Appointments 1991

In the initial post-Soviet period, Russia did not hold "founding elections." Instead, President Yeltsin directly appointed regional leaders, first as representatives of

the president, and then as governors. Once these positions were filled, he also appointed mayors. In the absence of comprehensive information and reliable surveys from the local districts, Yeltsin and his team chose leaders based on their estimates of who would be the most loyal to the federal center and they generally succeeded in this task as the officials indeed remained loyal.

The appointed local government leaders in 1991 had the following career backgrounds:

- 16.6% CPSU city or district committee 1st Secretary
- 1% CPSU city or district committee 2nd Secretary
- 4% Soviet Chairman/Deputy Chairman
- 54.8% Executive Committee (Ispolkom) Chairman/Deputy Chairman
- 17.6% Enterprise Directors
- 6% Other posts

Accordingly, around 60 percent of the sub-national leaders Yeltsin appointed came from the Soviet nomenklatura. On the basis of these figures, it is clear that the new office holders in post-Soviet Russia differed little from the previous incumbents. Therefore, the aim of these appointments was not to transform the composition of the local government elite, nor to remove the presence of the previous party nomenklatura from the positions they occupied.

First Electoral Cycle (1994–1996)

The first cycle of elections to local government took place within 5 years of the collapse of the Soviet Union. These elections were hotly contested, ideological, and pitted the “communists” against the “democrats.” In this context, 13.6 percent of the newly-elected heads of the city and district administrations (mayors) were former Communist Party first secretaries, 38.2 percent were former soviet leaders and 48.2 percent were representatives of the former economic nomenklatura. The nomenklatura’s declining fortunes did not occur simply as a result of inter-group tendencies, but as part of more widespread removal of previous political representatives. Overall, the population voted for the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and its protégés, but refused to place its trust in the former nomenklatura of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

The Second Electoral Cycle (1998–2001)

In the course of the second electoral cycle, the pragmatic political elite consolidated their positions in the face of imminent conflict caused by the dead-end nature of Russia’s bipolar political conflict. As a result, personal relations and alliances became a key political factor. In these conditions, the number of former CPSU first secretaries who continued to serve as executives fell to 11.1 percent. It was clear that they were no longer capable of holding on to power. Indeed, the soviet nomenklatura also lost some of their positions (falling to 25.6%), while the economic nomenklatura of Soviet period lost even more positions (dropping to 20.6%). The big-win-

ners of the elections were non-nomenklatura entrepreneurs (the newly wealthy agriculturalists, businessmen, soldiers, policemen etc; 42.7%).

The Third Electoral Cycle (2002–5)

The early years of the Putin presidency were marked by a “verticalization” of administrative reforms – aimed at returning powers to the federal center and ending the growing trends toward regionalization in the post-Soviet period. In this political situation, the number of former officials of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in top jobs within subnational government dropped to just 6 percent. At the same time, representation of the soviet nomenklatura and Soviet-era economic nomenklatura fell to 10.6 percent and 9 percent respectively. The non-nomenklatura entrepreneurs increased their representation to 72.4 percent. After the 2005 elections, party first secretaries and most other officials who were part of the Soviet nomenklatura had been fully cleansed from government.

Local Elections in Tambov Oblast

After 2004, we shifted focus from looking at numerous regions to examining elections taking place in Tambov Oblast.

The Fourth Electoral Cycle (2008–10)

In the first year of the current electoral cycle (2008), elections took place in 10 out of 30 local government districts in Tambov Oblast, making it possible to draw a number of conclusions about key points in the elections.

Incumbency – In these elections, only a third of the incumbent mayors were able to hold onto their offices. We should not draw hasty conclusions about the turnover of mayors from the beginning of the fourth cycle, because the Tambov data should be double-checked against data from other oblasts and regions, or at least against the remaining rounds of elections in the fourth cycle of Tambov oblast (due to be held in March 2010). Nonetheless, it is important to understand the circumstances in which the replacement of mayors in Tambov took place in 2008.

An important aspect to note about these elections is that only in three of the ten cases were elections held as originally scheduled. In the other seven cases, the elections were held earlier than planned. In the majority of these cases, this was because criminal cases were launched against the incumbents.

Who won the elections? Another revealing trend is that of the ten newly elected mayors – five are the rich-

est people in their district. These candidates reached agreement with those responsible for the “electoral process” in the district, thus ensuring themselves victory. The rest are municipal civil servants. These public officials were able to win their elections by using ties to the same business groups as the rich candidates, connections with the oblast administrations, and their own managerial experience.

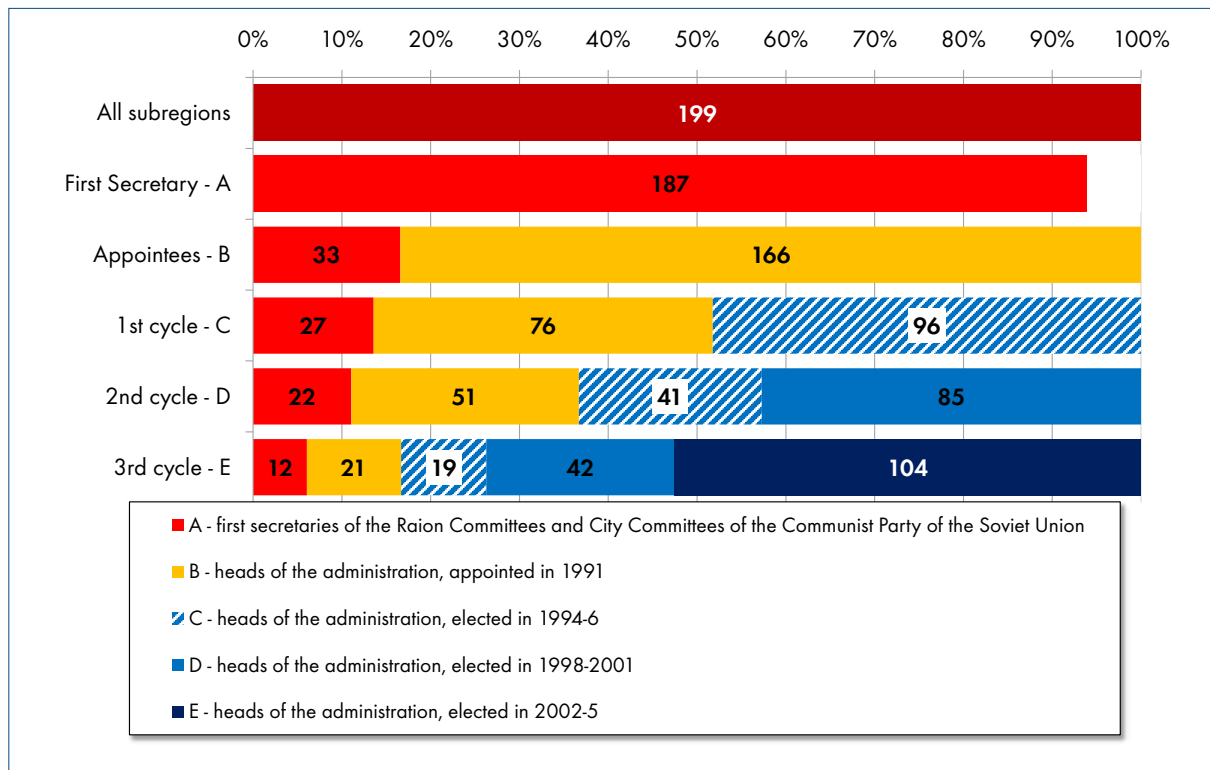
Party membership. The significance of party-membership in determining local electoral outcomes should not be overestimated. It is clear that in today’s Russia decision-making functions are no longer located within the party apparatus, not even within United Russia (UR). The UR regional executive committee typically only reveals its endorsement of a candidate after the governor’s decision. In a number of *raions*, party discipline broke down. At times leaders of the local branches of United Russia stood against one another. Indeed, only 38 percent of the candidates for the post of head of a local district revealed their party membership. These were the representatives of United Russia and Just Russia. None of the businessmen candidates stood as candidates of United Russia. There were no candidates from the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. Indeed, the only Communist who sought to run was denied registration.

Clearing the field. The authorities actively refused to register or annulled the registration of candidates they did not support (15 cases). This was carried out in different ways. Typically, the authorities acted harshly against those individuals who have a history of registering and then voluntarily withdrawing their candidacy, thereby making a significant sum of money. In one prominent case, the authorities refused to register a candidate from the pro-Kremlin party Just Russia, who had financial backing from a businessmen who was the strongest critic of the governor in the region. The central party leadership offered this candidate the opportunity to use the Just Russia party label even though Tambov party officials had refused to give it to him.

Modelling the Replacement of Local Leaders

Diagram 1 illustrates the dynamics in the makeup of Russia’s mayors from 1991 to 2005. The table examines 199 city and neighborhood mayoral positions. The diagram shows that raion and city party first secretaries (category A) held 94 percent of the local leadership posts before 1991 (187 seats out of 199). However, when Yeltsin made his appointments, their representation fell to 16.6 percent and over time dropped to 5.5 percent

Diagram 1: The Dynamics in the Makeup of Russia’s Mayors from 1991 to 2005



through three electoral cycles. Moreover, it should be noted that between 1985–1991 there were around 475 such first secretaries. By the end of the third electoral cycle, only 12 of them remained.

Also, Yeltsin-era appointees (Soviet nomenklatura; who predominantly make-up category B), are steadily disappearing. Until recently, they still represented a quarter of all the heads of administration, but this figure is now down to 10.6 percent. At the end of the third cycle, their representation was only slightly greater than that of the former first secretaries – with 21 posts.

Thus, the old power-brokers of the Soviet Union, the party officials and Soviet nomenklatura (A+B in the table), are still present as heads of local governmental districts, making up 16.6 percent of such posts (6.0% + 10.6%), but they are quickly disappearing.

The table also shows that the winners of the first electoral cycle (C) have fared even worse than those appointed by Yeltsin. This group has gone from comprising 48.2 percent of the posts of heads of local government in 1996 to only 9.5 percent a decade later. The explanation for this is fairly simple: the winners of first electoral cycle were those able to win within the framework of the traditional “communist versus democrat” paradigm. Once the elections stopped being decided on the basis of ideology, these types of candidates no longer won. In the author’s view, the first electoral cycle led to a lot of opportunists winning elections. Although, these opportunists were from outside the frameworks of former CPSU party-membership or Soviet nomenklatura, they also were not the economic power-brokers who came to dominate later elections.

The attempt of the winners of the 1998–2001 elections (D) to hold onto their positions failed, and their representation among Russia’s mayors fell from 42.7 percent to 21.1 percent by the end of the next electoral cycle. Inter-clan rivalry explains these changes. Indeed, even within the parameters of a single clan the rotation of personnel is an ordinary phenomenon.

The success of the “first timers” (E) in the third electoral cycle is in some ways impressive – since they managed to win 53.3 percent of the positions, but at the same time it is not considerably better than that of the two previous waves (C and D) of new electoral winners.

Thus, the table highlights that following each local electoral cycle in post-Soviet Russia, there is always a turnover in personnel of around 50 percent. At the beginning of the fourth cycle, the figure grew to 66.7 percent.

Conclusion

This article has sought to show that the characteristics of the heads of local governmental districts in post-Soviet Russia have changed from the start of the 1990s to the present:

1. In the early Yeltsin period, the local elite was made up of the Soviet nomenklatura (chairmen of the city and district executive committees)
2. In the mid-1990s, it was the economic nomenklatura (directors of factories, construction organizations and state farms; representatives of kolkhozes)
3. At the end of the 1990s – non-nomenklatura economic power-brokers (people from the real sector of the economy, who typically held third or fourth tier positions in the Soviet era)
4. From the start of the 2000s – non-nomenklatura power-brokers (outsiders during the Soviet era and those who became wealthy during the 1990s) and municipal public servants.

What were the results of the elite transitions in post-Soviet Russia? The events of 1991 brought to government the second echelon of nomenklatura and, to a lesser degree, members of the intelligentsia. From 1991 there was extensive turnover in local government personnel. In the course of the electoral cycles of 1994–96, 1998–2001 and 2002–2005 the winners were non-ideological figures, connected with business and local communities. Around these figures, clans formed that were united by common interests and personal dependency. A key late-Yeltsin tendency was the blurring of political and economic elites, and the emergence at the local level of political-financial conglomerates, who sought to become the dominant actors in local politics and business. At the present time, there are post-nomenklatura clans within local governmental politics, a group of people drawn overwhelmingly from the heads of industry who are sending their own people to positions of power,

Thus, the author’s answer to the question “Who governs?” is: representatives of business elites and the managers hired by them, in essence – local clans.

In his classic book *Who Governs?* Robert Dahl provided an in-depth analysis of the changing elites in the US city of New Haven. He found that aristocrats, businessmen and “ex-plebeians” occupied the key positions of authority. In the Russian case, it is possible to say, that the nomenklatura of the traditional party-Soviet career represent a certain form of “aristocracy.” The entrepreneurs of the mid-1990s are equivalent to the American businessmen. And Russia’s current mayors correspond to the “ex-plebeians” Dahl defined. They all became rich in the 1990s (among them are agrarians, engineers,

even former police and decommissioned military officers), and won election to local government in order to protect their business interests. These people now hold power in local government. The one other type of local government leader beyond the categories that Dahl

identified is the municipal civil servant, who most often are placed in important position by the same business interests that reach agreement with the regional political power-brokers.

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Analysis

Valentina Matvienko's Second Term: From Ambitious Projects to Threats of Removal

By Daniil Tsygankov, St. Petersburg-Moscow

Abstract

Three years after President Vladimir Putin appointed her to a second term as governor of St. Petersburg, Valentina Matvienko's position seems secure, particularly since she maintains close relations to Putin. The city economy suffered a serious drop in output thanks to the global financial crisis, but now a slow recovery has begun. However, critics have pointed out that the city's anti-crisis policies support large-scale construction projects at the cost of medium and small business, which are respectively more stable financially and provide many jobs. The city leaders also have not implemented an innovative plan for overhauling the structure of the city economy.

2006: Matvienko at the Top of Her Game

Three years ago St. Petersburg Governor Valentina Matvienko was at the height of her political influence in St. Petersburg. At the end of 2006, President Vladimir Putin appointed her to a second term as governor. To this day, Matvienko continues to maintain Putin's confidence.

In fact, by the end of her first term as St. Petersburg's governor, Matvienko had managed to merge into one team two initially competing coalitions in the city government: the Komsomol alliance headed by Vice Governor and Chief of Staff Viktor Lobko, and the "PSB Fraction" headed by the curator of the financial-economic bloc Mikhail Oseevsky.

Moreover, to Matvienko's benefit, Presidential Envoy to the NorthWest Federal District Ilya Klebanov did not succeed in creating a second power base in the city as had been the case from 2000 to 2003 when then Governor Vladimir Yakovlev faced opposition from Presidential Envoy Viktor Cherkesov. And the apparent threat never materialized from Deputy Governor Yury Molchanov, appointed in 2003 by Putin himself according to many analysts (others say that Federation Council Speaker Sergei

Mironov was his sponsor). Although Molchanov seemed to offer political competition for Matvienko at first, he ultimately preferred to limit himself to the position of an observer in the battle between the two main coalitions and focused on lobbying for construction companies working with the LSR Group, which his son heads.

At that time, Matvienko was so confident in her position that she began to circulate a plan to merge St. Petersburg with the surrounding Leningrad Oblast, ignoring the obvious objections of Leningrad Governor Valery Serdyukov. However, with the election of Dmitry Medvedev, with whom Serdyukov had built good relations, this plan was pushed to the back burner.

Executive-Legislative Relations During the Second Term

With her ostensible support for United Russia, Matvienko managed to do well during the March 2007 elections to the city council. United Russia did not manage to win a majority of the seats thanks to the successful performance of Mironov's Just Russia, making the council even more dependent on the coalition building skills of the governor's representative. Immediately