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RUSSIA'S RESTIVE REGIONS

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Analysis

More than a Cog in the Kremlin's Machine: A Political Portrait of Tatarstan¹

By Danielle N. Lussier, Berkeley

Abstract

Tatarstan negotiated one of the highest levels of autonomy for any region within the Russian Federation during the Yeltsin era. Putin's efforts to centralize power curtailed many of the advantages the republic had originally won. Ironically, the strengthening of central institutions actually forced greater democracy in the region. However, as the key patron in a clientelistic system, Tatarstan President Mintimer Shaimiev remains extremely powerful and the Kremlin has little choice but to take his preferences into account if it wants to maintain the support of Tatarstan's population. Shaimiev has effectively co-opted the Kremlin political machine for his own purposes

Tatarstan's Evolving Relationship with Moscow

During the early years of post-Soviet Russian federalism, the Republic of Tatarstan showed other regions how to play tough with the Kremlin – and win. In stark contrast to Chechnya, where separatist claims led to armed conflict and large-scale regional destruction, Tatarstan leveraged nationalist sentiment to garner more autonomy than any other region in the Russian Federation. Heeding former Russian President Boris Yeltsin's 1990 invitation to “take as much sovereignty as you can swallow,” Tatarstan negotiated the first (and most advantageous) bilateral power-sharing treaty between the central government and a Russian region. Throughout the 1990s Tatarstan's President Mintimer Shaimiev successfully wielded the region's troublemaking potential to shield Tatarstan from the Kremlin's reach. The result was a region that operated according to its own rules – until former Russian President Vladimir Putin came to power.

As Putin shortened the leashes of unwieldy regional executives by recentralizing the state apparatus, many of the advantages Tatarstan gained through its 1994 power-sharing treaty were slowly chipped away. As Russia enters the Medvedev era, where does Tatarstan stand in Russia's centralized federation? Has this fiercely independent region been compelled to forfeit autonomy or can it still stand up to the Kremlin?

Chicago of the Lower Volga

Tatarstan is located in the Volga Federal District, and its 3.8 million residents represent nearly one hundred different nationalities, although the most prominent are the Tatars (52.9 percent) and Russians (39.5 percent). The Russian population is more urbanized, resulting in relatively equal Tatar and Russian populations in the two largest cities – the capital Kazan and Naberezhnye Chelny. Tatarstan is one of Russia's most economically developed regions with strong oil, petrochemical, and automotive and aviation manufacturing industries. It comes in seventh among Russia's regions for its share of total Russian GDP (2.8%).

The 1994 power-sharing agreement brokered between Moscow and Kazan gave Tatarstan almost total control over the region's economic resources and revenue. The region maintained power over much of the taxable income generated in Tatarstan, and also held control over the privatization of assets located on the republic's territory. At the turn of the century, approximately 65 percent of the region's wealth was under the control of the republican political elite.

Mintimer Shaimiev, now 71, has controlled regional politics since 1989, when he became the first secretary of the Tatar Regional Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Shaimiev adapted the method of single-party political rule to the post-Soviet context, running unopposed as the republican president in 1991 and 1996 before changing the republican constitution to run for a third term in 2001. Shaimiev's mandate was extended yet again in 2005 when Putin appointed him to a fourth five-year term.

Even though discussions about Shaimiev's ultimate retirement have been underway for almost a decade, it is clear that his departure from the political scene will happen on his own terms. While Tatarstan's reputation

¹ The following analysis was largely informed by twenty-four interviews with representatives of political parties, civil society organizations, scholars, analysts, and present and former legislators in Tatarstan, and twenty-five anonymous semi-structured interviews with a representative sample of the population of Kazan. All interviews were conducted in February–April 2008.

as one of the most authoritarian regions in an increasingly authoritarian Russia may lend itself to comparison with the personalistic dictatorships that characterize Central Asia, a more accurate analogy for Shaimiev is that of a party boss for a well-oiled political machine, like the 1970s Cook County Democratic Organization that previously dominated Chicago politics. In spite of a severe reduction in Tatarstan's autonomy over legislation and taxation, Shaimiev's longstanding role as patron for Tatarstan's political and economic spoils provides him with an asset the Kremlin covets: sway over republican public opinion and vote choice to ensure that the federal center cannot bypass him if it wants to maintain a loyal Tatarstani public. Given Tatarstan's economic significance to Russia as a whole, an agreeable population in the region serves the Kremlin's interests.

Indispensable Power Broker

Shaimiev first made a name for himself as an essential player in Tatarstan's struggle for power with Moscow when Tatar nationalism was mobilized into a 1990 regional declaration of sovereignty and a 1992 referendum in favor of independent statehood. Shaimiev, who preached moderation and commanded the respect of multiple sides, arose to broker a palatable solution. For the Kremlin, maintaining Russia's territorial integrity was of far greater importance than democratizing political institutions. The Kremlin priorities led to the beginning of an implicit trade-off: Tatarstan's democracy in return for its subordination.

Having averted a potential civil war, Shaimiev turned his attention toward strengthening his hold on the region's economic and political power. Tatarstan's experience with fair and free elections was short-lived. By the March 1995 elections for the republican legislature, the State Council, Shaimiev had successfully reconsolidated power in central republican institutions, which henceforth managed elections from the top. The engineering of elections became more egregious during the 1996 Russian presidential voting. In the first round alone, vote tabulation protocols from Kazan were revised to add over 47,000 votes to Boris Yeltsin's tally and deduct almost 14,000 from second-place finisher Gennady Zyuganov, according to an analysis by Yelena Chernobrovkina. If this was not evidence enough to suspect foul play in the published results claiming that both Yeltsin and Zyuganov took about 38 percent of the vote, then the radical increase in support for Yeltsin to 61 percent in the second round should certainly have raised questions.

Those questions, however, were of little interest to the Kremlin, which benefited from Shaimiev's ability to support the status quo in Moscow. Shaimiev's

team continued to deliver the desired results, posting votes for Putin of 68.8 percent and 82.6 percent in 2000 and 2004, respectively, and showing 79 percent for Medvedev in 2008. These outcomes are not all due to falsification. Other techniques, such as media control and voter mobilization, help keep the numbers high, particularly in rural areas. Most of the voters in the region – who had been socialized to believe that voting was not about selecting representatives, but about demonstrating loyalty to the regime – could be easily swayed to participate. Moreover, they shared the belief that Shaimiev's shrewd political leadership had prevented ethnic violence. They also believe that life in Tatarstan is better than in other regions, a debatable myth that Shaimiev's regime has successfully propagandized.

According to Ivan Grachev, one of the founders of the democratic movement in Tatarstan and a current Russian State Duma deputy elected from Irkutsk, regions like Tatarstan and Bashkortostan destroyed nascent democratic institutions in order to strengthen a clientelistic relationship with the Russian center: the regions turn out the pro-Kremlin vote and in turn receive various privileges. Grachev suggests that other regions have learned from Tatarstan's example.

Co-opting the Pro-Kremlin Machine

Turning out the vote for Moscow became an even more important task for Shaimiev following Putin's 2004 decision to cancel direct elections for regional executives. By then, however, Shaimiev was already turning the regional branch of the pro-Kremlin United Russia party into the republican ruling machine. While the parallels between the former CPSU and United Russia are frequently noted, nowhere are the similarities more striking than in Tatarstan.

The Tatarstan regional branch of United Russia was created from above by elite agreement, co-chaired by Shaimiev and chairman of the State Council Farid Mukhametshin. Eighty-three of the 93 State Council deputies are members of the party. All republican ministers but two are in the United Russia party leadership. According to a United Russia party insider, the party cannot be viewed as an independent organization. Rather, it is intertwined with the republican executive and legislative branches and with central political organs.

The perception of the party as an extension of the state apparatus is further reinforced by the regional branch's charitable foundation, which has financed popular initiatives like the Naberezhnye Chelny City Center for Children's Creative Works – a twenty-first century version of the Pioneer Palace. Such displays of patronage reinforce the image of United Russia as the modern-day ruling party for the rank-and-file as well.

The spread of membership over the past several years closely parallels CPSU recruitment – enterprise directors joined and then strongly encouraged their subordinates to join as well. These employees see job security as somewhat contingent on party membership. A United Russia party insider noted that this is a view shared by young people as well, who see party membership as a way to move up the career ladder.

The public and elite perceptions of United Russia as a regional patron, however, are not based on sympathies with the party, but are closely linked to the popularity of Shaimiev and Mukhametshin as individuals. To generate support for United Russia, Shaimiev agreed to be on the party's candidate list for both the 2003 and 2007 State Duma elections. Shaimiev's popularity in the region is genuine. Tatars and Russians alike look on him favorably, even while they criticize the regional and local legislatures for being corrupt and clan-centric. This degree of public support makes crossing Shaimiev a dangerous move for the Kremlin. Meanwhile, by taking control over the development of United Russia in the region, Shaimiev has succeeded in linking his regionally-based system of patronage into the Kremlin's primary institutional support structure.

The result is a subtle form of leverage for lobbying regional interests against a powerful center. Though organized from the top-down, United Russia has acquired a mass following in Tatarstan, boasting 45 local branches with 132,000 members, making this division the largest United Russia branch of all regions, including Moscow, according to an interview with a Tatarstan-based United Russia employee. United Russia dominated the 2007 State Duma elections in Tatarstan. It was the only party to cross the 7 percent barrier, and the high showing resulted in the election of fourteen United Russia deputies from Tatarstan, which constitutes the largest regional group in the Duma.

Bleak Prospects for Opposition

The nearly twenty-year reign of one man's political machine in Tatarstan has not been unanimously supported. Opposition to Shaimiev, however, continues to encounter sustained and meaningful barriers. The Communist Party of the Russian Federation, Just Russia, the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, Yabloko, and the Union of Right Forces are all active in the region. Just Russia, in particular, inherited the vocal opposition following that the Russian Party of Life had cultivated in Tatarstan. Unfortunately, disagreements among the regional members of the parties that united to form Just Russia have caused the party to lose a sizeable bloc of its previously active cadre. All of these parties share an interest in reducing vote falsification, and Yabloko, Union of Right Forces, and Just Russia have worked together to mon-

itor elections and vote counting. They all are confident that officially published vote results belie true levels of support.

Ironically, it was Putin's success at strengthening the center that brought modest democratic gains to the region. Tatarstan ultimately made over 350 amendments to the republican constitution to bring it into alignment with federal legislation. Changes included the elimination of single-candidate elections for executive positions, the revision of an election procedure that led to the overrepresentation of complicit rural regions in the State Council, and the introduction of elections for local government. These revisions improved the legal basis for competitive elections. According to one local political observer, the March 2004 elections to the State Council marked the first time since 1995 when a few opposition candidates made it into the legislature. In October 2005 the first-ever elections were held for city and town governments. Yet, in most instances, the status quo was preserved. Over 80 percent of candidates ran unopposed and all but one *raion* head was reelected (*Russian Regional Report*, Vol. 10, no. 18, 3 November 2005). While these changes may mark small progress in terms of reducing *de jure* authoritarian procedures, they have done little to actually change the face of Tatarstan's politics.

Mass movements have long been absent from Tatarstan. According to an estimate made by one local scholar, the All-Tatar Public Center (VTOTs) claims to have 3,000 registered members, but only 200 to 300 are active. Aside from VTOTs, there is no civil society organization in the region with more than 100 active members. The pro-democracy movement Accord had 500 active members during its peak in 1990–1991, but now it has only about 70 regular participants. Similarly, the once vibrant Equal Rights and Lawfulness movement has been diluted into a discussion group aimed at assisting the State Council's sole democratically-inclined member, Aleksander Shtanin. Nevertheless, small pockets of protest occasionally emerge regarding local issues, such as conditions relating to small business and the rising costs of utilities. Opposition potential exists, but most residents see elections as a useless mechanism for resolving their problems. They find issuing formal complaint letters and filing the occasional court case to be more effective.

Whether this situation will change once Shaimiev leaves office is an open question. Local analysts are not optimistic: the Kremlin knows better than to put anyone in charge of Tatarstan who does not have Shaimiev's backing. The most likely compromise candidate is Farid Mukhametshin, although Shaimiev has also praised Kazan mayor Il'sur Metshin. Regardless of who the successor is, he is unlikely to tinker with the smooth-run-

ning machine. For any real change to come at this point, the Russian federal government would have to make democratization in Tatarstan a priority. But since the

current system serves Moscow's interests well, there is little chance that it will make many changes.

About the author

Danielle Lussier is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the University of California, Berkeley Political Science Department.

Recommended Reading

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Analysis

The Oil Factor and War of Clans in Chechnya

By Nathalie Ouvaroff, Moscow

Abstract

Oil has long been an object of conflict in Chechnya, with both Moscow and the leaders of the republic trying to gain control of the profits from its sale. Over time various warlords and members of the Russian special services have sold the oil on the black market for personal profit. Under Ramzan Kadyrov, the Chechens argue that the Russian state-owned oil company Rosneft is taking too much of the republic's oil for its own purposes, leaving too little money in the region. Kadyrov has apparently scored some victories over Rosneft recently, but these may be short-lived. Ultimately, the Putin-Medvedev tandem and the people around them must decide whether the Russian government will continue to support Kadyrov or try to replace him with an alternative figure who would better serve Russian interests.

Time of Uncertainty

Russia is entering a zone of uncertainty, fraught with danger. Elites view the Putin-Medvedev tandem as a false diarchy, in which Putin remains the leading figure. According to jokes currently circulating in Moscow, "The tsar is still there, he has just appointed an assistant" or "Our Vladimir is canny, he has chosen the only way to preserve his throne without alienating Western public opinion and oligarchs eager to launder money in the West." Even though the Russian constitution places power in the hands of the president, the presence of two people at the top will allow a number of maneuvers between the two centers of power, particularly since the new head of state does not seem to be a clone of his predecessor.

Even before the new president was sworn in, subtle games began to appear in the fringes of the empire: The Chechen Republic, which since the arrival of Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov in 2006 has experienced a period of calm and prosperity that even Kadyrov's opponents must concede, is again facing tension for two reasons:

- Rosneft's decision to build a second refinery in the neighboring republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, rather than in Chechnya, and
- The resumption of clan warfare among the various Chechen factions, marked in particular by the dispute between Kadyrov and the Yamadaev Brothers and the surprising statement of the separatist refugee Ahmed Zakaev in London highlighting the

positive aspects of Kadyrov's management of the republic.

Oil and the Chechen Conflict

In 1991, Chechnya proclaimed its independence. President Dzhokhar Dudaev placed his hand on the republic's oil and promised the people to build a new Kuwait. However, Dudaev, who only had the right to issue export licenses, instead mostly shared the spoils with his relatives rather than the people as a whole.

The oil trade generated huge profits due to the difference between market prices inside and outside the republic and the absence, until 1992, of tariffs on trade between former Soviet republics. One ton of crude sold in Grozny for \$1 but fetched \$150 in Lithuania. Given these lucrative profits, the oil trade provoked rivalries that resulted in killings. The people who expected miracles were disappointed, life became increasingly difficult and the Russians did not pay additional wages or pensions.

After these circumstances festered for several years, Russia decided to end the Chechen rebellion in December 1994. President Yeltsin and his entourage believed that they would be able to secure a quick victory for the federal forces. However, Russia's troops were unprepared for guerrilla fighting and faced strong resistance from the Chechens, especially in the mountains. Additionally, Russia's response lacked cohesion due to the tensions between civilian and military groups working in Chechnya as well as the role of Boris Berezovsky, who openly played on both sides. The outcome was a humiliating defeat for Moscow, which was codified two years later in the ceasefire agreement spelled out in the 1996 Treaty of Khasavyurt.

Russia accepted the departure of all of its forces, meeting then Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov's condition for the Chechens to lay down their weapons. At the time, the Kremlin had no choice but to accept these conditions. Because of the instability that reigned in Chechnya, Azerbaijan threatened to send its oil by pipeline through Soupsa in Georgia. Ultimately, Russia agreed to pay \$15.67 per ton of oil leaving Chechnya, while charging \$4.57 for transportation fees.

From 1998 on, however, the Russian money never arrived. Then Chechen President Maskhadov went to Moscow to try to solve the problem, explaining that the situation around the pipeline affected not only Chechens, but also Russians, because the guards who should have been protecting the pipeline, but who had not received their wages, were instead pumping oil from the pipeline to sell on the black market. Ultimately, newly-appointed Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov paid Russia's debts, but it was too late as the black market for oil was in full swing.

In August 1999, Yeltsin appointed Vladimir Putin as prime minister, apparently at the urging of the meddling Berezovsky. At the same time, Chechen Islamists undertook an offensive to liberate Dagestan, even though Maskhadov had objected to this operation. The September attacks in Dagestan left several hundred dead. Although the conditions of the invasion remain murky, the outbreak of violence helped Moscow to begin its "anti-terrorist" activities in Chechnya and at the same time to install the "vertical of power," stomping on all freedoms. These efforts did not stop the fighting, but, to the contrary, intensified the war effort.

Rosneft, Russia's state-owned oil company, which has since become a powerful player, settled in Chechnya in the early 2000s, following the troops into the break-away republic. Its job was to take control of oil wealth there. At that time, most of the oil wells had been destroyed during the fighting. The ones that still operated were controlled by the heads of the most influential clans in the republic and used to finance both separatist forces and those that favored a compromise with Russia.

Rosneft began to repair the wells and revive the oil industry with the help of the Russian special forces, which took the place of the warlords in the illicit oil trade. At that time, more than half the oil was sold on the parallel market, whose size was between one million and a million and half tons. The oil was processed in mini-refineries, which were protected by senior members of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces (GRU) and the Federal Security Service (FSB).

Then Chechen President Akhmed Kadyrov met with members of the presidential administration in Moscow in an effort to direct the oil profits to his republic. Putin went secretly to Grozny to establish a special police group capable of requiring the special forces not only to renounce their main source of income, but to fight against those of their comrades who worked with Chechen separatists to continue their black market trade. Nevertheless, oil still remained a key bone of contention.

The Kadyrov Clan against Rosneft

Relations between the Kadyrov clan and Rosneft have never been cordial, and for good reason. The state-owned Rosneft behaves in Chechnya as if it is operating in a conquered country, acting as if it can behave with impunity. Rosneft gained extensive weight on the Russian market since it took over Yukos' assets, following the destruction of that company in 2003. Of course, it is no coincidence that Chairman of the Rosneft board of directors Igor Sechin, who also served as a deputy

head of the presidential administration, played a major role in dismantling Russia's most important independent oil company.

The father of current Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov, Akhmed, who ruled from October 2003 until his death on May 9, 2004, secured the support of a number of warlords and brought peace to the small republic. He then sought to take advantage of his popularity by convincing Moscow to agree to his demands for more autonomy. In particular, he sought an agreement with the federal government that would precisely define the powers of the Russian and Chechen governments, both politically and economically, clearly delineating who controlled the oil wealth and refineries in the republic. While the controversial document was under discussion, Akhmed Kadyrov was killed by a bomber as he viewed the republic's World War II commemoration. According to the official account, he was the victim of a terrorist act.

However, his son Ramzan Kadyrov drew the appropriate conclusion and, just after his inauguration as Chechen president, reassured the Kremlin of his intentions: "I am in favor of strengthening the vertical of power and believe that an agreement with Moscow is useless," he said.

In addition, Ramzan convinced the Kremlin, and Putin in particular, that Chechenizing the peace would best serve Russian interests by replacing the Russian security forces in Chechnya with Chechen groups. This initiative made Ramzan Kadyrov powerful enemies in the FSB and GRU.

Chechnya's oil is exploited by Grozneftegaz, a subsidiary of Rosneft, headed by 9 people, including 5 Russians and 4 Chechens. Rosneft takes the lion's share of the oil, leaving the Chechens mere crumbs. The company returns to Chechnya only 420 million rubles of the 200 billion that it earns each year. "Rosneft's attitude is an affront to the Chechen people," Ramzan Kadyrov told the Russian news agency RIA NOVOSTI last year. Likewise, the speaker of the Chechen parliament, D. Abdoura Khmanov, recalled that President Putin had stressed that the oil would be used primarily to improve the economy of the republic and stressed that "Rosneft had a short-sighted policy, both economically and politically."

In March, the news that Rosneft had finally decided to build a refinery in Kabardino-Balkaria and not Chechnya despite all of Grozny's efforts and the company's repeated promises, sparked conflict. For the Russian oil giant, it was a strategic decision rather than an economic one since Kabardino-Balkaria's reserves do not exceed 7 million tons, while Chechnya has at least 20 million. This decision shows that Rosneft and the Kremlin have, in fact, little confidence in Kadyrov

and fear that he might one day decide to do business without Rosneft.

Ultimately, Rosneft went for a compromise solution. The company will open a representative office in Grozny thus allowing a more equitable distribution of income taxes by having the state send some of the funds it collects back to Chechnya. As for the refinery, it would appear that the Chechens have also succeeded in getting their way, at least according to the Chechen media, which, in contrast to the Russian press, remains very discreet on the subject, merely emphasizing that "all the difficulties have been ironed out."

The Resumption of the Struggle of Clans between Ramzan and the Yamadaev Brothers

In this context, the clash between the clans of Ramzan Kadyrov and the Yamadaev brothers resumed. The rivalry between Kadyrov and the Yamadaevs is not new. At the beginning of the second Chechen war, members of both clans fought against the federal authorities and then subsequently joined their side. Ruslan Yamadaev, the elder brother, was close to the father of Ramzan and is a member of the pro-Kremlin United Russia party. Suleyman, the younger brother, became the head of the "Vostok" battalion, which consists solely of Chechen troops but serves directly under the GRU. Clearly, this battalion is not dependent on Ramzan Kadyrov and is not accountable to him. But Ramzan Kadyrov wants absolute power and beginning with his inauguration, he has taken advantage of Putin's strong support to get rid of any potential opposition, which could eventually stand up to him.

In 2006 Kadyrov succeeded in dissolving the "Gorets" battalion, composed of members of the FSB, and a few weeks later, on November 18, 2006, its commander Movladi Baisarov was killed by Chechens in Moscow. Beslan Emilkhanov, who commanded the GRU "Zapad" battalion was forced to leave the region after he received a number of threats. It is important to note that the federal government is not interfering with Kadyrov's attempt to destroy all his opposition. For Moscow, the essential thing is that the situation in the region remains stable.

In mid-April, a clash occurred between Kadyrov-followers and that of Suleyman Yamadaev on a national highway near the town of Gudermes, stronghold of the Yamadaev clan. Two fighters were killed in this incident. The next day Yamadaev's supporters attacked Kadyrov's backers leading to a real battle between two mini-armies in which eight fighters were arrested and killed.

Following the confrontation, Ramzan Kadyrov asked the Russian Defense Minister to break up the Yamadaev unit, which includes thousands of men. At

the same time, Kadyrov filed a complaint against the younger brother of Suleyman, Badroudin, accusing him of being a drug addict and having carried out numerous kidnappings for ransom. In 2003 he was sentenced to 15 years in a prison camp, but remains at large. The Grozny city council backed the Chechen president, declaring that “the Vostok battalion has no place in a peaceful country working toward reconstruction.”

After contradictory information appeared in the press, the federal authorities tried to put forward a split decision, announcing, on the one hand, the disgrace of Suleyman Yamadaev, who will no longer command the Vostok battalion and, on the other, that the combatants must now “pass an examination to be reclassified.”

Kadyrov’s Victory?

Chechnya is at peace, but it is a relative and fragile peace while at the same time, the rest of the Caucasus has entered a time of turbulence. In addition, there is no doubt that Ramzan Kadyrov only manages to stay alive with the support of Putin, with whom he maintains very close relations. Kadyrov is content now that the prime minister retains all the levers of power in Moscow. But how long will this be the case? Many observers point out that President Medvedev has no intention of being a puppet. In this context, the Chechen president is working to get rid of all those who could replace him, particularly since he has few friends in Moscow. The new Russian president does not seem to have a great deal of sympathy for Kadyrov: in fact, he invited both Suleyman and Ruslan Yamadaev to his inauguration ceremony, as well as Kadyrov. Igor Sechin and Nikolai Patruchev, who did not support Kadyrov in the past, are still in place. It does not help the Chechen president that he has sought to gain control over such a lucrative source of income as his region’s oil. One positive point for Kadyrov is that one of his personal enemies, Deputy Prime Minister and former Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov, is no longer part of the Security Council.

However, the Chechen president should not rejoice too soon as a new scandal is about to burst. This time, the attack comes from the Russian army. In an article published in the military newspaper *Krasnaia zvezda*, General Nikolas Silak, who serves in Chechnya, said that “the republic is still not peaceful and that losses of men this year are substantially the same as they were in 2007.” He also stressed that “the police and the Chechen FSB do not provide the kind of help that we need and

only the Vostok and Zapad battalions, which are not controlled by Kadyrov, now take an active part in the fight against the guerrillas.”

Responding to these accusations in the daily *Vremia Novostei*, the Chechen ombudsman and a member of the Chechen parliament, Houdry Houkhaiev, accused the Russian forces “of painting Chechen reality in black to justify their presence on the ground.”

Moscow-based political scientist Sergei Markedonov is not surprised by these revelations. “This is not the first time that a conflict has erupted between the Chechen and federal forces. This dispute will continue and intensify because the center gave all the levers of power to Ramzan and now has no power over him,” he said, and added “the situation in the republic is troubled. The policy of national renaissance led by Kadyrov is not clearly defined.” For him “the essential thing is to be Chechen.” He believes that the fighters in the mountains are no longer “separatists,” but patriots, who have not yet understood that the Chechen administration shares their ideal of a Chechen autonomy in which Islamic values would be respected. This attitude is dangerous, especially in the context of the rise of Islamist radicals in the republics bordering Chechnya — Ingushetia and Dagestan. Finally we must acknowledge the unexpected support given to Kadyrov by the separatist Ahmed Zakaev.

In this context, Kadyrov’s victory over Rosneft and the Yamadaev clan may be pyrrhic. Ultimately, the Kremlin and the Russian White House will decide. For Moscow, it is a difficult problem. Indeed, if the Kremlin moves to get rid of Ramzan Kadyrov, it will have to come up with an alternative in a hurry. According to experts, there is no individual who is acceptable to all clans and the solution would likely be a troika of leaders, consisting of two clan representatives and a member of the Chechen diaspora. This configuration would be highly unstable and could generate a new outbreak of violence.

Likewise, we must explain the significance of the recent appointment of Ramzan Kadyrov to the presidium of the Russian Federation State Council. Regional leaders are rotated through this body on a regular basis. According to Markedonov, Kadyrov received this “promotion” so that Moscow could “monitor the Chechen president more closely and prevent the republic from conducting its own foreign policy, something that it has already started doing.”

About the author

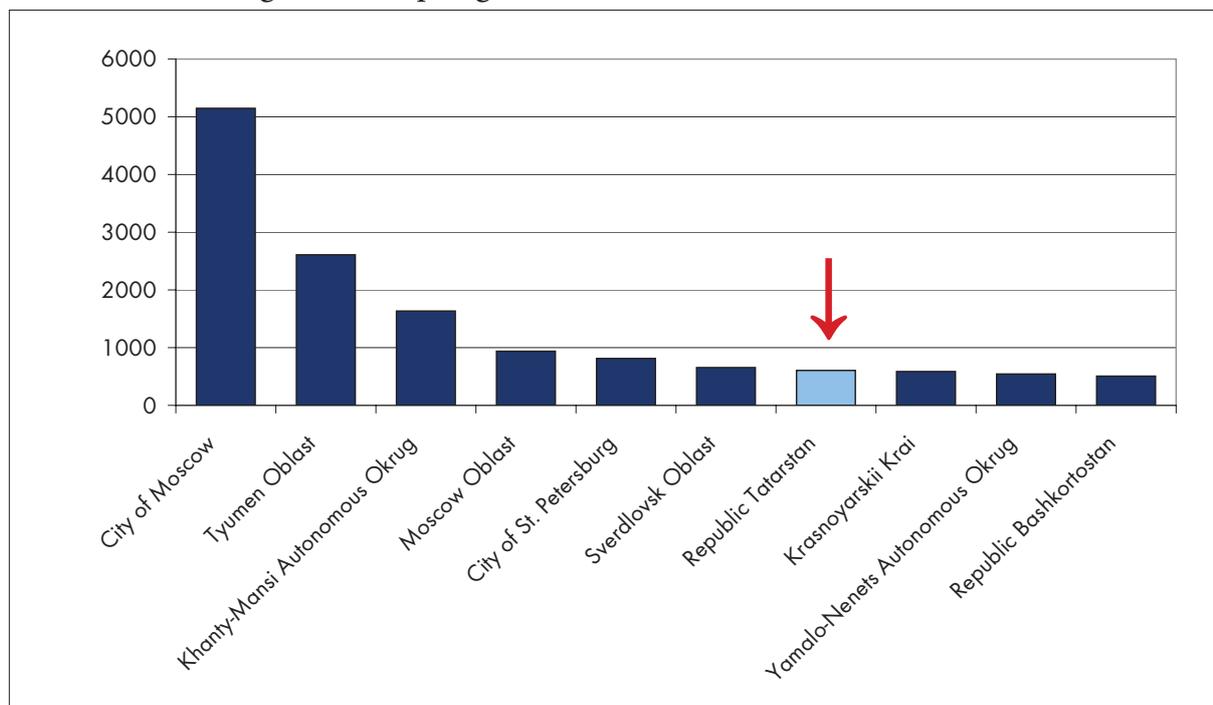
Nathalie Ouvaroff is a freelance journalist based in Moscow

This article is an English translation from the French original.

Tables and Graphs

The Regional GDPs of Tatarstan and the Chechen Republic

GDP of Russian Regions, 10 Top Regions (2006, bln. roubles)

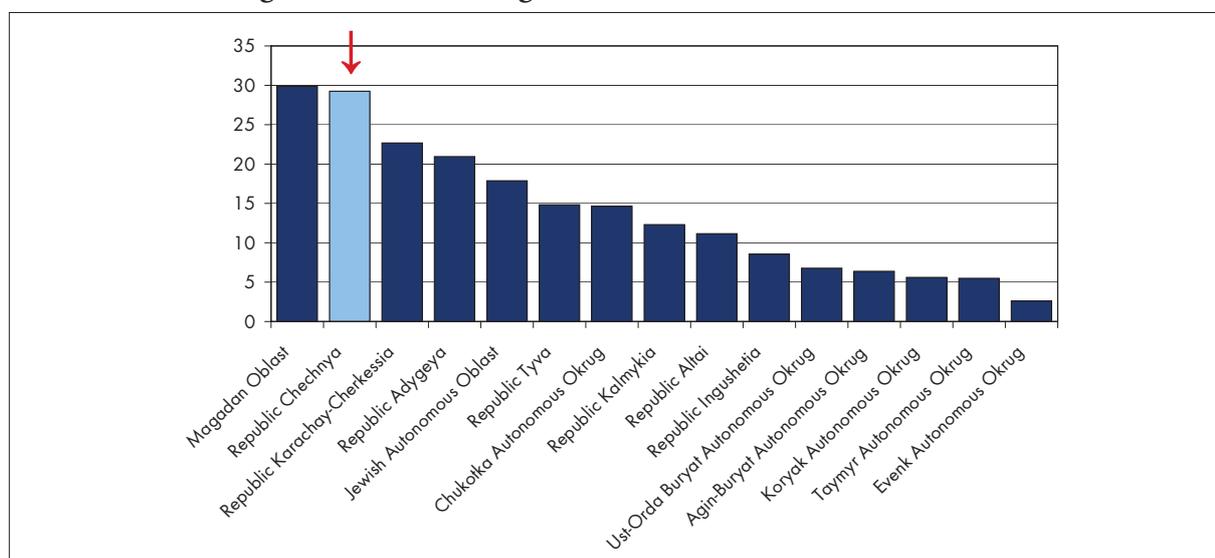


Source: Russian Federal State Statistics Service, www.gks.ru

Regional GDP of Russian Regions, 10 Top Regions (2006, bln. roubles)

City of Moscow	5145.87
Tyumen Oblast	2608.79
Khantii-Mansiisk Autonomous Okrug	1633.29
Moscow Oblast	938.43
City of St. Petersburg	811.70
Sverdlovsk Oblast	655.03
Republic Tatarstan	605.58
Krasnoyarskii Krai	585.88
Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug	543.38
Republic Bashkortostan	505.72

Source: Russian Federal State Statistics Service, www.gks.ru

GDP of Russian Regions, 15 Poorest Regions (2006, bln. roubles)


Source: Russian Federal State Statistics Service, www.gks.ru

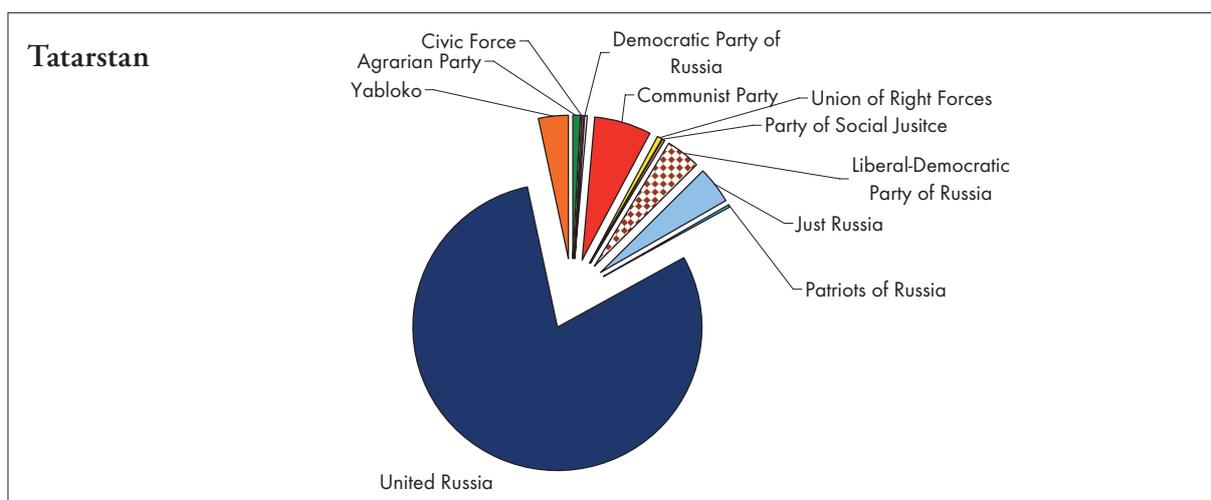
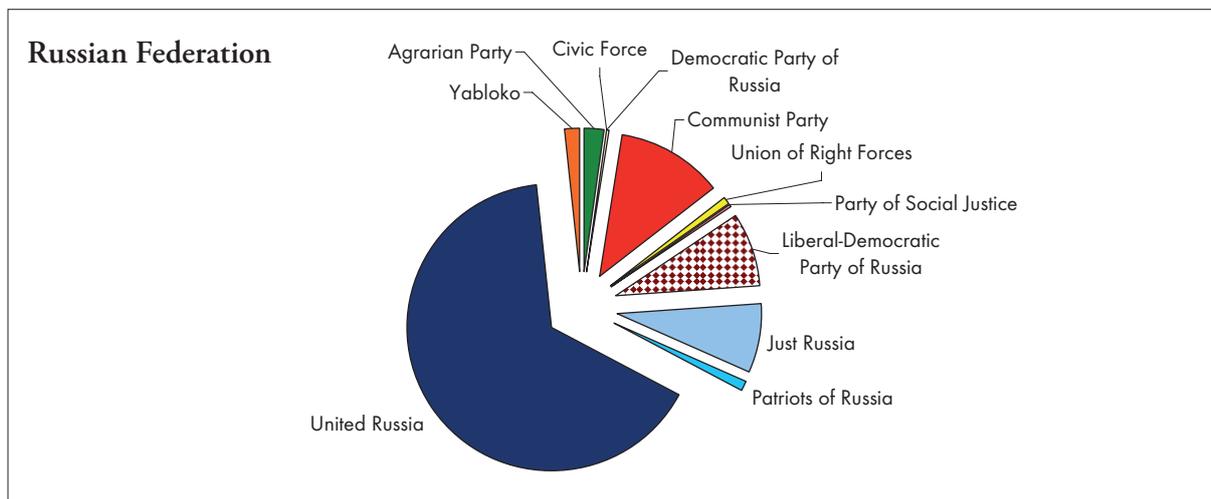
GDP of Russian Regions, 15 Poorest Regions (2006, bln. roubles)

Magadan Oblast	29.86
Republic Chechnya	29.24
Republic Karachay-Cherkessia	22.67
Republic Adygeya	20.94
Jewish Autonomous Oblast	17.87
Republic Tyva	14.82
Chukotka Autonomous Okrug	14.64
Republic Kalmykia	12.30
Republic Altai	11.15
Republic Ingushetia	8.56
Ust-Orda Buryat Autonomous Okrug	6.77
Agin-Buryat Autonomous Okrug	6.37
Koryak Autonomous Okrug	5.59
Taymyr Autonomous Okrug	5.49
Evenk Autonomous Okrug	2.61

Source: Russian Federal State Statistics Service, www.gks.ru

Election Results of the 2007 Duma Elections and the 2008 Presidential Elections for Tatarstan and for the Chechen Republic

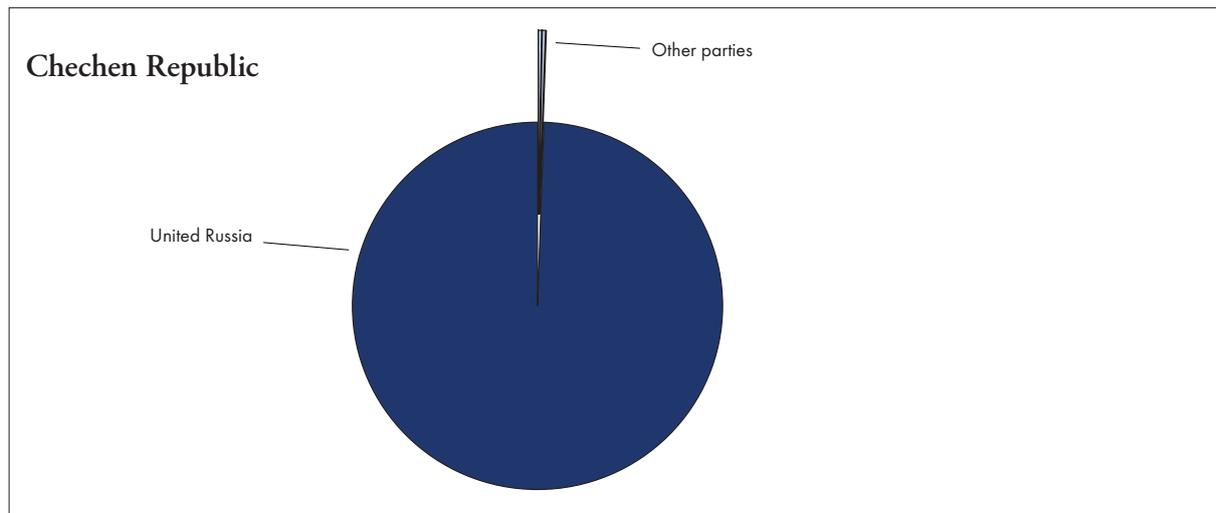
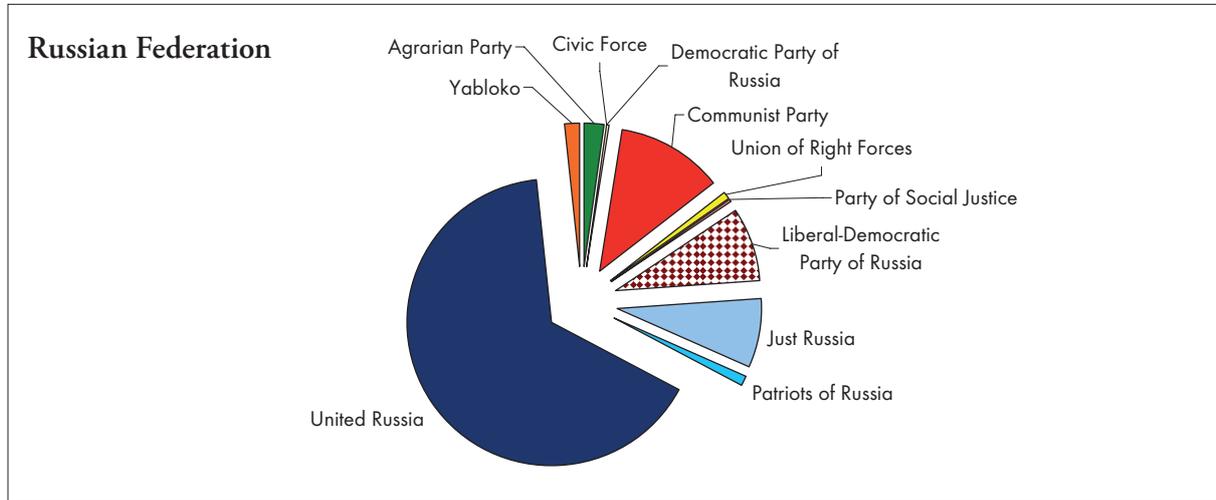
Election Results of the Duma Elections of 2 December 2007 for Tatarstan, Compared with the Result for the Entire Russian Federation



	Agrarian Party	Civic Force	Democratic Party of Russia	Communist Party	Union of Right Forces	Party of Social Justice	Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia	Just Russia	Patriots of Russia	United Russia	Yabloko	Voter turnout
Russian Federation	2.30%	1.05%	0.13%	11.57%	0.96%	0.22%	8.14%	7.74%	0.89%	64.30%	1.59%	63.71%
Tatarstan Voting Districts:												
Moskovskaya	0.64%	0.36%	0.09%	4.68%	0.58%	0.12%	3.48%	3.15%	0.27%	85.08%	0.73%	88.00%
Naberezhno-chelninskaya	0.83%	0.40%	0.12%	8.14%	0.40%	0.18%	3.23%	5.59%	0.25%	79.66%	0.55%	84.82%
Neftyanaya	0.79%	0.33%	0.11%	8.04%	0.35%	0.18%	2.57%	4.25%	0.26%	81.69%	0.44%	89.71%
Tsentralnaya	0.72%	0.72%	0.19%	5.76%	1.12%	0.25%	6.60%	4.16%	0.52%	77.55%	1.57%	78.94%

Source: http://www.vybory.izbirkom.ru/region/region/izbirkom?action=show&root=1&tvd=100100021960186&vrn=100100021960181®ion=0&global=1&sub_region=0&prver=0&pronetvd=null&vibid=100100021960186&type=233

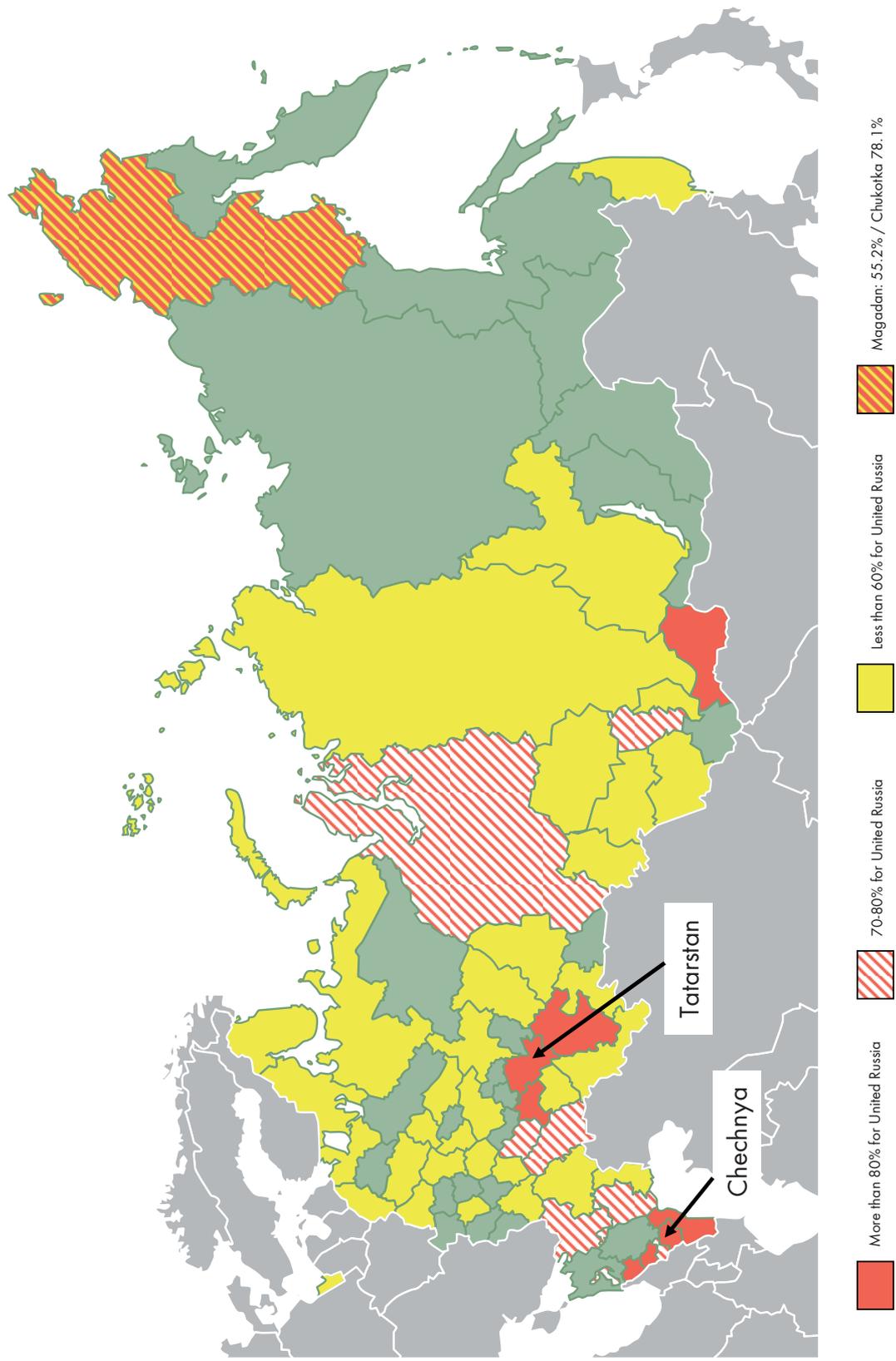
Election Results of the Duma Elections of 2 December 2007: Chechen Republic Compared with the Result for the Entire Russian Federation



	Agrar-ian Party	Civic Force	Demo-crat-ic Party of Russia	Com-munist Party	Union of Right Forces	Party of Social Justice	Liberal-Dem-ocratic Party of Russia	Just Russia	Patriots of Russia	United Russia	Yabloko	Voter turnout
Russian Federation	2.30%	1,05%	0.13%	11.57%	0.96%	0.22%	8.14%	7.74%	0.89%	64.30%	1.59%	63.71%
Chechen Republic	0.04%	0.03%	0.03%	0.13%	0.08%	0.03%	0.06%	0.06%	0.04%	99.36%	0.05%	99.46%

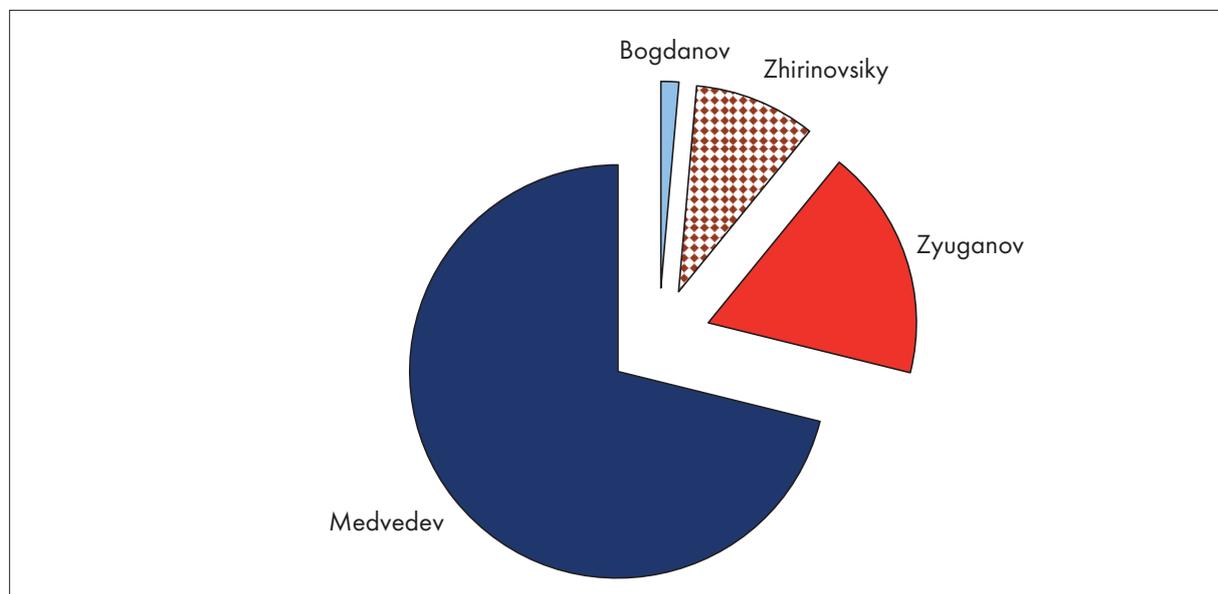
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Results for United Russia in the Duma Elections of 2 December 2007

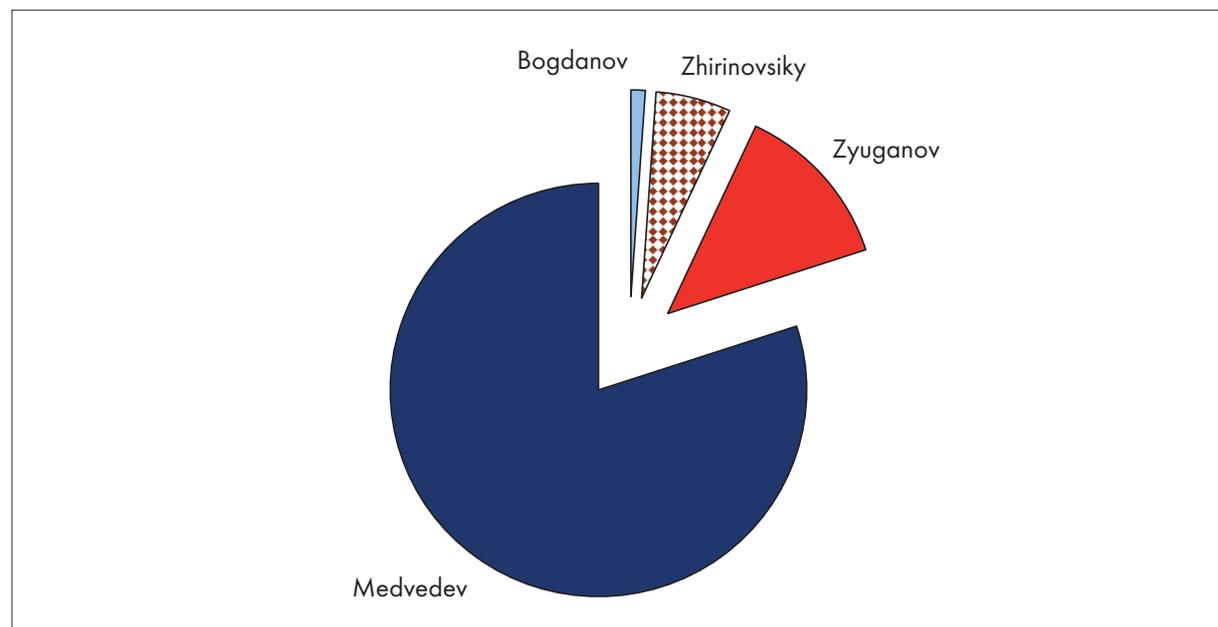


Election Results of the Presidential Elections of 2 March 2008: Results for Tatarstan Compared with the Result for the Entire Russian Federation

Russian Federation



Tatarstan

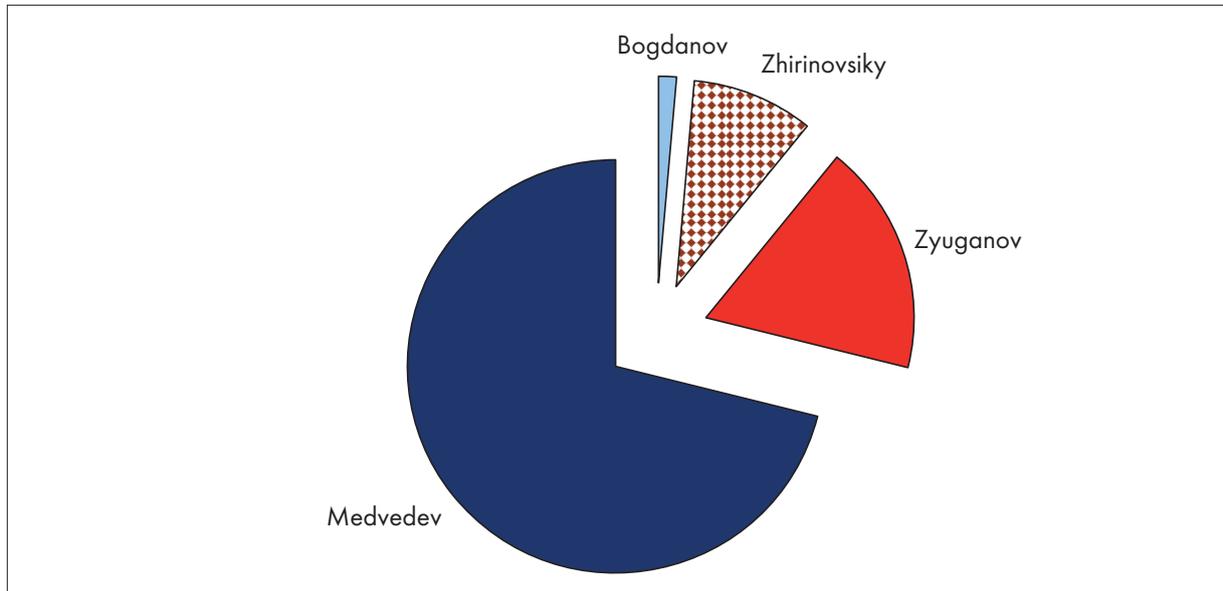


	Bogdanov	Zhirinovsiky	Zyuganov	Medvedev	Voter turnout
Russian Federation	1.30%	9.35%	17.72%	70.28%	69.71%
Republic Tatarstan	1.23%	5.55%	12.93%	79.24%	83.27%

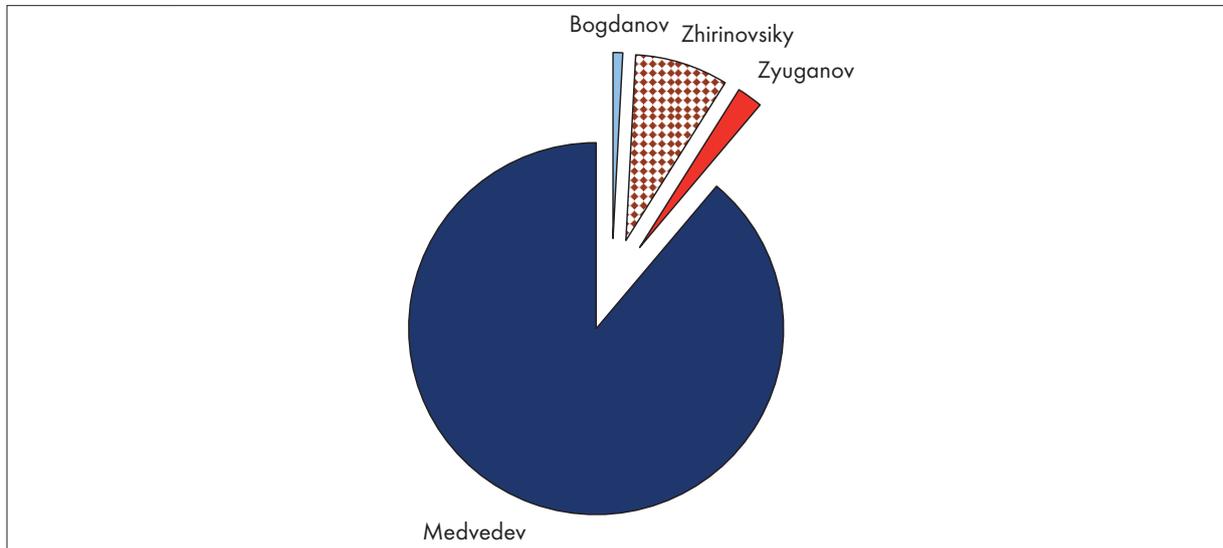
Source: http://www.vybory.izbirkom.ru/region/region/izbirkom?action=show&root=1&tvd=100100022249920&vrn=100100022176412®ion=0&global=1&sub_region=0&prver=0&pronetvd=null&vibid=100100022249920&type=227

Election Results of the Presidential Elections of 2 March 2008: Results for the Chechen Republic Compared with the Result for the Entire Russian Federation

Russian Federation



Chechen Republic



	Bogdanov	Zhirinovsiky	Zyuganov	Medvedev	<i>Voter turnout</i>
Russian Federation	1.30%	9.35%	17.72%	70.28%	69.71%
Chechen Republic	0.85%	8.15%	2.19%	88.70%	91.16%

Source: http://www.vybory.izbirkom.ru/region/region/izbirkom?action=show&root=1&tvd=100100022249920&vrn=100100022176412®ion=0&global=1&sub_region=0&prver=0&pronetvd=null&vibid=100100022249920&type=227

About the Russian Analytical Digest

The Russian Analytical Digest is a bi-weekly internet publication jointly produced by the Research Centre for East European Studies [Forschungsstelle Osteuropa] at the University of Bremen (www.forschungsstelle-uni-bremen.de) and the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zurich). It is supported by the Otto Wolff Foundation and the German Association for East European Studies (DGO). The Digest draws on contributions to the German-language *Russlandanalysen* (www.laender-analysen.de/russland), the CSS analytical network on Russia and Eurasia (www.res.ethz.ch), and the Russian Regional Report. The Russian Analytical Digest covers political, economic, and social developments in Russia and its regions, and looks at Russia's role in international relations.

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Research Centre for East European Studies [Forschungsstelle Osteuropa] at the University of Bremen

Founded in 1982 and led by Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Eichwede, the Research Centre for East European Studies (Forschungsstelle Osteuropa) at the University of Bremen is dedicated to socialist and post-socialist cultural and societal developments in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

The Research Centre possesses a unique collection of alternative culture and independent writings from the former socialist countries in its archive. In addition to extensive individual research on dissidence and society in socialist societies, since January 2007 a group of international research institutes is participating in a collaborative project on the theme "The other Eastern Europe – the 1960s to the 1980s, dissidence in politics and society, alternatives in culture. Contributions to comparative contemporary history", which is funded by the Volkswagen Foundation.

In the area of post-socialist societies, extensive research projects have been conducted in recent years with emphasis on political decision-making processes, economic culture and the integration of post-socialist countries into EU governance. One of the core missions of the institute is the dissemination of academic knowledge to the interested public. This includes regular email service with nearly 15,000 subscribers in politics, economics and the media.

With a collection of publications on Eastern Europe unique in Germany, the Research Centre is also a contact point for researchers as well as the interested public. The Research Centre has approximately 300 periodicals from Russia alone, which are available in the institute's library. News reports as well as academic literature is systematically processed and analyzed in data bases.

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The CSS is engaged in research projects with a number of Swiss and international partners. The Center's research focus is on new risks, European and transatlantic security, strategy and doctrine, state failure and state building, and Swiss foreign and security policy.

In its teaching capacity, the CSS contributes to the ETH Zurich-based Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree course for prospective professional military officers in the Swiss army and the ETH and University of Zurich-based MA program in Comparative and International Studies (MACIS), offers and develops specialized courses and study programs to all ETH Zurich and University of Zurich students, and has the lead in the Executive Masters degree program in Security Policy and Crisis Management (MAS ETH SPCM), which is offered by ETH Zurich. The program is tailored to the needs of experienced senior executives and managers from the private and public sectors, the policy community, and the armed forces.

The CSS runs the International Relations and Security Network (ISN), and in cooperation with partner institutes manages the Comprehensive Risk Analysis and Management Network (CRN), the Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact (PHP), the Swiss Foreign and Security Policy Network (SSN), and the Russian and Eurasian Security (RES) Network.

Any opinions expressed in Russian Analytical Digest are exclusively those of the authors.

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