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The Origins of Dominant Parties

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The Origins of Dominant Parties

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Abstract

The Origins of Dominant Parties

By Ora John Reuter

This study examines why dominant parties emerge in some non-democracies, but not in others. Institutionalized ruling parties that play a role in distributing rents, policy, and patronage contribute to elite cohesion and fortify authoritarian rule, so it is puzzling that many authoritarian leaders eschew building them. This dissertation solves the puzzle of dominant party emergence by examining dominant party emergence as a two-sided commitment problem between leaders *and* other elites. Specifically, it is argued that dominant parties emerge when other elites hold enough independent political resources that leaders need to coopt them, but not so many autonomous resources that they themselves are unwilling to commit to the party project.

In a span of just under 20 years, post-Soviet Russia has witnessed the failure of two ruling parties *and* the emergence of a dominant party. This makes contemporary Russia an excellent arena for exploring arguments about the formation of dominant parties. The dissertation shows how Russia's ruling parties failed in the 1990s because regional elites were so strong that they would not link their political machines to any ruling party project. In contrast, United Russia emerged as a dominant party in the 2000s under Vladimir Putin because elites were still strong enough that they needed to be coopted, but they were not so strong that they were prone to defect from the party. Using individual level data on Russian governors and legislators it is shown that strong elites were more reluctant to join Russia's emergent dominant party.

Using cross-national data on dominant parties in all the world's non-democracies since 1946, this study shows that dominant parties only emerge and endure in those countries where neither leaders nor elites hold a preponderance of resources. When elites control access to regional political machines, clientelistic networks, and hard-to-tax economic assets, they may need to be coopted, but if these resources give elites too much autonomy, then elites will not commit to a leader's party project and a dominant party will not emerge. By demystifying the origins of dominant party rule, this study contributes to our understanding of why some countries democratize, but others do not.

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Acknowledgments

While doing field research for this project I spent a lot of time on long distance trains. Russian trains are comfortable enough, but in the summer, I find it difficult to work on the train. Temperature and aromas combine to distract the mind and dull the intellect. As I sit writing this (on a train), Russia is experiencing its hottest summer on record. The heat has aided the spread of hundreds of wildfires that fill with air with a pungent smoke. At 40mph, my train waddles through the 100 degree heat and smoky haze of Tverskaya Oblast. The windows of our compartment are sealed shut ("Closed in Winter" is inscribed on the inner pane) and the air conditioner seems to have thrown in the towel. If there were any time that working on my dissertation would be impossible, this should be it. But, having run out of newspapers to read and with the batteries dead on my iPod, I opened my laptop to give it a try. Fortunately, I remembered that I had not written any acknowledgments for the dissertation. The acknowledgments are by far the easiest part of this dissertation to write, because my gratitude to those who have helped me in this project is so deep that I don't have to expend much mental energy on finding the words to thank them.

The first word of thanks must be reserved for my dissertation advisor, Thomas Remington. Early on, he urged me to forge a nebulous interest in 'parties of power' into a research question and then into a dissertation. His enthusiastic support for the project saw me through difficult moments, while his criticisms pushed me to clarify my arguments. If the reader finds any precision in my exposition, it has much to do with his influence. I could not imagine having had a better advisor in graduate school. His professionalism, intellectual curiosity, and rigorous approach to scholarship set a powerful example for others. I am proud to have followed that example.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Democracy is more prevalent today than at any time in history. Yet non-democratic regimes continue to survive in many parts of the world. Many of these regimes have failed to democratize because regime leaders successfully appropriated nominally democratic institutions in order to entrench their rule. The most significant of these institutions has been the dominant party. A dominant party is one that has the leading role in determining access to most political offices, shares powers over policy-making and patronage distribution, and uses privileged access to state resources to maintain its position in power. Some authoritarian leaders use a dominant party to secure victories at the ballot box, reduce the costs of ruling, and bind allies to the ruling coalition. Others prefer to rule through a combination of charisma, patronage, and coercion, rather than sharing power with a party. This dissertation explains why dominant parties emerge in some non-democratic regimes, but not in others.

Dominant parties are neither a recent phenomenon nor an historical artifact. As Figure 1.1 shows, they have existed consistently in about half of all non-democracies since 1946.

[Figure 1.1 Here]

Dominant parties may exist alongside marginalized opposition parties (hegemonic party regimes) or they may rule in an environment where multi-party competition is banned

(single party regimes). Dominant parties of both varieties have been key institutions in some of the 20th century's most important and long-lived non-democratic regimes. In Eurasia, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union ruled the Soviet Union from 1917 to 1991. In Central America, the PRI ruled Mexico from 1929 to 2000. In South America, the Colorado Party helped Alfredo Stroessner govern Paraguay from 1954 until his death in 1989. In East Asia, the KMT led Taiwan from the state's inception in 1947 until 2000. In Southeast Asia, Malaysia has been effectively ruled by UMNO since independence in 1957. In the Middle East, the Ba'ath party has ruled Syria since 1963, much of that time in conjunction with the Assad political dynasty. In Sub-Saharan Africa, Kenya was ruled by KANU from 1964 until 2002. In North Africa, Egypt's Presidents have ruled their country in concert with the elite coalitions forged in the ranks of the NDP. These are just a few examples of well-known, long-lived dominant parties.

In all, 121 dominant parties have existed at some time in over 80 countries between 1946 and the present. The prominent examples above notwithstanding, many of these dominant parties occurred in less visible non-democracies such as Tajikistan, Djibouti, Seychelles, or Guyana and many were quite short-lived (existing for fewer than 10 years) such as the CUG in Georgia, the BNP in Bangladesh, Cambio 90 in Peru, and the DP in Turkey. Moreover, although many of the most-studied dominant parties trace their origins to the mid-20th century, new dominant parties continue to emerge at a steady rate in the post-Cold War era. Prominent examples include Ethiopia's EPRDF, Kazakhstan's OTAN, Nigeria's PDP, Yemen's GPC, Cambodia's CPP, and the subject of much of this study, Russia's United Russia.

Yet, the puzzling thing about dominant parties is not their prevalence but rather their nonexistence in so many non-democracies. After all, dominant parties contribute to elite cohesion and regime stability by reducing uncertainty over the distribution of spoils and extending the time horizons of party cadres (Geddes 1999a, Smith 2005, Brownlee 2007, Magaloni 2008). If dominant parties fortify authoritarian rule, why do many leaders eschew building them?

Unfortunately, existing literature provides only a few clues about why dominant parties emerge. Those recent accounts that do exist focus solely on the incentives of *leaders* to build institutions (Smith 2005, Gandhi 2008). According to these works, leaders build parties when they confront a social opposition that needs to be coopted and/or when they lack resource rents that can be used to buy off erstwhile supporters. Yet, many important cases of dominant party emergence confound the expectations set forth by these recent works. One of these puzzling dominant parties, United Russia, is the subject of much of this study. In the mid 2000s, the Kremlin was blessed with treasury-filling hydrocarbon revenues and a relatively weak opposition. In this setting, leader-centric theories predict that Russian president Vladimir Putin would have little impetus to build a ruling party and would instead use rent revenues to buy cooperation in society. Indeed, Putin employed rent revenues to buy cooperation, but contrary to existing theories' predictions, he also invested heavily in the creation of a dominant party, United Russia. This development contrasted sharply with the mid-late 1990s when the Kremlin faced the very real threat of a communist opposition and record low oil prices. Here existing theory predicts that the Kremlin would have built institutions that would allow them to coopt the opposition, or at the very least, keep its supporters loyal in

the absence of rent revenues. Instead, we observe the exact opposite. President Yeltsin and, initially, his successor, Putin, undermined those regime parties close to them. The theory in this dissertation solves this puzzle by introducing elites to the equation.

Specifically, I frame the problem of dominant party formation as a two-sided commitment problem between leaders and elites. In non-democracies, leaders wish to keep elites loyal by promising them perks, policy, and privileges, but they have no way to make those promises credible. Elites want to gain dependable access to spoils, and they could achieve this if they pledged their loyalty to the regime; but they have no way of making this pledge credible. Mutual investment in a dominant party, with its independent institutional mechanisms for distributing spoils in a rule-governed manner, could help solve this commitment problem. But it is only part of the explanation for why dominant parties emerge, because it still does not explain why actors would chose to solve their commitment problem with a dominant party institution in some settings, but not in others. Thus, I argue the likelihood that leaders and elites will construct such an institution depends on the severity of the commitment problem, which is determined by each side's need for cooperation with the other. *Specifically, dominant parties emerge when elites hold enough independent political resources that leaders need to coopt them, but not so many autonomous resources that they themselves are highly reluctant to commit to any dominant party project.*

Indeed, a long tradition of work in comparative politics sees regional elites such as governors, chiefs, bosses, landlords, caciques, clan leaders, wealthy peasants, strongmen, and/or warlords as the key to understanding politics in the non-democratic world (Migdal 1988). This analysis puts these actors, and more specifically the

exogenous characteristics that make them powerful vis-à-vis rulers, on center stage along with state leaders in the analysis of dominant party formation.

Much of the current study uses this general theory to examine the rise of one of the world's newest and most significant dominant parties, United Russia. United Russia is one instance of dominant party formation that, through its theoretically puzzling nature and recent emergence, helps elucidate the dynamics of dominant party emergence. In turn, insights from Russia enrich general theory, which can then be tested in other cases.

This analytical philosophy guides the dissertation through three chapters devoted to contemporary Russia and one cross-national empirical chapter. Chapter 4 is a longitudinal narrative comparing the non-formation of a dominant party in Russia in the 1990s and early 2000s, with the subsequent transformation of United Russia into a dominant party. Chapters 5 and 6 use original, individual-level data on the party affiliation decisions of regional governors and legislators in Russia to test micro-level hypotheses about elite incentives to join a dominant party. Chapter 7 presents a cross-national statistical test of the theory using original data on dominant parties across the world from 1946 through 2008. In this chapter, I endeavor to identify the exogenous historical and state characteristics that make elites (especially regional elites) strong vis-à-vis rulers.

The rest of this chapter provides an introduction to the definitions and concepts that the dissertation employs. It also presents an overview of how this study is situated in the broader study of dominant parties and democratization and introduces the reader to the theoretical argument. It then elaborates on the contributions of the empirical chapters and previews the implications of the study.

1.2 Dominant Parties and Political Science

A dominant party is a political institution that has the leading role in determining access to most political offices, shares powers over policymaking and patronage distribution, and uses privileged access to state resources to maintain its position in power. Dominant party regimes are distinct from one party-dominant democracies, such as the Social Democrats in Sweden or the Christian Democrats in Italy, because dominant parties in autocracies exploit state resources to such an egregious extent that one cannot speak of free and fair political competition. The dominant party concept subsumes both hegemonic parties, which are dominant parties that consistently compete in and win multiparty autocratic elections (Magaloni 2006), and single parties, which are the ruling parties in those regimes that proscribe multi-party competition. In Chapter 2, I offer a minimalist operationalization of dominant parties that is based on seat shares in the legislature. This measure is easily replicable and closely matches the base concept. Using this operationalization, I identify 118 dominant parties in 70 countries from 1946 through 2006.

Given the prominence of dominant party regimes, it is peculiar that there are so few studies of their origins. The vast majority of scholarship on dominant parties has examined how they operate in equilibrium. Most work has focused on descriptive characteristics and political processes within already established dominant parties. Scholars of communist systems, to take but one world region, devoted enormous energy to understanding the workings of Leninist parties. In the developing world, scholars also attempted to understand how new ruling parties structured politics in authoritarian

regimes. Unfortunately many of these studies failed to transform their country-specific insights into comparative theory about the conditions that contributed to the maintenance of dominant party rule. Recognizing this omission, recent literature has taken on the task of developing comparative theories of dominant party maintenance. These works have pointed out that resource imbalances accruing from privileged access to the state can sustain a dominant party equilibrium (Scheiner 2006, Greene 2007, Magaloni 2006). Whether it is via patronage, unequal access to state-controlled media, or state resources available for campaigning and communicating with voters, dominant parties use their special advantages to marginalize opposition parties. Dominant parties also endogenously deter elite splits by reducing uncertainty over the distribution of spoils and extending the time horizons of party cadres (Geddes 1999, Smith 2005, Langston 2006, Brownlee 2007). Indeed, this special ability to insure elite commitment is the primary mechanism behind the finding that dominant party regimes are significantly more durable than other types of authoritarian regimes (Magaloni 2008).

The recent contributions described above all begin their analysis with the existence of a dominant party and then examine how that dominant party maintains its position. From this flow conclusions about the conditions that lead to the demise of these parties (e.g. exogenous or endogenous changes that limit the party's ability to maintain its resource advantage). Of paramount importance to these parties' survival prospects is their unmatched ability to ensure elite cohesion. It is curious, then, that no study has undertaken the task of identifying the conditions under which elite commitment can be achieved in the first period. Instead, most existing work on dominant party origins has focused either on structural forces or leaders' incentives to build parties.

In one of the first causal accounts of the origins of dominant parties, Huntington (1970) located the origins of such parties in processes of modernization—social differentiation, economic development, and nationalist struggle—which opened up fissures in society that could only be healed through concession, cooptation, and cooperation. Opposing cleavages and/or social bifurcation were essential in this view as they provided the impetus for organization. While Huntington’s insights were groundbreaking insofar as they helped problematize the formation of institutions under authoritarianism, they were lacking in their attention to agency. In Huntington’s account parties emerge as a mechanistic response to social confrontation. Agency is, thus, sorely neglected in Huntington’s consideration of the problem.

In an important set of correctives to these points, Gandhi (2008) develops a model of institutional choice under dictatorship that posits a set of costs and benefits that confront a ruler in deciding whether to grant policy concessions. Concessions, for Gandhi, come in the form of access to policy influence and rents, both of which can be provided through legislatures and parties. Dictators with the financial means necessary to make side payments to supporters on an ad hoc basis and/or those who face a weak opposition are expected to make fewer concessions to the opposition. Her model recognizes that in addition to the benefits that institutions can provide there are costs from sharing control over policy and spoils. Dictators will only share when they have to; in other words, when they face a tight fiscal situation that precludes ad hoc patronage distribution and/or when they face a strong opposition. Smith (2005) applies this same set of hypotheses to the formation of dominant parties. According to Smith, robust dominant

parties emerge when incumbent leaders face a social opposition that needs to be coopted or lack resource rents that can be used to buy off supporters.

Gandhi (2008) and Smith (2005, 2007) have identified fiscal constraints and social opposition as the most important factors influencing leaders in their decisions to build party coalitions. These accounts mostly discount other elite actors as deliberate political actors who choose whether to cast their lot with a dominant party project. In existing accounts, elites may benefit from a dominant party, but this is typically a post hoc assertion, dependent on the existence of the party in the first place.

This neglect would not be problematic if considering elites did not help us explain why dominant parties emerge when and where they do. In fact, however, introducing elite incentives to the equation helps make sense of many instances of dominant party emergence that appear puzzling in light of existing explanations. Take, for example, the case of contemporary Russia. In the mid 2000s, the Kremlin was awash in windfall oil revenues and, with a growing economy, the Communist opposition had lost much of its vim and vigor. In this setting, leader centric theories predict that Russian president Vladimir Putin would face little impetus to build a ruling party and would instead use rent revenues to buy cooperation in society. Indeed, Putin employed rent revenues to buy cooperation, but contrary to existing theory's predictions, he also invested heavily in the creation of a dominant party, United Russia. This development contrasted sharply with the mid-late 1990s when the Russian economy was in a state of decay and oil prices were at record lows. Partially as a result of these economic dislocations, a strong and well-organized Communist opposition emerged to challenge the Kremlin in the 1995 parliamentary elections and 1996 presidential elections. Existing theory would predict

that such a competitive threat would force the Kremlin to invest in a pro-presidential party that could be used to coopt important elites and create a united front against the Communist opposition. Instead, however, Yeltsin had difficulty securing the commitments of important elite actors and regional governors opted instead to pursue individual strategies of self-promotion (Reuter and Remington 2009). Fearing the costs of supporting a pro-presidential party when such a party could not be sustained, Yeltsin undermined his own party and opted for a divide and rule strategy with respect to the country's regional executives.

In addition to United Russia, dominant parties have emerged recently in a number of countries with both an impuissant social opposition and ample rent revenues. The PDP in Nigeria and OTAN in Kazakhstan are two prominent examples. How can we make sense of this? I argue that we must consider elites, and particularly regional elites, as deliberate political actors in order to more fully explain dominant party emergence (and non-emergence) in Russia and many other non-democracies.

1.3 The Argument in Brief

There are few studies of dominant party formation. Those that do exist consider only the incentives of the ruler to invest in a dominant party, neglecting other elites. In contrast to existing works, I argue that dominant parties are the product of conscious decisions by *both* leaders *and* other elites in a strategic setting. Elites are those actors who exercise influence and demand loyalty from other political actors. These elites may be landowners, bosses, chiefs, local strongmen, industrial enterprise owners, regional governors, influential politicians, or opinion leaders in society. Leaders are chief

executives. They are presidents, dictators, monarchs, military leaders, or, sometimes, prime ministers.

In non-democracies, leaders and elites face a mutual commitment problem when it comes to cooperating with each other over the distribution of spoils, policy, and careers. Leaders would like to secure the loyalty of elites and reduce the transaction costs associated with managing legislatures, winning elections, and controlling careers. They can achieve these things through an *ex ante* agreement with elites on the future distribution of spoils. But leaders value their autonomy, and, due to their short-sightedness, they may defect from this agreement *ex post*, especially if circumstances or preferences change. Thus, they cannot make their commitments credible. For their part, elites would like to receive guarantees that leaders will channel careers, perks, and policy to them now and in the future.¹ They could achieve this if they were able to pledge their loyalty to a leader through an *ex ante* agreement. But as with leaders, elites value their autonomy to bargain with opponents, make side payments to supporters, and control their own clientelist networks. Thus, their short-sightedness may cause them to defect *ex post* from any *ex ante* agreement. As a result, their commitments to any such agreement are not credible. In sum, both sides would like to collude in the division of spoils, perks, and policy, but neither can credibly assure the other that it will be a faithful partner in this collusion.

For leaders and elites, the benefits of cooperation are only realized if both sides sign on to the collusive agreement. The ruler is unwilling to commit himself to any such agreement unless he can be sure that other elites will be loyal. For their part, elites will

¹ For simplicity, I treat 'the elite' as a single actor in my theoretical framework and then relax this assumption to test some other implications of the main theoretical framework.

not tie their fates to the party project unless they can be sure that the leader will make it a mechanism for guaranteeing the supply of careers and resources.

I argue that leaders and elites can solve their bilateral commitment problem through mutual investment in a parallel party organization—a dominant party—that governs the distribution of spoils. Dominant parties can help solve leaders' commitment problems if it is granted the independence to make decisions about the distribution of policy, perks, and privileges. Leaders can also credibly commit to not abusing the terms of their bargain with elites by relinquishing to the dominant party their ability to gather information on key political decisions and linking their reputations to the party. The dominant party can make elite commitments credible if elites give it the power to sanction them for renegeing, and if they place their own political machines under the control of the party leadership. Elites may also pay a sunk cost by contributing financially to the party.

Unfortunately, positing institutional solutions to commitment problems does not help us explain why dominant parties exist in some authoritarian regimes, but not in others. Commitment problems such as those laid out above are likely to exist in almost all authoritarian regimes, but we only observe dominant parties in some of those regimes. Any theory of dominant parties that seeks to explain variance in the emergence of those institutions across countries must move beyond simply describing the institutional solution to the commitment problem.

The argument here focuses on how the relative balance of political resources between leaders and elites affects each side's incentives to cooperate. When leaders are very strong in resources (relative to elites) their incentives to defect from any bargain are

particularly high and thus they are unlikely to invest in dominant party institutions. Leaders have less motivation to coopt and control these weak elites. While they may be better off striking a cooptive agreement with elites, this option is only weakly preferred to bargaining with them on an individual basis or coercing them. On the other side of the equation, when elites are very strong relative to leaders they have *strong* incentives to defect from any agreement and thus will not invest in a dominant party that can formally solve the commitment problem. Their autonomous political machines are very strong, and through these mechanisms they can achieve most of their political goals without much cooperation with the leader. Elites may still benefit by concluding a cooperative agreement with leaders (i.e. agreeing to link their political machines to the regime and remain loyal in exchange for a rule governed division of regime-distributed spoils), but they are not that much better off.

Thus, leaders and elites are unlikely to seek an institutional solution to their commitment problem when it is very severe. Since nascent dominant party institutions are not always dependable, they will not take this risky step. They are more likely to invest in a dominant party when the gains from cooperation with one another are maximized. Incentives to defect from the *ex ante* agreement are hard to eliminate, but they can be reduced. In other words, neither side can ever be sure that the other will hold up its end of the bargain, but they will be more likely to risk cooperation when they need that cooperation more. Or as I frame it, the commitment problem can be mitigated for both sides.

Dominant parties are, thus, most likely to emerge when resources are balanced such that neither side has significant incentives to defect from any bargain. In the

language of institutional analysis, dominant parties become more likely as it becomes increasingly efficient for both sides to cooperate with one another. The mutual commitment problem is attenuated when neither side holds a preponderance of resources. In sum, when resources are balanced between the two sides, a dominant party is more likely because elites are strong enough that leaders benefit significantly from coopting them, but not so strong that they (elites) gain little from being coopted.

In the final sections of this chapter, I emphasize how this theoretical framework is also appropriate for understanding dominant party emergence as a gradual series of continuous commitments made by leaders and smaller sub-groups of elites. Here I show how the various institutions that make up dominant parties can layer and reinforce one another over time such that ex ante investments in nascent dominant parties are made credible by subsequent delegations and transfers of resources. This allows us to speak of commitments to the ‘party’ or ‘party project’ while still acknowledging that elements of the dominant party help solve the commitment problem. The logic of these arguments is elaborated in Chapter 3.

1.4 Testing the Theory in Post-Soviet Russia

Chapter 4 begins the empirical portions of the dissertation. It is a narrative comparing the failure of Russia’s regime parties in the 1990s with the incremental transformation of Unity into United Russia and the latter’s subsequent rise to dominance. This narrative shows how the commitment problem between the Kremlin and regional elites was insurmountable in the 1990s and the Kremlin thus undermined the very parties that supported it, while elites defected and invested in their own political machines.

For over 70 years, the Soviet Union was ruled by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In 1991, one-party rule ended and was replaced by its opposite—a hyper-fractious political system in which parties played little role and powerful elites pursued uncoordinated strategies of political advancement. The size of Russia, the dispersion of economic production within its borders, its decentralized state structure, ethnic divisions, and the political imperatives of the transition from Communism combined to make regional elites especially strong in post-Soviet Russia. By the mid-late 1990s, elites' strength vis-a-vis the Kremlin had been amplified by Yeltsin's unpopularity, weak state capacity, historically low oil prices, and socio-economic dislocation. In this setting, Yeltsin (and, for some time after taking office, his immediate successor, Vladimir Putin) looked upon other elites as a threat. For their part, Russia's regional elites had no incentive to link their fates to a Kremlin-controlled ruling party and opted instead to pursue individual strategies of self-promotion. Russia's presidents feared the costs of supporting a pro-presidential party that could not be sustained, or worse, could unite powerful elites against them. Thus, even though faced with a strong Communist opposition and a paucity of treasury-filling rent revenues (which existing theories predict would impel the construction of a dominant party), the Kremlin opted for a divide and rule strategy with respect to regional elites, securing their cooperation through ad hoc deals and bilateral ties. The result was that Russia's first 'party of power,' Our Home is Russia, never became a major political force.

In 1999, regional elites reached the apex of their power. In this setting, the Kremlin allowed Our Home to wither and, by mid 1999, had still not identified a party of power that it would back in the December 1999 parliamentary elections. The Kremlin

played a divide and rule strategy by sending mixed signals about which, if any, of several parties it would support and, then at the last moment, endorsing its own skeletal movement, Unity, to secure the support of a plurality of unaffiliated governors. But Unity was a campaign strategy, not a party. After the elections, the Kremlin was not willing to turn it into a dominant party. The 1999 elections had demonstrated just how powerful Russia's governors were, and in 2000 and 2001, they continued to rely on their autonomous resources to win elections and bargain for rents with the Kremlin. Thus, during its brief existence, Unity did not transform into a dominant party because the Kremlin still feared elites, and elites were disinclined to relinquish their autonomy to a dominant party when President Putin was not ready to turn that party into a dependable arena for securing access to spoils and careers.

Only after 2003 did United Russia—Unity's organizational successor—become a dominant party by attracting the unequivocal support of the Kremlin and across the board commitments from regional elites. United Russia's emergence as a dominant party occurred precisely because the resource balance had shifted in favor of the Kremlin, as sustained economic growth, windfall oil revenues, and the precipitous rise of President Putin's approval ratings, strengthened the Kremlin's bargaining position with regional elites. This readjustment in the balance of resources gave elites more reason to cooperate with the center than they had had in the 1990s. Meanwhile, elites were still strong enough that the Kremlin needed to coopt them if it wanted to win elections and govern cost-effectively. Because elites were not so strong that they would shirk any obligations laid out for them in a dominant party, Putin could feel comfortable in investing his own resources in such a party and his signals of support emboldened elites to make their own

investments. This dynamic led both sides to commit to the party of power at a higher level than ever before.

The result has been a dominant party. In both 2003 and 2007, United Russia garnered over two-thirds of the seats in the State Duma. As of 2008, it controlled a majority of seats in 82 out of 83 regional legislatures, and almost all regional administration heads (Russia's all important governors) were party members. At every level, the party is increasingly being used as a device for distributing patronage and containing elite conflict, thus making it one of the key institutions in Russia's new regime.

With instances of ruling party failure and dominant party emergence, there is variation in the dependent variable in post-Soviet Russia. This, combined with the puzzling nature of the case in light of existing literature, makes post-Soviet Russia an ideal setting for examining the question of dominant party formation. But rather than conceive of this chapter as a longitudinal cross-case comparison, I prefer to treat this chapter as a within-case analysis. Within-case analysis is aided by the simple fact that the emergence of a dominant party is not a dichotomous event. Instead, it is the sum total of decisions made by hundreds of different actors over a period of years. This chapter shows how changes in the balance of resources between leaders and elites led the two sides to make more (or fewer) investments in the ruling party. In turn, the sum total of these decisions is related to the success of the regime party at the time.

And yet this chapter demonstrates the internal validity of the theory not just by showing a correlation between within-case values of the independent variables (resource ownership) and dependent variables (individual commitment to the party), but also by

demonstrating that actors made their decisions for the reasons posited in the theory and that those decisions had real consequences for the success or failure of the party of power. This is the widely recognized version of within-case analysis known as ‘process tracing’ or analytic narrative (Bates, et al. 1998, George and Bennett 2005). Of course, there is a distinct possibility that a different process is generating the data in other real world cases of dominant party emergence and there is no doubt that behavior is influenced by more than just one exogenous process. Other cross-national empirical chapters, therefore, add external validity to the theory’s propositions.

This chapter not only serves to test the commitment argument qualitatively but also introduces the reader to United Russia. Descriptively, this chapter debunks several myths about the personalization of power in Russia, demonstrating the extent to which United Russia has become an institution that constrains the arbitrary exercise of power by the Kremlin and keeps elites loyal. Over the past 5 years, I argue, United Russia has become a key institution for solving elite conflict, distributing policy goods, and coordinating candidates and voters.

Another reason that United Russia is a good laboratory for studying dominant party formation is its recent emergence. This permits collection of qualitative and quantitative data on the individual behavior of elites that is difficult to collect for a large N sample of countries. Indeed, although this theory is ultimately concerned with the macro-outcome of dominant party emergence, its implications concern the behavior of many individual actors. Since the most novel theoretical insight of the project is that elites will not commit to the dominant party when they control autonomous resources that permit them to make successful careers on their own, Chapters 5 and 6 are devoted to

examining individual elite behavior in more detail. Here I endeavor to prove that elites have interests in retaining their own autonomy and make dominant party affiliation decisions on the basis of those interests. If elites as a whole are less likely to join a dominant party when they control significant autonomous resources, then the same should hold true of individual elites in a dynamic process of dominant party formation. In such a setting, we can take advantage of the fact that for any given macro-level distribution of resources between the center and elites, there exists micro-level variation in the resources controlled by individual elites within a country. In Chapters 5 and 6, I examine the simple micro-level proposition that, once the process of dominant party formation has begun, elites weaker in resources should be the first to join an emerging party, while those stronger in resources should postpone joining the party.

Chapter 5 uses original data on when Russia's most important elite actors—regional governors—joined United Russia to test micro-level implications of the theory. In the 1990s and early 2000s, regional governors were Russia's kingmakers. They held vast swaths of formal and informal control over economic and political life in their regions. For much of the post-Soviet period, the task of governing Russia was one of figuring out how to manage these powerful governors. Examining their commitment behavior in detail is thus crucial to fully exploring the implications of my argument in Russia.

According to the commitment framework that I propose, governors with large endowments of political, personal, and/or economic resources that are difficult for regime

leaders to control should be more likely to postpone joining an emerging dominant party.² Using event history data on when 121 governors joined United Russia from 2003 to 2007, I show this to be the case. Governors in regions with diversified economies that permitted the construction of strong political machines were less likely to join United Russia as were those who had governed their regions for long periods of time, had won their seats by large margins, and/or were from non-Russia regions. Russia's governors were not simply forced or coerced to join United Russia; most were coopted and chose to join when it became advantageous for them to do so.

Chapter 6 extends the individual analysis of the relationship between resource ownership and party affiliation to other elites, in particular regional legislators. In Russia's federal system, regional legislatures are primary arenas for the division of spoils. The most prominent figures in the regional political and economic elite are typically members of the legislature—directors of the largest industrial and agricultural enterprises, representatives of large federally owned corporations and utilities and directors of major hospitals and research institutes.

As with governors, legislators' decisions to join the party are a function of the resources under their control. Analyzing the affiliation behavior of regional legislators has the additional benefit of allowing us to examine some types of personal, independent resources that are difficult to analyze among governors. In particular, this relates to economic assets. In Russia's regional legislatures, representatives of federal and regional businesses typically occupy a majority of seats, especially in single member districts. Representation in parliament is a way for deputies to secure rents and influence for their

² This hypothesis is consistent with recent scholarship on party development in new democracies, which attributes the decisions of candidates to eschew party affiliation to the accessibility of non-party political resources (Golosov 2003, Hale 2006, Smyth 2006).

enterprises, and to represent those voters who directly or indirectly depend on the enterprise for their livelihoods. Those whose careers are built on the basis of business enterprises that are difficult to tax or control by the Kremlin will be less willing to commit to the party. Representatives of those enterprises that do not rely on state subsidies, government contacts, tax breaks, or government-issued permits are less likely to seek affiliation with the governing party. These individuals are likely to make weak commitments to the ruling party if they were to join, and thus the Kremlin is not likely to seek their entry. In addition, the difficulty of expropriating their resources (their ability to hide tax revenue) makes it difficult for the Kremlin to systematically repress them. I argue that the economic autonomy of an enterprise is largely a function of size, sector, and ownership structure. Using original data on when 700 regional legislators joined United Russia factions in 17 regions I show that legislators from easily taxed and/or state dependent enterprises joined United Russia earlier.

1.5 Testing the Theory Cross-Nationally

Chapter 7 presents a cross-national statistical test of the argument using original data on 118 dominant parties in 70 countries from 1946 through 2006. This analysis shows that dominant parties are most likely to arise in those countries where regional elites are neither extremely weak (relative to leaders) nor extremely strong (relative to leaders) in political resources. Since we cannot gather individual-level data for hundreds of countries across time as I have done for Russia, measuring these political resources cross-nationally is a central task undertaken in this chapter.

The conflicts that have defined politics throughout much of history have been center-periphery conflicts. As state leaders have attempted to exert control over society, time and again they have been stymied in their efforts by regional elites, governors, chiefs, bosses, landlords, caciques, clan leaders, wealthy peasants, and warlords, or, as Joel Migdal calls them, ‘strongmen’ (1988). Comparativists have used variations of the regional elite concept to explain a great number of outcomes, including state capacity (Migdal 1988), state formation (Tilly 1975), party development (Hale 2006, Mainwaring 1999), and taxation (Boone 2003). Unfortunately, these studies provide only limited guidance on when we should expect regional elites to be strong and when we should not. More often than not, the reasons behind regional elite strength are brushed under the table, explained in passing by historical contingencies and political context.

Comparative politics thus lacks reliable measures of the exogenous state characteristics that predispose some countries toward having strong regional elites. This is partially because comparative politics also lacks comprehensive cross-national data on some related concepts, such as political decentralization. Chapter 7 presents a scale of regional elite strength this is based upon 1) historical patterns of political decentralization, 2) the dispersion of population across a country's territory, and 3) the regional concentration of ethnic minorities.

Since it is not the absolute value of elite resources that matters for dominant party formation, but rather their strength in resources relative to leaders, we must also consider the resources that make leaders ‘strong’ vis a vis elites. Two factors that make leaders strong relative to elites are economic growth and natural resource revenues. Existing scholarship indicates that when leaders are strong in their own resources (measured

herein by access to resource rents and economic growth), they may see little reason to invest in cooptive institutions like parties. The introduction of regional elites to the equation demonstrates that when elites are strong, the existence of these resources (rents, personal popularity, and/or economic growth) may frequently be associated with the emergence of dominant parties, as leaders need these resources to make dominant party affiliation attractive for elites.

In this chapter, I find that dominant parties are most likely to emerge when the resources of leaders and elites are relatively balanced. That is, when elites are very weak and leaders very strong, dominant parties do not emerge. This is because leaders have no reason to coopt elites into a party. But, dominant parties are also very rare when elites are strong and leaders are weak. Here elites cannot commit to a party and, thus, leaders refrain from investing in a ruling party. When neither side holds a preponderance of resources, dominant parties are more likely to emerge.

1.6 Implications for Comparative Politics

In this dissertation, I provide a theory of dominant party formation that is tested in cross-national and Russia-specific settings. The study concludes with some thoughts on what the study of dominant parties can contribute to political science and our understanding of the world.

Dominant parties fundamentally alter the nature of political exchange in authoritarian regimes. To the extent that scholars and policy makers care about understanding how patronage is distributed, cadres promoted, elections won, ethnic conflict managed, and policy made in authoritarian regimes, the study of dominant

parties, and their origins, is important. But, perhaps, the most salient reason to study dominant party origins is that such an analysis gives us deeper insight into why some countries democratize, but others do not. Once established, dominant parties are institutions that contribute to authoritarian regime stability by ensuring elite cooperation. Understanding the circumstances under which these institutions get their start is thus crucial to understanding a country's prospects for democratization. Knowledge about the origins of dominant parties is especially useful for those trying to understand the 'gray-zone' between democracy and authoritarianism. In the 21st century, much of the interesting variation to be explained in the study of political regimes is the difference between those transitional regimes that backslide into authoritarianism and those that transform into competitive democracies (Epstein et al 2006). Many of those regimes that backslid into authoritarianism have stabilized their rule with dominant parties. This study elucidates the factors that allow authoritarian leaders to consolidate such parties and stabilize authoritarian rule.

This study can also improve our ability to understand the causal relationship between dominant parties and regime stability. The fundamental problem of the new institutionalism is determining whether institutions exert an independent effect on outcomes that is separate from the circumstances that bring them into being. In the case of dominant parties' effects on democratization, we do not know for certain whether dominant party institutions stabilize authoritarian regimes or whether the conditions that generate dominant party institutions stabilize authoritarian regimes. If, as I have argued, dominant parties are most likely to emerge when resources between elites and leaders are relatively balanced, then how do we know that elite loyalty is not generated by the

accommodation afforded by that balance of resources between leaders and elites? In other words, if the balance of resources between leaders and elites are the conditions that bring about dominant parties, then how do we know that the effects of dominant parties are due to dominant parties and not the conditions that bring them about? What is needed in order to improve this causal claim is an empirically robust explanation for dominant party emergence, such as the one I have tried to offer here. Such an explanation will give us a fighting chance at sweeping out the effects of initial conditions when we conduct analyses of the effects of dominant parties

Furthermore, by conceptualizing and operationalizing regional elite strength, this dissertation makes use of a construct that is central to understanding politics in developing countries, but has rarely been introduced as a variable in cross-national studies. The introduction of this variable not only helps us explain why dominant parties emerge, but also changes the way we think about some of the variables often used to explain authoritarian regime trajectories. For instance, when elites are strong, resource rents may give leaders the resources to coopt regional elites thereby facilitating the emergence of a dominant party and, consequently, the longevity of the regime. This reconciles divergent findings in the literature showing both that resource rents extend the life of regimes (Smith 2004) and that they are associated with weak authoritarian institutions (Gandhi 2008). It turns out that the latter is not always true.

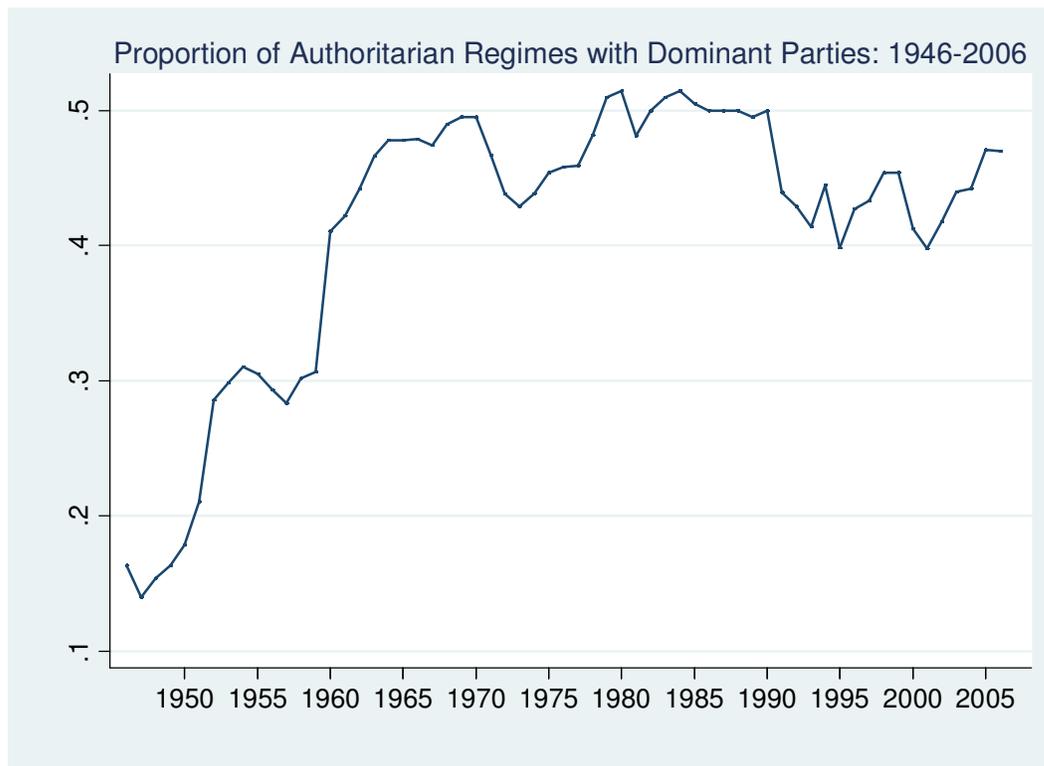
1.7 Plan of the Dissertation

The next chapter lays out the definition of dominant parties in fuller detail, providing a conceptual map that situates these regimes as an authoritarian subtype and distinguishes

them from democracies. It also discusses an original dataset of dominant party regimes. Chapter 3 presents the commitment argument in full detail. Chapter 4 is a longitudinal narrative comparing the ‘non-formation’ of a dominant party in Yeltsin-era Russia with the incremental rise of United Russia as a dominant party. This chapter introduces the reader to United Russia and provides an in depth discussion of its role as a political institution in contemporary Russia. Chapter 5 examines the argument that elite commitment to a dominant party is dependent on the resource under elites command by quantitatively examining the dominant party affiliation behavior of Russia’s regional governors from 2003-2007. This chapter uses an original dataset on these governors’ decisions to join United Russia. Chapter 6 extends this analysis with an examination of the dominant party affiliation behavior of Russian regional legislators. Here I focus on the link between the types of firms represented by regional legislators and their decisions to join United Russia. Chapter 7 is the main cross-national quantitative chapter, which uses the original data on dominant parties around the world to test the macro-level hypothesis about how the balance of resources between leaders and elites determines the probability that dominant parties will emerge and endure. Chapter 8 concludes.

1.8 Figures and Tables

Figure 1.1 Proportion of Authoritarian Regimes with Dominant Parties: 1946-2006



CHAPTER 2 DOMINANT PARTIES IN POLITICAL SCIENCE AND AROUND THE WORLD

2.1 What are Dominant Parties?

Dominant party regimes are the most common type of modern authoritarian regime. The purpose of this study is to explain why dominant parties emerge in some non-democratic countries, but not in others. Therefore, it is worth going into some detail to precisely define this concept. A dominant party is a political institution that has the leading role in determining access to most political offices, shares powers over policymaking and patronage distribution, and uses privileged access to state resources or extra-constitutional means to maintain its position in power. Indeed, they exploit state resources to such an egregious extent that one cannot speak of free and fair political competition. Dominant parties institutionalize the flow of patronage, careers, and spoils that runs between leaders and elites. In its capacity as a political institution, it successfully supplies certain goods to leaders, elites, and, in some cases, voters. The party can reduce transaction costs for leaders and elites in bargaining over policy, give career opportunities to ambitious politicians, manage conflicts and succession struggles among elites, mitigate uncertainty over whom to support, and coordinate electoral expectations on the part of elites and voters. Indeed, the dominant party is the primary site of coordination for most important political elites and a device through which leaders coopt and bargain with these elites.

Part of the definition of dominant parties is that their position in power is maintained via extra-constitutional means or by dint of privileged access to state resources that precludes free and open competition. In other words, their rule is

undemocratic. This distinguishes these regimes from democracies in which one party governs for long periods of time. Of course, long-lived governing parties in democracies, such as the LDP in Japan, have bolstered their dominance with patronage distributed through clientelist linkage mechanisms (cf Scheiner 2006). Indeed, the disbursement of state resources in order to forestall alternation in office places these regimes in a true 'gray area' between democracy and authoritarianism. The list of states that complicate the efforts to code regime type is full of such one-party dominant anomalies: Botswana under the BDP, South Africa under the ANC, Namibia under SWAPO, India under Congress, and Guyana under the PNC are only a few. The best one can do in discriminating between one-party dominant democracies and dominant party regimes is to assess the degree to which these state resources are used to retard citizens' ability to hold their elected representatives accountable. In well-known (authoritarian) dominant party regimes the state often uses state media to control the information that citizens receive, selectively (and illegally) disburses state contracts and subsidies, and promotes sanctions on those who defect from the ruling coalition. To a lesser extent, formal and informal constraints are placed on the ability of opposition forces to challenge the dominant party.

Thus, dominant party regimes are non-democratic. But what types of regimes within the universe of authoritarian regimes are dominant party regimes? First, the category of dominant party regimes subsumes hegemonic parties as they have been defined in the recent literature (e.g. Magaloni 2006). Prominent examples of such parties include the PRI in Mexico, UMNO in Malaysia, PS in Senegal, ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe, and United Russia. These regimes are typically defined as non-democratic regimes in

which one party holds office while holding multi-party elections in which the other parties are ‘not permitted to compete with the hegemonic party on antagonistic terms and on an equal basis’ (Sartori 1976). In terms of the definition used here, hegemonic party regimes are ones in which a dominant party political institution coexists with marginalized opposition parties.

Thus, explaining the origins of dominant party regimes necessitates explaining the origins of hegemonic regimes, which are a subset of the larger category. But what about single party regimes or regimes that rule via a dominant party without holding multiparty elections? These regimes include most of the world’s current and former Communist regimes, as well as well-known one-party regimes in Africa such as KANU in Kenya until 1992, DSP in Tunisia until 1987, and the FLN in Algeria until 1991. Since this study is substantively interested in explaining the construction of party institutions in non-democracies and most one party regimes fall under the rubric of the definition outlined above, then the origins of such single party regimes also fall under the explanatory orbit of this dissertation. As of 2008, only six single party regimes existed in the world—the Communist Parties in Laos, Cuba, North Korea, China, Vietnam, and the Democratic Party in Turkmenistan—and since 1980, only one new single party regime has emerged in the entire world (the Democratic Party in Turkmenistan after the fall of the Soviet Union). Many well-known single party regimes got their start under revolutionary conditions and as I discuss later, there may be alternative explanations that better explain variance in the formation of single parties in earlier periods.

Figure 2.1 lays out the terms and classifications used in this dissertation. The left side of the diagram lists examples of one party dominant democracies and references to

other labels for these types of states used in the literature.

[Figure 2.1 Here]

The center panel does the same for dominant party regimes, the phenomenon of interest. For clarity's sake, the right side provides examples of ruling parties that fail to attain dominant status in non-democracies. The labels used in the literature for these different types of parties tend to overlap. I illustrate this intentionally in order to differentiate the labeling scheme employed in the dissertation from the many previous labels that have been applied within and across these boundaries.

Figure 2.2 provides another representation of the phenomenon of interest in this dissertation.

[Figure 2.2 Here]

The top row gives examples of dominant party regimes, while the bottom row provides examples of non-democracies without dominant parties. This category includes authoritarian regimes in which all organized political competition is proscribed and those in which multiple political parties are allowed to compete.

2.2 Classifying Dominant Parties

Much like labels, operationalizations of dominant parties have varied. Early typologies classified party systems as dominant when the governing party controlled a majority of seats in the primary legislative body and held power for multiple elections (Almond 1960, Coleman 1960, Blondel 1968). Given that these authors were concerned primarily with identifying one-party dominant parties in democracies, their stipulation of a durability criterion is understandable. As noted below, however, when considering how to classify dominant parties in authoritarian regimes, stipulating a certain length of time in office is unnecessary and possibly even counterproductive to theory testing. More importantly, however, these early typologies ignored party-systems in authoritarian regimes.

Still the most comprehensive typology of party systems is that developed by Sartori (1976). Sartori was the first to classify party systems on a spectrum that ranged across regime divides. Sartori drew a distinction between what he called pre-dominant party systems in democracies (one-party dominant democracies in my terminology) and hegemonic and single party regimes in authoritarian regimes.³ The key difference between hegemonic and pre-dominant, for Sartori, was competition, or more precisely contested elections. In hegemonic regimes, candidates in elections did not have equal rights, precluding any ex ante possibility of alternation. Subsequent scholars have more or less agreed with this dividing line (Przeworski et al. 2000, Magaloni 2006, Greene 2007). Thus, the first task in classifying a set of dominant party regimes is to establish a dividing line between democracies and non-democracies.

³ Sartori used the terms hegemonic and single party regimes in the same way that I do in this study.

For this purpose, I use the Polity IV classification of regimes and exclude all countries with a combined Polity score higher than 7. This conforms with cutpoints established in the recent literature to distinguish non-democracies from democracies (Epstein et al. 2006). I use Polity's ordinal measure of regime type rather than dichotomous, retrospective codings of regime type such as those employed by Przeworski et al. (2000), because ordinal measures permit inclusion of hybrid regimes, which are ultimately coded as democratic by Przeworski et al. We know in retrospect that alternation occurred in these countries, but it is within the realm of possibility that a dominant party could have formed there. These hybrid regimes are key cases in which institutional forms and practices are uncertain. In some instances they represent important negative cases that are instructive in telling us why dominant parties do *not* emerge in some hybrid regimes. These regimes might transition into an unstable autocracy, as Ukraine under Kuchma did in the early 2000s, or they may transform into full-fledged democracies as Ghana appears to have done with its second peaceful transfer of power via elections in 2008. As Epstein et al. (2006) find, most regime transitions tend to occur into and out of this 'gray zone.' Removing such cases from the analysis would constitute selection bias, as they are regimes in which the emergence of a dominant party that accompanies the entrenchment of authoritarian rule is by no means out of the question. This leads to the first rule used in coding dominant parties.

Rule 1: The regime must be non-democratic.

With a sample of non-democracies, we next face the task of detecting dominant parties within that class of regimes. We have already explored the distinction between hegemonic and single party regimes. But there are also regimes that ban all forms of political organization. Some monarchies such as Saudi Arabia or military regimes such as the junta in Myanmar fit this category. There are also regimes that permit one party while granting it no discernible influence on policy or political recruitment. Libya under Qaddafi fits this category. Some other regimes permit a panoply of smaller parties, none of which are hegemonic, to hold seats in the legislature. Some of these parties may be regime-affiliated while others are in licensed opposition. The Verkhovna Rada in Ukraine under Kuchma was filled with a number of parties loyal to the presidential administration, while others were in opposition or not-formally aligned. In Jordan, a number of groups and independents are routinely represented in the National Assembly but no single grouping has attained hegemonic status, exercising primary influence over policy, careers, and rents via their relationship with King Hussein. The task in authoritarian regimes, then, is to determine which parties dominate the party system and also exercise influence over policy-making and patronage distribution.

One approach to classification would entail qualitatively coding the extent to which ruling parties share influence and spoils. Geddes (2003) takes this approach for categorizing single party regimes in her oft-used typology of authoritarian regimes. The difficulty with such an approach lies in ensuring reliability and, for many cases, securing accurate information that would allow one to make a determination about the extent to which the party structures political exchange. Authoritarian regimes are rarely transparent about how posts are filled, spoils distributed, and power exercised. Valid

judgments about whether the party fulfills these tasks can be difficult, even for area experts. Thus, the ideal approach to classification is one that is both valid and reliable, while being practical enough that it permits coding dominant party regimes around the world and across decades. Therefore, I take the following approach.

Parties must exercise influence over cadres, policy, and the distribution of spoils. Thus, I omit regimes that do not have a legislature, since legislatures are the primary arenas for parties to exercise their influence, even in autocracies (Gandhi 2008). When single parties exist without a legislature, then I assume that the party is likely to be window-dressing for a group of supporters that share in the patrimonial dividends of the military or civilian dictatorship.

Of course, in addition to the legislature, there must be a strong regime party. I argue that a legislature with a party that controls more than 50% of seats marks reasonable dividing line between those incumbent rulers who have invested in organized institutions of bureaucratic cooptation and mobilization and those that seek to buy off supporters and/or compete with opponents on an ad hoc basis.⁴ The 50% cutpoint is thus intended to capture not only the party's electoral dominance, but its degree of influence. There are likely to be very few instances when a dictator permits a legislature and majority party to form without ceding the party any influence or authority.

Thus, this operationalization maximizes intercoder reliability while minimizing error by positing meaningful institutional criteria. Additionally, it permits the inclusion of recent and short-lived dominant parties, where other codings do not. Take for example,

⁴ There is an emerging body of research that examines the effect of institutions in authoritarian regimes (Gandhi 2008, Wright 2008). For the most part, this work has focused on legislatures and the presence of parties in these legislatures. We do not, as of yet, know much about how dominant parties affect policy outcomes, especially within the class of authoritarian regimes that have legislatures.

the subject of much of this study, United Russia. Since 2003, when the party achieved a supermajority in the State Duma, the party has eased the passage of legislation in regional and national legislatures (Remington 2008), taken the leading role in managing political appointments at the regional level, coordinated elites and voters on the regime's behalf by winning majorities in nearly all regional parliaments and the State Duma, and taken the lead in deciding how federally-designated social infrastructure projects (the National Projects) are disbursed in the regions. Kremlin leaders have stated on numerous occasions their unequivocal support for the party and indicated their intention to make the party 'dominant' for the foreseeable future.

Contrast this outcome with Belarus, where the national legislature is largely non-partisan (98 of 110 seats are non-partisan), desirable election results are secured by fraud rather than via elite coordination, and political appointments are determined in a relatively arbitrary manner by President Aleksandr Lukashenko and his clique (Marples 2007). The differences between the Belarussian and Russian 'party systems' clearly have important consequences for how these authoritarian regimes govern. Explaining these differences is essential, even if United Russia does not approximate the hegemonic and single party regime 'ideal' type, exemplified by the CPSU and PRI.

Yet, the 50% figure is not arbitrary. A lower figure is clearly unwarranted since that would mean that the dominant party controls less than a majority of seats in the legislative chamber and could not, without securing other parties' support, pass its own initiatives. On the other hand, a higher figure would be too restrictive, for it would eliminate dominant party regimes that operated in the presence of strong, but divided opposition parties especially at the end of their tenure. The PRI secured 52% of seats in

the Mexican election of 1988 and continued to rule Mexico for another decade. KANU in Kenya received 50 and 51% of the seats in the 1992 and 1997 elections respectively. During this time period both parties reside comfortably within the set of dominant party regimes that are widely recognized by general comparativists and area studies scholars alike. Thus, the second rule for classifying dominant party regimes is the following:

Rule 2: The party must control more than 50% of the seats in the primary legislative chamber.

A third rule is that the party must truly be unequivocally affiliated with the dictator or regime leader. This rule is not often used for it would entail a dictatorship that permits an opposition or non-aligned force to hold a majority in the legislature. Primarily it eliminates cases such as Iran in the early 1990s and early 2000s, when reformist parties (the Association of Combatant Clerics and the Islamic Iranian Participation Front respectively) won large majorities in parliament all the while being in constrained opposition to the clerics.

Rule 3: The party must be affiliated directly with the regime leader(s).

Finally, I also exclude foreign maintained regimes, such as the communist regimes in Eastern Europe. We can safely assume that external factors played a major role in the emergence of single party regimes in those states after WWII.⁵

One thing to note in this operationalization of dominant parties is the absence of a durability criterion. Greene (2007) defines dominant party systems as those in which a single party rules uninterrupted for a period of 20 years or more while holding multi-party elections. The operationalization of dominant party regimes offered here intentionally avoids such a durability criterion for two reasons. First, durability and the extent to which the party structures political exchange are two different concepts, though length of tenure is often an operational indicator of the latter. ‘Weak’ ruling parties may be in office for long periods of time because exogenous circumstances (e.g. economic growth) support their rule. By the same token, institutionally robust ruling parties may be short-lived since the factors that lead to the formation of dominant parties may not be the same as the factors that cause their failure. Indeed, studies of authoritarian survival have found that dominant party regimes are more long-lived than other times of authoritarian regimes (Geddes 1999b, Smith 2005). Such studies should not implicitly make party duration a criterion for the operationalization of dominant parties. If they do, their models will be biased in favor of finding that dominant party regimes are more durable.

Second, even if durability and institutional strength are closely intertwined, then the issue of choosing a durability criterion is simply an issue of where to dichotomize a continuous variable. The continuous variable in this case would be the strength/durability of the party which may range from those cases in which no parties or

⁵ Geddes (2003) makes a similar qualification.

legislature exists to those in which the party rules for 60+ years. Choosing to call dominant only those parties that met some durability criterion would obscure variation on the lower end of the dependent variable. This is not to mention the fact that such a rule would disallow analysis of dominant parties that have emerged in the past decade or so.

Third, eliminating a durability criterion allows the analyst to analyze dominant party formation and survival as a continuous phenomenon as this analysis does. In Chapter 6, I analyze the determinants of dominant party emergence and duration. Allowing dominant parties to be both short-lived and long-lived permits the analyst to test hypotheses about their emergence and survival.

Table 2.1 contains a list of the 121 dominant parties identified by these rules that have existed at some time from 1946-2006.

[Table 2.1 Here]

The advantages of this sample are several. First, it is based on a highly reliable, yet valid coding scheme. Second, it permits inclusion of short-lived and recent dominant parties. And third, it covers a long time frame that can easily be extended. This more minimalist operationalization of dominant parties is especially warranted for the purposes of this study. For example, Geddes' (2003) goal in coding regime types was to determine how different institutional configurations affected regime survival. Toward this end, her intention was to characterize the *inherent nature of authoritarian regime types*. For a regime to be a single party 'regime', the institutionalization of the party must be very great indeed. My purposes are different. This study is interested in the emergence of

dominant parties in all non-democracies. That some dominant parties wield more institutional autonomy than others is no doubt true, but since this study investigates the origins of dominant parties rather than their institutional strength, a minimal operationalization is more appropriate because it permits inclusion of all instances of dominant party formation, regardless of whether the party comes to hold a monopoly on leadership recruitment, or it exercises this role only in certain spheres, or whether it is long-lived or short-lived.

I now turn to a more detailed discussion of the data. The sample of dominant parties includes 121 dominant parties existing at some time between 1946 and 2006. Dominant parties are neither a recent phenomenon nor an historical artifact. As Figure 1.1 shows, they have existed consistently in about half of all non-democracies since 1946. In 1980, 53 regimes in the world, excluding Soviet controlled Eastern Europe, were backed by a dominant party. By 2006, that number had fallen back to 40, but dominant parties still existed in 46% of all authoritarian regimes, a higher proportion than in 1980. Indeed, the proportion of the world's authoritarian regimes that have dominant parties is now the highest since the end of the Cold War. In the immediate post-war period, dominant parties were rare, but became more common in the early 1960s, as many nascent post-colonial democracies shed free elections and adopted authoritarian modes of governance, often with the backing of a dominant party. As Figure 2.3 shows, the early 1960s witnessed the most instances of dominant party emergence in history.

[Figure 2.3 Here]

During this decade over 40 dominant parties emerged. Malaysia's UMNO, Ivory Coast's PDCI, Botswana's BDP, Kenya's KANU, and Algeria's FLN are prominent examples of dominant parties that emerged in the early and mid 1960s. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s many of the world's authoritarian regimes ruled with the backing of a dominant party, but fewer dominant parties emerged. The next wave of dominant party emergence came began in the 1990s and continues through the present. In this wave of dominant party formation, hegemonic parties emerged in many 'failed' cases of Third Wave democratization. In some countries, former single party (and non-party) regimes experimented briefly with open politics, but then remodelled the authoritarian successor parties, turning them into hegemonic parties that dominated the electoral playing field. In other countries, regime leaders created new hegemonic parties to control multiparty elections.⁶ Prominent examples of the latter variety include Russia's United Russia, Ethiopia's EPRDF, Kazakhstan's OTAN, Nigeria's PDP, Yemen's GPC, and Cambodia's CPP.

Dominant parties are both short and long-lived. The median duration of the dominant parties in my sample is 14 years. Twenty-five percent of parties survived for less than 7 years and 25% survived for more than 28 years.⁷ Dominant parties may exist only for a short period of time when they are dislodged by coups, lose autocratic

⁶ The only single party regime to emerge in the post-Cold War era is the Democratic Party in Turkmenistan.

⁷ This number is slightly biased due to the fact that some parties are left-censored i.e. they began their life-span before 1946, when this data begins. These parties are the CPSU in the Soviet Union (1917), the PRI in Mexico (1929), the True Whig Party in Liberia (1878), the Liberal Nationalist Party in Nicaragua (1936), the National Party in Honduras (1933) and the CHP in Turkey (1923). In addition, many parties are right censored in that they continue to survive as of 2006. For those parties that began on or after 1946 and collapsed before 2006, the median duration is 12.5 years. Twenty-five percent survived for fewer than 7 years and 25% for more than 21 years. So the figures are likely similar to the true figure.

elections, are disbanded by regime leaders, or collapse internally. Others persist for decades. Well-known examples of long-lived dominant parties abound including the Mexican PRI, the CPSU in the Soviet Union, the True Whig Party in Liberia, and the KMT in Taiwan. Examples of short-lived parties are less well known, but in order to avoid predetermining any research design that attempts to exploit variation in dominant parties, they are no less important. Examples of short-lived dominant parties include the CUG in Georgia, the BNP in Bangladesh, Cambio 90 in Peru, and the DP in Turkey.

2.3 Dominant Parties in the Literature

Dominant Party Rule

The vast majority of scholarship on dominant parties has examined how they operate in equilibrium. In other words, most work has focused on descriptive characteristics and political processes within already established dominant parties. Scholars of communist systems, to take but one world region, devoted enormous energy to understanding the workings of these parties. The party-led processes of political recruitment and elite succession were well studied. Through the *nomenklatura* system and other institutionalized procedures, communist parties routinized inter-elite relations and political advancement (on the Soviet Union, Hough 1969, Harasmyiw 1984, Daniels 1976, on China, Barnett 1968, Schurmann 1968, Burns 1989). Volumes of literature, too extensive to recount here examined the communist party's other roles in mobilizing ideological support, (Hough 1969, Remington 1988), socialization (e.g. White 1979), interest articulation (Hill and Frank 1981), and patronage distribution (e.g. Urban 1989).

The party's central role in formulating and implementing policy, internal party decision-making processes, and the operative tenets of democratic centralism were also fleshed out in detail (e.g. Hough and Fainsod 1979).

Though less in number, there has also been extensive scholarship detailing the workings of dominant parties in developing countries. To take only a handful of examples, Smith (1979) described how elections served to facilitate elite circulation in the PRI in Mexico. Others detailed the important role the PRI played in monitoring patronage exchanges (Ames 1970). As early as 1966, Zolberg emphasized the role that most West African dominant parties played in mobilizing support for incumbents and coordinating voters. The logic and practice of cooptation was also explored extensively. For example, Bienen (1967) outlined how TANU/CCM in Tanzania incorporated labor unions and business elites into its structures, buying off their support with institutionalized political privilege.

Much of this early literature on dominant parties, though rich in detail and immensely valuable for the amount of factual knowledge it generated about the operation of these systems, failed to develop a comparative, theoretical perspective on dominant party rule. As some have observed, this failure to develop a theory of single party origins and maintenance contributed to the failure of scholars to predict the collapse of communist regimes and other one-party states around the world (Kalyvas 1999). While these early studies did much more than simply describe the formal institutional rules in place as Kalyvas (1999) has claimed,⁸ they did fail to transform their observations on

⁸ As early as 1974, Archie Brown noted how 'political institutional' approaches taken by most Sovietologists, differed from the 'legal-institutionalist' studies offered by Soviet scholars which sought mostly to exposit at face-value the written rules and procedures. The political institutional approaches

‘what parties did’ to theories about ‘why dominant parties did them.’ The lack of comparative perspective prevented scholars from probing differences in how dominant parties operated across world regions or from comparing the relative differences between dominant party regimes and other authoritarian subtypes. Without adequate theories about the origin or maintenance of these parties, scholars were unable to pinpoint when and where such parties might flounder or flourish.

Recognizing this lacuna, political scientists have recently begun the task of building comparative theories of how dominant parties maintain themselves. The first, and most obvious, observation with regard to dominant party dominance is that parties maintain their hold on power when they accrue a ‘monopoly or hyper-monopoly’ on state resources (Greene 2007). Whether it is via patronage, unequal access to state-controlled media, or state resources available for campaigning and communicating with voters, dominant parties use their special advantages to marginalize opposition parties (Greene 2007). This useful observation frees us from the theoretical constraints imposed by Downsian spatial models, which predict that no incumbent will be able to consistently dominate challengers in a fair electoral marketplace. Yet for the purposes of this study, this hypothesis borders on the tautological, since dominant parties are defined as institutions in authoritarian regimes that use their special privileges to maintain their position in power. In any case, this theory offers no clues as to how parties come to control such resources.

In an influential study of PRI hegemony in Mexico, Beatriz Magaloni (2006) offers the most comprehensive account of party dominance to date. Her account rests on

adopted by scholars sought instead to discover the true effects of these institutions on political outcomes and actors’ behavior.

three pillars: elite unity, opposition coordination dilemmas, and electoral support. Elite splits are deterred through displays of electoral invincibility and patronage distribution. Divides among the opposition are fostered both by exogenous factors such as ethnic cleavages and personal rivalries, but also endogenous factors such as electoral rules that are manipulated by the regime. The hegemonic party's ability to attract electoral support is due to the uncertainty surrounding opposition forces that have never governed, to the regime's ability to effectively reward and punish voters with patronage, and to the regime's ability to threaten electoral fraud. Notwithstanding this final factor, Magaloni's contribution is notable for its emphasis on how hegemonic parties maintain their position in power without frequent or systematic recourse to coercion, repression, or fraud. Instead, they found their rule on a pattern of cooptation and patronage distribution that is intended to foster elite cohesion and voter apathy. This is a theme that will be emphasized elsewhere in this study. Magaloni's study moves the field forward in its understanding of how hegemonic parties operate and thrive in equilibrium, but, as Magaloni herself acknowledges, it offers few clues about how such an equilibrium could come to be established in the first place.

Other scholars, attempting to explain the duration of dominant parties have focused more on the institutional characteristics of dominant parties. Geddes (1999) was the first to push the field in this direction, when she noted the ability of ruling parties in single party regimes to ensure elite unity through by fostering a behavioral equilibrium in which factions have a disincentive to defect. Subsequent scholars have delved deeper into the institutional characteristics of dominant parties in order to explain their longevity. Brownlee (2007) argues that strong ruling parties "bridle elite ambitions and bind

together otherwise fractious coalitions. Anchored in an institutional setting that generates political power and long-term security, rival opportunists cooperate” (33). Magaloni (2008) describes how dominant parties are not only behavioral equilibria among competing factions, but also credible commitment devices that constrain the dictator’s behavior and thereby encourage elite cooperation, provided that the dominant party institution is properly designed. Common to all these studies is the argument that the institution of the dominant party ensures elite cohesion by reducing uncertainty over the distribution of spoils and careers and expanding the time horizons of elites.

In support of their arguments, these authors have assembled an impressive array of empirical findings. Both Geddes (1999b) and Magaloni (2008) find evidence that dominant party regimes are more durable than forms of authoritarian regimes. Gandhi and Przeworski (2006) add credence to these findings by showing that autocrats who govern in the presence of partisan legislatures survive longer than those without such institutions. In a comparative analysis of regime dynamics in four authoritarian settings, Brownlee (2007) finds that strong ruling parties successfully mitigated elite dissent in Malaysia and Egypt, while weak party institutions contributed to factionalism in the Philippines and Iran. In Iran, this has led to a more contested form of authoritarianism at the elite level even if repression and coercion are used more frequently. In the Philippines, elite fractures led to a democratic transition.

The recent contributions outlined above all begin their analysis with the existence of a dominant party and then examine either how that dominant party maintains its position or how the existence of a dominant party affects the survival of the regime. This research has emphasized that a key factor contributing to the durability of dominant

parties is their ability to deter challengers and elite splits. The literature now almost unanimously views these parties as exceptional in their capacity to maintain loyalty among elite groups (Geddes 1999b, Brownlee 2007). Thus, we now know a great deal about the equilibrium characteristics of these parties as well as the threats to that equilibrium. But, we still know very little about how these equilibria come to be established in the first place.

The Emergence of Dominant Parties

Though political science has made serious strides in developing a theory of dominant party rule, work on theory of dominant party formation remains sporadic and incomplete. In the 1950s, scholars devoted significant attention to analyzing the Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia (e.g. Fainsod 1953, Schapiro 1964, Daniels 1960). These studies focused primarily on gathering information on the period and described the unfolding of events in an atheoretical way. Influenced as they were by ‘old institutionalism’ and the prerogatives of the other subfields (primarily, history), these works refrained from conducting a general inquiry into the factors that contributed to the transformation of the revolutionary Bolshevik party into the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Communist parties are distinctive types of dominant parties characterized by high levels of social mobilization, strong guiding ideology, and, usually, origins in simulated or real social revolutions. Since ideology, mobilization, and, often times, revolution are choices made by leaders it is difficult to employ these variables as exogenous explanations of dominant party emergence. Nonetheless, I admit throughout

this study that many communist regimes are distinct due to world-historical context of their origins. In the early and mid 20th century, the popularity of communism and the Marxist-Leninist emphasis on revolutionary party organization increased the prevalence of communist dominant parties. As the ideological draw of communism has waned this sub-type of dominant party has declined in frequency. However, it is worth pointing out two things: 1) countries that developed into communist party regimes were not immune to the mutual commitment problems that I stress in this dissertation and 2) communist parties served the exact same cooptive, uncertainty-reducing functions for leaders and elites that I stipulate for dominant parties. Thus, while the distinctiveness of communist party regimes is undeniable, they can be usefully compared to other instances of dominant party emergence, because leaders and elites in these regimes were faced with similar impulses (or lack thereof) toward mutual cooperation. I discuss the empirical distinctions among these regimes in more detail in chapter 7.

The first application of political theory to the problem of dominant party formation occurred in Africa in the early 1960s. As is usually the case, political science was called to action by events that transpired in the real world. In the wake of decolonialization, scholars of African politics noted the rise of dominant parties in many post-colonial countries. According to *Finer (1968)*, 20 of Africa's 37 independent nations had developed dominant parties by 1966. Theories of their origins were guided primarily by the dominant paradigm in comparative politics at that time, modernization theory. Just as parties were the only modern form of political organization in democratic societies, dominant parties were thought to be the only modern form of authoritarian government (*Huntington and Moore 1970*). As society shed traditional authority

structures, citizens developed more complex political attitudes, and participation became mass-based, parties became necessary for mobilization and political linkage. And as the task of governing became more complex, the need for institutionalized political recruitment and policy formulation became more immediate (Lapalombara and Weiner 1963, Schachter 1961).

The argument was simple and intuitively appealing, but faulty on several scores. First, modernization theorists themselves were unsure about the direction of causality. Some were of the opinion that dominant parties caused modernization. Thus, Apter (1965) asserted that strong parties themselves were agents of modernization, fostering collective identifications, extending the influence of rationally organized political structures, and encouraging broad-based political participation. As purveyors of stability, political socialization, and integrative education, it was thought that dominant parties could even spur investment and economic development.

These studies tended to be less descriptive than prescriptive. They believed that if state leaders in Africa desire a modern, stable and unified nation-state, then they should govern with a dominant party, for this is better than the alternatives which are either protracted inter-communal conflict under the guise of multi-party democracy or military rule. Indeed, the integrating functions of these parties were seen as one of their most desirable traits (Emerson 1966, Wallerstein 1961, Coleman and Rosberg 1964). In the view of many scholars writing at the time, dominant parties were a reaction by political elites to the fissiparous tendencies of ethnically divided societies. Dominant parties, it was said, fostered national integration by reducing the “cultural and regional tensions and discontinuities” with the goal of “creating a homogenous territorial political community”

(Coleman and Rosberg 1964, 9). This argument was not unique to Africa and had been applied to India under the Congress Party (Weiner 1968) and other South/Southeast Asian countries after independence. Dominant parties, it was thought, brought citizens of the new African countries into the political process fostering a participant political community (Schachter 1961).

Neither modernization theory nor national integrationist accounts of dominant party formation were up to the challenge of providing a general theory of their origins. First, as noted above, both edged closer to prescription rather than theory, a weakness exposed early on by subsequent scholars (Finer 1967, Huntington 1970). Indeed, modernization-inspired accounts and national integration explanations betrayed their functionalist bias by positing that dominant parties should perform certain roles because these roles need to be fulfilled in post-colonial states.⁹

But even if we take modernization (in its simplest form) and national integration as *causes* of dominant party formation, they fail to pass muster. In the first place, sub-Saharan societies were, by the standards used at the time, not modern, so it was peculiar that this ‘modern’ form of authoritarian government should proliferate so readily on the continent. More generally, the emergence of dominant parties in Africa varied across countries with similar levels of development. Across the globe, a casual look at the list of dominant parties in Table 1 reveals that they emerged and flourished in countries at varying levels of socio-economic development. A similar critique could be applied to the national integration arguments. First, national integration arguments could only be applied to post-colonial countries, and again, a casual look at the data reveals parties that

⁹ Even as prescription, national integration arguments appeared without merit. In a critique of the early parties literature in Africa, Finer (1967) noted that coups and political instability were no less common in dominant party states than they were in military regimes or multi-party regimes.

emerged under varied political circumstances. Second, the emergence and success of dominant parties varied wildly across similar levels of ethnic or regional diversity. In any case, there was never an attempt to empirically evaluate these claims cross-nationally, so we have no way of knowing for sure.

The functionalist bias of these early accounts also diminished their usefulness in one other way. The function of parties in these non-democratic regimes was seen to be the same as that of parties in democracies, especially with respect to popular mobilization and integration. Early on, however, Zolberg (1966) argued that conclusions drawn about the 'true nature' of these ruling parties were derived from the image these parties sought to convey rather than how they really were. Instead, he observed that dominant parties in these regimes devoted an inordinate amount of time to ensuring the victory of incumbents and maintaining political control rather than to mobilizing new groups or linking citizens to the policy-making process. In stark contrast to the early modernization theorists, Bienen (1970) characterized the African ruling parties as political machines much like the political machines of 19th and early 20th century America. African ruling parties, Bienen observed, relied "characteristically upon the attraction of material rewards rather than enthusiasm for political principles" (1970, 113). Under this formulation, elections become important as ways of distributing rents and patronage to party supporters. Corruption becomes requisite for stability. By introducing the concept of the party machine beholden to elite bosses and sustained through bargains with mid-level elites, Bienen made possible the identification of conditions that would make party machines more sustainable and/or more beneficial to elites, but Bienen failed to specify these conditions.

The first attempt at a general theory of dominant party regimes was offered by Huntington in 1970. According to Huntington (1970), one-party systems grow out of processes of modernization—social differentiation, economic development, and nationalist struggle—which open up fissures in society that can only be healed through concession, cooptation, and organization. More specifically, the argument rested on the nature of cleavage structures in a modern society. Societies that produce complex patterns of cross-cutting cleavages, so the argument went, tend to develop into multi-party democratic systems, whereas “one-party systems tend to be the product of either the cumulation of cleavages leading to sharply differentiated groups within society or of the ascendancy in importance of one line of cleavage over all others. A one-party system is, in effect, the product of the efforts of a political elite to organize and to legitimate rule by one social force over another in a bifurcated society” (11). In turn, Huntington believed that “the strength of the one-party system depended on the duration and intensity of the struggle to acquire power” (14). Ruling parties were thus to be found when conflict existed between opposing forces in a bifurcated, modern society. This bifurcation could be based on economic, ethnic, religious, cultural, or social lines, but it was the foundational crisis that strengthened the party.¹⁰

While Huntington’s insights were groundbreaking because they helped problematize the emergence of parties under authoritarianism, they were lacking in their attention to agency. In Huntington’s account, parties emerge as a deterministic response

¹⁰ In democracies, the importance of a competitive threat to party building was emphasized in Martin Shefter’s analysis of party organization in 19th century America. According to Shefter, periods of party organization were initiated by competition from organized labor. When organized labor threatened to develop its own vote-mobilizing organizations, the Democrats and Republicans were motivated to expand and institutionalize their own organizations (Shefter 1994; 164).

to social confrontation. The incentives of leaders to build and maintain parties were neglected as were the incentives of elites to join such a party. Neglecting agency would not be a drawback if it did not inhibit efforts to explain why dominant parties emerged when and where they did, but, as I discuss in greater detail elsewhere, a strict focus on social cleavages and broad processes of modernization blinds one to other important political resources that motivate the behavior of political actors as they decide whether to invest in a dominant party.

Huntington's inattention to agency had several other consequences as well. First, as Huntington himself acknowledged, political leaders could foster antagonistic group consciousness through agitation and mobilization if no such bifurcation existed. As a now large body of work on social cleavages and ethnic politics shows, group identity can be crafted and molded by political entrepreneurs (Przeworski and Sprague 1986, Kalyvas 1996, Mainwaring and Torcal 2003, Fearon and Laitin 2000, Snyder 2000). If social bifurcation is indeed endogenous, then an explanation that pays no attention to agency cannot be a starting place for a theory of dominant party politics.

Second, arguing that dominant parties emerge when a dominant social force organizes to repress another social force does not explain how a party would come to be constituted as the instrument of that repression. Organization may be called for by a competitive threat, but it may not always be possible. Internecine struggles among leaders of one ethnic group, defections by regional elites, or a rebellious military may stymie efforts to organize on behalf of a class or ethnic group.

Third, the structuralist assumptions underlying Huntington's approach led to overdrawn claims about the role and functions of dominant parties. Huntington argued

that, “Every one-party system comes into existence with a concept of the community of the chosen and of the party as the political expression of that community” (13). Clearly, Huntington had in mind Leninist systems with their revolutionary ideology and transformative social purpose. But forty years on, we know that many dominant parties, rather than being guided by a revolutionary ideology or engaged in perpetual mobilization, are centrist political machines, crafted as tools of cooptation. Often as not, their goal vis-a-vis society is to cultivate political apathy and/or clientelist forms of exchange. When mobilization is removed from the equation, the reasons behind political organization at the elite level begin to change.

After Huntington, there was little effort to build a comparative theory of dominant party institutions for nearly 35 years. Only with the recent emergence of neo-institutional approaches to authoritarianism has the topic received some attention. A few recent works have either directly or indirectly addressed the question of how dominant parties get their start. The most general of these is Gandhi’s (2008) model of institutional choice under dictatorship, which posits a set of costs and benefits that face a ruler in deciding over whether to grant policy concessions to an opposition. Concessions come in the form of access to policy influence and rents, both of which can be provided through legislatures and parties. The amount of concessions that dictators offer is dependent on the resources at their disposal and the strength of the opposition that they confront. Dictators with the financial means necessary to make side payments to supporters on an ad hoc basis and/or those who face a weak opposition are expected to make fewer concessions to the opposition. Their model recognizes that in addition to the benefits that institutions can provide there are costs from sharing control over policy and spoils. Dictators will only

share when they must; i.e. when they face a tight fiscal situation that precludes ad hoc patronage distribution and/or when they face a strong opposition.

Smith (2005) takes a similar tack on the problem in a study specifically devoted to the origins of what I am calling dominant parties. Smith argues that robust dominant parties emerge when incumbent leaders face a social opposition that needs to be coopted or lack resource rents that can be used to buy off supporters. In this sense, ruling parties are a means to an end. Their purpose is to organize the narrowest coalition possible that will allow leaders to maintain power. Leaders are led to broaden party coalitions only when an organized opposition forces them to seek allies. Smith argues that leaders with access to profitable rent-producing sectors can simply buy off potential supporters rather than investing in meaningful party structures. As Smith (2005) states, “Where regimes have ready access to rents as they consolidate, they can buy a coalition through the distribution of those rents and confront no necessity to disperse access to policy-making via the ruling party” (431). The most robust ruling parties, according to Smith (2007), are found in those regimes where decisions about party building were undertaken in the face of these challenges.

Another important recent work takes a different tack on the problem by examining elite factionalism. Brownlee (2007) has argued that ruling party strength is best explained as a function of how elites deal with factionalism in the party formation phase. In Egypt and Malaysia, Brownlee finds that the decisive victory of one elite faction over another made for tight party bonds in those regimes. These tight bonds made the party less prone to factional splits that would leave the regime vulnerable to opposition threats. In Iran and the Philippines, on the other hand, the incorporation of

diverse and competing elite factions into the ruling party left the party vulnerable to intra-party splits, which, at least in the Philippines, opened the door for opposition successes. Brownlee's argument dovetails well with the important case of the PRI in Mexico, where the decisive victory of certain revolutionary elites over other elite factions (notably the Catholic Church) produced an elite settlement that would remain robust for over 70 years (Knight 1992). The trouble with this as an explanation of dominant party emergence is that the independent variables are quite proximate to the outcome. In other words, to say that dominant parties emerge because rampant factionalism is put to bed borders on the definition of a dominant party, where competing elite factions cooperate and coordinate closely. Brownlee's work is highly important for focusing scholarly attention on elite factions in dominant parties, but it leaves open several important questions: Why are elites factionalized? Why can some elites commit to the party, while others cannot?

Brownlee's contribution notwithstanding, the most influential extant explanations of dominant party origins focus on the incentives that leaders face in deciding over whether to invest in a dominant party. Gandhi (2008) and Smith (2005, 2007) have identified fiscal constraints and social opposition as the most important factors influencing leaders in their decisions to build party coalitions. These accounts mostly discount other elite actors as deliberate political actors choosing whether to cast their lot with a dominant party project. In existing accounts, elites may benefit from a dominant party, but this is typically a post hoc assertion, dependent on the existence of the party in the first place.

This neglect would not be problematic if considering elites did not help us explain why dominant parties emerge when and where they do. In fact, however, introducing

elite incentives to the equation helps make sense of many instances of dominant party emergence that appear puzzling in light of existing explanations. Take, for example, the case of contemporary Russia. In the mid 2000s, the Kremlin was awash in windfall oil revenues and, with a growing economy, the Communist opposition had lost much of its vim and vigor. In this setting, leader-centric theories predict that Russian president Vladimir Putin would face little impetus to build a ruling party and would instead use rent revenues to buy cooperation in society. Indeed, Putin employed rent revenues to buy cooperation, but contrary to existing theory's predictions, he also invested heavily in the creation of a dominant party, United Russia. This development contrasted sharply with the mid-late 1990s when the Russian economy was in a state of decay and oil prices were at record lows. Partially as a result of these economic dislocations, a strong and well-organized Communist opposition emerged to challenge the Kremlin in the 1995 parliamentary elections and 1996 presidential elections. Existing theory would predict that such a competitive threat would force the Kremlin to invest in a pro-presidential party that could be used to coopt important elites and create a united front against the Communist opposition. Instead, however, Yeltsin had difficulty securing the commitments of important elite actors and regional governors who opted instead to pursue individual strategies of self-promotion (Reuter and Remington 2009). Fearing the costs of supporting a pro-presidential party when such a party could not be sustained, Yeltsin undermined his own party and opted for a divide and rule strategy with respect to the country's regional executives.

How can we make sense of this? I argue that we must consider elites, and particularly regional elites, as deliberate political actors in order to more fully explain

dominant party emergence (and non-emergence) in Russia and many other non-democracies. In the next chapter, I elaborate a theory of dominant party formation that takes into account the incentives of elites to commit to the party as well as the strategic dynamic between elites and leaders. The following chapters provide tests of this theory.

2.4 Tables and Figures

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Map of Ruling Party Regime Types

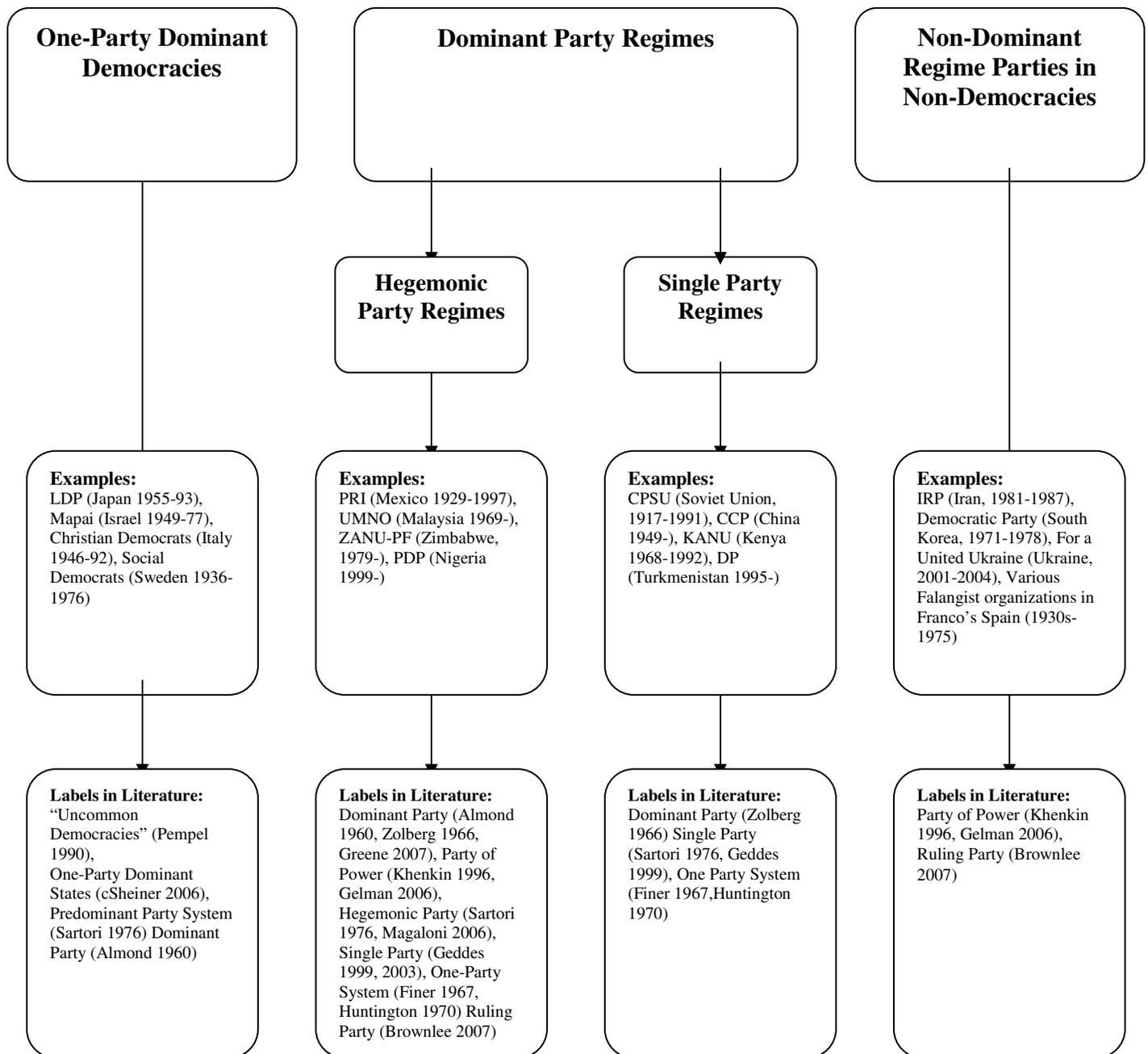


Figure 2.2 Conceptual Map of Hegemonic and Single Party Regimes

Is there a dominant party?	Are opposition parties allowed to compete in elections?	
	Yes	No
	Yes	No
	<i>Hegemonic Party Regimes</i> (Mexico 1929-1997, Malaysia 1969-, Zimbabwe, 1979-, Nigeria 1999-)	<i>Single Party Regimes</i> (Soviet Union, 1917-1991, China 1949-, Kenya 1968-1992)
No	<i>Multi-party autocracies without a dominant party</i> (Morocco 1977-, Belarus 1994-, Iran 1979-, Sri Lanka 1995-)	<i>No-party Regimes</i> (Saudi-Arabia 1932-, Myanmar 1988-, Chile 1973-1989)

Figure 2.3 Number of Dominant Parties Emerging over Five-Year Periods: 1946-2006

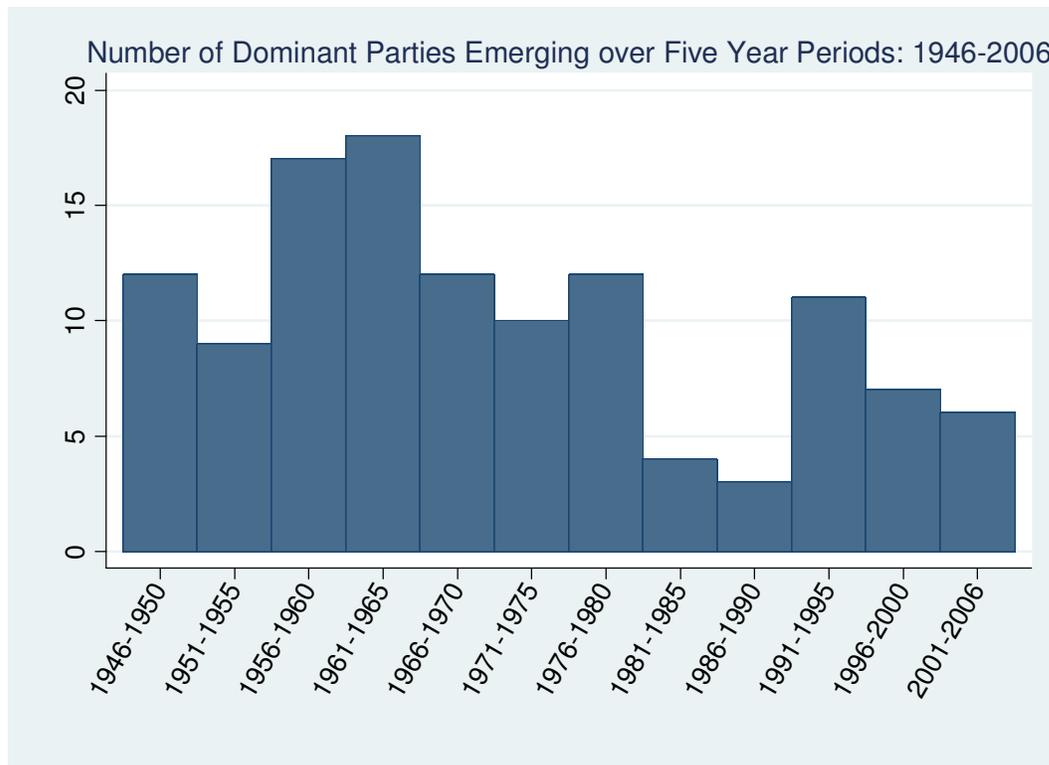


Table 2.1 Dominant Parties Around the World

Party	Country	Years
National Liberation Front (FLN)	Algeria	1962-1999
Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLN)	Angola	1976-
Justicialist Party	Argentina	1951-1955
Intransigent Radical Civic Union	Argentina	1958-1962
New Azerbaijan Party (YAP)	Azerbaijan	1994-
Awami League (AL)	Bangladesh	1971-1975
Jatiya Party	Bangladesh	1988-1991
Republican Party of Dahomey (PRD)	Benin	1960-1964
Benin People's Revolutionary Party (PRPB)	Benin	1974-1990
Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR)	Bolivia	1952-1964
Botswana Democratic Party(BDP)	Botswana	1966-
National Renewal Alliance Party (ARENA)	Brazil	1964-1984
Voltaic Democratic Union-African Democratic Rally (UDV-RDA)	Burkina Faso (Upper Volta)	1960-1966
Voltaic Democratic Union-African Democratic Rally (UDV-RDA)	Burkina Faso	1970-1980
Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP)	Burkina Faso	1992-
Union for National Progress (UPRONA)	Burundi	1961-1965
Union for National Progress (UPRONA)	Burundi	1982-1987
Sangkum	Cambodia	1955-1970
Communist Party of Kampuchea	Cambodia	1975-1979
Cambodian People's Party (CPP)	Cambodia	1998-
Cameroon National Union/Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (RPDC)	Cameroon	1961-

African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV)	Cape Verde	1975-1991
Movement for the Social Evolution of Black Africa (MESAN)	Central African Republic	1961-1965
Chadian Progressive Party (PPT)	Chad	1960-1975
Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS)	Chad	1991-2006
Chinese Communist Party (CCP)	China	1949-
Conservative Party	Colombia	1951-1958
National Revolutionary Movement(MNR)	Congo Brazzaville	1963-1968
Congolese Labor Party (PCT)	Congo Brazzaville	1968-1992
Popular Movement of the Revolution (MPR)	Congo Kinshasa	1967-1992
Cuban Communist Party	Cuba	1959-
People's Rally for Progress (RPP)	Djibouti	1981-
Dominican Party (PD)	Dominican Republic	1946-1962
Reformist Party	Dominican Republic	1966-1978
National Democratic Party (NDP)	Egypt	1952-
Revolutionary Party of Democratic Unification (PRUD)	El Salvador	1952-1962
National Conciliation Party (PCN)	El Salvador	1962-1979
Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea (PDGE)	Equatorial Guinea	1987-
People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ)	Eritrea	1993-
Ethiopian People's Democratic Revolutionary Front (EPRDF)	Ethiopia	1994-
Gabonese Democratic Party (PDG)	Gabon	1960-
Peoples Progressive Party (PPP)	Gambia	1965-1994
Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction	Gambia	1997-
Citizens Union of Georgia (CUG)	Georgia	1999-2003

Convention People's Party (CPP)	Ghana	1960-1966
National Democratic Congress (NDC)	Ghana	1992-1999
Greek Rally	Greece	1952-1956
Democratic Party of Guinea (PDG)	Guinea	1958-1984
Party of Unity and Progress (PUP)	Guinea	1995-
African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC)	Guinea Bissau	1974-1980
African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC)	Guinea Bissau	1984-1999
People's National Congress (PNC)	Guyana	1966-1992
National Party	Honduras	1933-1954
National Party	Honduras	1963-1971
Golkar	Indonesia	1966-1998
Iran Novin	Iran	1963-1971
Rastakhiz	Iran	1975-1978
Democratic Party of Cote'D Ivoire (PDCI)	Ivory Coast	1960-1999
Fatherland (OTAN)	Kazakhstan	2004-
KANU	Kenya	1963-2002
Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland	Korea, North	1946-
Democratic Party	Korea, South	1963-1973
Democratic Justice Party	Korea, South	1981-1988
Laos People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP)	Laos	1975-
True Whig Party	Liberia	1919-1980
Social Democratic Party (PSD)	Madagascar	1960-1972
Vanguard of the Malagasy Revolution (AREMA)	Madagascar	1975-1993
Malawi Congress Party (MCP)	Malawi	1964-1994
United Malays National Organization (UMNO)	Malaysia	1969-

Sudanese Union-African Democratic Rally (US-RDA)	Mali	1960-1968
Democratic Union of the Malian People (UDPM)	Mali	1979-1991
Mauritania People's Party (PPM)	Mauritania	1960-1978
Democratic and Social Republican Party (PRDS)	Mauritania	1992-2005
Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)	Mexico	1929-2000
Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO)	Mozambique	1975-
Burmese Socialist Program Party (BSPP)	Myanmar	1962-1988
South West African People's Organization (SWAPO)	Namibia	1991-
Liberal Nationalist Party (PLN)	Nicaragua	1936-1979
Sandinista National Liberation Front (SNLF)	Nicaragua	1979-1990
Nigerien Progressive Party (PPN)	Niger	1960-1974
National Movement for a Developing Society (MNSD)	Niger	1989-1992
National Union of Independents for Democratic Renewal (UNIRD)	Niger	1996-1998
People's Democratic Party (PDP)	Nigeria	1999-
Colorado	Paraguay	1954-1998
Cambio 90	Peru	1992-2000
National Party	Philippines	1969-1971
New Society Movement (KBL)	Philippines	1978-1986
United Russia	Russia	2003-
PARAMETHU	Rwanda	1961-1972
National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND)	Rwanda	1973-1994
Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR)	Rwanda	2003-
Senegalese Progressive Union (UPS)	Senegal	1960-2000

Seychelles People's Progressive Front (SPPF)	Seychelles	1979-
All People's Congress (APC)	Sierra Leone	1968-1992
Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP)	Sierra Leone	2002-
People's Action Party (PAP)	Singapore	1965-
Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP)	Somalia	1979-1991
National Party	South Africa	1953-1994
United National Party (UNP)	Sri Lanka	1977-1994
Imbokodvo National Movement (INM)	Swaziland	1968-1974
Ba'ath Party	Syria	1963-
Kuomintang (KMT)	Taiwan	1949-2000
People's Democratic Party (PDP)	Tajikistan	2000-
Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM)	Tanzania	1961-
Party of Togolese Unity (PUT)	Togo	1960-1963
Rally of the Togolese People (RPT)	Togo	1980-1994
Rally of the Togolese People (RPT)	Togo	1998-
Socialist Destourian Party/Constitutional Democratic Rally	Tunisia	1957-
Democratic Party (DP)	Turkey	1946-1960
Democratic Party of Turkmenistan	Turkmenistan	1994-
Uganda People's Congress (UPC)	Uganda	1980-1985
National Resistance Movement (NRM)	Uganda	2005-
Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU)	USSR	1917-1990
Democratic Action (AD)	Venezuela	1946-1948
Fifth Republic Movement (MVR)	Venezuela	2005-2006
Communist Party of Vietnam	Vietnam	1975-
General People's Congress	Yemen	1993-
Yemeni Socialist Party	Yemen, South	1967-1990

United National Independence Party (UNIP)	Zambia	1964-1991
Zimbabwe Africa National Union (ZANU)	Zimbabwe	1979-

CHAPTER 3 A THEORY OF DOMINANT PARTY FORMATION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a theory of dominant party formation that accounts for the variation in the prevalence of dominant parties around the world, highlighted in Chapter 2. The previous chapter demonstrated that existing theories of dominant party formation ignore the incentives of elites to join a party. This chapter begins with a short overview of my argument, which is based on the incentives of elites *and* leaders to invest in a dominant party. In Section 3.2, I define elites and discuss why their inclusion in a model of dominant party formation is necessary. In Section 3.3, I lay out the terms of a two-sided commitment problem between leaders and elites in non-democracies. This two-sided interaction forms the basis of my analysis of dominant party formation. In Section 3.4, I discuss how the commitment problem is overcome. Here I focus on how actors solve their commitment problem by delegating authority to a dominant party institution and how changes in the balance of resources between the two sides make them more (or less) likely to delegate this authority. Section 3.5 extends the static analysis of dominant party formation by discussing how dominant parties emerge gradually through a process of institutional layering and overlapping commitments.

3.1 The Argument in Brief

In contrast to existing works, I argue that dominant parties are the product of conscious decisions by *both* leaders *and* other elites in a strategic setting. Such elites may include regional executives or strongmen, prominent enterprise directors, aspiring politicians,

and/or opinion leaders from the professions. These elites are important to the extent that they hold or have access to some actual or latent base of political resources that are autonomous from the regime. In non-democracies, leaders and elites face a mutual commitment problem when it comes to cooperating with each other over the distribution of spoils, policy, and careers. Leaders would like to secure the loyalty of elites and reduce the transaction costs associated with managing legislatures, winning elections, and controlling careers. They can achieve these things through an *ex ante* agreement with elites on the future distribution of spoils. But leaders value their autonomy, and, due to their short-sightedness, they may defect from this agreement *ex post*, especially if circumstances or preferences change. Thus, they cannot make their commitments credible. For their part, elites would like to receive guarantees that leaders will channel careers, perks, and policy to them now and in the future. They could achieve this if they were able to pledge their loyalty to a leader through an *ex ante* agreement. But as with leaders, elites value their autonomy to bargain with opponents, make side payments to supporters, and control their own clientelist networks. Thus, their short-sightedness may cause them to defect *ex post* from any *ex ante* agreement. As a result, their commitments to any such agreement are not credible. In sum, both sides would like to collude in the division of spoils, perks, and policy, but neither can credibly assure the other that it will be a faithful partner in this collusion.

For leaders and elites, the benefits of cooperation are only realized if both sides sign on to the collusive agreement. The ruler is unwilling to commit himself to any such agreement unless he can be sure that other elites will be loyal. For their part, elites will

not tie their fates to the party project unless they can be sure that the leader will make it a mechanism for guaranteeing the supply of careers and resources.

I argue that leaders and elites can solve their bilateral commitment problem through mutual investment in a parallel party organization—a dominant party—that governs the distribution of spoils. Dominant parties can help solve leaders' commitment problems if it is granted the independence to make decisions about the distribution of policy, perks, and privileges. Leaders can also credibly commit to not abusing the terms of their bargain with elites by relinquishing to the dominant party their ability to gather information on key political decisions and linking their reputations to the party. The dominant party can make elite commitments credible if elites give it the power to sanction them for renegeing, and if they place their own political machines under the control of the party leadership. Elites may also pay a sunk cost by contributing financially to the party.

Unfortunately, positing institutional solutions to commitment problems does not help us explain why dominant parties exist in some authoritarian regimes, but not in others. Commitment problems such as those laid out above are likely to exist in almost all authoritarian regimes, but we only observe dominant parties in some of those regimes. Any theory of dominant parties that seeks to explain variance in the emergence of those institutions across countries must move beyond simply describing the institutional solution to the commitment problem.

The argument here focuses on how the relative balance of political resources between leaders and elites affects each side's incentives to cooperate. When leaders are very strong in resources (relative to elites) their incentives to defect from any bargain are

particularly high and thus they are unlikely to invest in dominant party institutions. Leaders have less motivation to coopt and control these weak elites. While they may be better off striking a cooptive agreement with elites, this option is only weakly preferred to bargaining with them on an individual basis or coercing them. On the other side of the equation, when elites are very strong relative to leaders they have *strong* incentives to defect from any agreement and thus will not invest in a dominant party that can formally solve the commitment problem. Their autonomous political machines are very strong, and through these mechanisms they can achieve most of their political goals without much cooperation with the leader. Elites may still benefit by concluding a cooperative agreement with leaders (i.e. agreeing to link their political machines to the regime and remain loyal in exchange for a rule governed division of regime-distributed spoils), but they are not that much better off.

Thus, leaders and elites are unlikely to seek an institutional solution to their commitment problem when it is very severe. Since nascent dominant party institutions are not always dependable, they will not take this risky step. They are more likely to invest in a dominant party when the gains from cooperation with one another are maximized. Incentives to defect from the *ex ante* agreement are hard to eliminate, but they can be reduced. In other words, neither side can ever be sure that the other will hold up its end of the bargain, but they will be more likely to risk cooperation when they need that cooperation more. Or as I frame it, the commitment problem can be mitigated for both sides.

Dominant parties are, thus, most likely to emerge when resources are balanced such that neither side has significant incentives to defect from any bargain. In the

language of institutional analysis, dominant parties become more likely as it becomes increasingly efficient for both sides to cooperate with one another. The mutual commitment problem is attenuated when neither side holds a preponderance of resources. In sum, when resources are balanced like this between the two sides, a dominant party is more likely because elites are strong enough that leaders benefit significantly from coopting them, but not so strong that they (elites) gain little from being coopted.

In the final sections of this chapter, I emphasize how this theoretical framework is also appropriate for understanding dominant party emergence as a gradual series of continuous commitments made by leaders and smaller sub-groups of elites. Here I show how the various institutions that make up dominant parties can layer and reinforce one another over time such that ex ante investments in nascent dominant parties are made credible by subsequent delegations and transfers of resources.

3.2 The Actors: Building a Theory of Dominant Party Formation

I now turn to a more detailed discussion of the actors that are relevant to my argument: leaders and elites. I pay particular emphasis to discussing the role of elites, for their role in dominant party formation has been largely ignored.

Retaining an emphasis on agency, the question of dominant party formation could be approached from several different angles. The first is to examine the interests of regime leaders. By regime leader, I understand the individual that serves as the ‘effective head of government’ in a non-democratic regime (see Gandhi 2008 for a similar conceptualization). In regimes with nominally democratic institutions this may be the president or the prime minister. Vladimir Putin was Russia’s effective head of

government as President from 2000-2008. Lee Quan Yew was Singapore's effective head of government as Prime Minister from 1959-1990. In other regimes, military dictators (or juntas), monarchs, or dictators serve as regime leaders. Regime leaders may see no reason to make concessions and broaden coalitions, or they may have a need for cooperation. This is an approach pursued by existing literature (Gandhi and Przeworski 2006, Smith 2005).

The second is to examine the interests of elites. Elites are those actors who exercise influence and demand loyalty from other political actors. They make decisions of political significance to large numbers of citizens. In many cases, their elite status is confirmed by their political position (e.g. legislators, governors, military leaders, ministers, administrators). In other cases, their status derives from their influence alone, not their formal political position (e.g. enterprise directors, aspiring politicians, opinion leaders, university rectors, hospital directors, etc). In developing countries, important elite actors may be chiefs, bosses, landlords, caciques, clan leaders wealthy peasants, strongmen, or warlords. In the center-periphery conflicts that have wracked much of the developing world, regional elites are key actors. They control local resources, social organizations, administrative hierarchies, clientelistic networks and/or entrenched political machines, often within territorially defined spaces. In his study of state-society relations in the developing world, Migdal (1988) identifies local strongmen and the resources they control as the key stumbling blocks to the construction of a strong, central state. Understanding variation in the power of these regional elites is thus crucial to understanding politics in the developing world. Regional elites may be individually indispensable and control resources that give them bargaining leverage vis-à-vis the

center or, as Migdal argues, they may be embedded in a pattern of effective social control and political exchange that is costly for leaders to subvert. An elite-centric approach would place the emphasis solely on the incentives of elites to join a party. They may see no reason to affiliate with the party or they may have an interest in tying their fates to the regime's party project.

The third approach is to assume that both elites and leaders matter and examine the process of dominant party formation as a strategic interaction between these two sides. Dominant parties fail to emerge in this view because one side or the other is unwilling to invest in the party. Recognizing that the other side is unwilling to invest in the party, the other side is loath to make its own investment.

This dissertation embraces all three approaches, but places a new and special emphasis on the latter two.

Elites and Dominant Party Formation

The main innovation of this dissertation is the introduction of elites to the equation of dominant party formation. But why is it important, useful, and/or necessary to consider the role of elites when studying the origins of dominant parties? I answer this question in the following paragraphs.

The political map in authoritarian regimes is traditionally drawn as a struggle between rulers and the opposition. The picture is, of course, much more complicated. Opposition may come from mass actors. Leaders may be confronted by endemic ethnic or religious strife. Opposition may also come from other social classes or organized

societal interests. Elite actors such as landowners, the military, local strongmen, industrial enterprise owners, or powerful regional governors may also be oppositional. Of course, these actors are not always oppositional. In fact, the position of elites vis-a-vis the regime may be ambiguous. It is safe to assume that these actors want to protect certain interests. When their interests lie in striking temporary bargains with the regime they may be erstwhile allies. When opposition is the best means of protecting their interests they may choose that option. Alternatively, they may simply be neutral with respect to the regime. Oppositional or not, elites, and most frequently, regional elites are key players in many authoritarian regimes.

One key difference between elite actors and mass actors is that elite support must be secured in order for a dominant party to be established. Elite support is both a necessary and sufficient condition for dominant party formation. Elites are the stuff of which dominant parties are made. A dominant party is a winning coalition of these elites.

Theories of dominant party rule from Huntington (1970) to more recent accounts such as those provided by Smith (2005) and Gandhi and Przeworski (2006) have stressed the cooptive function of parties vis a vis society. In contrast to coercion, cooptation implies a bilateral exchange of benefits, even if there is a disparity in power between the contracting agents. But, as noted above, most literature only focuses on one of the contracting agents, leaders, neglecting other elites.

The literature on party formation more generally has, of course, emphasized the importance of securing elite commitments. Parties are viewed as solutions to collective action and commitment problems. They are institutional commitment devices that harness together the ambitions of rivalrous elites. John Aldrich's (1995) account of why

parties emerged in the United States is the most well-known example of such rational choice work on party development. According to Aldrich, legislators share a long-term interest in collaborating on policy logrolls. But their own short-sightedness and the lack of a commitment device lead legislators to defect from these logrolls *ex post* by voting their preferences myopically. In this setting, legislators may feel compelled to tie their hands by delegating to third party institutions (parties) that can solve these commitment problems.

But Aldrich's account is not a full-fledged theory of endogenous institutions because it is the party *institution* that constrains actors. This begs the question: why and when would elites join in the early rounds before the institution has enforcement power? In this sense, the argument is somewhat functionalist, for it assumes the emergence of institutions to meet a need felt by actors. Extending this objection to its logical conclusion, one might be compelled to ask whether we should always expect actors to have a long-term interest in cooperating together. It sometimes might be true that actors would find it in their interest to go it alone, crafting their own platforms, expending their personal resources on campaigns, and making ad hoc bargains to achieve desired policies.

Recent work on party development in new democracies has made just this argument. It has questioned whether all actors find it in their best interest to commit to nascent political parties. In a study of post-Soviet Russian party development, Henry Hale (2006) shows that candidates with the support of so-called 'party substitutes' (financial industrial groups and powerful political machines) can avoid party affiliation and be successful in running and winning campaigns. In another study of post-Soviet party development, Regina Smyth (2006), demonstrates that candidates with personal

vote resources, such as a local reputation or experience in local leadership, and who own their own business are less likely to affiliate with parties. The upshot of these important works is that politicians may not always find it in their best interest to commit to a party, an insight that is also useful as we turn our attention to the origins of dominant parties.

Elite cohesion has also factored prominently in other research areas as well. Scholars of democratization have focused on elite cohesion as a determinant of authoritarian breakdown (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, Przeworski 1991, Burton, Gunther and Higley 1992). The 'transitions' project in particular viewed splits in the ancient regime as a necessary condition for democratic transition. On its own, however, elite cohesion is of limited utility as an explanatory factor. First, its proximity to the outcome makes it border on tautology. To say that a regime must command the support of those within it does not take us very far. Second, difficulties often arise in identifying periods of elite splits that are separate from their alleged effects on regime durability. In other words, it was unclear whether elite splits were the cause or the consequence of authoritarian breakdown. Finally, from an empirical standpoint, elite cohesion was often seen to melt in the face of contextual contingencies, a fact that diminished its standing as a generalizable explanation of authoritarian survival.

Those who have endogenized elite cohesion provide a more compelling account of authoritarian survival. Attempts to endogenize elite cohesion come in two varieties: structural and institutional. Those who take a structural approach posit economic and macro-social variables as determinants of elite cohesion. Haggard and Kaufman (1995) discuss how economic crises in Latin America prompted business elites to withdraw their support for military regimes. Acemoglu and Robinson argue that elite splits are caused

by “the challenge of disenfranchised citizens to the existing system” (2006, 85). Those who take an institutionalist view see institutions, such as parties, created by dictators as constraining elite behavior and solving collective action problems when times are tough. This is the approach implicitly adopted by Geddes (1999), and explicitly advocated by Brownlee (2007). These institutions create incentives for elites to remain loyal to the regime if they can credibly guarantee elites a stream of benefits into the future (Magaloni 2008). Indeed, Haggard and Kaufman (1995) argue that the institutional bonds of party dictatorships can be strong enough to survive economic crises. This literature makes clear the importance of elite cohesion within the dominant party, but does not provide a clear view of how that cohesion is established in the first place. Most starkly, it fails to lay out the factors that make elites, both in the aggregate and at the individual level, more or less likely to commit to dominant parties in the first place.

In sum, elite commitment is a central element in the neo-institutional literature on parties in democracies and transitional regimes. Elite commitment to the regime is also a crucial component in much of the literature on democratization. In the study of dominant parties, it is not difficult to see how party institutions can solve elite commitment problems once they are firmly established, but it is less clear why elites make investments in the party in the first place. A primary research frontier is to determine the factors that make elites more likely to make these investments. Identifying these factors will help provide a complete theory of dominant party formation for two reasons. First, it will provide insight into the conditions under which leaders will have an interest in investing in a dominant party. And second, it will help explain the conditions under which elites tie their fates to a nascent dominant party. I argue that elite affiliation does not always

follow automatically from a leader's decision to invest in a dominant party (although it may appear that way when we take into account a leader's ability to strategically assess other elites propensity to invest in the party). There are times when elites do not have an interest in investing in a dominant party.

In the theoretical setup that follows, I treat elites as a single actor that chooses whether or not to cast its lot with a dominant party. This simplification is made to ease exposition of the main argument. Of course, in the real world, elites within a country are a diverse lot. Within any country, some elites are stronger and more influential than others, such that there is both between and within country variation in the strength of elites. At the end of this chapter, I relax this assumption of elite unity and show how this theory of dominant formation applies when elite diversity is taken into account. Indeed, recognizing the diverse resources of elites within a country is key to testing some of the main implications of my argument.

Elites and Resource Endowments

Elite investment is likely to depend heavily on the political resources available to elites and leaders. Both between and within countries there is always variation in the extent to which elites hold or have access to some actual or latent base of *resources* that are autonomous from the regime. By autonomous from the regime I mean those resources that are exceedingly costly for the regime to systematically repress or expropriate. Following Dahl, I define political resources as anything that can be used to sway the specific choices or the strategies of another individual (Dahl 1961). Elites are important

to the extent that they control these resources. Such resources might include, but are not limited to, autonomous control over clientelist networks, de facto or de jure regional autonomy, hard-to-tax economic assets, and individual-specific ability to mobilize oppositional citizens. To take but one example, regional elites in large federal countries with locally elected regional officials have, *ceteris paribus*, more exogenous sources of access to rents, policy, and career advancement than elites in those countries without subnational divisions. These elites control more resources and are likely to be stronger. In Brazil, for instance, leaders have long had to reach accommodation with powerful governors as a prerequisite for holding power (Mainwaring 1999). In Russia in the 1990s, Yeltsin reached accommodation with regional elites by granting them generous writs of de facto and de jure autonomy. I will have more to say about conceptualizing and measuring these resources in the empirical chapters of the dissertation. For the purposes of this theory chapter, we will refer to them, in aggregate, as *resources*.

3.3 Dominant Party Formation as a Two-Sided Commitment Problem

Thus, in many, if not most situations, there are two sets of actors that are important to consider in an analysis of the origins of dominant parties: regime leaders and other elites. When both sets of actors exist, (i.e. when a central leader is present during the relevant period of analysis) the two sides are faced with a series of bilateral commitment problems that inhibit them from enjoying a range of benefits that they could otherwise enjoy by making medium- or long-term agreements about how to divide spoils, policy, and political positions. The most interesting commitment problems in social science involve a dynamic whereby efficient (long-term, mutually beneficial) agreements are not reached

because at least one actor has a strong incentive to renege on the agreement after it is reached, either sporadically or systematically. The actor's behavior is short-sighted in these cases, though, because if he could commit to the agreement long-term, all would be better off. The other actor or actors involved in the potential agreement anticipate this renegeing, would be harmed by it, and, thus, do not sign on. Actors might directly be harmed by the renegeing (for instance, as in the case of private investors deciding over whether to invest in the shadow of a predatory state) or they may be harmed because the benefits of commitment are only realized if the other player or players makes a complementary commitment. Political scientists and economists have sought solutions to this problem by looking for ways that commitments can be made credible in the eyes of other players.

Below, I lay out a theory of dominant party formation that focuses on a set of commitment problems between a ruler and a body of elites. I begin by discussing, in general terms, the nature of the commitment problem for the two sides. I focus on the long-term benefits that rulers and elites would like to achieve through mutual agreement on several issues. I then discuss the incentives that rulers and elites have to renege on any such ex ante agreement. This leads to a discussion of how the commitment problem can be solved. I first discuss how dominant party institutions can solve each side's commitment problem. But since leader-elite commitment problems are nearly ubiquitous and dominant parties vary across countries, I note that we must look beyond formal institutions for an explanation of why dominant parties emerge in some contexts, but not in others. Here I argue that much depends on the balance of political resources controlled by leaders on the one hand and elites on the other. I show how changes in the balance of

political resources between leaders and elites can reduce the severity of each side's commitment problem. I argue that mitigating the severity of each side's commitment problem makes it more likely that actors will seek formal institutional solutions (i.e. dominant parties) to their commitment problem. I conclude the chapter by demonstrating how this framework can explain the gradual formation of dominant party regimes and initial institutional evolution that we know accompanies the emergence of these types of regimes.

The Leader's Commitment Problem, Part One: Benefits of Concluding a Bargain with Elites

In this section, I discuss what leaders would like to achieve by joining an agreement with elites. In other words, I discuss how finding an accommodation with elites could be beneficial. In short, they would like to effectively assure the loyalty of elites and reduce the transaction costs associated with achieving policies, controlling careers, and managing elections. In the next section, The Leader's Commitment Problem, Part 2: Incentives to Renege on the Agreement, I discuss the incentives that the leader has to renege on any such deal.

Cooptation

Leaders in office prefer to remain in office and to maximize rents and policy. Leaders in non-democratic regimes vary in the extent to which they require the cooperation of elites to achieve these goals, but they all must rely upon an elite coalition of some size to stay in power. Leaders would very much like to find a way to bind these elites to them; to be assured that their loyalty is secured. One way that they can do this is by distributing spoils, policy, and careers through private transfers to these elites (Bueno De Mesquita et al. 2003). Unfortunately for leaders, elites have no way to be assured of the continued provision of these benefits into the future. In other words, they are unsure of whether they will continue to receive promotions and rents in the future. This leaves elites with constant incentives to conspire, rebel, or shirk their duties before the leader. For cooptation to be effective in keeping elites loyal, the leader must offer credible guarantees that policy, spoils, and office will be distributed to them now and in the future. If leaders can effectively commit to distributing these spoils in a rule-governed and predictable manner, then elites will have a reason to remain loyal to the regime (Brownlee 2007, Magaloni 2008). Elites want to have some assurances that their interests will be served by remaining loyal to the dictator. If leaders can commit to an agreement on dividing spoils, careers, and policy in way that reduces future uncertainty over their provision, then elites will have less reason to gamble on challenging the regime.

Forming Stable Legislative Majorities

In authoritarian regimes the legislature is only ‘marginalized’ if it can be controlled by the executive. Rule by decree, even when the ruler has extensive formal decree powers, is often more limited than commonly thought. In Russia, for instance, the decree making powers of the president are limited to the establishment of law where no law exists and to the resolution of inconsistencies in existing law (Haspel, Remington, and Smith 2006). There are also certain policy areas that must be governed by law rather than decree.¹¹ Leaders can cobble together legislative majorities for each bill by trading individual favors and private goods, but such an arrangement can be exceedingly costly and such bargains are difficult to monitor on a large scale (e.g. Cox and Morgenstern 2002, Remington 2006). These ad hoc logrolls are costly for three reasons. First, they are costly because they generate more uncertainty over the final content of legislation. In this way, the leader’s problem is similar to the problem that legislators confront in partyless legislatures. As Aldrich (1995) describes it, legislators live in constant fear of being excluded from the next majority decision. They could reduce uncertainty about their long term legislative achievements if they could form a ‘long coalition’ with other legislators (Aldrich 1995). Leaders in non-democracies are rarely, if ever, excluded from influencing the majority coalition that supports a bill, but through the need to make side payments and concessions to shifting groups of legislators, the final outcome of legislation may deviate frequently, and often, unpredictably from their ideal point. Second, these logrolls are costly because leaders must expend time and effort winning over individual allies and gaining information on whom to court. Third, the private

¹¹ See Haspel, Remington, and Smith (2006) for a list of these policy areas. In Russia, decrees are less durable than laws, which require passage of another law to be overturned. A presidential decree, on the other hand, can be annulled or superseded by a succeeding president’s decree. A president seeking the implementation of lasting policy reform will thus prefer a law to a decree.

transfers or concessions that leaders must make to individual legislators or shifting coalitions of legislators are likely to exceed the amount of benefits they would have to offer if they could agree with elites on a long-term ex ante division of policy (see benefit #1 above). This is because the uncertainty-reducing benefits that elites receive from knowing that their spoils are going to be distributed to them according to the terms of some pre-made agreement are likely to offset some of the real value of spoils that they would require in on the spot transfers.

Given these potential costs, leaders can benefit by making some agreement with elites to ensure that executive initiatives are adopted within the framework of a long-term deal. In Aldrich's (1995) terms, they would benefit from entering into a 'long coalition' with these elites. As I discuss below, the difficulty for a leader is to commit to the terms of any such agreement after it is made.

Coordinating Electoral Outcomes

When elections are held, leaders need tools for ensuring that pro-regime candidates are elected. Coordination failures among pro-regime candidates can lead to unexpected outcomes that are suboptimal for the ruler. Political scientists have begun to pay attention to the implications of coordination failures among opposition candidates in non-democracies (Howard and Roessler 2006, Van de Walle 2006, Kasara 2005), but the consequences of coordination failures among regime candidates remains unstudied. Two pro-regime candidates may each calculate that they have a chance of winning an office to a legislature, governorship, or mayoral post. Both may seek to capitalize with voters on

their support for the current regime and associate themselves with the rule, while simultaneously highlighting the differences between them. If they compete separately, there exists the possibility that they will split the regime vote and that an opposition candidate will win the seat or post. Such coordination failures are highly costly for the ruler trying to control elections.

The ruler may opt to ensure the election of loyal deputies by striking new bargains with powerful elites for every election. In other words, he can monitor each election and make side-deals with ambitious candidates so that some will forego running for office, perhaps in exchange for a preferred rent, the promise of a future opportunity, or electoral support. However, the transaction costs associated with the constant revision of such ad hoc arrangements can be enormous, especially when the regime hopes to see loyal candidates installed at different levels of government. In addition, as with the division of legislative spoils, regime leaders will have to pay candidates less to coordinate if there is an agreement about how the pay off will be distributed in the future. In sum, leaders can benefit from an agreement with elites about how elites should contest elections and what electoral support they should receive in return.

Routinization of Political Appointment Processes

As I noted in the section on cooptation, leaders would like to enjoy the benefits of keeping elites loyal via the distribution of spoils. A major component of such spoils are political positions and office. Leaders in non-democracies typically determine appointments and promotions to a great many offices. To the extent possible, they would

like to reduce the costs associated gathering information on cadres and with determining who should receive promotions. As with legislative logrolls, this process is likely to involve costly negotiation and concession-making. One way that leaders can avoid these costs is by making an ex ante agreement on the distribution of spoils. If they could commit to this ex ante agreement, elites would be effectively coopted (as I discussed above) and leaders would minimize the time and effort they spend on cadre politics. One clear example of this is the nomenklatura system operated by the CPSU in the Soviet Union. The nomenklatura system consisted of a table of appointments covering all political offices. This ex ante agreement on the distribution of posts ensured the efficient distribution of posts to loyal and talented supporters (Hough 1969). Thus, as with the distribution of policy and rents in legislative settings, leaders would like to find a way to reduce their transaction costs.

The Leader's Commitment Problem, Part 2: Incentives to Renege on the Agreement

If leaders want to effectively coopt elites, then they may have to agree to an ex ante division of spoils, careers, and policy. This entails that the leader support only agreed upon candidates in elections. It means that he will promote only those whom he has promised to promote. And it means that policy and rents will be distributed to elites according to the terms of some pre-determined agreement. The difficulty is that a ruler has no way of committing to these agreements (Haber 2006, Magaloni 2008). He has no way of credibly assuring elites that he will abide by its terms. This is because committing to such an agreement would constitute a major loss of autonomy for the ruler.

Should circumstances, preferences, or tastes change he may want to support another candidate for office, craft another bill, or promote another cadre. If a policy failure occurs, the leader may want to distance himself from those elites tainted by the policy failure. At any given moment, the leader might give in to his temptation to seek immediate gain by renegeing on the terms of the agreement.

Thus, there is no guarantee that he will not renege on the terms. This renegeing may be systematic or selective. And as I elaborate below, this incentive to renege is exacerbated by a strategic dynamic in which the leader may think that he can secure the benefits of the agreement (elite cooperation and loyalty) while sporadically shirking his own duties.

In practice, of course, this ex ante agreement is a fantasy because no such comprehensive agreement on the future division of all policy, careers, and rents could ever be constructed. Information, foresight, and technical capacity would be lacking. But the implausibility of such an agreement only underscores the difficulty that a ruler has in refraining from abusing elites around him. Thus, in many countries around the world, leaders who cannot commit to such an informal cooptive agreement are left to forego such 'efficient' agreements and strike ad hoc cooptive bargains with individual elites and groups of elites. Their other option is to seek out a way of assuring elites that they can be trusted to abide by the terms of the bargain.

The Elites' Commitment Problem Part One: Benefits of Reaching an Agreement with Leaders

In this section, I discuss how elites could benefit from an ex ante agreement with leaders. In short, they would like to be assured that they will receive career advancement, advancement for their subordinates, policy concessions, and rents now and in the future.

Reducing Uncertainty over the Procurement of Spoils

Elites want to maintain their positions in office. They also would like to secure perks, privileges, and policy. Access to these goods is at least partially controlled by the regime in non-democracies. Leaders give elites promotions. They grant them policy concessions and pork that they can use to appease their constituents and/or clients. Leaders have the power to grant elites personal privileges as well—immunity from prosecution, career advancement for relatives, insider deals on government contracts, tax exemptions, real estate, government cars, preferential treatment in the procurement of permits and exemptions, etc. Elites may also benefit from being associated with the leader, who may be popular among certain segments of the population or carry weight among other elite actors. Leaders also support candidates for office with their state administrative resources.

In all regimes, some of these goods are distributed in an ad hoc manner on the basis of personal ties and clientelist networks. But elites would prefer to find an accommodation with the leader that gives them some sort of assurance that these goods could be provided on an ongoing basis and into the future. They would like the piece of mind to know that they will receive perks and privileges not just now, but also in the future (Geddes 2003). Moreover, since perks, privileges, and policy are typically

distributed in proportion to rank, they would like some assurance that they will receive career advancement (Magaloni 2008). Elites value this reduction in uncertainty.

The difficulty is that in order to make such an ex ante agreement attractive to leaders, leaders must have some assurance that elites will remain loyal, otherwise they will not be willing to make such an agreement. The agreement must be mutual for its benefits to be realized. That is, leaders must have an assurance that elites will not receive their preferred rent, but then fail to support the leader's legislative initiatives. Leaders must have an assurance that elites will not accept the regime's support in elections, but then criticize the regime during the campaign or put their political machine to work for an opposition candidate in a regional election. They must be assured that elites will not receive career advancement, but then conspire against the leader.

Reducing Transaction Costs

Constant negotiation for policy concessions, perks, and career support is costly. Elites must pay for lobbyists in the capital, they must gather information about what perks and privileges are achievable, and they must expend time in the process of negotiation. Thus, elites not only value reduced uncertainty in its own right, they would also like to save time, effort, and resources on lobbying.

The Elites' Commitment Problem Part Two: Incentives to Renege on the Bargain

The elite commitment problem mirrors that of the leader. As noted above, elites would like to receive assurances that their interests are served by remaining loyal to the regime. They would like to know that they will receive their preferred policy, rent, or office in the future. They can do this if they are able to convince leaders that they will be loyal and dutiful followers, support regime sponsored legislative initiatives and regime candidates for promotion and election, and that they will put their political machines and clientelist networks to work in support of the regime. The difficulty that elites face in making this commitment is that by doing so they relinquish some of their political autonomy. Such an agreement precludes them from criticizing the regime for policy or economic failures. They agree not to run their own lists of candidates should their preferences over whom to support change. They would be precluded from striking their own bargains on policy concessions outside the terms of the original agreement. They agree to support regime appointments and not to subvert these appointments. These are significant self-imposed restrictions on autonomy. If it were possible, elites would prefer to retain the flexibility to bargain with opponents and make side payments to supporters. Their own short-sightedness may lead them to support an opposition candidate, vote against a leader's policy proposal, or appoint a non-approved cadre, if it serves their immediate interests.

Thus, because such an agreement requires elites to give up their autonomy and there is little stopping elites from renegeing on the ex ante agreement, leaders cannot trust elites to abide by its terms in the future. This is especially true if elites are strong and have strong incentives to renege. Elite commitments are not credible.

Summing Up: A Two-Sided Commitment Problem

Elites and leaders cannot make credible commitments to cooperate with one another. They would like to collude in the division of spoils, perks, and policy, but neither can credibly assure the other that it will be a faithful partner in this collusion. In other words, elites will not remain true to this bargain unless they can be sure that the leader will make it a mechanism for guaranteeing the supply of spoils. They must be assured that the bargain will last into the future. The ruler is also unwilling to commit himself to the party unless he can be sure that other elites will be loyal to the party. Thus, the benefits of the bargain are only achieved when both players cooperate, but each side has strong incentives to defect, owing to their desire for autonomy.¹² Each side would like to come to an efficient agreement, but has incentives to defect *ex post*.

The two sides' commitment problem is complicated by the fact that each is tempted to try the patience of the other side and renege on the agreement while the other side continues to cooperate. Sporadic renegeing by leaders, if unobserved by elites, can yield significant benefits because it allows the leader to gain the cooperation of elites, while he retains his autonomy. The leader may support candidates or appoint cadres other than those agreed upon. The same is true for elites; sporadic renegeing while the leader remains true to the terms of the agreement can be very rewarding. Elites can decouple their political machine from the regime by supporting their own candidates or appointing their own clients. Of course, even without some device for monitoring compliance, full blown renegeing is unlikely to go unnoticed for long. But in order to

¹² For a practical elucidation of a mutual commitment problem between an authoritarian leader and economic elites (using the example of Russia) see Tompson (2003).

keep from being abused sporadically, both sides must not only find a solution to their commitment problem, but also find a mechanism for monitoring compliance.

3.4 Overcoming the Commitment Problem

Part 1: Dominant Party Institutions

In political science it has become a commonplace to say that delegating to third party institutions solves commitment problems. For example, some of the most well-studied commitment problems in social science involve the inability of state leaders to credibly commit to not expropriating the wealth of subjects (e.g. North and Weingast 1989, Stasavage 2002, Frye 2004). Here the problem is made interesting by the fact that the ruler's inability to commit creates a disincentive to contracting, investment, and other productive economic activity by subjects. Thus, the ruler's inability to credibly promise that he will not expropriate wealth hinders long run economic growth. In the past several decades, much of the literature has settled on institutions as the most effective solution to commitment problems of this sort.¹³ Sufficiently independent judiciaries and parliaments, in particular, have been touted as devices to constrain the arbitrary behavior of leaders.

To take another example, within legislatures, political parties serve as a commitment device for legislators seeking to contract with one another. Unable to commit to bargains over the division of legislative goods, legislators delegate authority to

¹³ North and Weingast (1989), Greif, Milgrom, and Weingast (1994), Greif (1992) and others have pointed out that repeated play with reputation mechanisms is often insufficient, especially when actors discount the future heavily.

a party leadership that can sanction bad behavior by excluding those who renege from logroll agreements (Aldrich 1995).

In the study of dominant parties, Beatriz Magaloni (2008) has argued that dominant parties help leaders commit to distributing perks and offices to elites. By delegating power to a parallel party organization that controls these appointments, leaders place constraints on their ability to abuse the terms of the spoil-sharing bargain. She offers the following: “By giving up his absolute powers to select members of the ruling clique into government positions, the dictator can more credibly guarantee a share of power and the spoils of office over the long run to those who invest in the existing institutions. . . .” (Magaloni 2008, 716). In Magaloni’s account, dominant parties make leader commitments credible because the institution is independent of the leader. When elites know that they can count on the institution (and not the leader) to deliver careers, perks, and policy then they will be more inclined to make their own commitments to the bargain. Elites must not only know that the institution is independent of the leader, but also that it will extend into the future. Thus, leaders must give signals that they intend to support the party into the future. With time, presumably, it would become more costly for the leader to renege on the bargain as leaders know that regime stability depends on the continued maintenance of the institution.

In the abstract, I agree with Magaloni that the key for leaders in making their commitment credible is to create an institution that is independent of the leader. They need to create an institution that can be depended upon to control careers and spoils. Unfortunately, this is only a partial answer to the question of how dominant party institutions make these commitments credible. It begs the question of what makes the

party independent. What prevents the leader from impinging on the independence of the institution, breaking the terms of the bargain, and promoting his preferred cadres or policy. In other words, how can a newly-created dominant party institution with no reputation for binding actors constrain leaders? The question is a difficult one without clear answers in the literature. A second question that Magaloni does not address at all is how the party can make *elite* commitments credible as well. Below, I offer several practical propositions for how even new dominant party institutions could make elite and leader commitments credible.

Dominant Parties and the Leader's Credible Commitments

I begin by discussing how dominant party institutions can constrain leaders. First, if steps are taken to delegate independent decision-making authority to the party, then it can immediately have a constraining effect on the leader. Leaders must take steps to ensure that promotions, policy, and privileges are at least partially distributed by the party itself. Institutional linkage is one way of achieving this. Leaders can link the powers of the dominant party to other institutional constraints such as the constitution. Leaders can change laws or the constitution so that the dominant party is given explicit or implicit control over nominations in a specific sphere. In contemporary Russia, the Kremlin pushed through changes that give the majority party in regional parliaments the legal right to nominate candidates for regional governor. In this way, if the leader is to subvert the principle of party controlled nominations he also incurs the costs of having to change or contravert the constitution. The leader can sanction other institutional changes, such

as imperative mandate laws or fixed electoral cycles, to raise the costs of dismantling the dominant party at a moment's notice. Leaders may also take steps to insure that the party receives its finances from an independent source.

More informally, leaders might institute a norm of forbidding members of his inner circle from attending key party meetings, legislative faction gatherings etc. If the leader is able to refrain from interfering in the cadre selection and spoil distribution process for a short period, then costs to renegeing are quickly built up as the party and its leadership, rather than the leader, becomes the patron of the newly installed cadres. At the very least, cadres may develop dual loyalties. Even in the early stages, these nomenklaturist tendencies in the party create costs to renegeing.

Of course, the ultimate commitment in this regard is for the leader himself to step down and let a party nominated candidate take his spot. In this regard, the world's archetypal dominant party regime was the PRI in Mexico, where presidents were prohibited from seeking reelection. At the point when the leader owes his career to the party (i.e. his political resources come from the party), then the regime becomes a true party-state and the bilateral commitment problem which I envision here loses its significance. Of course, since leaders in all regimes have many avenues for cultivating their resource base outside the party, there are few examples of true party-states in which there is no identifiable leader as distinct from the party. Even the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, who formally served at the pleasure of the Central Committee, was a formidable political figure in his own right with many formal and informal levers of influence at his disposal.

To the extent that the ruler can grant the party independent authority for some period, elites change their expectations about how spoils and careers can be accessed. The resources and skills necessary for achieving these goods change. Elites invest in these skills and jettison the resources that allowed them to access spoils and careers prior to the creation of the party. They invest in schemes to curry the favor of party leaders and promote the party's interests. In this way, they not only develop divided loyalties, but also strategies of political survival that are based on the continued existence of the party. By dismantling the party at this point, the leader risks backing elites into a corner and giving them no choice but to revolt. How long it would take for this to happen is difficult to say, but while the independence of the party institution is accumulating, other commitment mechanisms such as those described in this section are likely necessary to keep actors from defecting.

A second way that leaders can credibly commit to not abusing the terms of their bargain with elites is by relinquishing to the party their ability to gather information on key political decisions. If members of the ruling clique micromanage the party's affairs then the dictator's commitment to not renege on the terms of the cooperative bargain are less credible. But if the leader takes steps to tie his hands in the gathering of information about which candidates to support, about how patronage should be distributed, and about how cadres should be appointed, then his commitment to not interfere is more credible. Leaders could do this by dismantling their own parallel mechanisms for managing elections, organizing legislative majorities, or appointing cadres. In Russia for instance, the continued existence of a cadre reserve system within the executive branch, separate from the ruling party's own cadre reserve system, undermines elites' belief that the

Kremlin is committed to building a dominant party system. In gubernatorial elections in the 1990s, the Kremlin undermined its investments in Our Home is Russia by setting up a parallel structure, the All-Russia Coordinating Council, to channel support to candidates in regional gubernatorial elections.

A third way that dominant parties can constrain leaders is by solving elite collective action problems vis-a-vis the leader. In those countries where elites are very strong, they may be prevented from capturing the state only by their own collective action and coordination problems vis-à-vis one another. In 1990s and early 2000s Russia, regional governors were extremely strong and if they had united their political machines they could easily have won any election or secured a policy victory, but they were frequently stymied in their efforts to put forward presidential candidates or oppose the Kremlin by divisions among themselves (Solnick 2000, Shvetsova 2003). The creation of a dominant party gives elites the institutional tools to keep themselves united. If leaders allow the creation of these institutional bonds within the elite, then there is always the chance that elites may use this new-found unity to challenge or constrain leaders. Indeed, history is replete with examples of leaders who struggled to control their dominant parties, especially during times when the leader is seeking far-reaching reforms.

Another way that leaders can use the dominant party as a commitment device is by making up-front investments of symbolic personal resources in the party, costly signals in other words. By committing his name, reputation, and personal valence to the party, the leader is sending a signal to other elites that he is willing to accept part of the responsibility for policy failures that occur on the party's watch. He is signaling to elites

the costs that he is incurring by investing in the party. What's more, if the leader allows his name and reputation to be associated with the party, then he incurs reputational costs when he reneges on that deal and abandons the party. Public statements of support for the party create costs for the leader if he then elects to go back on a public commitment. This is all the more true if he elects to join the party or become its leader. In this case, the leader's reputation as a strong and decisive authority figure would be tarnished if he then left the party. Similarly, if the leader allows his image to be used on party campaign materials, then his reputation may be tarnished if he allows other parties or candidates to use his image on campaign materials.

Finally, it is worth saying a few words about how the party helps elites monitor agreements and thus reduces the temptation of the leader to sporadically abuse them. Enshrined in the party arrangement are rules, parchment or implicit, specifying what constitutes compliance on the part of the leader (e.g. only supporting party candidates in elections, granting preference to party supporters in personnel, granting the party control over nominations, and certain areas of policy formulation). If all elites contracted with the regime via some unwritten agreement, then violations of those agreements could easily go unnoticed, especially if it is not clear what constitutes violation of the agreement. In contrast when the terms of the agreement are set down on parchment, as they may be in a party's charter, then a transgression against the party's policy making sphere of authority or its delegated authority over cadre decisions is easier to identify and punish (via defection, perhaps).

Dominant Parties and Elite Credible Commitments

I now discuss how dominant party institutions can make elite commitments to the cooperative agreement credible. Elite commitments can be secured in a more imperative sense than are leader's commitments. Elites grant the party the ability to sanction them for defections or renegeing. If they deviate from the party line in legislatures, they may be excluded from the party faction. If deputies criticize the party in electoral campaigns, they may be expelled from the party and lose its support in future campaigns. Elites (who occupy legislatures) can make such commitments even more credible by linking commitment to the party to existing institutional rules. For instance, the regime can institute imperative mandate laws which state that if a deputy leaves his legislative group, he loses his legislative mandate. Or the party may institute laws that allow the party that nominates a candidate to withdraw his/her candidacy. In Russia, this is a mechanism that is used to sanction unruly candidates during election campaigns. Such a rule ensures that joining the party and accepting its support at election time is a meaningful signal that the candidate has made a commitment to the terms of the cooperative bargain.

Elites can also make their commitments credible by linking their political machines to the party. If they delegate to the collective party leadership control over appointments and patronage distribution within their sphere of administrative control, then they are giving up a part of the resources that made them powerful. In other words, they are relinquishing a portion of their authority as head of a clientelist network. This is a major sunk cost that can signal commitment. As an illustration of this, in the early 2000s, Russian governors played the key role in drawing up United Russia's lists of candidates for regional elections in Russia. This led aspiring candidates to maintain their

clientelistic relations with governors. But in the mid 2000s, governors began allowing United Russia regional branches (and the federal party leadership in Moscow) more autonomy in the creation of party lists. This has led to the dissipation of part of the governors' clientelist base.

Thirdly, elites can tie their hands by giving up their own institutions that win elections, lobby for legislative goods, and secure perks from the center. If elites join the dominant party while maintaining their own political party on the side, then their commitment to the cooperative bargain with leaders is not credible. After all, they could always abandon the bargain and go back to using their own local party to win elections within their sphere of administrative control. This is exactly what happened in many Russian regions in the early 2000s in Russia. Regional governors made tentative statements of support for the new ruling party, but at the same time used their own political parties to contest local elections, ultimately preserving their own autonomy. Thus, elites can make credible commitments if they merge their own political parties, legislative organizations, and lobbying networks into the dominant party and cede the dominant party leadership control over these resources.

A fourth way that elites can make an early commitment to the party is by contributing financially to it. This creates an immediate sunk cost. If they then criticize the regime or do something else to draw the party's ire, the party can expel the elite and the elite loses the investment that he has already made. In Russia, candidates typically make contributions to the party that are well beyond the amount required for running a campaign (and much higher than the required dues). Needless to say, the party requires

such payments, but elites know that such payments send signals of their commitment to the Kremlin.

A fifth way that elites can demonstrate the credibility of their commitment is simply by joining the party. Much like the leader makes a symbolic transfer of resources when he joins the party, elites make a symbolic transfer of reputational resources when they make a public commitment to one political party—the dominant party. It demonstrates to the leader that elites are willing to pay the reputational costs of policy failures that may occur on the party's watch. What's more, abusing the party or reneging to support another party tarnishes their image of independent authority figures, because they are seen as abrogating a public commitment.

Finally, a word must be said about how the parchment rules of the party make it easier for leaders to monitor elite commitments and thus give them reason to believe that elites are not shirking the responsibilities laid down in any such bargain. The dominant party establishes clear rules about the regime's accommodative arrangement and thus makes it easier for leaders to identify when they are being transgressed against. In most cases, the dominant party constitutes a clear dividing line between regime supporters and opponents. Leaving the dominant party constitutes defection from the regime. As Huntington noted (1970, 15), “the more important the party is in the system, the more difficult it is to become a member and the more frequent are the purges expelling members. If party membership becomes universal, it becomes meaningless.” Leaders know whom to punish (or reward) and elites know what needs to be done in order to retain access to future spoils.

Summary

It is worth noting, however, that, like all institutions, dominant parties are comprised of a bundle of rules with different functions, and not all dominant parties are the same. The configuration of rules is likely to differ across dominant parties, such that the exact configuration of commitment mechanisms differs. What is more, because the rules are bundled under the aegis of an overarching institutional agreement, the individual commitment devices are likely to work in tandem. Thus, for instance, breaking party discipline in the legislature sends signals about an individual elite's level of commitment to other components of the bargain. Or, for example, the leader's level of commitment in allowing the party to autonomously craft legislation can be construed as a signal of his support for the party more generally. I leave for future work to examine which of these commitment devices are most effective at constraining transgressions by leaders and elites.

Ultimately, dominant parties are likely to provide only very tenuous institutional constraints at their founding. This makes investment in these institutions a real gamble. It is risky for actor A to make commitments to actor B when the institutional constraints on actor B are weak, leaving actor A vulnerable to abuse by actor B. It is my view, however, that the frailty of nascent dominant party institutions only underscores the need for a theory of dominant party emergence that focuses on how actors can mitigate their commitment problem, so that there is much to gain and as little as possible to lose from cooperating with the other side.

Explaining Variation in the Emergence of Dominant Parties: The Limitations of Institutional Explanations.

Unfortunately, positing institutional solutions to commitment problems does not help us explain why dominant parties exist in some authoritarian regimes, but not in others. Commitment problems such as those laid out above are likely to exist in almost all authoritarian regimes, but we only observe dominant parties in some of those regimes. Dictators almost always have incentives to keep elites loyal and thus should always invest in dominant party institutions, but dominant parties exist only in some regimes. Thus, describing institutional solutions to the commitment problem is not sufficient for explaining why dominant parties exist in some countries, but not in others. Any theory of endogenous institutions that seeks to explain variance in the prevalence of those institutions across countries must move beyond simply describing the institutional solution to the commitment problem.

What distinguishes the most innovative recent work on institutions in comparative politics is that it moves beyond identifying the institutional solution to a commitment or collective action problem to identifying the conditions that generate the outcome in specific cases. For example, in the study of political parties, the problem of party formation has long been seen, essentially, as a multi-lateral commitment problem. Legislators would prefer to agree on a long-term division of benefits, but they cannot credibly commit to voting according to the terms of that agreement. They have incentives to sporadically renege and support their own preferred bills. A party institution solves this commitment problem by changing the incentive structure.

. The innovation of some recent literature on party development has been to identify the factors that make politicians more or less likely to feel compelled to participate in this long-term logroll. For example, Hale (2006) and Smyth (2006) have argued that if politicians have their own personal resources or access to party ‘substitutes’ that can replace parties, they may feel less compelled to submit to party discipline. In other words, actors do not automatically seek out an institutional solution to their commitment problem when confronted with it. To say that there is a commitment problem and a potential institutional solution to that commitment problem does not tell us when that institutional solution will be employed.

Frequently, there are exogenous factors that determine the extent to which actors desire solutions to their commitment problems. Indeed, I think it is crucial to consider the balance of power between actors as a factor influencing the willingness and ability of actors to construct institutions that solve their commitment problems. Explicit arguments of this nature are rare, but they are implicitly advanced in many accounts of endogenous institutions. For example, even in North and Weingast’s (1989) account of the emergence of parliamentary sovereignty in England, an account that is often cited as the gold standard for how institutions solve problems of credible commitment, the creation of independent parliamentary institutions was only made possible by the Civil War and the Glorious Revolution which served as an exogenous shock reducing the power of the Crown vis-à-vis the opposition. In this setting, the opposition was able to extract concessions out of the King for the limitation of the Crown’s authority and the extension of parliamentary sovereignty.

In the argument I present below, I rely on exogenous changes in the balance of power between leaders and elites to explain why and when the two sides will seek a solution to their commitment problem.

Overcoming the Commitment Problem Part 2: Changes in the Balance of Resources and the Likelihood of Dominant Party Emergence

If actors are nearly always faced with commitment problems, then we must look elsewhere for clues about why dominant parties emerge in some countries, but not others. Thus, I argue that while dominant party institutions can and do solve leaders' and elites' commitment problems, there are times when investment in such institutions is more likely than others. More specifically, I argue that we must consider the relative balance of political resources between leaders and elites and their associated needs for cooperation with the other side. I present this argument below.

Reducing the Severity of the Leader's Commitment Problem

The leader's commitment problem can vary in its severity. When the leader's commitment problem is at its most severe, the gains from cooperation with elites are relatively low. In other words, striking a long-term bargain on the division of spoils with elites is only slightly better than transacting with them on an ad hoc basis, coercing them, or ignoring them altogether. In practical terms, when leaders are strong relative to elites, they may not need much in the way of cooperation with elites. They can achieve many of

their policy goals, appoint cadres, and win elections without the help of the political machines and clientelist networks controlled by elites. Leaders may still be better off by concluding a cooperative agreement with elites (i.e. agreeing on a rule-governed division of spoils in exchange for their loyalty), but they are not that much better off.¹⁴ Thus, when leaders are strong and their commitment problem is severe, leaders are highly prone to defect from any arrangement that is reached with elites.

The leader's commitment problem is mitigated (made less severe) as the potential benefits from cooperation with elites rise and costs of relinquishing his autonomy decreased. What determines these costs and benefits? It is the balance of political resources between leaders and elites. As I discuss in more detail in later chapters, leaders may draw their strength from many sources, including personal popularity, easy access to rent revenues, and economic growth. I call these the leader's resources. When leaders are strong in these resources and elites are weak in their resources, then the leader's incentives to defect are high and the commitment problem is severe.

Thus, when the leader's commitment problem is severe, he will not delegate power to a party that will constrain him, because leaders do not have a pressing need to coopt elites. As it becomes more beneficial to contract with elites, leaders will become more interested in finding an institutional arrangement that can solve their commitment problem and will be more likely to invest in a dominant party. For leaders it becomes

¹⁴ At the limit, the structure of the game would cease to be a commitment problem all together and leaders would simply prefer not to contract with elites at all. They gain nothing by cooperating with them. When leaders become 'very' strong in this way, the game loses both its strategic and commitment components. Thus, one could pitch the argument in such a way that leaders are only interested in investing in a dominant party when the commitment problem becomes manifest. The core logic of such an argument is nearly identical to the one I have offered her. I prefer to pursue an argument that focuses on variations of the commitment problem, because I think that in the vast majority of regimes, some cooperation with elites would be preferable to none. And, thus, leader investment in dominant parties for most countries is really about reducing the severity of this commitment problem.

more beneficial to contract with elites as the balance of resources shifts toward elites. As elites become stronger in resources, there is more need for the leader to coopt them. Leaders need access to their political machines to win elections and need to make policy concessions to them in legislatures. Thus, it becomes more likely that the leader will invest in a dominant party that can solve his commitment problem.

Nascent dominant party institutions may not be perfectly constraining, so leaders will be more likely to take the risk of investing in these institutional commitments when they have more to gain and less to lose from doing so. What is more, since no nascent dominant party institution could restrain leaders from renegeing when their commitment problem is severe, elites will be unlikely to trust the institutional commitments of leaders when leaders are strong in resources. For elites, mutual cooperation is highly valued when they are weak and the leader is strong. After all, they could gain much by entering a cooperative agreement with a strong dictator. But leaders cannot be counted on to deliver their side of the bargain, and since the gains from cooperation are only achieved when both sides participate, elites will not be willing to invest either. Thus, when the resource balance is tipped decisively in favor of leaders, they will have less incentive to invest in a dominant party, but as the resource balance shifts in favor of elites and the leader's commitment problem is mitigated he is more likely to invest in a dominant party.

Reducing the Severity of the Elite's Commitment Problem

If decisions about the creation of dominant parties depended only on leaders, then dominant parties would become more likely as the balance of resources shifted in favor

of elites. As I noted above, leaders would have more incentives to coopt elites and thus more incentives to invest in a dominant party that could solve their commitment problem. The difficulty is that elites also have agency in this matter. They also choose whether or not to conclude a cooperative bargain with leaders. In short, this means that as the balance of resources between leaders and elites shifts ever more in favor of elites, then it becomes increasingly likely that *elites* will want to forego investment in a dominant party institution because they themselves will not see significant gains from reaching a cooperative bargain with leaders. Thus, we must not only consider the severity of the leader's commitment problem, but also the severity of elites' commitment problem.

When the elites' commitment problem is at its most severe, the gains from cooperation with leaders are minimal. Striking long-term bargains with leaders on the division of spoils, policy, and offices, is only slightly better than transacting with leaders individually and/or circumventing the leader to achieve political office and advancement. When elites in a polity are very strong *relative to leaders*, they cannot commit themselves to a party because the resources they control are extensive enough to provide them with the opportunity to survive politically on their own. Their own autonomous political machines are very extensive and they are reluctant to give them up. Elites can use these machines to obtain their preferred rents, secure policy concessions in legislatures, and win elections with only minimal cooperation from the leader. Elites may still benefit by concluding a cooperative agreement with leaders (i.e. agreeing to remain to link their political machines to the regime and remain loyal in exchange for a rule governed division of regime-distributed spoils), but they are not that much better off. Thus, when

elites are strong and their commitment problem is severe, they are highly prone to defect from any arrangement that is reached with leaders.

The elites' commitment problem is mitigated as the potential benefits of cooperation with leaders rise and the costs of relinquishing their autonomy go down. What determines these costs and benefits? It is the balance of political resources between leaders and elites. As I discuss in more detail in later chapters, elites may draw their strength from many sources, including regional political machines, ethnically based clientelistic networks, hard-to-tax economic assets, tribal loyalties, or their own personal authority. When elites are strong in these resources and leaders are weak in their resources, then the elites' incentives to defect are high and the commitment problem is severe.

Thus, when the elites' commitment problem is severe, they will not delegate power to a party that will constrain them, because elites do not have a pressing need to cooperate with leaders. As it becomes more beneficial to contract with leaders, elites will become more interested in finding an institutional arrangement that can solve their commitment problem and will be more likely to invest in a dominant party. It becomes more beneficial for elites to contract with leaders as the balance of resources shifts toward elites. As leaders become stronger in resources, elites have more interest in gaining rule-governed access to the spoils, perks, and privileges that the regime controls, and it becomes more likely that they will invest in a dominant party that can solve their commitment problem vis-à-vis leaders.

As in the case of leaders, nascent dominant party institutions may not be perfectly constraining, so elites will be more likely to take the risk of investing in these

institutional commitments when their commitment problem is mitigated. What is more, since no nascent dominant party institution could restrain elites from renegeing when their commitment problem is severe, leaders will be unlikely to trust the institutional commitments of elites when they are strong in resources. For leaders, mutual cooperation is highly valued when they are weak and elites are strong. After all, they could gain much by coopting the political machines of these elites. But elites cannot be counted on to deliver their side of the bargain, and since the gains from cooperation are only achieved when both sides participate, leaders will not be willing to invest either.

Thus, when the resource balance is tipped decisively in favor of elites, they will have less incentive to invest in a dominant party, but as the resource balance shifts in favor of leaders, and the elites' commitment problem is mitigated, they are more likely to invest in a dominant party.

Balancing Resources: Maximizing the Likelihood of a Dominant Party

I have argued that when leaders are very strong in resources their incentives to defect from any bargain are very strong and thus they are unlikely to invest in dominant party institutions. On the other side of the equation, when elites are very strong they have strong incentives to defect from any agreement and thus will not invest in a dominant party. This is because both leaders and elites are unlikely to seek an institutional solution to their commitment problem when it is very severe. They are more likely to do so when the gains from cooperation are maximized. Incentives to defect from the ex ante

agreement are hard to eliminate, but they can be reduced. In other words, the commitment problem can be mitigated for both sides.

Dominant parties are most likely to emerge when resources are balanced such that neither side has significant incentives to defect from any bargain. In the language of institutional analysis, dominant parties become more likely as it becomes increasingly efficient for both sides to cooperate with one another. The mutual commitment problem is attenuated when neither side holds a preponderance of resources. When resources are balanced like this between the two sides, a dominant party is more likely because elites are strong enough that leaders benefit significantly from coopting them, but weak enough that they themselves benefit from being coopted.¹⁵ In other words, dominant parties are most likely to emerge when elites hold enough autonomous political resources (relative to the resources of leaders) that coopting them is necessary, but not so many autonomous resources that they themselves are reluctant to participate in any cooperative bargain.

This logic leads to the following hypothesis.

H1: Dominant parties are more likely to emerge when resources between leaders and other elites are relatively balanced. They are less likely when leaders are disproportionately strong (relative to elites) or elites are disproportionately strong (relative to leaders).

H1 is graphically depicted in Figure 3.1.

[Figure 3.1 Here]

¹⁵ Note that the net balance of resources between the two sides is what matters here and not the absolute strength of the two sides. If the two sides are both 'strong' in resources, then I consider there to be a balance of resources between the two sides and a dominant party to be more likely. The same is true if both sides are weak in resources or if both sides have 'middle' amounts of resources.

On the left side of the figure, elites are weak relative to leaders and dominant parties are unlikely. On the right side the figure elites are very strong and a dominant party is also unlikely. In the middle of the figure, when the resources of elites and leaders are relatively balanced, a dominant party is more likely.

3.5 Gradual Dominant Party Emergence and Institutional Evolution in Nascent Dominant Party Systems

The argument above has simplified reality by positing a two-sided interaction between leaders on one side and elites as a whole on the other. It has also simplified reality by indicating that the process of dominant party formation is single-stage process—a dichotomous choice over the creation of a full-fledged dominant party. This was done to facilitate exposition of the core elements of the argument. But these insights can easily be applied to the gradual processes of dominant party building that we observe in the real world. Leaders typically make a series of tacit or explicit agreements with subgroups of elites over incremental investments in different institutional components of the party. It is helpful to think of the process of dominant party formation as a continuous set of two-sided commitment problems between the leader and various groups of elites over respective levels of investment in individual institutional components of the dominant party. Thus, the process of dominant party formation is comprised of two dynamic processes: one in which increasing numbers of elites join the party and another in which institutional solutions to commitment problems layer on top of one another. These

processes usually unfold in tandem, but, they are analytically distinct elements of the process. I discuss each, in turn, below.

Gradual Elite Affiliation

I begin by discussing what I call ‘gradual elite affiliation’ because it is easier to conceive of than the institutional layering that I discuss in the next section. The simple extension to the argument offered here is that leaders rarely contract with all elites simultaneously. Rather, since the strength of elites varies within countries as well as across countries, they contract first with those that need coopting or with those that may benefit from being coopted, depending on how the balance of resources is shifting at the time. To make sense of this argument it is crucial to recognize that there are country-level factors that determine the overall balance of resources between elites and leaders *and* individual level factors that determine the strength of individual elites vis-a-vis the leader within a country for a given level of overall resource balance between leaders and elites.¹⁶ Thus, as the hypothesis in the previous section indicated, dominant parties may begin to emerge under two different circumstances:

1. They may begin to emerge as the balance of resources shifts from a very strong leader towards elites. In this setting, the strongest elites will be the first to be coopted into the party, because they are the first with whom the leader needs to strike bargains.

¹⁶ Thus, for example, in Brazil, regional governors and landowners have always been extremely strong. In the 20th century, they held a great deal of sway over national politics (Samuels and Abrucio 2000). However, it goes without saying that some Brazilian governors were more powerful than others, no matter what the overall balance of resources between the governors, as a whole, and Brazilian presidents. In particular, governors from economically powerful and independent regions such as Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais controlled a great deal of autonomous resources that any Brazilian president had to contend with.

2. Dominant parties may begin to emerge as the balance of resources shifts toward leaders in countries where elites hold a preponderance of resources vis-à-vis leaders. Here the weakest elites may be the first to make investments in the party because they are first that stand to reap significant gains from cooperation with leaders.

As the overall balance of resources between leaders and elites shifts towards a point where neither side holds a preponderance of these resources, individual elites will begin joining the party. The order of their joining depends upon their individual resources and whether leaders or elites as a whole control a greater share of the overall balance of resources. Of course, if the balance of resources between the two sides ceases to shift, then the process of gradual elite affiliation, and hence of dominant party emergence, may come to a halt. But if it continues to shift such that resources become more balanced, then the gradual process of elite affiliation will continue until most elites are members of the dominant party.

Institutional Evolution in Nascent Dominant Party Systems

Dominant parties are comprised of bundles of rules and norms that govern the formulation of policy, promotion of cadres, and distribution of rents. It is safe to say that no two dominant parties share the exact same configuration of rules. What dominant parties all share in common is some minimal mass of these rules and norms, such that they play an important role in governing the distribution of spoils and policy. Yet, dominant parties rarely emerge as full-fledged, dyed in the wool institutions. Rather,

they are born of a gradual process by which leaders and subsets of elites make incremental commitments to sequentially layered institutional components.

In the early stages of dominant party emergence, defections and commitment-shirking are likely to be common as the nascent institutions have yet to develop the teeth that can always bind leaders and elites to their promises. Leaders and elites may start dominant party *projects* that contain certain institutional components, but subsequent institutional investments may be required to make their commitments to the nascent dominant party credible.

This view of dominant party formation brings us closer to the real-world of dominant party formation, where leaders and elites typically give minimal structure and names to the ‘cooperative agreements’ that I have discussed in the abstract above. They often call them parties of some type. Political scientists call them ruling parties or, among those who study the former Soviet Union, ‘parties of power’. These nascent ruling parties may contain some institutional devices that constrain leaders and elites, but leaders and elites often shirk many of their other commitments to the ‘party’.¹⁷ In other words, ruling parties may emerge, but elites and leaders sometimes have difficulty committing to the initial agreements represented by those parties, and thus they may make additional investments in subsequent commitment devices to reap the benefits of more extensive cooperation. Indeed, leaders and elites may need not only additional commitment devices, but as per the argument above, additional shifts in the balance of resources to make it more likely that they will create these commitment devices.

¹⁷ Here the analog in the theory offered above is when leaders and elites cannot make credible commitments to the ‘cooperative agreement’ that would be mutually beneficial in the long haul.

Thus, dominant party *projects* transform into true dominant parties when changes in the balance of resources further reduce the severity of the commitment problem and make it more likely that the two sides will invest in new commitment devices that make their previous promises to the dominant party project credible. This is what I mean by institutional layering. New institutional components of the dominant party layer upon one another to make previous commitments credible. *By recognizing that the party is not a monolithic institution, but rather a bundled hierarchy of institutional commitment devices, we can talk about commitments to a party while still acknowledging that certain aspects of the emerging dominant party solve commitment problems between leaders and elites.*

Let me provide several examples from Russia of institutional layering in the formation of a dominant party. In the 1990s, many of Russia's governors supported the then 'party of power' in the 1995 and 1999 State Duma elections by lending their political machines to help these parties secure party list votes in their respective regions. However, at the regional level, many governors retained their own parallel political parties, which they used to contest regional elections and see that loyal independent candidates were elected to the State Duma in single member district races. Beginning in 2003, however, governors increasingly did away with their own political parties and instead linked them to United Russia. By relinquishing their own political parties, the governors relieved themselves of some of the resources that they could have used to abuse their commitment to the party of power. In this way, they made their promise to support United Russia and only United Russia credible by relinquishing the resources that they could use to support alternative candidates. This investment of resources made

prior commitments credible and was one stepping stone on the road to creating a dominant party in Russia.

Leaders also make their promises to initial party projects credible through subsequent commitments. The evolution of relations between the presidential administration and pro-presidential deputies in the State Duma demonstrates this phenomenon. In 2002, a united pro-presidential coalition was created from several centrist groups. This near-majority coalition was associated with a new 'party of power' outside the legislature. But in 2002 and 2003, Putin continued to bargain with other factions and groups of independent deputies. Deputies from any group could gain influence on the content of legislation by participating in the consultative 'zero reading' that took place prior to bills being introduced. After parliamentary elections in December 2003, however, United Russia won a large majority and Putin approved of the idea of allowing this consultative zero-reading to be eliminated in favor of intra-party deliberations within the United Russia parliamentary group. Subsequently, the Kremlin took further steps to strengthen the role of the party by eliminating the single member district portion of the ballot and introducing imperative mandate laws that forbid faction members from deserting their faction. Several authors have noted that these reforms were aimed at reducing the bargaining costs to the Kremlin of passing legislation and at increasing control over loyalists (Remington 2006, Smyth et al. 2007). This is no doubt true, but these reform moves also constituted sunk cost investments by the Kremlin in a system of policy formulation that depended on one party. These signals were correctly interpreted by deputies as a sign that the Kremlin would be distributing perks and privileges through this party and only through this party. Such commitments were

deepened in 2006 and 2007 as the Kremlin granted United Russia partial control over the dispersion of funds from a set of massive, state-funded social infrastructure projects known as the National Projects and granted it the right to access federal budget funds for its own multi-billion dollar, party-controlled infrastructure projects.

These commitments made prior commitments to United Russia's legislative organization credible by creating sunk costs (i.e. delegated financial control over patronage) and nested institutional constraints that would make any attempt to undermine United Russia as the party of power very costly. I discuss other examples of this phenomenon in the next chapter.

Dominant parties link these layered commitments across multiple spheres of politics. Thus, for example, if a party member shirks his commitment by competing against the party leadership's preferred candidate in elections, then that member can be sanctioned in other arenas. He may be excluded from party logrolls or be passed over for a promotion. Thus, if actors transgress against party discipline in one sphere it can be noticed and punished in another sphere. This linkage facilitates the process of layered commitments that I have described.

Thus, the process of dominant party formation is actually marked by a series of investments that constitute delegations and irretrievable transfers of resources. These delegations and resource transfers make commitment to the previous institutional investment incentive compatible and thus credible. Of course, this means that leaders and elites can make certain commitments and transfer some resources while refraining from making other commitments or transferring other resources. In other words, in the gradual emergence of dominant parties, institutional commitments and resource transfers

are not all or nothing. Thus, for example, the leader may delegate control over promotions in the legislative branch to the party, but refrain from giving it power over cadre politics in the executive branch. Or the leader may transfer some personal resources by lending the party his name and image for use in campaigns, but at the same time, refrain from dismantling parallel organizations that allow the ruler to manage cadres and policy without the party. For their part, elites may use their political machines to campaign for the party during national elections, but still retain their own political parties for use in local elections.

The speed with which actors make these commitments varies with the size of the shift in the resource balance between leaders and elites, and the process of dominant party formation can be arrested at any time if the distribution of resources ceases to shift toward a balance that favors mutual investment in the dominant party. During a process of dominant party formation, rapid changes in the balance of resources are what distinguish many one-time, failed efforts at dominant party formation from stable dominant parties. In addition, exogenous events temporarily may alter one side's need for cooperation. For example, an interstate war may leave leaders suddenly more dependent on the resources of local warlords or field commanders. Once the war ends, the leader's need for cooperation may decrease. Or, an election, may temporarily increase a leader's need to marshal the political machines of regional elites, but when the election campaign is over, he may no longer feel the need to support a party institution.¹⁸

¹⁸ The possibility always exists for path dependent tendencies to take hold. Assuming that the balance of resources does not shift too drastically, actors adjust their expectations and strategies to conform to the new rules of the game. The analysis of this long-term dynamic is slightly beyond the scope of this dissertation, but suffice to say that, *ceteris paribus*, leaders and elites increasingly condition their behavior on observations of what has come before. The capacity of the two sides to monitor and enforce agreements is

The gradual nature of dominant party formation helps us to see why leaders might fear the party itself and how this can sometimes influence their decisions over whether to invest in one. The danger for the leader is that the party itself may grow so strong and independent that it comes to usurp policy, rents, and even office from the ruler. Alternatively, the party may groom a new leader that seeks to challenge the ruler. This danger is elevated when elites are strong in resources.

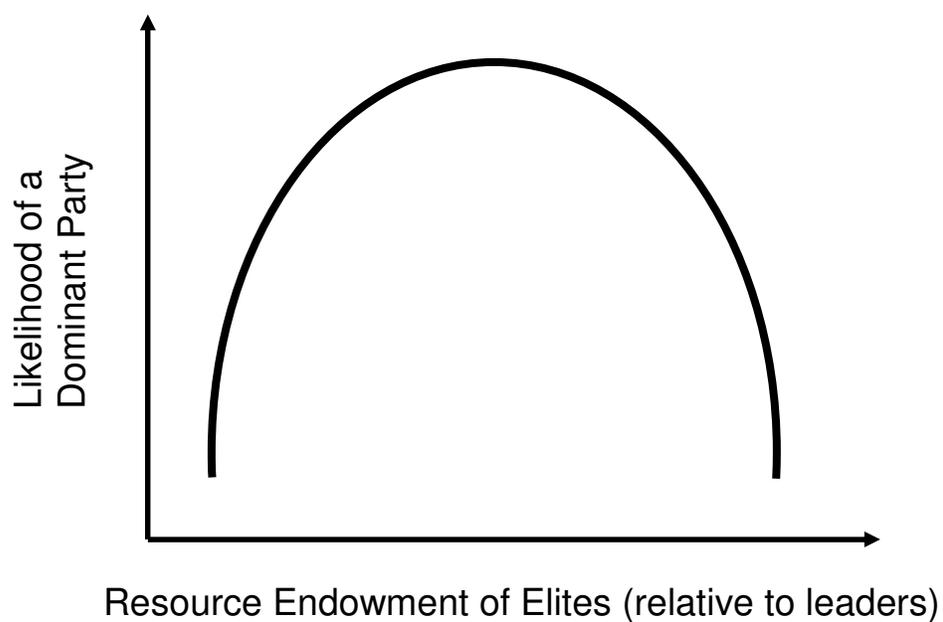
In sum, the gradual process of dominant party formation is marked by a set of mutual commitment problems between leaders and subsets of elites. The nature of those commitment problems and the solutions to it are the same as those outlined in the sections above. The particular subset of elites in question may want to obtain the benefits of cooperating with leaders, but due to their shortsightedness and desire for autonomy they may not be willing to commit to the emergent party until the gains from cooperation with leaders are maximized. This happens as the balance of resources between them and the leader shifts in favor of the leader. At that point, they may make further institutional investments in the emerging dominant party that formally solve their commitment problem. For their part, leaders may want to obtain the benefits of cooperating with a particular subset of elites, but may not be able to commit to some set of promises (housed within the dominant party project) that would be required to retain elites' loyalty. As the need for their cooperation with this subset of elites grows, however, leaders will be more likely to take the next step by making another institutional investment in the emergent dominant party.

also likely to grow as party membership becomes more meaningful and political exchange is increasingly structured through the party.

At the end of this process, the norms and rules embedded within the dominant party govern most political exchange within the country. The only time when the commitment problem between leaders and elites completely vanishes is when the leader himself is elected by the party and has no supply of political resources that is independent of the party.

3.6 Tables and Figures

Figure 3.1 Relationship between Balance of Resources and Likelihood of Dominant Party Emergence



Chapter 4 Parties of Power in Post-Soviet Russia: 1993-2009¹⁹

In non-democracies, leaders and elites face a set of mutual commitment problem. Leaders cannot commit to providing spoils to elites in the future and elites cannot commit to remaining loyal. These problems are amplified by a strategic dynamic whereby leaders remain reluctant to invest in a dominant party until they know that elites are tying their fates to it and elites remain reluctant until they know that leaders are channeling spoils through the party. Dominant parties can solve these commitment problems, but are only likely to emerge as solutions to these dilemmas when the benefits of cooperation are maximized and the costs are minimized. These costs and benefits depend on the resources available to each side. Thus, leaders and elites are most likely to invest in a dominant party when elites are strong enough that leaders need to coopt them in order to govern the country, but not so strong that they themselves are highly inclined to eschew investment in the dominant party. In this chapter, I present a narrative of post-Soviet Russia's experience with regime parties in order to illustrate the causal validity of this framework.

Part I tells the tale of how the parties created by the Kremlin in the 1990s failed to become dominant parties. These 'parties of power' failed to become dominant because Russia's elites, and particularly regional elites, were unwilling to cede the significant autonomous resources that they had accumulated after the transition to a centralized

¹⁹ Parts of this chapter can be found in an article that I coauthored with Thomas Remington "Dominant Parties and the Commitment Problem: the Case of United Russia" *Comparative Political Studies*. 42(4).

dominant party.²⁰ In turn, knowing that elites would not invest in a party, Yeltsin was himself loathe to waste resources and reputation on investing in one. This stance only further undermined elites' incentives to link their fates to a possible dominant party.

Part II recounts the emergence of United Russia as a dominant party in Putin-era Russia. As oil prices climbed, the economy stabilized, and Putin attained widespread popularity in the 2000s, the balance of resources between leaders and elites shifted in favor of the Kremlin. The political machines of Russia's elites were no longer so puissant that elites were anathema to the idea of cooperating with the Kremlin under the aegis of some party organization. But they still controlled sufficient autonomous resources that it was necessary for the Kremlin to coopt these elites if it hoped to pass legislation, win elections, and appoint preferred personnel. The result has been United Russia

Part III discusses some of the ways that the commitment problem has been overcome in contemporary Russia, as well those aspects of the commitment problem that have not been surmounted. It pays particular attention to United Russia's role as a dominant party institution in overcoming these commitment problems.

The methodological approach of this chapter is within case narrative. With instances of ruling party failure and dominant party emergence, there is variation in the dependent variable across a short period of time in post-Soviet Russia. But rather than conceive of this chapter as a longitudinal cross-case comparison, I prefer to treat it as a within-case analysis. Within-case analysis is aided by the fact that dominant party emergence is not a dichotomous event. Instead, it is the sum total of decisions made by

²⁰ "Parties of Power" is a term used in Russian and by those who study post-Soviet politics to describe parties that are created by the executive branch. As a rule, they lack well-defined ideology and depend upon state resources to sustain themselves (Khenkin 1996, Gelman 2006)

hundreds of different actors over a period of years.

This chapter shows how changes in the balance of resources outlined above led to more institutional investments in United Russia and more dependable commitments from regional elites. In turn, the sum total of these decisions is related to the ‘success’ of the regime party at the time. This observation transforms a degrees of freedom problem into a measurement problem. Luckily, this is one area where qualitative analysis excels. Throughout, I try to bring relevant quantitative data to bear on arguments, but where such data is unavailable; I rely on press reports, my own interviews with actors, and where the subject matter is well-studied, secondary sources.

PART I. NON-DOMINANT REGIME PARTIES IN POST-SOVIET RUSSIA: 1990-2001

4.1 The Absence of Parties of Power in the First Russian Republic: 1990-1993

The story of post-Soviet Russia's experience with parties of power begins before the fall of the Soviet Union. With the election of the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies in 1989, Russia witnessed its first competitive elections since before the Russian Revolution.²¹ In 1990, the Russian Republic followed suit and created a legislative body that mirrored its union-level forbear—a full-time Supreme Soviet selected from the ranks of a part-time Congress of People's Deputies that was popularly elected. In March 1990, elections to the Russian Congress of People's Deputies were held. Formal parties were not permitted to nominate candidates, but loose groupings of like-minded deputies were identifiable soon after the election. Democratic-reformist deputies won significant

²¹ This section draws on accounts in Andrews (2002), McFaul (2001), Hale (2006), and Hough (1998).

victories, winning as many as 40% of the seats by some estimations (Sobyenin 1994; 18, Hough 1998; 294-297, Remington 2001; 133)

Many of these deputies were in some way affiliated with Democratic Russia, an umbrella political movement uniting reformists, democrats, and anticommunist leaders of various stripes that had come together to contest the election. The Democratic Russia leadership consisted of individuals whose primary political experience was participation in the various associations, fronts, and clubs that had sprouted during Glasnost' (Brudny 1993). On the other side of the aisle, conservative communists, advocating the preservation of the Soviet system, also constituted approximately 40% of the chamber. Both the pro-reform and anti-reform camps included under their wings a panoply of party factions, each of which contained shifting and overlapping memberships. Unsurprisingly, the leadership of these factions exerted very little control over their members' voting behavior.

The symbolic leader of Democratic Russia was Boris Yeltsin, serving first as Chairman of the Supreme Soviet and then as President of the Russian Republic after June 1991. Yeltsin and his allies were united primarily by their dissatisfaction with the scope and pace of reforms taking place in the Soviet Union. First and foremost, they shared common ground on the need for Russian sovereignty and the democratization of the political system. To a lesser degree, they were united around the push for deeper and more rapid market reforms. During this period, Democratic Russia's primary role was to mobilize street protest in support of deeper reforms.

In the summer and fall of 1991, events that would lead to final undoing of the Soviet Union began to unfold rapidly. In August, several high-ranking members of the

Soviet government orchestrated a coup, implemented emergency rule, and declare their intention to halt further reforms. Democratic Russia mobilized thousands of demonstrators against the coup (Brudny 1993). After a short standoff, the coup-plotters backed down. As leader of popular opposition to the coup, Yeltsin's political capital was at its peak. He quickly used this political capital to decree Russian sovereignty, ban the CPSU, and seize control of Soviet state property. In December 1991, Yeltsin signed the Belovezhskaya accords with the leaders of the Ukrainian and Belarussian republics, which formally dissolved the Soviet Union.

During this period, Yeltsin enjoyed a precarious, but workable majority in the Russian Congress. Indeed, at the 5th Congress of People's Deputies in November, Yeltsin was granted sweeping emergency decree powers that enabled him to unilaterally push through major reform measures and form his own government. But Yeltsin did not enjoy majority support in the Congress for long. With the fall of the Soviet Union, Yeltsin's motley crew of allies in parliament lost the anti-systemic purpose that had united them. This, combined with the increasingly unpopular economic reforms initiated by the Yeltsin government, led to the crumbling of Yeltsin's majority in the Congress over the course of 1992. By the end of 1992, the balance of power in congress had shifted decisively against Yeltsin and his allies (Kiewet and Myagkov 1996).

The collapse of the Soviet Union revealed the multidimensionality of the issue space that divided deputies in congress. Among other things, deputies were divided on the direction of economic reform, the distribution of power between center and regions, and the proper scope of presidential power (Remington et al 1994, 168). In an environment with multidimensional preferences and weak institutions for structuring the

voting behavior of deputies (political parties), majority cycling can result (Aldrich 1995, Andrews 2002). And indeed, for most of its post-Soviet tenure the Congress of People's Deputies was eviscerated by indecision. When Yeltsin's initiatives were passed, he often expended inordinate amounts of energy recruiting centrist deputies, coopting opponents, presiding over complicated logrolls, and identifying reliable allies (Remington 2001, 134-137) As 1992 progressed, Yeltsin increasingly was forced to rely on shifting coalitions in the congress for passing his reform initiatives.

Yeltsin's enemies capitalized on the chaos. As Josephine Andrews has shown, Supreme Soviet Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov masterfully manipulated the legislative agenda to push through curbs on Yeltsin's presidential powers even when a majority in the hall likely opposed the final outcome of the bill (Andrews 2002, 236-245).

Deadlock set in as parliament entered deliberations over a new constitution to replace the amended Soviet constitution that was currently in force. Over the course of 1993, confrontation between Yeltsin and parliament intensified to such a point that Yeltsin deemed it necessary to take the constitutional drafting process out of parliament and place it in the hands of a specially convened, constitutional assembly. The opposition quickly found that it could make little headway pressing its demands through this presidentially-controlled constitutional assembly and decided to quit the forum. At this point, Khasbulatov began actively seeking alliances with powerful regional elites who were vying for increased sovereignty from Moscow (McFaul 2001, 194).

In the summer of 1993, parliament began making preparations to pass a Constitution of its own, but it would never get its chance. On September 21, Yeltsin issued a decree disbanding the congress and calling for popular ratification of a new

constitution. The decree also called for new elections to a new bicameral parliament. These moves set off a bloody standoff between Yeltsin and supporters of Khasbulatov and the Supreme Soviet in which over 100 people died. The standoff ended with parliament capitulating and the collapse of the First Russian Republic.

Multidimensional preferences and the extreme factionalism in parliament opened up possibilities for the cycling and deadlock that hindered policy compromise in the Russian Congress of People's Deputies. Disciplined political parties would have solved many of the cycling problems by institutionalizing stable logrolls (Aldrich 1995).

Before its opening session, the Congress did authorize the creation of deputy factions within the body. But institutional rules allowing each deputy to belong to up to five groups and the lack of party affiliation at election time meant that the Congress quickly fragmented into over 32 deputy groups (Remington 2001, Andrews 2002, Hough 1998). Changes in mid 1991 that limited the number of factions a deputy could join reduced the overall level of fragmentation, but the absence of any history of party labels or attachments and the lack of a party-based electoral connection ensured that party discipline in the Congress was minimal at best.

Yeltsin's position, in particular, could have been improved by the support of a pro-presidential party. Such a party could have stabilized his majority support base. While Yeltsin enjoyed the support of many individual deputies in Congress, this undisciplined coalition was not an effective instrument for governing, either inside parliament or out. And, indeed, Yeltsin's allies were notoriously undisciplined in Congress. Given its aim to unite all anti-Soviet forces Democratic Russia tended toward extreme decentralization and intra-party democracy (McFaul and Markov 1993, 137).

This decentralization transformed into disintegration over the course of 1992 and 1993, as faction after faction peeled off in order to pursue its own agenda. This process accelerated until only a rump group was left to compete in the 1993 Duma elections.

Democratic Russia's failure to transform into a potent political party was caused not only by the diffuse set of ideologies in its ranks and unfavorable institutional design, but also by the fact that Yeltsin declined to lend his unequivocal support to it and turn it into a true pro-presidential party. McFaul (2001, 154-156) reports that this was a conscious non-decision made by Yeltsin. Yeltsin's closest advisor, Gennady Burbulis, counseled Yeltsin, as early as 1991, that Yeltsin's personal popularity would not last and that, therefore, an ideological, programmatic party was necessary. In Burbulis' view, the party could not only provide a link to society, but also simplify the process of passing reform legislation and serve as a mechanism for staffing political positions “until [such time] there were stable state instruments run by well-trained personnel”²²

Yeltsin, however, was reluctant to affiliate with any one party. According to Burbulis, his reluctance was based on two factors: (1) the belief that post-Soviet citizens had an anti-party allergy and had elected Yeltsin on a non-partisan basis to serve as president of all Russians and (2) the fear that a party would come to limit his autonomy (McFaul 2001, 155). Yeltsin's move to separate party and state went so far as to require appointees to the Presidential Administration to join the administration not as representatives of Democratic Russia, but as individuals (McFaul 2001, 175). Part of Yeltsin's aim, clearly, was to cultivate personal loyalty at the expense of partisan loyalty.

Yeltsin was a democrat, but also a pragmatist. He realized early on that he needed allies outside the democratic movement. Nowhere was this more evident than in

²² Quoted in McFaul (2001, 155).

his efforts to buy the loyalty of prominent regional leaders.²³ In late 1992, Yeltsin met with regional leaders on two occasions and agreed to grant them more autonomy over taxation and spending and made promises concerning the preservation of regional autonomy in the new constitution. These moves frustrated the Democratic Russia leadership who rather than compromising with regional nomenklaturist elites wanted Yeltsin to disband the Congress and hold a referendum on a new constitution (Brudny 1993). Disregarding the wishes of his democratic allies, Yeltsin appointed, en masse, nearly all sitting chairmen of soviets to the newly created executive post of governor (Slider 1994). It appears that Yeltsin did this for two reasons. First, from a practical standpoint, there were very few experienced administrators in the democratic ranks who could be tapped to govern in the regions. Second, as a concession made to the conservative opposition in parliament, Yeltsin had agreed to allow local Soviets to confirm presidential appointees in the regions. Given the conservative composition of these local Soviets, Yeltsin knew that he had to play ball when it came to appointing regional administrators. This meant placing his eggs in multiple baskets when it came to appointing cadres in the regions.

Yeltsin's reluctance to associate himself closely with a party or link it to the state had clear consequences for how prominent elites related to the party. From 1991-1993, Democratic Russia suffered a string of debilitating defections. Prominent leaders from Democratic Russia's heady days of street protest calculated that they were better off

²³ In March 1990, elections had been held for the first time to soviets at the regional level. In most regional soviets, communist and nomenklatura elites dominated the body (Hahn 1994). The chairmen of these Soviets quickly became extremely influential. In mid 1991, Yeltsin signed a law creating an executive post in the regions know as 'head of administration' (*glava administratsii*). Initially these heads of administration, popularly called governors, were supposed to be elected, but when Yeltsin was given emergency decree powers in 1991, he postponed elections and gave himself the authority to appoint heads of administration.

pursuing their political agendas independently. One of the coalition's founders, Moscow mayor Gavril Popov, created his own movement, Movement for Democratic Reforms. Popov feared that Democratic Russia had become too «populist and unprofessional» through its detachment from government (McFaul 2001, 175). Popov's strategy was to build a non-ideological party that could curry favor with prominent regional leaders (Golosov 1999, 92). In November 1991, one of Democratic Russia's three coordinators, Nikolai Travkin, withdrew his Democratic Party of Russia. Travkin criticized Democratic Russia's overreliance on street tactics and its inability to build an effective governing structure.²⁴ All this is not to downplay the role that policy differences played in Democratic Russia's demise. From the beginning, Democratic Russia united factions with markedly different views on the extent of Russian sovereignty, Yeltsin's leadership style, and the pace of market reforms. As the collapse of the Soviet Union became imminent in the fall of 1991, these policy differences led to numerous defections from the coalition (McFaul 2001, 174).

Summary: The First Russian Republic

Thus, the Russian Federation began its existence without a pro-presidential party. The failure of Democratic Russia was, in large part, preordained by the imperatives of the transition from communism. The evaporation of the Soviet Union removed the common banner around which Democratic Russia's broad coalition was organized. This exposed divisive policy disagreements that undoubtedly contributed to its demise.

²⁴ Interview with Nikolai Travkin, in McFaul and Markov (1993, p 72).

But, the failure of Democratic Russia to become a dominant party after the transition also illustrates some features of the commitment framework outlined here.

First, deadlock and chaos in the Russian Congress of People's Deputies revealed early on how costly policy-making can be for a president that does not wield a well-disciplined party. But at the same time, the period from 1991-1993 also demonstrated the premium that Yeltsin placed on autonomy even in the face of such costs. Yeltsin was not strong enough, even in 1991, to pass key reforms without building shifting majorities that depended upon diverse coalitions. And yet, Yeltsin feared that a party would limit his ability to play this game and, thus, inhibit his ability to govern. For their part, many elites realized that if Yeltsin was not going to make Democratic Russia into a governing party that could help them gain access to power, then they were better off building their own parties or just cultivating personal relationships with Yeltsin. Elites were unwilling to subordinate their autonomy to Democratic Russia, when the organization presented itself as little more than a protest movement with limited potential to influence policy.

Of course, Democratic Russia's demise is somewhat overdetermined. Moreover, the extreme uncertainty of that transitional period diminishes the applicability of any theory based on the balance of power between actors. After all, actors, elites, leaders, resources: these are all parameters that were exceedingly uncertain in 1991. The nature of the elite changed from day to day, the identity of the leader was by no means a foregone conclusion, and it was not yet clear what type of resources were useful for influencing outcomes in this transitional environment.

4.2 Russia's Choice: The Failure of Russia's First Party of Power

In September 1993, Yeltsin decreed that elections would be held in December to a new parliament that would replace the Supreme Soviet as Russia's primary legislative body. Despite Yeltsin's reluctance to associate himself with Democratic Russia, members of his administration still recognized the need to organize some sort of political organization that could support the government after the elections. In June 1993, several prominent political figures including former presidential advisor Gennady Burbulis, former Democratic Russia leader Arkadii Murashev, and Head of the Association of Private and Privatized enterprises began negotiations with the remaining elements of Democratic Russia to create a new political bloc that would be in support of the government (McFaul 1998, 117). Despite the misgivings of Democratic Russia's leadership, an agreement was reached and a new political organization, called Russia's Choice was created. In addition to the rump elements of Democratic Russia, many prominent members of the government including former Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar, Deputy Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais, and Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev. At the organization's founding congress in October 1993, it became clear that emphasis would be placed on recruiting well-placed members of the new Russian political elite. Democratic Russia leaders were unable to secure top spots on the federal list as 16 of these 19 spots went to members of the government. In the regions, the party leadership privileged pragmatism over ideology and chose to curry favor with powerful regional leaders, even if these former nomenklaturists were odious to liberal activists from Democratic Russia (Golosov 1999, 101).

The party's goal was to draw on the support of two groups: 1) liberal, pro-market reformers who had an ideological preference for markets and democracy and 2) members

of the new political and economic elite who were benefiting from the status quo. This latter group was small in number but rich in the administrative and financial resources necessary to win votes. They included directors of newly privatized enterprises and newly created banks, government bureaucrats, and, in some instances, regional government officials. On election day, the bloc boasted 13 members of government and a number of regional administration heads. Yeltsin's chief of staff joined the bloc, but Yeltsin himself refused to endorse a particular party ahead of the elections (McFaul 1998, 119).

Going into the polls, most observers expected the party to do well. It combined a strong ideological appeal with significant access to administrative resources at the federal level. These expectations were not met. Although the party secured more party-list votes (15.5%) and more single member district (SMD) seats (25) than any other pro-reform party, it finished an embarrassing second to Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's far-right Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) in the party-list vote. In 1994, only 73 of the State Duma's 450 deputies entered Russia's Choice's legislative faction.

In retrospect, it is clear to see why Russia's Choice failed to perform better. The contradiction between an ideological appeal to liberalism and an administrative reliance on the resources of the state and nomenklaturist elites was difficult to overcome. This conflict created friction within the party and undermined the credibility of the party's program. Second, the deteriorating state of the economy meant that pocketbook oriented voters would not be supporting the party.

Probably even more consequential than these factors, however, was the lack of commitment by Yeltsin and the reluctance of elites to coordinate within Russia's Choice.

At the federal level, many prominent democrats and supporters of the government failed to coordinate with Russia's Choice. St. Petersburg mayor Anatolii Sobchak, a former Yeltsin ally in the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies and one of Russia's most trusted politicians at the time, chose to run his own reformist party, the Russian Movement for Democratic Reforms. Sobchak organized the party in concert with former Moscow mayor Gavril Popov. Nikolai Travkin's, Democratic Party of Russia, also opted to contest the elections on his own. Another prominent member of the reformist camp, Grigory Yavlinsky, author of the 500 days program, which laid the groundwork for the Soviet Union's transition to a market economy, opted at the last minute to form his own, liberal party in opposition to Russia's Choice.

But perhaps the most important non-participant in Russia's Choice was Sergei Shakhrai's Party for Russian Unity and Accord (PRES). In 1992 and 1993, Shakhrai was a deputy prime minister under Yeltsin. Arguably, Shakhrai was Yeltsin's most powerful deputy prime minister because he chaired the committee on national politics within the government, which was responsible for relations with regional governments. This made Shakhrai the key figure for regional officials seeking to lobby Moscow. His control over subsidies and his influence over decisions that would grant writs of regional autonomy gave Shakhrai a great deal of influence with these leaders (Goloso 1999).

Shakhrai began by recruiting to his side top figures in Moscow, including prominent Yeltsin advisor Sergei Stankevich, Deputy Prime Minister Alexandr Shokhin, Justice Minister Yurii Kalmykov, and Labor Minister Gennadii Melik'yan (Sakwa 1995). But what set Shakhrai's party apart from any other party of power at the time was the extent to which Shakhrai recognized how the political machines of regional leaders could

be used to win votes. Shakhrai thus intentionally crafted a party that eschewed specific ideological appeals in favor of a «pragmatic approach to solving Russia's problems» (Hale 2006, 49). Shakhrai used his cozy relationships with regional leaders to gain regional support for a 'party of the provinces.' (Treisman 1998, p 145). Reports indicate that Shakhrai wore his own presidential ambitions on his sleeve and PRES was a first step toward realizing those ambitions (Sakwa 1995).

The failure of important liberal elites in Moscow to coordinate with Russia's Choice had serious consequences for the reform agenda. Together the reform oriented parties secured 47.8% of the party list vote, but Russia's Choice on its own only secured 16%. In the SMD races, reformist parties competed against one another in a whopping 43% of districts, thus, diminishing their overall vote total further.

The other important elite group that failed to coordinate with Russia's Choice was regional leaders (governors, enterprise directors, regional soviet speakers, etc). In some important regions, regional leaders worked with Russia's Choice to boost the latter's vote total. Perhaps the most notable case of this was Moscow, where newly elected mayor Yurii Luzhkov, a key Yeltsin ally during the October events of 1993, put the machine of the powerful city bureaucracy to work in order to boost the party's vote share in the region (Kullberg 1998, 321). In most other regions, however, regional leaders opted to steer clear of any affiliation with Russia's Choice.²⁵ Instead, these leaders either threw the weight of their political machines behind independent candidates or supported other parties in the race. Thus, for example, in Bashkortostan, Bashkir Supreme Soviet

²⁵ For evidence of this, see the series of regional case studies on the 1993 elections in Colton and Hough (1998). Of the ten regions analyzed in that study, only one (Moscow) had a regional leader that put his machine to work for Russia's Choice.

Chairman Murtaza Rakhimov backed Shakhrai and PRES, openly undermining Russia's Choice's campaign in the region (Hale 1998).

For his part, Yeltsin refused to ever unequivocally endorse Russia's Choice. On several occasions he promised to speak at the bloc's convention or endorse its party list but failed to follow through. In retrospect (especially after his behavior in 1995, which I will discuss shortly), it was clear that Yeltsin never intended to support the party, but rather preferred to make his relationship with it appear ambiguous so that it could gather votes as a pro-reform, pro-Yeltsin party, while at the same time he would be able to make deals with other actors. Indeed, the clearest signal of Yeltsin's lack of support for Russia's Choice was the fact that Yeltsin did not attempt to dissuade members of his government (or other reformist politicians) from joining competing parties of power (Colton 1998, 13).²⁶ During the campaign, Yeltsin made few comments about the parliamentary election, preferring instead to speak to voters about the referendum on the constitution scheduled for election day. Yeltsin's noncommittal stance to Russia's Choice cost the party dearly. Days after the election, Burbulis blamed the bloc's poor performance on Yeltsin's ambiguous stance.²⁷ Some pro-Yeltsin voters were left unsure of whom to support and many regional elites, even if they were inclined to support a national party, were not inclined to support one that could not help them lobby in Moscow.

Why Yeltsin Failed to Invest in Russia's Choice

²⁶ Six cabinet members were members of Russia's Choice, but 5 were members of other parties of power.

²⁷ *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 15 December 1993, p 1.

Yeltsin repeatedly stated that he wished to remain 'above' any party (Hough 1998, McFaul 2001, Hale 2006, Colton 2008, Satarov et al. 2001). In interviews with biographers, Yeltsin expressed two justifications for this choice. One was personal; Yeltsin claimed to have an 'allergy' against the word 'party' after his experiences in the CPSU. Yeltsin felt that Russian voters shared the same distaste for parties and therefore, the chief executive should 'act as president of the entire population' (McFaul 2001, 155).²⁸

Yeltsin's other reason for not wanting to nurture a pro-presidential party was more political. He reasoned that a party would 'force him to coordinate his decisions with others' and thereby limit his autonomy (Colton 2008, p350). After interviewing Yeltsin and his aides, Timothy Colton concluded that "Yeltsin had seen Gorbachev labor to steer both the CPSU and the Soviet State, while he as an oppositionist had flexibility when he walked out of the party in 1990. He was not sure how agreeable Russia's untrammelled political elite would be to reimposition of party discipline in any form." (Colton 2008, 350). Members of Yeltsin's inner circle echoed this sentiment. One Yeltsin advisor reported that he believed that Gaidar and others were building Russia's Choice in order to become independent of Yeltsin and that the emergence of a strong party would result in Yeltsin's allies splitting their loyalty between the party and Yeltsin.²⁹ Yeltsin, noted the aide, agreed and actively sought to hinder the process of party building. Thus, in 1993, Yeltsin was put off not only by his own ideological misgivings, but also by doubts about how easy it would be to control Russian elites in the early 1990s. Instead, he found it preferable to cultivate personal relationships and employ divide and rule tactics.

²⁸ Quoted from interview conducted with Gennady Burbulis by Michael McFaul.

²⁹ This synopsis is taken from Hale (2006, 209). Hale conducted the interview with the Yeltsin aide.

Why Elites Failed to Invest in Russia's Choice

For Yeltsin's inner circle and advisors, the uncertainty of the transitional environment made presidential bids all the more attractive. At times, Yeltsin looked very beatable. Opinion polls frequently found that several other prominent leaders were at least as well respected as Yeltsin—including Yavlinsky and Shakhrai. Thus, prominent members of the reformist camp sought to cultivate their own parties that could possibly serve as vehicles for their own presidential bids (McFaul 2001, Sakwa 1995, Urban 1994, 147).

Yeltsin's weakness made recruiting allies an easy task. Both Yavlinsky and Shakhrai were able to lure to their parties important members of the government and the liberal elite who were looking to hitch their wagons to a promising future presidential candidate. As noted above, Shakhrai was especially well-positioned in this area as he used his position as minister for nationalities to curry favor with regional elites, a group whose status and influence was growing rapidly at that time.

For regional elites, the decision not to affiliate was motivated mostly by a simple cost-benefit analysis. In the early 1990s, their autonomy was such that they were not willing to put themselves under the yoke of a dominant party. In the section below, I briefly outline the sources of regional power in the early 1990s as a means to showing how and why regional elites had the resources to eschew affiliation with Russia's Choice.

Regional elites in the early 1990s derived their autonomy both from the dislocations spawned by the collapse of the Soviet state and from the built-in impulses toward regionalism and localized clientelism that undergirded the Soviet system. I start

with the latter. Despite the fact that key decision-making in the Soviet Union was highly centralized, the accumulation and perpetuation of power had always included a regional dimension. National party leaders constructed power by building clientelistic networks made up of provincial party leaders. In what was known as the circular flow of power, the general secretary of the CPSU was removable by the central committee, which in turn was elected at the party congress, delegates to which were selected at regional conferences that were controlled by regional party secretaries. In a practice initiated by Lenin and perfected by Stalin it became a norm that the General Secretary would have the key role in nominating and removing regional party secretaries (Daniels 1971, Hough 1997). The regional secretaries thus became a support base for the General Secretary, while the General Secretary was simultaneously under their collective control. Thus, under the old regime, power was simultaneously personalized around the General Secretary and concentrated in the hands of regional party officials.

What is more, the specialized knowledge and expertise of regional party officials played a key role in lubricating the wheels of the Soviet command economy. In democracies, federalism is purported to allow for the development of policy that more accurately reflects local needs. In the Soviet Union, political decision-making was centralized within the party hierarchy, but given the empire's size and diversity, Soviet leaders recognized a need for economic planning that could conform to local needs. Thus, local party officials were ceded the crucial task of coordinating economic production in their region (Hough 1969). This entailed managing relations among enterprises and branch ministries so that supply and demand of key goods were fulfilled

in the most efficient manner possible. This task involved informal bartering, off-plan exchanges, and, often times, managing personnel at the enterprise level.

Thus, by the time of the transition a pattern had emerged in the Russian regions, whereby the functioning of the economy was highly dependent on the ability of political managers to solve practical problems and coordinate economic exchange. As Jerry Hough has pointed out, post-Soviet Russia's regional governors took on this management and coordination role in a fashion updated for transitional capitalism (Hough 2001, 44). Indeed, already by 1992, regional governors were amassing immense informal authority due to their key role in stewarding the informal barter that oiled the early post-Soviet economy. In a pattern that would continue throughout the post-Soviet period, Russian central leaders would become dependent on the skill and clientelist networks of regional managers who could effectively solve political and economic problems on the ground.

The Soviet (and early post-Soviet) workplace also created a panoply of opportunities for regional elites to build political machines that would serve them as power bases when central control weakened. This is largely because Soviet enterprises, and especially collective farms, internalized so many social and economic services upon which citizens depended. Large enterprises often operated their own stores, health clinics, day cares, vacation resorts, summer camps, and even farms. Families' lives thus revolved around the enterprises, giving enterprise directors a high degree of political power (Hale 2003). As these enterprises were privatized and enterprise directors were removed from the ministry chain of command this source of autonomous power only grew in many cases.

A further source of political resources for some regional elites in the early post-Soviet period was ethnicity. The Soviet Union institutionalized ethnicity by matching administrative divisions to ethnic boundaries. Whether those ethnic differences were real or cultivated by the Bolsheviks, the result was that post-Soviet Russia contained 21 ‘ethnic’ republics. In the Soviet Union, members of the titular ethnic groups in these regions had been favored through various affirmative action-style programs in education and political advancement. In the post-Soviet period, members of these groups had a vested interest in the continuation of these privileges. The leaders of ethnic republics thus had a ready-made political base that they could use in negotiations for formal and informal autonomy from the center. At the extreme, leaders could threaten ethnic strife if their demands for sovereignty were not met.

By privileging members of the titular group for promotions in the regional state-administrative apparatus, regional leaders quickly built strong political machines that featured themselves at the top, their co-ethnic clients in the middle, and the ethnic populace at the bottom. As Hale (2003) notes, the most skillful republic leaders expanded their support among non-titular groups in the region, by arguing that their ethnically-based sovereignty claims were bringing benefits for the region as a whole. .

As if these resources were not sufficient to make regional elites in early 1990s Russia autonomous, the political imperatives of the transition only strengthened their hand. Russia inherited the Soviet Union’s federal administrative structure, so as soon as the Union collapsed, regional leaders found themselves sitting atop well articulated political entities—republics, oblasts, krais, autonomous okrugs—that could serve as juridicially legitimate platforms from which to demand political and economic autonomy.

In 1990 and 1991, Yeltsin recognized that regional leaders could be a key ally in his struggle with the Soviet leadership. Their desire for more autonomy mirrored the Russian Federation's desire for sovereignty from the Soviet Union. Yeltsin actively courted these leaders in late 1990, promising support for regional autonomy in exchange for opposing Gorbachev. In 1992 and 1993, when Yeltsin faced opposition in the Congress of People's Deputies, he again turned to regional leaders for support, even as their demands for greater sovereignty pushed the Russian state to the brink of collapse. Yeltsin understood that policy could not be implemented at the local level without the support of regional leaders. As regional leaders withheld tax revenue and ignored (or contravened) federal laws on everything from privatization to budgets to foreign trade, Yeltsin granted the regions even greater political autonomy.³⁰

In addition to witnessing an expansion of de jure political autonomy, the period from 1990-1993 also saw the emergence of informal powers that regional elites would continue to wield with great effect into the 2000s. In many cases, these powers were accumulated at the expense of the central state. It is well known that Russia was suffering through a cataclysmic economic crisis during the early years of transition. Estimates vary, but most agree that the Russian economy contracted by more than 40% from 1989 to 1994 (Aslund 2007). As the fiscal and organizational resources of the Russian central state withered in the early 1990s, regional governments carved out great swaths of de facto policy autonomy in a variety of policy areas including social services, budgets, privatization, judicial reform, foreign trade, land ownership, and environmental protection. More generally, regional authorities and elites were given a free hand as they

³⁰ For just a few of the many good discussions of center-periphery relations in this period see Stoner-Weiss 1999, Treisman 1997, Lapidus and Walker 1995, Slider 1994, and Solnick 1997.

used sometimes unsavory and illegal methods to extend control over civil society and the media. Where federal institutions failed to provide services, regional and local governments stepped in to provide public goods and services as best they could. As federal institutions in the regions became increasingly impoverished, regional governments extended their control over law enforcement organs and the courts.

In many cases, regional elites were given authority over the conduct of privatization as well (Aslund 1995). Regional leaders used this power to give local nomenklatura clients an inside track in acquiring shares and property. In recognition of Russia's size and diversity, Gaidar admitted defeat in advancing a common price liberalization policy when he stated that «a common policy for subsidies [of basic consumer goods] was not only difficult, but perhaps impossible» (quoted in Slider 1997, 450). Thus, regional elites were left with extensive powers over prices and subsidies. In budgetary policy as well, the regions took great liberties. Although Russia has always had a relatively centralized tax system many regions simply diverted federal transfers, earmarked for one purpose (for instance, wages), to other purposes (Slider 1997).³¹

Throughout the 1990s, regional authorities used these extensive resources to build autonomous political machines that could be put to use for controlling elections in their regions. In 1993, regional elites were just getting the hang of this game, but clearly the learning curve was not very steep. In an in-depth study of six SMD races in Bashkortostan in 1993, Hale (1999) reports that the most decisive factor that determined electoral success was backing from the republic leadership or a state post. Slider (1996) found that enterprise directors and representatives of the local administration were more

³¹ Most taxes in Russia are federal, collected in the regions by federal officials, and then remitted back to the regions by the center.

successful at winning seats in the 1993-1994 regional legislative elections than were candidates tied to national political parties. Similarly, Golosov (1997) showed that members of the managerial elite outperformed all other candidates in the 1993-1994 regional elections.³²

Regional and local 'bosses' translated their machines into votes through a mixture of clientelist and administrative tactics. Their control over local media, law enforcement, courts, tax inspectorates, licensing agencies, and prosecutors gave them ample coercive leverage over competitors (or their clients' competitors). Through their control of utilities and social services, regional administrations could credibly threaten disloyal districts with punishment. Similarly, enterprise and collective farm directors could threaten their employees with reprisal, but more often than not, the possibility of such reprisal induced compliant voting behavior. Even without such implicit threats, the advantage these officials enjoyed in visibility, authority, and material resources was difficult to match.

With such expansive autonomous resources under their control, it is not hard to see why regional elites in 1993 might be reluctant to surrender their autonomy to any party, much less one that could potentially put them under the tutelage of the state. They were clearly able to secure the political survival and procure important concessions from Moscow without submitting to the discipline of a dominant party. But even in this setting, if Yeltsin had committed wholeheartedly to Russia's Choice, making it a clear governmental party, through which governors could lobby their interests and policy could be distributed, it is possible that regional elites may have seized the opportunity. In

³² For further confirmation about the power regional elites wielded in the 1993 elections, see the collection of regional case studies presented in Colton and Hough (1998).

choosing their party affiliation for the 1993 election, regional leaders were keen to find out what that party could do for them; how it could help them bring tangible benefits back to their clients and constituents. Regional elites did not feel assured that any of the parties of power on offer in 1993 could help them achieve this. Indeed, press reports from the PRES congress report that Shakhrai's calls to develop a 'conservative' party program were yelled down by specific demands from regional leaders for assurances on items as diverse as aluminum export regulations and logging licenses. Regional leaders in attendance were decidedly uninterested in becoming affiliated with a party ideology, especially if they could not guarantee they would receive their preferred concessions from Moscow in exchange for this affiliation. As the Prime Minister of Buryatia put it at the party's founding conference, «Our platform should be flexible...differentiated by region...And, in general, after I join the party, what will I get in return»³³

Summary: The Failure of Russia's Choice

Russia's Choice continued to wither after the elections. The reluctance of Yeltsin, pro-government elites, or regional elites to commit to Russia's Choice undoubtedly spelled its failure. Each player's reluctance was based both on its own calculations about the benefits of investing in Russia's Choice and its estimation of what the other side would do. Yeltsin could not control elites completely so it was better to keep them divided. For elites, their political future seemed well secured in continuing to build their regional political machines. They may have wanted to cooperate more closely with the Kremlin in order to reduce the uncertainty surrounding the procurement of rents, but they were

³³ *Segodnya*, 19 October 1993, p2.

receiving no clear signals from Yeltsin that he would support a party organization that could provide those benefits. And given their resources, they were not so desperate for cooperation that they were willing to unilaterally link their fates to the party of power.

4.3 Our Home is Russia: Russia's Second Failed Party of Power

In the First Duma (1994-1995), Russia's Choice was the party most supportive of Yeltsin, and Yeltsin favored this party over others, but it was not a closed shop for lobbying the president. Yeltsin was not going to invest any more energy in turning this party into a dominant party. Just one month after the 1993 elections, reports emerged claiming that the presidential administration was planning to construct a new presidential party (Hale 2006, 208). Russia's Choice opposed Yeltsin on sending troops into Chechnya in late 1994 and early 1995. Gaidar, it was reported never forgave Yeltsin for forsaking the party in the 1993 elections (Colton 1998, 13). Members of other parties could (and did) press their demands to the presidential administration. Although several members of the government were Russia's Choice members, Yeltsin did not govern through the party or in conjunction with it. In the Duma, Russia's Choice controlled only a plurality and rather than trying to induce other parties or independents to join with Russia's Choice, Yeltsin settled into a routine of passing reforms with the aid of shifting coalitions that typically included Russia's Choice, members of other factions, and independent deputies (Remington, Smith, and Haspel 2006, Remington and Smith 2001, Huskey 2001, Troxel 2003). This routine of repeatedly building new coalitions was costly and time-consuming for Yeltsin. For deputies, it very likely posed grave uncertainties.

In the 1994 regional legislative elections, very few legislators affiliated with any party, much less Russia's Choice. Between 1993 and 1995, a whopping 87.5% of all elected deputies were independents. Russia's Choice contested only 22.4% of the elections held in this period. In those regions where it did contest elections, it won on average a mere 11% of seats (Golosov 2003). In ten regional executive elections that Yeltsin permitted between October 1993 and January 1995, none of the incumbent governors or winning candidates took on a Russia's Choice affiliation. All were independents.

By early 1995, Russia's Choice was no longer the party of power. Still, recognizing the need for some sort of pro-presidential party, Yeltsin's inner circle set to work on creating a new party of power. But recalling the difficulty that Yeltsin's then advisors had had in convincing the president to support a party of power in 1993, Yeltsin's election team opted for a different strategy. They proposed creating two 'parties of power', one right of center and one left of center. According to Shakhrai, the initiator of this idea, the parties would «outwardly compete, but internally would constitute a joint, electoral movement» (Satarov et al 2001, 536). Shakhrai thought that two blocs could provide the basis of a parliamentary majority in the Duma and siphon votes away from opposition parties on both sides of the political spectrum. Yeltsin gave his support to this idea and in April 1995, it was announced that Chernomyrdin would lead the right bloc, now called, Our Home is Russia. Duma speaker, Ivan Rybkin, elected with the support of the main opposition groups in early 1994, was tapped to head the center-left bloc.

Despite its designs as a right-center party of power Our Home very quickly shed its ideological baggage. Its platform, which criticized the 'shocks' and 'experimentation' of the past, called for stability and professionalism in government (Golosov 1999). At Chernomyrdin's urging, most members of the government joined the party and the party sought to form alliances with regional leaders. A total of 60 governors sat on the party's 126 member political council (though very few took up formal membership).

The designs for the center-left bloc, now called Ivan Rybkin Bloc, never really got off the ground. The party had difficulty credibly positioning itself as an oppositionist party when it was so clearly in collusion with the Kremlin. It thus failed to coopt any prominent figures from existing left opposition parties. Even the Agrarian Party, on whose list Rybkin had been elected in 1993 refused to cooperate with the parliamentary speaker. In August, the bloc's fortunes appeared to be on the rise as it attracted the support of the popular general Boris Gromov. Unfortunately, Gromov deserted the bloc weeks later in order to run his own party in the elections (Belin and Orttung 1995, 37). By December, when the elections were scheduled, no one expected the party to do well. And indeed, on election day, the party collected just over 1% of the party list vote.

The expectations for Our Home in Russia were different. With its potential to mobilize the vast political resources of both the Kremlin and regional administrations, the party looked poised for success. These expectations were not borne out. On election day, the party managed to secure only 10.1% of the party list vote and 10 SMD seats. The results for Our Home in the SMD races were especially disappointing to its leaders, as the leadership had expected alliances with regional governors to boost vote totals for

Our Home candidates (Golosov 1999). After the elections, the party fared little better. In regional executive elections, very few NDR candidates won election (see for example Solnick 1998). From 1995-1999, the party only managed to field candidates in 27% of regional legislative elections and it averaged a dismal 4.2% of the seats in those contested elections (Golosov 2003). During this period the standard was for strong candidates to run as independents. And indeed, 79% of regional deputies were elected as independents during this period (Golosov 2003).

After the 1995 elections, the party's membership and organization slowly dwindled. While it retained branches in most regions up through the 1999 elections, regional governors paid it little attention. Needless to say, the party played no role in the selection of personnel at either the regional or national level. Its main organizational presence was its Duma faction where it held 65 seats. Thus, in the 2nd Duma, just as in the 1st Duma, Yeltsin relied upon ad hoc log rolls and cross-factional bargaining to advance his legislative agenda, rather than securing support through the construction of a stable majority faction. Consequently, it played almost no role in regulating how pork was distributed to legislators and regional leader. Thus, like Russia's Choice before it, Our Home was a very weak party of power.

Why Our Home is Russia Failed: Presidential and Regional Neglect

Our Home's failure to transform into anything resembling a dominant party had several causes. First, being associated with the status quo was disadvantageous at the time. Bloodshed in Chechnya and economic collapse made Yeltsin and the policy course

associated with him increasingly unpopular. But policy preference was likely not the most important factor.³⁴ After all, despite his lack of popularity, Yeltsin won reelection in 1996. Also, the total vote for reformist parties more closely associated with the reform packages of the early 1990s (e.g. Russia's Democratic Choice and Yabloko) garnered twice as many party list votes as Our Home. In total, centrist and right-centrist parties gathered over 35% of the vote. Also, as I discuss below, Russia's increasingly powerful governors and financial industrial group could have mobilized more votes for Our Home had they chosen to do so.

The proximate causes for Our Home's failure were: 1) national political elites' failure to coordinate and invest in the party, 2) regional elites failure to invest in Our Home, and 3) Yeltsin's failure to invest in the party. I discuss each of these in turn and the consequences they had for Our Home's prospects. Then I move to consider why each of these sets of actors opted to make only minimal commitments to Our Home.

National Elites and Our Home in Russia

On paper, the lack of coordination by parties and elites in Our Home is clear. The ballot for the 1995 elections contained over 40 parties. Divisions were particularly acute in the reformist camp. Gaidar's Russia's Democratic Choice refused to cooperate with Our Home, ostensibly over the war in Chechnya. A panoply of smaller centrist parties refrained from joining Our Home in order to pursue their own campaigns (Golosov 1999, 110). Most of these small parties were vehicles designed to serve the larger ambitions of

³⁴ Though as I emphasize throughout, Yeltsin's popularity certainly influenced the calculations of elites about the relative value of affiliating with a party that was associated with Yeltsin.

their leaders. For instance, in a replay of 1993, Sergei Shakhrai, the very initiator of the idea for creating Our Home, left the party in late 1995 to head the list for his PRES party again. In many single member districts, Our Home failed to attract prominent local independents that it had hoped would run on its list. These coordination failures not only split the vote at the national level, but also meant that reformist and centrist candidates ended up competing against one another in numerous single member districts (Belin and Orttung 1995, 57-58). The result was a lower vote total for the party, and confirmation of Yeltsin's suspicion that members of the political elite could not be counted on to submit to the control of a centralized party.

The business elite also chose to place its eggs in multiple baskets. Although most banks did funnel support to Our Home and the party enjoyed the backing of the state-owned natural gas giant Gazprom, other parties had no difficulty securing major financing from large banks in Moscow (Johnson 2000). For example, the Stable Russia group, created in early 1995 as a pro-presidential faction in the Duma, was reportedly created at the behest of prominent Moscow bankers (Johnson 2000, 119). In the December elections, this centrist party steered clear of affiliation with Our Home.

Regional Elites and Our Home is Russia

NDR's troubles with securing commitments from important regional elites began just months after its formation. In August, in its first major electoral contest, the Our Home-backed governor of Sverdlovsk Oblast lost heavily to the locally popular Chairmen of the

regional parliament, Eduard Rossel.³⁵ Seeing that Our Home backing was not enough to ensure reelection, many sitting governors began distancing themselves from the party. In elections held in 1995 and 1996, the Kremlin circumvented Our Home by creating two umbrella organizations for coordinating campaigns in the gubernatorial races—the All-Russian Coordinating Council (OKS) lead by Presidential Administration Chief of Staff Sergei Filatov and a parallel committee chaired by deputy chief of staff, Aleksandr Kazakov (McFaul and Petrov 1998, Solnick 1998). Our Home supported candidates in several races and many governors proclaimed solidarity with the party, but the extent of Our Home's involvement in the races was minimal. What Kremlin support there was channeled through OKS or Filatov's group and came with few strings attached in terms of platform, personnel, or policy. Rather, the goal of these non-partisan coordinating committees was to work to ensure that individuals Yeltsin deemed loyal were elected.

The extent to which governors relied upon any parties to secure election was very limited (Slider 2001, Solnick 1998). Those that did make use of party support were either supported by the KPRF or created their own regionally-based parties of power that served as institutional extensions of their political machines (see for example, Makarenko 1998, Golosov 2003).³⁶ In the Federation Council, Russia's upper house where regional governors held seats *ex officio* beginning in 1995, regional leaders also eschewed any party affiliation. Parliamentary work in the body was conducted without the help of factions or party organizations. Our Home did not prevent governors, even those affiliated with it, from opposing Yeltsin initiatives. For instance, in July 1997, the Federation Council voted unanimously to appeal to the constitutional court to overturn

³⁵ *Russian Regional Report* 1 January 1996

³⁶ The best example of this was Eduard Rossel's "Transformation of the Urals" party which served as Sverdlovsk's party of power from 1994 until 2002.

two Yeltsin vetoes.³⁷ It also rejected a bill passed with presidential support that would require regional administrations to consult with city majors on certain budgetary matters.³⁸

Our Home's standing with regional governors only deteriorated over time. By 1997, just two years after its founding, the number of governors on the political council had dropped to 30. By early 1999, only 16 remained on the political council (Slider 1999). Throughout this period, governors took no active part in what little party work there was and, although data on this point does not exist, it was assumed that very few were formal party members (Golosoov 2000). Many governors distanced themselves from the party from the very beginning. Moscow Mayor Yurii Luzhkov and Tatarstan President Minitmer Shaimiyev declined to join the coordinating council, appointing representatives to sit in their place (Makarkin 1999). Indeed, in the latter years of its existence, many governors maintained dual affiliations with both Our Home and other political parties (Lussier 2002, Slider 2001, especially 231). A standard practice was for governors on Our Home's political council to openly support candidates from other political parties in regional elections (Makarenko 1998, Ryabov 2006).³⁹

Among the regional managerial elite, Our Home's position was no more solid. Its presence in regional legislatures (where most members of a region's economic elite are represented) was minimal. It contested only 27% of all regional elections held between 1995 and 1999, and won seats in only 11% of those elections (Golosoov 2003). It won

³⁷ One having to do with a law that would prohibit the return of valuables and art seized by the Soviet Union during World War II and another requiring the removal of the entire cabinet should the prime minister resigned or be sacked. RFE/RL Newline July 7, 1997

³⁸ RFE/RL Newline July 8, 1997.

³⁹ Golosoov (2000) gives an example in which the governor of Rostov Oblast, a member of NDR's central political council, supported loyal-to-him members of Yabloko in that region's regional elections.

more than 10% of seats in only one very minor region, Koryak Autonomous Okrug (Golosov 2000).

The Kremlin and Our Home is Russia

The final major reason that NDR failed was the lack of real investment by the Kremlin. Yeltsin made only half-hearted commitments to Our Home. In April 1995, Yeltsin's advisors debated the relative merits of supporting a single party of power versus supporting several. As they discussed the options before them, Yeltsin surprised his advisors by jumping the gun and publicly by announcing that the Kremlin would be supporting two separate electoral blocs during the 1995 elections—Our Home and the above-mentioned Ivan Rybkin Bloc.

In the summer of 1995, Yeltsin did not campaign for Our Home or speak at its pre-election congress. In September, Yeltsin went a step further by expressing doubts about the party's electoral chances in the upcoming elections. During the campaign, key Kremlin advisors and members of the government worked on NDR's campaign, but the Kremlin also helped other independent candidates get elected. Two days before the election, Yeltsin gave a live televised address on the elections, but he had nothing positive (or negative) to say about Our Home and instead focused his speech on the communist threat.

Thus, in late 1995 and early 1996 Our Home could not credibly tell elites that it spoke for the president. For candidates, affiliation with Our Home did not offer any advantages over running independently. By undermining the party in 1995, Yeltsin sent

no clear signal that a strong party of power would be supported in future elections (or even for the election in question).

In the Duma, the Our Home faction did not exercise a monopoly on law making. Legislators from other parliamentary factions could lobby their interests directly with the Kremlin. Indeed, in the 2nd Duma, behind the scenes negotiation with multiple party factions and individual deputies was the core of the Kremlin's legislative strategy (e.g. Remington 2000, Remington 2001). Because the party did not win anything close to a majority in the Duma, making it the sole basis for distributing legislative goods was not feasible. Although many SMD deputies joined NDR, the Kremlin did not take significant steps to lure other deputies into the faction and turn it into a pro-government majority. Instead, Yeltsin played a divide and rule game in the Duma. He made cross-faction alliances that shifted with each bill.

With respect to personnel, the party played no role in promoting cadres within either the executive or the legislative branch. The chairman of the Duma was elected from the KPRF, while NDR received one in five Deputy Chairmanships and only 10.7% of committee chairmanships. In the executive branch, the party played no role in selecting cadres in the Kremlin or in the government.

Why Yeltsin Did Not Invest in Our Home

Yeltsin's failure to associate himself with NDR or seriously invest the Kremlin's resources in the party is puzzling. Facing strong opposition from the communists, existing literature predicts that Yeltsin should have invested in a strong party that could

coopt this opposition (Smith 2005) or confront it (Shefter 1994). What is more, historically low oil prices had left the Kremlin short on the rents that it could have used to buy off elites on an ad hoc basis. Thus, Yeltsin should have substituted for these fiscal shortcomings with an institution that could be used to coopt elites (Smith 2005). But we observe the opposite type of behavior. Yeltsin undermined NDR at every step. Why did Yeltsin do this?

Yeltsin made few public statements on this matter so it is hard to analyze his reasoning systemically, but the interviews he did give and the views of his advisors indicate that Yeltsin had two motivations. The first was personal. Yeltsin stated on several occasions that the CPSU had left a bad impression on him. As he put it in an interview with one American biographer, “The CPSU had “left a belch in the air. [Therefore] I had an extreme reaction against the word party and an extreme reaction against all of this stuff.” (quoted in Colton 2008, 349) This might explain Yeltsin’s personal politics, but it does less to explain why he didn’t see utility in uniting his supporters around him through some sort of organization. In the same interview with Colton, Yeltsin repeated his oft-cited reasoning for remaining ‘above party politics’:

[I felt I should be above the interests of any party. I was the president. He should respect every registered party and every tendency in society; he should help them and listen to them....If I had been a member of one of the parties, I would have had to concern myself with lobbying for that party. That would have been incorrect....The president should be above all these things (quoted in Colton 2008, 350).

Statements by Yeltsin’s advisors help clarify this hesitancy to “lobby” for a particular party. In a collective memoir published in 2001, several of Yeltsin’s advisors

claimed that Yeltsin had been unwilling to commit himself to the party out of fear that the party's success would put Chernomyrdin in a position to challenge him in the coming presidential election (Baturin et al., 2001, 536-537). Chernomyrdin himself averred that the presidential administration withheld support for the party because they feared his ambitions in 1999 (Colton 2008, 350).

Yeltsin looked upon other elites as a threat, especially if they were organized and united at a time when they had acquired so much de facto and de jure autonomy from the center. Yeltsin disliked working with a parliament that was filled with his opponents. He later expressed regret at supporting Our Home even in its watered down form. Yeltsin thought that supporting a minority party in parliament undermined the authority of the government and the President.⁴⁰

Thus, Yeltsin apparently reasoned a party might limit his freedom to maneuver and he would not be able to assure elite loyalty in any case. Given his waning political capital at the time, Yeltsin opted for a divide-and-rule strategy. Somewhat ironically, Yeltsin and his aides believed that the creation of two parties of power, one on the left and one on the right, would keep these elites from setting up their own parties to challenge the Kremlin (Belin and Orttung 1997, 33). As it turned out, the creation of multiple parties of power only served to splinter and fortify the autonomy of elites further.

Why Elites Did Not Invest in Our Home is Russia

⁴⁰ See Yeltsin's statements on Our Home is Russia in *Presidentskii Marafon* Moscow: Izdatelstvo AST, 2000.

For their part, regional elites were disinclined to affiliate with Our Home for two related reasons. First, their considerable autonomous political resources gave them little reason to limit their autonomy by linking their fates to a party of power. Second, since elites were so strong and Yeltsin's circle knew this, the Kremlin made no moves to invest in a dominant party. Without any signals from the Kremlin that it would be channeling policy, perks, and privilege through a single party, regional elites had even less reason to limit their freedom of maneuver by investing serious resources in Our Home. I discuss these reasons in turn.

Regional Elites' Political Resources and Their Impact on Regional Elite Support for Our Home

As the 1990s progressed the fiscal position of the Russian central state continued to deteriorate. This was in part due to the inefficiencies of partial transition (Hellman 1998, Aslund 2007) and in part due to historically low commodity prices, which the Soviet economy increasingly had come to rely upon (Gaidar 2003). In a previous section, we noted how post-Soviet Russia's inherited federal structure, weakening central state, territorial size, and legacy of localized clientelistic governance combined with the political imperatives of the transition to make regional elites especially strong. We reviewed how, in his effort to gain support, first against the Soviet central leadership and then against Communist and Nationalist recidivists, Yeltsin ceded significant *de facto* and *de jure* political autonomy to Russia's regions.. In turn, regional elites—governors, mayors, enterprise directors, prominent legislators, and the heads of major regional

financial industrial groups---used this autonomy to expand their own formal and informal power vis-à-vis the central state and other political institutions in the regions.

In the mid-late 1990s, regional elites used the resources accumulated in the early transition and the openings created by a weakened central state to further entrench their political machines. Governors used their formal control over regional regulatory schemes, local taxes, utilities, regional pension funds, and enterprise subsidies to construct elaborate clientelist networks that were predicated on the careful use of carrots and sticks. Regional authorities (governors and mayors) were gatekeepers in many walks of economic life. They held power over issuing the myriad of licenses, permits, and regulatory approvals that are required to operate any business or organization. One of the most common justifications for regional authorities to close an unfriendly business, newspaper, or social organization was a 'failed' fire safety inspection. Indeed, regional governments devised many rules and regulations as a way to expand their own political machines in lieu of their financial dependence on Moscow.

A particularly relevant set of carrots wielded by regional governors were subsidies and government contracts. In the turbulent 1990s, when most Russian enterprises were loss-making, many regional businesses became dependent on subsidies and access to stable government contracts. Governors used these tools to exert control over regional business and accrue loyal clients among the economic elite.

Regional leaders and enterprise directors also extended their machines into society. In the vacuum of power left by the weakening Russian central state, regional authorities took up the mantle of providing many social services that Moscow was unable to fund (see, for example, Stoner-Weiss 1997). They did this through formal budget

allocations, as well as through informal off-budget programs funded by ‘voluntary’ donations from regional business.

The powers of regional governors and mayors were further supplemented by informal control over federal officials in their regions. Law-enforcement organs, tax police, prosecutors, and judges were susceptible to the same pressure from regional leaders as businesses. And, as Moscow proved persistently unable to meet its financial responsibilities to these officials, they were rendered even more vulnerable to control by local authorities.

Indeed, economic collapse in most of regional Russia made elements of civil society vulnerable to pressure as well. Through a combination of economic and political pressure, regional leaders and financial industrial groups exercised control over many of those local media organs that they did not own outright. Social organizations, political parties, and interest groups were also often incorporated into governors’ political machines.

Regional elites accrued significant economic power as well. During the transition, two groups—business elites and regional executives—accumulated significant economic resources that could easily be converted into political resources. When compared to most developing countries, post-Soviet Russia was an especially fertile territory for business elites seeking to build political machines. This was for three reasons. First, quite simply, the most lucrative privatization auctions of the early and mid 1990s concentrated an extraordinary percentage of the nation’s productive assets in the hands of relatively few, well-positioned (and well connected) individuals. Second, given the financial resources at their disposal, major national and regional enterprises and

individual oligarchs expanded and differentiated their business empires into many different walks of economic and social life.⁴¹ These so-called financial industrial groups acquired vast swathes of Russia's productive economic assets and, in the process, a great deal of usable political resources.⁴² Third, as noted earlier, the role of the enterprise in providing social services and, sometimes, housing for workers left most Russian citizens highly dependent on management.

Regional mayors and governors also became major economic players during the transition. From the start, regional authorities had control over the privatization of small and medium-size enterprises, receipts from the sale of which could be kept by regional governments (Shleifer and Treisman 2001). More significantly, the privatization of these enterprises could be used by governors to create or reward loyal clients. Regional authorities were also frequently allowed to take control of enterprises in their regions, ostensibly for later privatization (Hale 2003, 241). This constituted a de facto transfer of property from the center to the regions, as these enterprises either became long-term regional government assets or were later privatized in auctions tightly controlled by regional elites. Furthermore, by the mid 1990s, Moscow's fiscal problems led it to transfer control over regional enterprises to local governments in lieu of budgetary transfers. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, governors continued to strengthen their economic hand by using cooperative courts to orchestrate takeovers of bankrupt private enterprises (Slider 2005). Naturally, this control over regional economic resources

⁴¹ The literature on these financial industrial groups is extensive. Some of the best accounts that treat these groups in their relation to politics can be found in Hale 2006, Orttung 2004, Zubarevich 2004, and Johnson 1997.

⁴² 'Financial-industrial group' is a term used to describe the economic empires built out of privatized enterprises by major Russian businessmen and companies in the mid-1990s (see for example Hale 2006). These financial industrial groups usually began from some core privatized enterprise and expanded outwards, so that they eventually held banks and diversified assets across several sectors. The most politically ambitious groups also acquired major media outlets.

supplemented and was supplemented by the political resources and autonomy that regional authorities had accrued during the transition.⁴³

Leaders of Russia's ethnic republics also perfected their political machines as the 1990s wore on. These governors (presidents, in most cases) initially leveraged on their ability to mobilize ethnic strife to win greater sovereignty from Moscow. As time wore on and their political machines came to be the source of stability in those regions, these leaders increasingly promoted themselves to Moscow as indispensable guarantors of ethnic and social harmony in their regions. As election results in the late 1990s and early 2000s showed ethnic leaders were by far the most adept at using their political machines to garner voters for themselves or, if it suited their interests, the Kremlin.

The power of Russia's regional leaders was reflected in the confrontational stance they often took toward Moscow and, in the extent to which the Kremlin, even as early as the 1995-1996 election cycle, relied upon regional leaders to win elections. The autonomy grabs and sovereignty declarations of the early 1990s were codified starting in 1994 by a series of bilateral agreements between Moscow and some of the most powerful regions. In these ad hoc deals, many Russian regions secured extensive supplemental rights over taxation, budgets, natural resource revenues, and foreign economic relations.

Regional opposition to Moscow also drew significant material benefits. Treisman (1997) found that the most oppositional regions were able to secure a greater share of transfers from the federal budget. In the Federation Council, regional elites blocked

⁴³ The nature of the relationship between regional administrations and regional business was, and remains, of singular importance to Russian political economy. The relationship differed by region. In some it was characterized by cooperation between business and the authorities, in others there was open conflict. In many cases the regional administration were captured by business, while in others the state closely tutored business (Lapinan and Chirikova 2001). Stoner-Weiss (1997) has stressed how the factors influencing cooperation between these groups contributed to public goods provision during the transition. Others have focused on the consequences of these relationships for electoral politics (Turovsky 2002, Hale 2006) and economic development (Lapina and Chirikova 2001).

several attempts by Moscow to restructure the balance of power between Moscow and the regions (e.g. Solnick 2000, Remington 2003).⁴⁴ In their own regions, elites made it a practice of passing and signing legal acts that contravened the Russian Constitution or laws passed by the Federal Assembly. Some reports suggest that as many as 22,000 regional legal acts were in contravention of the Russian Constitution in 1996 (Stoner-Weiss 1999). In an analysis of regional legal non-compliance, Stoner-Weiss (2006) found that ethnic republics and economically powerful regions were the most likely to engage in non-compliant behavior. In sum, by the late 1990s, Russia was seemingly trapped in a vicious decentralizing cycle whereby the considerable informal resources of regional elites allowed them to make demands for more formal autonomy from the center which, in turn, gave them additional resources to strengthen their machines.

With such resources in their possession, regional elites were in a very strong position to influence election outcomes in the mid 1990s. As I noted above, regional leaders used control over local media, law enforcement, courts, tax inspectorates, licensing agencies, public utilities, and prosecutors to support preferred candidates and frustrate those that opposed them. But even without direct pressure, the fear of crossing the regional administrations gave governors immense influence over electoral contests, since, in addition to controlling the above mentioned levers of influence, governors also controlled appointments to a great many state positions and had a great deal of influence over the regional budget. Their economic position was further strengthened as regional governments accumulated property and shares in enterprises over the course of the

⁴⁴ In 1997-1998, the Federation Council rejected a law unifying how systems of representative government were organized in the regions. When the law finally passed in 1999, its content was heavily influenced by regional leaders. In another example, the Federation Council rejected a bill in April 1997 that would have subjected all bilateral treaties to legislative ratification (Solnick 2000).

transition.

Taken together, these resources are sometimes referred to as *administrative resources*. With great care, the most skillful regional leaders used these administrative resources to attract armies of loyal clients. These loyalists became the foot soldiers in their political machines. Governors (and many mayors of large cities) used these political machines to influence elections at every level in the period from 1995-1998. In regional legislatures, governors (even many of those who sat on Our Home's political council) set up their own regional movements to secure seats on behalf of the governor's political machine or put their political machines to work in support of select independent candidates (Golosov 1999). Observers disagree on the role regional leaders played in Yeltsin's reelection campaign. Some such as McFaul (1997) highlight the electoral importance of Yeltsin's alliances with key regional leaders. Of 89 heads of regional administrations 77 ended up endorsing Yeltsin. Others, such as Brudny (1996), however, have pointed out that Yeltsin changed course in his campaign after the December 1995 parliamentary elections, where regional governors demonstrated that, while they could certainly drum up votes when they put their mind to it, they were undependable in their support for the Kremlin. According to Brudny, Yeltsin's advisors abandoned the idea of trying to force regional leaders to generate votes for Yeltsin when it became apparent that many governors were either cutting deals on the side with the communist candidate, Zyuganov, or hedging their bets. Whether they were important to Yeltsin's victory or not, the issue was not whether regional leaders controlled the resources to secure votes, but rather whether they could be controlled by the Kremlin in doing so. In the end, some governors clearly put their machines to work for Yeltsin, while others equivocated or

supported Zyuganov.

Regional economic elites gained significant political power during this period as well. Powerful enterprises and newly-created financial-industrial groups penetrated and captured regional legislatures. Enterprise and collective farm directors continued to enjoy the same advantages in visibility, authority, and administrative resources that they had enjoyed in the 1990s. Beginning in the mid-1990s large financial industrial groups with vast material and organizational resources began to field lists of candidates and support independents in regional elections. Golosov (2003) reports that 41.2% of all regional deputies in the period from 1995-1999 were businessmen. This is an increase from the 23.5% of deputies that Darrell Slider (1996) reported were 'enterprise managers' in the regional parliaments elected in 1994.

At the national level, the power of major financial-industrial groups was famously demonstrated in Yeltsin's reelection campaign when the Russia's two main television networks, belonging to Vladimir Gusinsky's Most Group and Boris Berezovsky's LogoVaz group, provided wholly positive coverage of Yeltsin's reelection campaign. Major banks and financial industrial groups also financed Yeltsin's campaign as well as the Duma campaigns of most political parties and many independents (Hale 2006). Their goal was clearly to see candidates loyal to their interests elected to high office.

Thus, already by 1996, the Kremlin had learned that winning elections depended, in large part, on gaining the support of powerful regional leaders. Despite the fact that the regions were financially dependent on Moscow and that the Russian presidency was the single most powerful political institution in the country, the political machines of regional leaders were increasingly becoming the de facto basis of political stability in

Russia. While the Kremlin could take on any individual regional elite or oligarch (even in the 1990s) it was in no position to undermine them as a whole. Their ability to secure votes and maintain stability in the regions forced the central government to grant them further autonomy, which regional elites then used to further strengthen their political machines. The only thing that kept regional elites from capturing the state during this period were their own collective action problems (Solnick 2000). This was demonstrated by the Federation Council's inability to stand up to the Kremlin on any matter that did not threaten regional interests collectively. In lieu of an organizational tool for controlling these actors, the Kremlin resorted to divide and rule tactics that, as we will see in the next chapter, were perfected in the 1999 parliamentary elections.

When positioned against the continuing weakness of central state institutions, Yeltsin's faltering health and poll numbers, and continued economic crisis, the massive autonomous resources of Russia's regional and business elites were even more significant. Given the resources at their disposal elites had little interest in relinquishing these resources to a party institution that could limit their freedom of maneuver. The political and rhetorical stance of regional elites during this period was almost wholly centered on securing more autonomy from Moscow in order to strengthen their political positions at home. Most regional elites were strong enough to pursue their goals without the help of a party of power. Even if consistent cooperation with the Kremlin would have been preferable to defiance, the risks of giving up their own autonomous resources to secure that goal were too great.

Kremlin Signals and Regional Elites' Reluctance to Invest in Our Home

For Our Home to have become a dominant party regional elites would have had to invest their resources in it and the Kremlin would have to make the party an avenue for accessing patronage, careers, and policy. Even if regional elites had been inclined on their own to cooperate with the Kremlin in the confines of Our Home, they would have to have had some assurance from the Kremlin that it was going to channel these spoils through Our Home. As we have seen, Yeltsin and the presidential administration gave no such signals. The presidential administration took no steps to build a legislative coalition around Our Home, supported all manner of candidates in national and regional elections, made appointments without regard to potential appointees' partisan affiliation, and, eventually, abused key members of the party.

Yeltsin's initial decision to support more than one party of power in the 1995 elections made regional elites unsure of the Kremlin's intentions. In an interview with one of Yeltsin's biographers, Chernomyrdin reported having difficulty rounding up the support of regional elites because regional elites could not 'figure out' whether the Kremlin was 'together' or not (Colton 2008, 350).

Indeed, the Kremlin's lack of support for Our Home became especially clear as the bloc unraveled in 1998. In March of that year, Yeltsin removed party leader Chernomyrdin from the post of prime-minister, a move that alarmed many leaders of Our Home. In May, the appointment of a non-partisan junior member of the government, Georgii Gabuniya, to the post of Minister for Industry sparked an angry reaction from Our Home's parliamentary faction leader, Alexander Shokhin, who had expressed interest in the position. Shortly after, Shokhin announced that, since no one from Our

Home had been brought into the new government, Our Home would no longer support the government.⁴⁵ In that same month, the powerful governor of Samara Oblast, who had once been one of Our Home's most vocal supporters left the party, saying that the bloc's decision to declare its support for Chernomyrdin in the 2000 presidential ballot was ill-conceived, since Chernomyrdin was "just a former prime-minister."⁴⁶ This move came just as several others governors including Kabardino-Balkaria President Valery Kokov's refusal to accept the post of deputy leader of Our Home and Saratov governor Dmitry Ayatskov's decision to desert the movement in order to set up his own party.⁴⁷ In the months that followed, the stream of defections only increased.

Summing Up: The Failure of Our Home is Russia

The story of Our Home is Russia illustrates how strong elites can undermine the formation of dominant parties even better than the case of Russia's choice did. In the 1990s, the autonomous resources of regional elites were so significant that many observers doubted Russia's future as a single state. Regional elites wanted to enjoy the support and resources of the Kremlin without actually giving up their autonomy to conduct their own campaigns as they saw fit, support their preferred candidates, and appoint whomever they wanted. Consequently, Yeltsin understood that supporting a dominant party would be a waste of resources. The irony, of course, was that Yeltsin founded his competing party of power on the belief that Russia's political elite could not

⁴⁵ "Our Home is Russia Outraged Over New Appointment" *NUPI Chronology of Events*. 11 May 1998. www2.nupi.no/cgi-win//Russland/krono.exe?2192

⁴⁶ Moskovsky Komsomolets, May 8, 1998.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

commit to a centralized political party orchestrated by the Kremlin. By following a divide and rule strategy based upon this belief, he ensured that it would be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Thus, Our Home is Russia was not a dominant party. It did not keep elites loyal, it did not reduce the transaction costs that Yeltsin faced in bargaining with the Duma, and it was not an effective tool for coordinating pro-regime candidates in elections. For elites, membership in the party did not significantly reduce the costs associated with lobbying the Kremlin for spoils. Yeltsin did not link his reputation to the party, sanction institutional changes that privileged Our Home is Russia, or take steps to relinquish parallel institutions for dealing with elites. Nor did he give Our Home any special autonomy over policy, rents, or careers. Elites did not link their reputations to the party and they retained their own political machines and parties outside the party. Thus, Our Home was not in a position to solve commitment problems for the two sides.

This outcome is particularly peculiar since much of the literature on institutions in authoritarian regimes would have us believe that the presence of a strong opposition—like the one the Kremlin confronted in the Communist Party—would lead Yeltsin to create strong institutions that could coopt these actors. Instead, Yeltsin went searching for allies (regional governors) to help keep this opposition at bay. Interestingly, in return for their help, these allies wanted more autonomy. The Kremlin gave them this autonomy and refrained from investing in a dominant party.

4.4 Parties of Power and Presidential Succession: The Story of “Unity”: 1999-2001

Overview

By early 1999, Our Home was a rump organization. Its parliamentary leader, Alexander Shokhin, had deserted it, and most governors had declared their intention to leave, begun to build their own political parties, or signed up with competing parties.⁴⁸ It retained a faction in the Duma, and its leadership prepared to run in the 1999 parliamentary election, but the party could no longer claim special ties to the Kremlin.

To understand the Kremlin’s next steps in this situation, we must first understand the situation that regional elites found themselves in and their behavior in response to that situation.⁴⁹ With Yeltsin still ailing, it was clear that he would not be running for a third term, but no successor was yet apparent. For all their strength accumulated in the 1990s, governors were still, individually, very keen to have good relations with the President, especially considering the regions’ budgetary dependence on Moscow. Indeed, for all the formal and informal autonomy that regional leaders accumulated in the 1990s, Russia’s presidency, which was vested with extensive formal powers and direct control over a massive state apparatus by far, remained the strongest and most important institution in the country.

Every governor wanted to support the winner, but it was not clear which candidate this might be. The governors’ dilemma was made worse by the fact that no

⁴⁸ In the end, six governors were included in Our Home’s 1999 party list.

⁴⁹ The following overview draws on accounts of this period found in The following draws heavily on accounts in Hale (2006), Hale (2004a) McFaul and Colton (2003), Makarkin (1999), and the collection of essays in Hesli and Reissinger (2003).

party of power (or other binding institution) existed to help them collectively endorse a candidate. The governors' position was further complicated by their own considerable resources. Collectively, the governors (or a majority of governors) could put their political machines to work and have almost any candidate elected that they pleased, but, again, for an individual governor it was not clear which of many possible candidates should be supported. The timing of the Russian electoral cycle, in which parliamentary elections are held four months before presidential ones, meant that the leader(s) of the best showing non-communist party in the December 1999 parliamentary elections would be well-positioned for presidential elections scheduled in March 2000.⁵⁰

In this setting, some of Russia's strongest and most ambitious governors began forming their own political movements to contest the December 1999 parliamentary elections. The first to move in this direction was Moscow Mayor Yurii Luzhkov, who in December 1998, launched a political movement called Otechestvo (Fatherland), that drew together 11 governors in support of the bloc's demands for more federal attention to 'regional matters.' To all, however, it was apparent that Fatherland would be a vehicle for Luzhkov's own longstanding presidential ambitions. In January of 1999, another governors' party emerged with the creation of Konstantin Titov's (Samara) Golos Rossii. This grouping, which also was clearly designed with an eye toward Titov's presidential designs, initially drew to its side 20 governors. In April 1999, another major governors' party, Vsyá Rossii (All Russia), was created by Tatarstan President Mintimer Shaimiyev and St. Petersburg Governor Vladimir Yakovlev. Seventeen governors participated in this

⁵⁰ Because of the nature of the preferences in the electorate (and most of the governors' own political preference for maintaining the status-quo), a non-communist candidate was almost certain to win the presidential elections, despite the fact that the KPRF was almost guaranteed to win a plurality of seats in the Duma.

effort. Several smaller governors' parties were also started in early 1999 including, Aman Tuleev's (Kemerovo) Vozrozhdeniye (Revival) and Edinstvo (Unity) bloc, but these efforts were less successful in attracting regional leaders. The flurry of organization did not initially trouble the presidential administration because, as the governors seemed to be proving once again, it believed that the governors would be unable to overcome their divisions to present a united front against the Kremlin. Indeed, the Kremlin, at various times, offered its tacit support to each of the governors' parties, seeking to fragment the field as much as possible by airing the possibility that it might support each successive attempt at organization. Thus, by the summer of 1999, there was still no certainty about who would be the most likely presidential successor and the governors had divided into several camps in nascent support of several prospective governors-cum-presidential hopefuls.

As Olga Shvetsova (2003) has usefully pointed out, the governors during this period were facing a version of an electoral coordination dilemma. Individual governors, first and foremost, wanted to back the candidate/party that the majority of other governors backed, for this candidate/party would win, and governors wanted to start the new president's term off on good terms with him. They may have preferred one candidate slightly over another and they would be better off if a majority of governors were to coordinate on their preferred candidate, but if it were between backing their ideologically preferred candidate and backing the winner, they clearly would choose the latter. The problem for the governors was in knowing how all other governors would behave. As is well known, in coordination games, what is needed is some sort of signal or focal point to coordinate actors' behavior one of several possible equilibria. An

existing party of power and/or an incumbent president might have created such a focal point, but neither was on hand in 1999.

In August 4, 1999 the governors seemed to have found their focal point for coordination when Luzhkov's Fatherland formed an alliance with All-Russia. The new bloc announced its intention to support the presidential candidacy of one of Russia's most popular politicians at the time, Yevgeny Primakov. Primakov was well respected by voters and elites alike as he had seemingly stood up to the West over NATO expansion as foreign minister and, as Prime Minister, presided over Russia's first months of economic recovery following the 1998 financial crises. Fatherland-All Russia's imminent endorsement of Primakov seemed to cement a focal point for the governors to rally around his candidacy.

The Kremlin was startled to action by the Fatherland-All Russia (OVR, hereafter) alliance and its support of Primakov. Yeltsin's circle was characterized by a coterie of political and business elites whose wealth and power depended crucially on their access to the President.⁵¹ Indeed, Yeltsin and his coterie had reason to believe that they might be subject to criminal investigation under a Primakov presidency. If they did not control presidential succession, Yeltsin insiders risked losing access to the power and privilege they enjoyed.

The Kremlin recognized the importance of the governors and devised a plan to counter OVR. The plan depended on the governors' coordination dilemmas and their enormous political resources. It centered on the creation of an alternative governors' bloc

⁵¹ Members of this circle included the oligarchs Boris Berezovsky and Roman Abramovich, Yeltsin's daughter Tatyana Dyachenko, presidential administration chief Alexander Voloshin, former presidential administration chief Valentin Yumashev, deputy presidential administration chiefs Igor Shabdurashulov and Vladislav Surkov and other members of the presidential administration.

that would be given the tacit backing of the Kremlin and newly appointed prime-minister, Vladimir Putin. The bloc's symbolic leader would be popular Emergency Situations Minister, Sergei Shoigu. At the September 1999 session of the Federation Council, the Kremlin circulated a vague open letter calling for "Clean and Honorable Elections." The letter was perceived by observers as statement by signatories to coordinate their efforts in favor of the Kremlin's candidate. Thirty-nine governors signed the letter. At the end of September, Putin invited a group of regional leaders to his office to assure them that the Kremlin would not be supporting Fatherland and that the Kremlin approved of the new bloc, which did not yet have an official name. This meeting led to another letter being signed by 32 governors agreeing to help Sergei Shoigu win the December Parliamentary elections. On October 3 and 6, the bloc, now called the Mezhhregionalnoye Dvizheniye "Edinstvo" (Interregional Movement "Unity"), held its founding congress.

Unity's ratings were initially stagnant, hovering at around 5-8% throughout October and early November. But just before the elections Unity's rating skyrocketed and it finished with 23% of the party list vote, ahead of the Kremlin's main rival, Fatherland-All Russia and more than any other party except the KPRF.

Unity's meteoric rise was clearly associated with Putin's own rising star as a presidential candidate and, crucially, the definitive signals that Putin then sent about his support for the Unity (and not the Fatherland-All Russia) campaign. By late November, Putin's ratings had soared on the shoulders of Berezovsky's media empire and the prime-minister's firm reaction to a series of terrorist attacks in August and September 1999. As Russia's most popular politician and the most likely candidate to be supported by the Kremlin in the upcoming presidential election, Putin spoke before a gathering of

governors on November 24, announcing that he would be “voting for Unity, as a citizen.” As Shvetsova (2003) has emphasized, this endorsement from the Kremlin’s popular favorite, cemented the recoordination of a plurality of governors away from the “Primakov Equilibrium” to a “Putin equilibrium.” The best evidence of this was that while Putin’s rating as presidential candidate had climbed to 42% in mid-November, Unity’s support remained at 8%. The week after Putin’s address Unity’s rating jumped by 10% (Shvetsova 2003, 226).

Putin would go on to win the March presidential elections in a landslide. For its part, Unity set up a parliamentary faction in the Duma that initially counted 81 (18%) deputies, which included the 63 mandates it had won, as well as 18 independents and defectors from other parties. Thus, as in the First and Second Dumas, Putin would need to build shifting and cross-factional majorities in the Third Duma.

Like its predecessors, Unity’s position was weak in the regions. Despite the fact that some forty-odd governors supported its campaign, Unity’s could claim no governors as official members. In 44 gubernatorial elections held in 2000, not a single winning candidate accepted a Unity nomination. Most governors hedged their bets in the campaign by supporting multiple parties, and continuing to nurture their own regionally based parties. Thus, while many governors put their machines to work for Unity, they did not subordinate them to the control of Unity.

Among other regional elites, Unity’s position was no stronger. Regional parliamentary elections held after 1998 were even more non-partisan than in the mid 1990s. On average, only 14% of seats were won by party nominees in regional elections held between 1999 and 2003. Golosov (2003) reports that Unity won zero seats in 81%

of regional elections held between 1999 and July 2003.⁵² As I discuss in more detail in the next section, it was more common for legislators to form Unity or United Russia legislative factions from 2001-2003 than it had been for legislators to form Our Home factions, but the process was gradual and sporadic. By the end of 2001, Unity had set up factions in only a handful of regional parliaments. Among business elites, Unity had drawn the support of major federal oligarchs including Boris Berezovsky and Roman Abramovich, but the majority of the business elite continued to hedge its bets by supporting multiple independent candidates and parties.

Unity's organization was minimal. The movement held a campaign rally for President Putin February 2000, but it was not until May that the party held a founding congress that established Unity as a political party in the juridical sense. While it had branches in all regions, none of the political elite were members and branches had no permanent employees or fixed budgets.⁵³ The incipient party played no role in the selection or advancement of cadres in the executive or legislative branch. Because its faction in the Duma did not hold a majority, it could not claim for its members unrivalled access to the President, the government, or to pork distribution.

By early 2001, an observer could be forgiven for concluding that Unity, like its predecessors, would end up as just another discarded party of power. And, indeed, if we view Unity as an organizational entity, this is, in fact, the case, for in early 2001, negotiations began for the creation of a new party that would merge Unity with Fatherland-All Russia to form a new political party that would support the president. On

⁵² In Golosov's data, these data are for United Russia after 2001.

⁵³ Data is unavailable on Unity's initial organizational structure. Interviews with United Russia officials, who had been involved in the Unity organization in Permskii Krai indicated that the movement lacked permanent employees or resources in Perm.

December 1, 2001, the two parties formally merged to create the All-Russia Party “Unity and Fatherland—United Russia.”

The Kremlin and Unity

From 1998-early 2001, the Kremlin was clearly still very hesitant to unilaterally invest in a dominant party. Until Unity’s last minute creation in September 1999, the Kremlin made almost no moves to indicate that it would be investing in a party of power. Indeed, it was not until the fall of 1999 that the governors could even be sure that the Kremlin would not support Fatherland-All Russia. According to one of Fatherland-All Russia’s leading figures, Bashkortostan President Murtaza Rakhimov, the governors had approached the Kremlin on several occasions to ask its blessing for the creation of a party of power. Rakhimov claimed that the governors received tacit support for the creation of All Russia in 1998.⁵⁴ Needless to say, the Kremlin did not follow up on that promise. The Kremlin instead preferred to keep elites guessing by extending its support to various parties, so that elites would not coordinate in one party. Indeed, even after it sent signals that it would be supporting the Unity bloc, it continued to hedge its bets. Throughout the campaign, the Kremlin had also given its tacit support to “Soyuz Pravykh Sil” (Union of Right Forces), a right-center party that included prominent liberal politicians from the 1990s as well as the rump of Konstantin Titov’s Golos Rossii movement. This support culminated in Putin appearing in front of television cameras with the bloc’s leader one week before the election to discuss, and express support for, the party’s platform.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ “Putin—ne plokhoy paren” *Segodnya*. 15 February, 2000.

⁵⁵ “Putin podderzhal SPS” *Vostochno-Siberskaya Pravda*. 17 December 1999/

Putin did not speak at the Unity movement's founding congress, but he did avow later in the campaign that he would vote for it as a citizen. In March 2000, Putin spoke at a conference of the movement's supporters. This was the first time in history that a Russian president had officially taken part in a party event.

Nonetheless, the idea of forming a dominant party was clearly not yet on the Kremlin's mind in 1999-2000. The bloc was initially designed as a governors bloc and was not intended to be positioned as a Kremlin-party (Ivanov 2008, 43). Unity held far less than a majority in the Duma and, like his predecessor, Putin used patronage and policy concessions to build shifting coalitions that comprised Unity and other factions (Remington 2003, 2006). Non-partisan deputies from the single member districts were key to passing legislation. Presumably, the Kremlin could have invested resources in attracting SMDs to the party (e.g. Putin could have joined the party to send a signal of unequivocal support for the party or the Kremlin could have started privileging Unity members above others for promotions and patronage). But the Kremlin did not do this. In fact, it is said that Putin explicitly rejected his advisors' proposals to begin the process of merging Fatherland-All Russia and Unity in 2000 (Ivanov 2008, 76). Deputies not affiliated with the party of power felt secure in knowing that they could advance their interests.

The party of power had no special access to promotions within the executive branch and, because it held a minority in the Duma, it did not enjoy any special privileges in helping deputies achieve leadership positions.

In elections, the Kremlin continued to hedge its bets. In 1998 and 1999, the Kremlin devoted minimal attention to regional elections. It did not even organize a

coordinating organization (the OKS) as it had done in 1996. Regional leaders were left to their devices. The President's special Envoys in the regions, who were, in part, charged with ensuring the election of suitable governors, gave no exclusive support to Unity-supported candidates. Hale (2004b) reports that the presidential envoys supported Unity (later United Russia) candidates in only 4 of the 24 gubernatorial elections where presidential envoys chose to endorse candidates between May 2000 and May 2003. Moreover, in three cases, the presidential envoy worked against the candidate endorsed by the party of power. The result was that multiple Kremlin-compatible candidates competed with one another in many races. In a number of regions, this led to the victory of opposition candidates.

Elites and Unity

Before it joined with Fatherland-All Russia to create United Russia, Unity fared no better than Our Home in attracting substantive investments from elites. The initial letter signed by regional leaders in support of honest elections was extremely vague, and many leaders later claimed that they did not realize it was a statement of support for the Unity bloc (Lussier 2002, 66). In the end, while 50 leaders signed one of the two letters of support for Unity, only one (Vladimir Platov of Tver) actually ran on the party list. A total of eight governors associated themselves more closely with Unity by appearing at a joint press conference with the bloc's leader, Sergei Shoigu, in September.

The 1999 elections were the ultimate demonstration of how the post-Soviet elite sought to avoid exclusive affiliations with federal parties that would limit their autonomy.

Their preferred strategy in the late 1990s and early 2000s was to hedge their bets by making provisional commitments to multiple political forces. The pattern of gubernatorial affiliation on election day was a miasma of crisscrossing and overlapping attachments. Of Russia's 88 governors, 36 maintained dual affiliations with at least two national parties/blocs in 1999 (Our Home, Unity, Fatherland, All-Russia, Voice of Russia, KPRF).⁵⁶ And this number is only the tip of the dual-affiliation iceberg, because it does not count the regional parties and movements that many governors backed as well. The lack of commitment to any one party reached absurd levels in some cases. Dmitry Ayatskov was listed number three on Our Home is Russia's party list, all the while he attended the press conference with Shoigu in September and pledged to campaign on behalf of Unity in his region (Makarkin 1999).

Unity was unable to attract strong candidates under its banner in the elections. Only nine candidates nominated by Unity were elected in SMD races. Incumbents and candidates with administrative resources accruing from their positions in regional and federal state-administrative apparatuses overwhelmingly chose to run as independents (Golosov 2002).⁵⁷ In regional legislative elections, the party was almost non-existent. As noted above, Unity failed to get a single candidate elected in almost 80% of regional elections. Where it did win seats, it won, on average, only 21.6% of seats (Golosov 2004). Party factions were almost non-existent in Russian regional legislatures during this period, but when they did form, they were most often created on the basis of regional

⁵⁶ Authors calculations based on data presented in McFaul, Petrov, and Ryabov (1999). Ten (!) governors made three or more "commitments." Astrakhan governor Anatolii Guzhvin was especially fond of electoral blocs; he signed the letter in support of the Voice of Russia group, joined All-Russia, signed the statement of 39 in tacit support of Unity, and simultaneously sat on the political council of Our Home.

⁵⁷ Only two incumbents ran for reelection as Unity SMD candidates, as opposed to 91 who ran as independents. Unity attracted two candidates with high-ranking state administrative backgrounds, whereas 47 candidates with such backgrounds ran as independents (Golosov 2002).

parties or interest groups (see, for example, Slider 2001). Unity factions emerged in only a handful of regions (Kynev and Glubotskii 2003).

In gubernatorial elections held in 1999, 2000, and 2001, governors eschewed entanglement with the new party of power nearly as much as they did Our Home in the mid-1990s. Instead, as in the 1990s, they relied on their own regionally based movements and political machines to secure election or, in 66% of cases, reelection. Unity did not officially nominate any candidates in these elections. When endorsements were issued, the party leadership often supported separate candidates (Turovsky 2002, 25). Nor was the party able to use its resources to unseat prominent Kremlin opponents, as indicated by Communist victories in Nizhnii Novgorod and Kursk.

Russia's business elite kept its political investments diversified as well. Regional enterprises and business were clearly not affiliated with Unity as indicated by Unity's dismal representation in regional legislatures. Instead, major regional enterprise directors preferred to run as independent candidates and use their resources to support their own slates of candidates (Turovsky 2002, Golosov 2003, Hale 2006).

Why the Kremlin was Hesitant to Invest in Unity

Yeltsin's justification for resisting investment in a dominant party when elites were strong was elaborated in the section on Our Home. Given the statements of Yeltsin and his advisors, it is at least plausible to assume that Yeltsin feared investing in a dominant party when elites could not be counted on to live up to their commitments, and indeed, might even use their platform in the party to challenge the president. In 1998 and early

1999, this consideration could only have been elevated in the president's mind. The political machines of elites were at their strongest at the end of the 1990s. Moreover, the Kremlin was in its weakest position since the transition. In 1998, oil prices reached \$15.81/barrel, their lowest inflation-adjusted level since before the Second World War.⁵⁸ This combined with the August 1998 financial crisis and Yeltsin's continuing health problems gave regional elites more even more cause to call for further autonomy and made the Kremlin exceedingly unpopular. Requiring dominant party commitments from elites at such a time was unrealistic.

Indeed, perhaps the strongest circumstantial evidence of the Kremlin's reasons for refraining from making real investments in a party of power is that the absolute nadir of the Kremlin's involvement in party of power politics coincided with their weakest moment vis-à-vis regional elites in 1998. In that year, the Kremlin had withdrawn all support for Our Home and had no plans for creating a new party of power. The presidential administration and government were even less involved in party politics than they were in 1995. Oil prices reached their lowest level in December 1998 and remained low until May 1999, when they began to climb steeply, reaching their highest level in ten years in November 1999. The fall of 1999 corresponded with the strongest economic growth seen in Russia since before the collapse of the Soviet Union and Prime Minister Putin's meteoric rise in popularity. And, as we have seen, the fall of 1999, was when the Kremlin made its first tentative commitments to Unity. Of course, such a correlation must be taken with a large grain of salt, since the fall of 1999 was the height of the Duma election campaign, but the correlation is still informative, because the Kremlin made its first tentative commitments to Unity only three months before election day and embarked

⁵⁸ In 1995, they were at historical lows, but still at \$23.82, they were 50% higher than in 1998.

on a crash campaign thereafter. The Kremlin's weakness and the governors' strength may still explain why the commitment was so tentative and why they equivocated on supporting a party of power until the last moment.

Those close to Yeltsin in late 1998 and early 1999 were divided on the issue of whether to support a party of power in 1999. Most advisors thought that a pro-Kremlin party would not have "the slightest chance of success, and therefore why expend the effort, people, and money on it."⁵⁹ Since it was clear at the time that a successful campaign depended crucially on the support of regional leaders, the implication is that Kremlin insiders feared investing in a party that could not hope to attract the support of Russia's regional elites. Indeed, by early 1999, it seemed so apparent that OVR would win that many in Yeltsin's circle were secretly negotiating with OVR's leaders about their futures in a Primakov administration. Such insiders, therefore, thought that helping to build a party to compete with OVR would only damage their future career prospects.⁶⁰ Thus, the Kremlin was reluctant to invest in a strong party of power in the run up to the 1999 election because they thought that such a party could not hope to draw the support of powerful governors. The strength of Russia's governors had reached such heights that many Kremlin insiders were worried more about their career fates after the governor's party, OVR, won the election, than they were about figuring out a way to coopt and control the governors in order to win the election.

The reasons for the Kremlin's hesitancy to rush headlong into building Unity into a dominant party after the elections were similar. Indeed, it has been suggested by those close to the Presidential Administration at the time that Putin was skeptical of

⁵⁹ Author's Interview with Igor Shabdurasulov, First Deputy Head of Presidential Administration 1999-2000, June 18, 2010.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

transforming Unity into a party in 2000, because of the fear that it would be “taken over by Luzhkov-ites and it would slip out from under the Kremlin’s control” (Ivanov 2008, 76). As the next section demonstrates, the governors (and other elites) were still extremely strong in the early 2000s. Their support was needed to pass legislation in both houses and govern the regions. Putin appears to have been initially unwilling to sanction a strong party when governors could not make the most basic commitment that a dominant party requires—refraining from directly challenging the leader for office and authority.

Why Regional Elites were Hesitant to Invest in Unity

In the late 1990s, the inability of elite actors in Russia to commit to—or create the impression that they could commit to—a dominant party is explained by the same factors that kept elites from making investments in Our Home is Russia in the mid 1990s. In short, elites were too strong in autonomous resources. This was especially true of regional elites. Their political machines and autonomous resources had only grown by the end of the 1990s. They were now Russia’s kingmakers. Even if a dominant party could have made them better off by reducing uncertainty over access to spoils there was too much to risk in relinquishing even partial control over their political machines, and for this very reason, signals from the Kremlin that it would begin investing in the institutions to solve this commitment problem were not forthcoming. Thus, due to the risks and the lack of party-building signals from the Kremlin, the governors sought to pursue their own individual, diversified strategies of political survival and advancement.

I elaborate these portions of the argument in the pages that follow.

By 1998, Russia's elites had grown extremely powerful at the expense of the central state. This was especially true of regional elites. Russia's financial position worsened in 1998, finally culminating in the August 1998 financial crisis. The crisis marked the nadir of the central state's capacity to provide social services, levy taxes, pay wages, and enforce the rule of law. The crisis led to renewed calls for autonomy by regional leaders, who argued that the crisis demonstrated the necessity for the regions to have more fiscal autonomy in order to insulate themselves from crises that originated in Moscow.⁶¹ Further, as noted above, 1998 witnessed a further plunge in oil prices from their already historically low levels. Yeltsin's approval ratings hovered in the single digits during this period and frequent spells in the hospital undermined Yeltsin's credibility as a strong leader.

I have already reviewed the immense administrative resources (formal and informal powers over budgets, subsidies, tax police, licenses, subsidies, law enforcement, regulations, the media, local courts, electoral commissions, and ethnic social networks) that the governors used to build complex clientelist networks that could help them win elections and manage their administrations. To a lesser degree, mayors, municipal administration heads, and other local politicians built similar machines at lower levels. The late 1990s gave regional elites extra time to entrench these machines and create stronger bonds of mutual support with sub-elites. By the late 1990s, these regionally-based political machines had become the fount of social control and, thus, political power in Russia.

I also have reviewed how enterprises (and their directors) used their unusual

⁶¹ Jamestown Monitor. 4 September 1998.

leverage over employees to build their own expansive political machines. Having won big through insider privatization in the mid-1990s, Russia's business elite began turning its sites on expansion in the regions by the end of 1990s. Although the financial crisis had weakened many of the most prolific financial industrial groups, their immense material resources outmatched any other non-state entity in the late 1990s. Moreover, as several scholars have noted, the financial crisis actually strengthened regional firms vis-à-vis Moscow-based firms, since the former were less tied up in the capital's banking sector (e.g. Turovsky 2002).

The political strength of Russia's regional elite was demonstrated clearly in the late 1990s. During this period, more than ever, regional elites translated their usable autonomous resources into impressive political results. Their strategy of eschewing major party affiliation and building their own regionally-based movements to contest regional elections paid dividends. From 1998-2001, the incumbency rate of governors was 66% (up from 54% in the 1996-1997 electoral cycle). In regional legislative elections, the governors successfully packed many regional legislatures with their own clients (Slider 2001, Golosov 2004).

In national elections, the power of governors was demonstrated even more starkly. Perhaps the best evidence of this is that almost the entire drama surrounding those elections was centered on which party or candidate the governors would support. And, indeed, it turned out that governor support was crucial to a party's success in the election. Myagkov (2003) shows that Unity received 30.4% of the vote in regions led by governors who supported Unity, compared to 7.5% in those regions led by OVR governors (Unity received 23% nationwide). OVR received 36.9% of the vote in those

regions led by OVR governors and 15.9% in regions headed by Unity governors (OVR won 13% nationwide).⁶² Studies of the election results would later reveal that strong governors were exceptionally successful at getting their clients elected in the single member districts contests of the 1999 election.⁶³

Business also flexed its electoral muscles quite successfully during this period. The late 1990s and early 2000s were a period when business engaged in greater and more direct participation in politics (Turovsky 2002, Hale 2006). In the 1999 Duma elections, large financial industrial groups had extreme success in getting their candidates elected to the Duma and placed on key committees (Hale 2006). In some regions, major federal and regional business attempted to capture the state by getting their own executives elected to governorships. Alternatively, major businesses lent financial support to governors in exchange for having their representatives gain positions in regional administrations by attempting to turn governors into their clients by funding their electoral campaigns.

In the late 1990s, regional legislatures transformed from representative arenas in which regional business was one of the main lobbying groups into institutional fora completely dominated by competing firms and financial industrial groups. According to Golosov (2003), 41.2% of regional legislators in the period from 1995-1999, were permanent employees of enterprises. A sample of deputies in 16 regional legislatures collected by the author shows that this proportion had grown to 61% by 2003-2005.⁶⁴

⁶² That this correlation is not due to ideological congruence between voters' preferences, governor's bloc affiliation, and electoral results is demonstrated by the electoral blocs' self-professed lack of ideology. Unity's organizers consciously sought to avoid a programmatic ideology in its campaign (McFaul and Colton 2003). As one Unity-supporting governor stated, 'The ideology of Unity is the lack of any kind of ideology' (quoted in Hale (2004a, 184).

⁶³ Russian Regional Report, 22 December 1999. See also Hale (2006).

⁶⁴ This data is analyzed in Chapter 6 in more detail.

And this number counts only those deputies that were full-time employees of enterprises while they served in the legislature. A not significant portion of deputies sitting in regional legislatures that were not full-time employees of an enterprise while they served are also direct representatives of business. In the regional legislatures of Yaroslavl, Perm, and Kurgan Oblast in 2003, fully 85% of deputies were either full-time employees of enterprises, top managers in those enterprises before they were elected, or major shareholders of enterprises in the region. Thus, by the late 1990s, regional legislatures contained all the most important economic elites in a region.

The immense resources of regional elites led them to eschew deep investments in Unity. This is demonstrated by several pieces of evidence. Hale (2006) provides some evidence that candidates in the 1999 elections that were supported by governors' machines and large financial industrial groups were more successful than other types of candidates. Smyth (2006) finds that candidates with significant personal political resources—primarily connected to their business—were more successful than other types of candidates (including partisan ones).

These findings comport with the logic of dominant party investment that I have laid out in this dissertation, but they do not speak specifically to the question of why an elite actor would choose to eschew dominant party affiliation in favor of any of the other options available for competing in elections, staffing administrations, and contracting with the Kremlin, including affiliating with another party.

One piece of evidence that testifies to the role played by autonomous resources in dissuading regional elites from investing in Unity is that, according to multiple sources, the bloc attracted the weakest and least powerful of Russia's governors. The bloc did

not attract leaders of any prominent ethnic republics. Its most eager first joiners were governors who were having legal problems or who were up for reelection and were in danger of being defeated (Petrov and Makarkin 1999, Sakwa 2003). In an interview after retirement, the primary architect of the Unity campaign and then First Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration, Igor Shabdurasulov, stated quite plainly:

The task was to create a counterweight to OVR. And, we created one; although it was created from governors that were considered weak, lacking in influence; roughly speaking, we gathered up all the left-overs. But at the same time, there began the struggle for those who were oscillating...this struggle was over those that feared placing all their eggs in one basket...Since I knew many of the governors, I traveled to the regions, and I frequently met with such a situation. This or that governor or president would say something like ‘we’ll support you, and our own guys, and somebody else.’ They did this so they wouldn’t make a mistake...⁶⁵

Those governors with the strongest resources (i.e. those that had strong electoral machines or ran powerful ethnic republics) were either OVR leaders or remained independent.

Governors in this period continued to favor individual strategies of political advancement over commitments to Unity. For this reason, the bloc was intentionally designed so as to require a minimum amount of effort or commitment from governors. The bloc had no ideology that could restrict a governor’s freedom of maneuver. The initial letter signed by the governors in the Federation Council, bound governors to nothing except “supporting honest candidates for election to the Duma.” Many governors later claimed that they were ‘surprised’ to learn that the letter was perceived as a statement of support for the Unity bloc (Lussier 2002, p66). Bloc leaders emphasized that the bloc was not an exclusive organization and that participation did not preclude

⁶⁵ Author’s interview with Shabdurasulov, 10 June 2010.

them from being members of other movements (Shvetsova 2003, Markov 1999).

Russian leaders knew that Russia's elites were so strong that they would balk at any attempt to impose constraints upon them. Rather than building a strong institution to coopt and control these elites, as some perspectives on dominant party emergence might suggest, the Kremlin sought to build a weak party of power—one without an ideology, policy platform, formal membership requirements, or rules governing the behavior of cadres--that could coordinate the governors around the Kremlin's preferred candidate without requiring too much from them in the way of commitment.⁶⁶

What is more, even for such minimal commitments as lending the party administrative resources during the campaign, governors were able to extract significant financial concessions from the center.⁶⁷ After the elections, many elites continued to eschew commitments to Unity, precisely due to the restraints it would place on their behavior. In April 2000, at the founding congress of Unity, prominent Duma veteran and Regions of Russia faction leader Oleg Morozov, balked at joining the new movement due to its ban on simultaneous membership in other political parties.⁶⁸

Regional elites were thus reluctant to invest in Unity. They continued to criticize the Kremlin when it suited their needs, ran their own lists of candidates in elections, and did not submit to party in their regional legislatures. They retained their own political parties, continued to cultivate reputations for independence, and refused to cede the party any authority in their regions.

⁶⁶ Smith's (2005) argument is about how leaders react to social opposition by building parties, so it is not perfectly applicable here, but if elites in this period were to be construed as the 'opposition' then the prediction from Smith's theory would be that governors would be coopted into the ranks a strong dominant party. Also, see Shvetsova (2003) for more on the strategy pursued by the Kremlin.

⁶⁷ See, for example, "Kirov Governor Benefits From Early Elections" Russian Regional Report, June

⁶⁸ From Morozov's biography at <http://history.peoples.ru/state/politics/morozov/index.html>

The Kremlin knew all this and, as we have seen, was deterred from making its own commitments, lest they would be investing resources in the party while not receiving any of the benefits of securing elite loyalty. Indeed, the Kremlin's halting and uncertain commitments to Unity further deterred elites from investing in that party, for if elites were to take the risk of relinquishing some of their autonomy, especially when they were so strong vis-à-vis the Kremlin, then they needed clear guarantees from the Kremlin that it would be supporting Unity and only Unity. These guarantees were not forthcoming. When asked how the Kremlin could provide guarantees to governors that Unity would continue to be supported after the elections, the main coordinator of Unity's campaign, Igor Shabdurasulov replied simply: "There were no guarantees."⁶⁹ But perhaps the best evidence for how the lack of Kremlin signals influenced elites' decisions to remain independent is how the minimal signals of support that it did send produced changes in behavior on the part of elites. Indeed, Putin's November speech to announce that he would be voting for Unity "as a citizen" was held for an audience of governors and in the week after that speech, governors began, for the first time, to *publicly* announce their support for Unity.⁷⁰

Summary

Regional elites reached the apex of their power in 1999. Their own inability to

⁶⁹ Author's interview with Shabdurasulov, 10 June 2010.

⁷⁰ A handful of governors declared their public support for Unity prior to that—including those on its coordinating council and Platov of Tver, who was on its party list—but it was not until these few weeks before the election that the other governors who signed Unity's initial letter of support began to associate their image with the party's campaign. See for example "Putin bankyuet po-Uralski" *Kommersant*. 30 November 1999.

coordinate was the only thing that prevented them from capturing the state. Although the Kremlin could have used a dominant party to manage presidential succession, it still feared the power of regional elites at this time and was reluctant to invest in one. Instead, it adopted a divide and rule strategy, which consisted of conflicting signals about which party it would support and then a last minute effort to draw a plurality of weak governors into its own haphazardly assembled movement. Since the Kremlin was not willing to offer any clear signals about which party it would support (until the last minute, of course), elites were not willing to unilaterally relinquish their significant resources and place themselves under their suzerainty of a regime party. Indeed, the Kremlin had to carefully craft expectations about which party it would support just to draw the weakest governors to its side.

Some view Unity as the first stage in the creation of Russia's now-dominant party, United Russia (Hale 2004). And indeed, it is true that Unity is the organizational predecessor of United Russia, but Unity in 1999 had little in common with United Russia in the mid-2000s. Unity was the culmination of divide and rule politics, not an institution intended for the cooptation of elites. It was a campaign strategy, not a political party. The decision to create United Russia as a dominant party was a separate one made under different circumstances. Part II discusses those circumstances.

Part II. The Formation of a Dominant Party in Post-Soviet Russia: the Story of United Russia

4.5 United Russia's Rise to Dominance: 2002-2008

Overview

All previous parties of power in Russia were created as instruments to contest national parliamentary elections and then left to decay after the election was over. In late 2000-early 2001, it appeared that Unity would suffer the same fate. Putin declined to attend the party's founding congress in May, the party was languishing in regional elections, and the regional elite continued to place its eggs in multiple baskets. Yet, the period between Russia's 1999-2000 and 2003-04 election cycles turned out to be different from previous ones. In early 2001, negotiations began for the creation of a coalition between four centrist factions in the State Duma—Unity, OVR, and two factions composed mostly of SMD deputies, Regions of Russia and People's Deputies. In July, that coalition was given some institutional form with the creation of a coordinating council to help synchronize the voting behavior of its members. When created, the coalition controlled 234 votes, a simple majority.⁷¹ Yet, with the exception of Unity, intra-faction cohesion was low, especially among SMD deputies. Around that same time, negotiations began for the creation of a new political party that would bring together the Unity organization and what was left of the Fatherland and All-Russia party organizations. In December 2001, a merger of the parties was sealed, and a founding congress was held for the All-Russian Party "Unity and Fatherland – United Russia."

The idea for the alliance belonged to then First Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration, Vladislav Surkov. Surkov convinced Putin and key figures in the two parties to support the alliance. Though he did not join the party, Putin spoke at its founding congress, the first time that a Russian head of state had attended a party congress. It was also the first time that a party of power had been created more than a

⁷¹ For more on the centrist coalition, see Smyth (2002), Remington (2006)

year before the beginning of a national election cycle. Despite the merger, the two parties retained separate parliamentary factions for the remainder of the Third Duma.

At its founding congress, the party created a nesting doll style leadership structure. It included: a congress, with delegates chosen by regional branches, to be held at least once every two years, a 100 person Central Political Council meeting several times a year and selected by the Congress, a General Council comprised of 13 Central Political Council members, meeting as circumstances required between Central Political Council sessions, and a Central Executive Committee that would serve as the everyday organizational arm of the party. The primary political organs of the party were the Central Political Council and the General Council.⁷² Former Putin Advisor Alexander Bespalov was named Chairman of the General Council and, simultaneously, Head of the Central Executive Committee. These positions made Bespalov the public face of the party in its first year.

At its Congress, the party also created a parallel organ to house prominent figures that wanted to somehow be associated with the party but not incur any of the responsibilities of party leadership. This Higher Council, as it was called, did not require its members to be party members and met infrequently. At the first Congress, several of Russia's most prominent governors joined the Council, including Moscow Mayor Yurii Luzhkov, Tatarstan President, Mintimer Shaimiyev, Tyumen Governor Sergei Sobyenin, and Bashkortostan President Murtaza Rakhimov.

In spring 2002, the party began creating its own branches in the regions. In a handful of regions, regional branches were headed up by the loyalists of powerful

⁷² The former was staffed with Duma deputies and some regional legislative leaders. The latter was comprised almost entirely of prominent Duma deputies. In the first General Council, Edinstvo's party leaders received five spots; Fatherland and All-Russia received four each.

governors, but in the vast majority of cases, the position of regional secretary was given to Duma deputies from Unity or OVR or in other cases to the chairmen of regional parliaments and mayors. In many cases, these figures were the opponents of regional governors.

In 2002, the party began contesting regional elections and forming factions in regional legislatures. By the beginning of 2003, it had established factions in 45 of Russia's 89 regional legislatures. But this was still a time when regional legislatures were dominated by independents. On average United Russia controlled only 26% of seats in regional legislatures in early 2003, and it held a majority in only seven regions.

[Insert Table 4.1 Here]

In gubernatorial elections held between 2002 and early 2003, the party did not play a major role. In the 36 elections held from January 2002 until December 2003, the party nominated only two candidates (one on its own and one as part of an electoral bloc with other parties). Of course, the custom was for Russian governors to run as independents even if they were actively supported as a political party, so this statistic is not especially informative. More instructive as an indicator of party activity during these elections is the number of elections in which the party publicly endorsed a candidate. Between January 2002 and May 2003, United Russia did this in 9 of 15 elections.⁷³ But, since gubernatorial candidates were not official party nominees, the party had no control over the governors it supported, and sitting governors could, and did, decline party support if they thought it might harm their electoral chances.

⁷³ Data on party support for gubernatorial candidates in this period is from Ivanov (2008).

The party was torn by infighting over leadership posts and clashed with governors during this period. Some of Russia's most powerful governors simply captured the party organization in their region, superimposing it onto their own regionally based organizations.⁷⁴ In other regions, however, the party set as its task the undermining of sitting governors. In many regions, the party leadership chose regional party secretaries from the ranks of the local governors' enemies (often a mayor or federal official in the region).

The effects of United Russia's confrontational stance toward governors in 2002 were mixed. Officially, the party supported incumbents' opponents in only 5 of the 15 gubernatorial elections held from January 2002-May 2003 (the party also supported four incumbents) and lost two of these contests. It opposed governors' regional parties in several regional legislative elections (notably, Sverdlovsk) and lost. By the end of the year, it was clear that, while the Kremlin could use the party to help it weaken weak governors, stronger governors could still marshal the resources to keep the party at arm's length, and the strongest governors could simply capture the party.

In early 2003, Bespalov was removed from his post as head of the party. The position of Chairman of the General Council was renamed Secretary of the Political Council and prominent Duma Deputy, Valerii Bogomolov was named to this post. The Central Executive Committee, the permanently operating organizational presence of the party, was headed by former counterintelligence officer Yuri Volkov. At the same time, the party introduced a new position, Chairman of the Higher Council, headed by then Minister for Internal Affairs Boris Gryzlov. Although the Higher Council was not a leadership organ—it could only make non-binding recommendations to the Central

⁷⁴ This was clearly the case in Bashkortostan and Mordovia.

Political Council on issues of cadres and strategy—the Chairman’s post was vested with significant informal importance. Throughout, 2003 and early 2004, Gryzlov served as leader of the party even though his position gave him less formal authority within the party. This is indicated by the fact that Gryzlov delivered the key address on the status of the party at the March 2003 Congress and all subsequent ones. From the beginning, the party leadership maintained close, subservient ties with the Presidential Administration. Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration, Vladislav Surkov, though he did not hold a formal party position, met frequently with party leaders and exercised significant control over major party decisions.

By March 2003, United Russia, with 400,000 members was the second largest party in Russia.⁷⁵ In the Duma, 151 deputies were members of the party and 41 Federation Council senators had joined. The party had set up regional branches in all regions and more than 2400 local branches. But the party was still languishing in regional elections and the 2003 State Duma elections were approaching in December. Thus, the Kremlin began to concentrate on securing the support of powerful regional and business leaders for the 2003 elections. United Russia became the forum for such a cooptive arrangement. In 1999, regional leaders and financial industrial groups had advanced their clients into the Duma primarily through the single-member districts. This practice continued in 2003, but the United Russia list also appeared as a highly attractive avenue through which regional leaders could, if they played their cards right, advance their clients into the Duma. Thus, to a greater extent than any party of power before it, United Russia’s party lists were populated with the representatives of regional leaders. Twenty nine regional leaders also agreed to have their names listed on United Russia’s

⁷⁵ The KPRF remained larger by membership.

party list and by December 2003. Also, by December 2003, 17 governors had joined the party's Higher Council.

At the Third Party Congress in September, Putin delivered an address reaffirming his support for United Russia. In December, the party's rating sat at 31%, higher than any party of power in post-Soviet history. In the election, the party received 37.5% of the party list vote and won 103 (45%) of the SMD seats (223 seats in total). This was by far the best ever electoral performance by a post-Soviet party of power.

When the new Duma convened, a further 55 deputies joined the United Russia faction bringing the total to 298. By the end of January 2004, the faction had grown to 310, a two-thirds majority. Gryzlov was named faction leader and speaker of the Duma. The party expanded the number of committees in parliament from 16 to 29 and kept for itself all chairmanships. Over the course of the next four years, United Russia served as a stable and unfailingly loyal voting bloc for the passage of President Putin's legislative initiatives.

On other fronts the party continued to grow. As Chapter 5 describes in more detail, governors joined at a gradual pace over this period. Figure 4.1 shows this progression. By October 2005 more than half of Russia's governors had joined the party, and by November 2007, all but 8 of Russia's governors had joined the party. Between January 2004 and February 2005, 23 gubernatorial elections were held. The party nominated only 4 candidates, but endorsed candidates in all races. The party made it a point to endorse the likely winner in almost all cases, losing only 4 contests in which it endorsed a candidate.

[Figure 4.1 Here]

Other regional elites also gradually joined the party over this period. As Chapter 6 discusses in further detail, Russian regional legislatures in the 2000s contained the most prominent social and economic leaders in a given region. The directors of major enterprises and collective farms, local state-run television anchors, rectors of universities, and heads of local hospitals can all be found in an average regional legislature. Thus, regional legislatures provide a useful window into the political affiliations of Russia's economic and social elite.

After mid-2003, all regional legislatures were required by federal law to elect at least half their deputies on the basis of party lists. This reform allowed United Russia (and all other parties) to immediately make an impact on regional elections. As Table 4.2 shows the party's regional performance in the latter half of 2003 was much improved over its prior experiences, when it rarely managed to win any more than a handful of SMD seats.

[Insert Table 4.2 Here]

In four elections held in December 2003, it received, on average, 47% of the vote and 55% of mandates. In 2004 and 2005, the party suffered several electoral setbacks, but since the end of 2005 it has consistently won more than 60% of seats in regional

parliaments.⁷⁶

The size of United Russia's regional legislative factions demonstrates the party's rise even more clearly, for it reflects the extent to which previously independent deputies migrated into United Russia over the course of convocations. As noted above, United Russia controlled 26% of seats in regional legislatures in early 2003. As Table 4.1 shows, this number climbed steadily year by year, reaching 71% in September 2009. At that time, it controlled majorities in all regional legislatures.

The orientation of Russia's national business elite toward United Russia is more difficult to assess straightforwardly. On the one hand, big business eagerly funded United Russia's campaign in 2003 and continued to fund the party's activities thereafter. In return, representatives of Russia's largest enterprises (e.g. Sibneft, Yukos, Lukoil, Severstal, Gazprom, Renovo, Norilsk Nickel, Basovyi Element, etc) received Duma seats on United Russia's party list. Moreover, several of Russia's most politically active tycoons, including Russian Railways President Vladimir Yakunin and the President of RosOboronExport (the arms sales monopoly) Viktor Chemezov joined the party.⁷⁷ The party's higher council frequently features the Vice Presidents of major Russian corporations and the president of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, Russia's largest business lobbying group, is afforded a seat on the Presidium of General council. United Russia frequently 'taps' business to fund its special party projects or recruits business leaders to serve as special party emissaries in exchange

⁷⁶ For a dominant party, the party list results of United Russia may seem rather low, but since most regions have entry barriers of 7% or higher, the PR components of Russian regional elections are highly disproportional. Moreover, as the difference between party list results and the percent of mandates received shows, United Russia has been extremely successful in SMD elections.

⁷⁷ "Partiya Vlasti Podtyanula biznes-resursy" *Kommersant*. 27 November 2006.

for seats in the Duma.⁷⁸ On the other hand, most of the highest echelons of Russian business (figures such as Roman Abramovich, Viktor Vekselberg, Alexei Miller, Oleg Deripaska) have eschewed public involvement in dominant party politics.

At the local level, the party started out slow but has since gained influence. Between 2004 and 2007, most notably, the mayors of most of Russia's largest cities joined the party.⁷⁹ In organs of local self-government (city councils, municipal councils, local administration heads) the party began making inroads only in 2005, when the party leadership instructed regional branches to begin organizing factions in local councils and recruiting local administration heads into the party.⁸⁰

However, two crucial institutions remained almost entirely non-partisan during this period (2004-2007): the government and the presidential administration. In 2007, only three members of the government and only a handful of Vladimir Putin's inner circle were party members. Rather than becoming part of the party, the presidential administration sought to keep its bilateral relationship with the party intact. The only area in which this rule was breached was within the Presidential Administration's Department for Internal Politics, the arm of the presidential administration that deals with all matters relating to parties, interest groups, and elections.⁸¹ From 2002 onward, a permanent staff was assigned to work with United Russia. In 2010, 20 specialists worked in this department. Between this department and United Russia, a bridge of cadres was created such that Department of Internal Politics staff frequently transfer over to work in the

⁷⁸ “‘Partiya Vlasti’ Torguet Mestami” *Novaya Politika* 16 October 2006. <http://www.novopol.ru/--partiya-vlasti-torguet-mestami-text12342.html>

⁷⁹ “Edinaya Rossiya goroda beryot” *Kommersant* 25 December 2006.

⁸⁰ Author's interview with deputy head of United Russia's Central Executive Committee in Sverdlovsk Oblast' 3 July 2007.

⁸¹ This department is overseen by Vladislav Surkov.

party executive committee and vice versa.⁸²

At the party's Fifth Congress in November 2004, the party shifted to the organizational structure that it has retained until the present day.⁸³ The Central Political Council was replaced by the General Council as the primary leadership organ meeting several times between congresses. Within the General Council, a Presidium was created that would meet frequently and serve as the permanent political leadership organ. In place of the old leadership posts, the party created the post of Party Chairman and Secretary of the Presidium. Both offices are charged with directing and leading the work of the General Council and Presidium, though the former also is charged with directing the work of the Higher Council. For its part, the Higher Council was retained as a symbolic institution that meets infrequently and does not participate directly in party decision making.⁸⁴ Within the Higher Council a higher-level star chamber was created at this congress, the Bureau of the Higher Council. This organ contained the most prominent governors from the Higher Council as well as the head of the party executive committee, the Party Chairman, and the Secretary of the Presidium and his deputies.

Gryzlov was chosen as party chairman and Valery Bogomolov, Vice Chairman of United Russia's Duma faction, was chosen as Secretary of the Presidium. Given his position as Duma Speaker, his keynote addresses at the party congress, and his post as head of the Higher Council, Gryzlov was clearly first among equals in this setup. In the spring of 2005, under pressure from the presidential administration and Gryzlov, Bogomolov and Volkov (still leader of the Central Executive Committee) resigned.

⁸² In 2003 and 2004, deputy head of the Department for Internal Politics, Leonid Ivlev, simultaneously held a position as deputy head of the United Russia executive committee.

⁸³ This discussion of personnel changes and intra-party intrigue draws on Ivanov (2008, 186-211)

⁸⁴ At the 2005 party congress, the party changed its charter so that Higher Council candidates were required to have been members of the party for more than one year in order to be considered for membership.

Vyacheslav Volodin, vice speaker of the Duma and former OVR deputy, was chosen as the new Secretary of the Presidium. The new head of the executive committee became Andrei Vorobyev, a 35-year old Duma deputy, former Senator from Adygeia, and son of Sergei Shoigu's top advisor in the Ministry of Emergency Situations.

Whereas the standard practice was for the approval rating of parties of power to fall between election campaigns (when administrative resources were not being deployed to drum up support), United Russia's rating only grew after the 2003 elections. According to the Levada Center, in March 2004, 33% of likely voters were prepared to vote for the party. By December 2006, that figure had grown to 55%. The party's membership also climbed precipitously from 400,000 members in 2003 to 1.25 million in early 2007 to 1.75 million at the end of 2007.

In the spring of 2007, United Russia was in a much stronger position to contest the upcoming State Duma elections than it had been in 2003. Putin had consistently voiced his support for the party in the inter-election period. Although another party of power, Just Russia, had been created in 2006, Putin quickly dispelled any doubts over which party would be the Kremlin's main horse in the race. Most governors were now members, or at least sympathetic, and the party had created an organization unrivalled by any other party.

In 2007, the Duma elections would be held entirely on the basis of party lists. In 2003, powerful regional and business elites had advanced their clients through the single member districts, on United Russia's party lists, and, sometimes, through other party's lists. In 2007, with the SMD component eliminated and other parties weakened, regional elites had only one option for advancing their clients: United Russia's party list. The

Kremlin and the party leadership used this monopoly to reduce the influence of regional and independent business interests in the Duma. Party functionaries and Duma loyalists replaced many of these clients on the United Russia list.⁸⁵ But in order to attract financing and the support of regional strongmen, United Russia did bargain significantly. Indeed, although single member district races were eliminated, a strong regional component was retained in the electoral system through the use of regional sub-lists within the party lists. Each party list was divided into regional sub-groups that, in the vast majority of cases, corresponded to the federal subjects of Russia. The total number of mandates received by a party was determined by the national aggregate vote given for the party, but the distribution of mandates received by each party among the regional lists was then determined by the total number of votes given for that party's regional list.⁸⁶ Thus, the total number of representatives from a given subject was determined not just by its population size, but also by the percentage of the votes given for the United Russia list in that region.⁸⁷ Since each regional party list usually included a significant number of a governor's clients, this system gave regional leaders a clear incentive, above and beyond their fear of retribution from Moscow, to turn out the vote for United Russia.

The most significant event in the 2007 Duma election campaign was Putin's announcement to head the federal component of United Russia's party list. This

⁸⁵ I have seen no systematic analysis of the patron-client structure of United Russia's 2007 party list. Such an analysis, when compared to a similar analysis for 2003 would no doubt be revealing. The conclusion drawn here is based on impressions of the party list expressed in the press, by experts, and in the author's interviews with several State Duma deputies. For a short discussion of the issue see Ivanov (2008, 290-291)

⁸⁶ For more on how this system works see, Kynev, Aleksandr "Disproportii Rossisskoi Proportsionalnosti" *Gazeta.ru* 7 May 2008.

⁸⁷ Thus, for example, although St. Petersburg has a population of 4.6 million and Rostov Oblast has a population of 4.2 million, the latter received 11 representatives in the Duma through United Russia's party list, whereas the former received 7. This is because the United Russia party list in Rostov garnered 72%, whereas in Saint Petersburg it managed only 50%.

immediately pushed United Russia's ratings over the 60% mark. With Putin's announcement, the party's election campaign became highly personalized around his image and a platform called "Putin's Plan," a vague manifesto that called for turning Russia into a "a world economic and political leader." The party also attached its brand to billions of dollars in public works and social spending—the so-called National Projects—funded by oil revenues. It also secured billions of dollars in budgetary funds for its own party projects that were managed at the regional level.

Putin's popularity, the activation of governors' political machines, and lavish social spending gave United Russia a landslide victory. On election day, the party raked in 64.2% of the vote, which translated into 310 mandates in the State Duma. After the election, United Russia endorsed the candidacy of Putin's hand-picked successor to the presidency, Dmitry Medvedev. Putin became prime minister and in April 2008, Putin accepted United Russia's invitation to become party chairman, though he did not become a party member.⁸⁸ Vladislav Surkov, United Russia's long time advocate and coordinator in the Kremlin stayed on in the presidential administration, but over time, the party has begun to coordinate its actions less with the Presidential Administration and more with the government and Prime Minister Putin's office. Putin meets with party leaders monthly and organizes all official meetings between the Kremlin and United Russia leaders.⁸⁹ Putin's Chief of Staff, Sergei Sobyenin, handles relations with United Russia for Putin, and the party leadership's biweekly meeting with Surkov has been replaced by biweekly meetings with Sobyenin.⁹⁰ This process has been gradual, however. The Presidential Administration retains a staff whose sole task is coordinating with United

⁸⁸ Gryzlov was demoted to Higher Council Chairman.

⁸⁹ "Vladimir Putin vzyal partiya v svoi ruki" *Kommersant*. 5 June 2008.

⁹⁰ See for example "Uravnenie s dvumya izvesnymi" *Russkii Newsweek*. 31 May, 2010.

Russia, and reports indicate that Surkov still retains influence on major decisions taken by the party.

As of 2010, the party's position among voters and elites is stronger than ever. As Table 4.2 shows, the party's electoral performance appeared not to be affected by the crisis. There have been hardly any high profile defections and party discipline in elections has been observed as strictly as at any time in the party's history.

As previously discussed, 80 of 83 regional governors are party members and the party holds a majority in all regional parliaments. The party's State Duma faction has 315 members (70% of the chamber). Party membership in the government remains low. Three of Putin's six deputy prime ministers are party members, but only two of seventeen ministers are party members. The party does not exercise direct control over the executive branch.

Party membership has fallen somewhat in recent years due to an increased focus on party discipline and vetting of cadres. But the party's organizational reach has only expanded. It now has 83 regional branches, 2,547 local branches (28 local branches per regional branch, on average) and 53,740 primary cells. Regional branches consist of a Political Council that contains a region's most prominent economic and political figures, a Presidium within that council that meets monthly, and a regional executive committee that serves as the permanent organizational arm of the regional branch. The Secretary of the Political Council (who is always simultaneously the Secretary of the Presidium) is the leading party figure in the region. These positions are not full-time positions, however. Most regional secretaries are the speakers or vice speakers of regional legislatures, Duma

deputies from the region, or bureaucrats from regional administrations.⁹¹ The regional executive committee is staffed by anywhere from a 10 to 100 employees. This number swells with consultants and temporary workers at election time.

Local branches consist on average of 687 members, though branches tend not to be distributed evenly across the population, but rather are established to correspond to administrative divisions, so large cities often have their own local branch that covers hundreds of thousands of people, while some rural branches correspond to an administrative division that contains only a few thousand people. Like the regional branch, the leading political organ of the local branch is the Political Council and its Presidium, which are headed by a Secretary (usually a mayor, collective farm director, or local administration head). Local branches, as a rule, are staffed with at least two or three permanent employees though the largest local branches can have up to 20 permanent employees. The local branch executive committees play a key role in making sure that local enterprises and interest groups support the party in elections and with a dependable stream of funding. The head of the local executive committee offers the carrots (access to municipal contracts, preferential utility rates) and sticks (threats of license revocation and utility disruption) that induce local businesses and elements of civil society to cooperate with the party. Although the executive committee head almost never has personal resources of his/her own (these officials are either hired hands from the regional capital or local civil servants), he/she can speak for the Secretary of the Political Council and call upon that person's authority if need be. The same type of arm-twisting and

⁹¹ In July 2007, the breakdown was as follows, 20 State Duma deputies, 16 speakers of regional parliaments, 15 vice speakers of regional parliaments and other high ranking regional legislators, 11 members of regional governors' administrations, 4 governors themselves, 4 enterprise directors, 3 rectors of universities, 3 local politicians, 2 federal officials, and 1 trade union leader.

cooptation goes on at the regional level as well, but in most regions, it is much more overt at the local level (especially in small and medium sized towns and rural areas).⁹²

United Russia's primary party cells average 33 members per cell. Each primary cell is headed by a secretary, who is not a full-time employee. Rather these are the party's activists. They are overwhelmingly public sector employees and the median secretary is a neighborhood opinion leader with access to public meeting spaces. Many are school principals, hospital directors, or factory production line supervisors and they are overwhelmingly female.⁹³

This local organization has been accompanied by an increase in the party's representation in organs of local self-government. Again, systematic data across time are not available, but as of September 2007, 51.6% of Russia's 12,369 municipal regions, city districts, city settlements, and rural settlements were headed by a UR party member. This figure may seem unremarkable, but it gains significance if we take into account that in the 1990s, the only party participating at the local level was the KPRF and even here it never could claim more than 10% of municipal heads as its members (Ross 2007). Although nationwide figures are not available, reports and interviews with United Russia officials in all 10 of the regions where I inquired about this matter indicated that regional party branches have expended enormous amounts of effort to establish party majorities in Russia's previously non-partisan city, municipal, and local councils.⁹⁴ By 2009, United

⁹² This discussion was heavily informed by a series of interviews I conducted with local United Russia executive committee officials in Tutaev, Yaroslavskaia Oblast (February 2010) and Berezniki, Permskii Krai (July 2008).

⁹³ I only have data on this for the Berezniki local branch where 22 of 25 primary party cells are headed by women, of which 14 are the directors of local schools. But my interviews with party officials in Yaroslavskaia Oblast and Kurganskaya Oblast tell me that this pattern of gender and occupational background is also evident in those oblasts.

⁹⁴ Ross (2007) reports that only 15% of local deputies were United Russia members in 2005. By July 2007, the Sverdlovsk regional branch had established factions in 68 of 72 local councils and was planning to

Russia began to use its control over city councils to change city charters and eliminate the direct election of mayors. This trend has gathered pace over the past two years so that by mid 2010 directly elected mayors in Nizhny Novgorod, Chelyabinsk, Ulyanovsk, Penza, Ufa, Saratov, Blagoveshensk, and scores of smaller towns had been replaced by United Russia appointees from the city council.⁹⁵

The party has also made significant inroads into other segments of Russian society. Although figures are not available, reports indicate that the rectors of most major universities are party members and use their positions to drum up votes during elections.⁹⁶ Famous actors, directors, musicians, and athletes have all joined the party and some are even Duma members. State employees and bureaucrats are the modal membership category, but party membership is not an absolute requirement for civil service advancement. In many regions, the editors of state-run print media and the directors of local state-run television networks are party members, though they rarely serve on Political Councils. Directors of prominent enterprises that are not represented in legislatures are usually invited to sit on the party's political council, though their influence there is less than it would be if they held seats in the party's legislative faction.

Numbers aside, United Russia has begun to function as a dominant party, as I discuss in greater detail at the end of this chapter. The party is increasingly being used as a forum for distributing rents, patronage, spoils, and policy. This is accomplished chiefly through legislative logrolls. Voting discipline among pro-presidential Duma deputies

establish a further 24. By July 2009, the Yaroslavl regional branch had established factions in 17 of 21 local councils. United Russia held the majority in 10 of those councils. Other reports indicate that over half of municipal council deputies were UR members by mid-2007: 'Knut i Pryanika dlya Munitsipala' *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. July 26, 2007.

⁹⁵ "Freely Elected Mayors a Dying Breed" *The Moscow Times*. 1 June 2010.

⁹⁶ At Yaroslavl State University, professors report that the rector met with heads of departments ahead of the presidential election, and while he gave no specific instructions, stressed the importance of the election result to the governor.

rose precipitously with the creation of the United Russia faction after the 2003 elections. With this ironclad discipline the party has now become the primary channel for patronage distribution in the State Duma (Remington 2008, Tolstykh 2008). The same is true of almost all regional parliaments.

The party has been given control over disbursing national project funds and special party commissions were created to oversee allocation.⁹⁷ Personnel politics are also increasingly at the center of the party's activities. The party now works hard to ensure cooperation by rewarding loyal members and punishing defectors. Beginning in 2008, the party began actively privileging internal party advancement over coopting new elites. This is especially true of legislative promotions and the composition of party lists. Most significantly, the party has recently been granted the formal right to propose candidates for regional executive posts. First proposed in October 2005, this provision was reintroduced in Medvedev's November, 2008 address to the Federation Council, was passed into law in March 2009 and came into effect on July 1, 2009.⁹⁸ Since 2006, a 'personnel reserve' (kadrovyyi rezerv) system, similar in concept (though not in scope of application) to the Soviet nomenklatura system, has formed the basis for many intra-party promotions. Plans are underway to make it one of several routes for the selection of cadres in the executive branch as well as in business.⁹⁹ I discuss United Russia's role as a dominant party in greater detail later in this chapter, but for this introduction, let it suffice

⁹⁷ Interview with member of Presidium of United Russia Political Council in Perm Krai, July 9, 2008.

⁹⁸ The new law gives the party which controls a majority in regional assemblies the exclusive right to nominate candidates to the President for the post of governor. The first formal application of the new law occurred on August 20, 2009 when United Russia presented President Medvedev with three candidates to fill the governor's post in Sverdlovskaya Oblast "Presidenta Ostavila Pered Vyborim," *Kommersant* 21 August 2009. By October 2009, the party had presented Medvedev with candidates for 5 additional gubernatorial posts.

⁹⁹ See for example "Edinaya Rossiya Budet Sorevnovatsya s polpredami presidenta" *Kommersant*. 4 September, 2008, and "Kadrovyyi inkubator partii vlasti" *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 28 July 2008.

to say that United Russia is now functioning as a dominant party. In the next section, I discuss how and why the Kremlin and regional elites have made investments in and commitments to the new dominant party.

The Kremlin and United Russia

Putin and his advisors in the Presidential Administration have exhibited a higher level of commitment to United Russia than the Kremlin has to any other party of power in post-Soviet history. But their commitments have come gradually; in response both to increases in the Kremlin's own strength vis-à-vis elites and the Kremlin's perception of elites' level of commitment to the party.

By 2002, commodity prices had risen several times over from their all-time lows in 1998. The economy had expanded at a rate of 10% in 2000, 5.7% in 2001, and 4.9% in 2002. Though inflation was high, incomes were expanding at a breakneck pace, tripling over the period from 1999 to 2002. In 2002, Putin's ratings were the highest for a Russian leader since Yeltsin in 1990. Putin wasted no time in spending part of this political capital on diminishing the authority of regional leaders. In 2000, Putin pushed through legislation eliminating the governor's (and regional parliamentary speakers') ex officio seats in the Federation Council. Henceforth, governors and regional parliaments would appoint senators to sit in the chamber. The reforms also divided the federation into seven districts, each headed by a federal appointee, whose was charged with coordinating federal agencies in the district and working with governors there. The reforms were also accompanied by an invigorated effort to force regional governments to

bring their legal acts into compliance with the Russian constitution and federal laws. With some foot dragging, most regional leaders began to make such changes.

The balance of resources between center and regions had changed and this allowed for formal changes to be made to reflect that new balance. But the autonomous resources that regional leaders continued to wield meant that Putin's efforts to recentralize authority were limited to these reforms. Regional elites continued to be purveyors of stability and political authority in their regions and on the factory floor. Through his authority, Putin could undermine any single regional elite actor, but he still would need the support of these actors to govern Russia cost-effectively. The Kremlin learned this lesson in 1999 and again in 2002 when United Russia failed to make much headway at undermining regional governors.

So, regional elites would need to be coopted in some way. The only question was whether they were still strong enough that coopting them into a dominant party would be dangerous or a waste of the Kremlin's resources. The Kremlin decided that it could afford to risk some commitments--given the change in the balance of resources--but not yet others. So, Putin spoke at the founding congress and let it become public knowledge that his advisors were working closely with the party and sanctioning the merger of Unity and OVR. Thus, Putin devoted some of his personal resources to the party by attaching, if only partially, his name and reputation to it. But in the period from 2001-2003, Putin was hesitant to make other commitments. For instance, he rejected United Russia's public proposal to form the new government on the basis of the parliamentary majority. The Kremlin also sometimes placed its eggs in multiple baskets in gubernatorial elections, sometimes supporting candidates standing opposed to United Russia (Hale

2004). Regional governors were left to their own devices in competing with United Russia in regional elections held in 2001 and 2002; the Kremlin did not object. Moreover, the Kremlin did not immediately push for the creation of a single majority faction in the Duma that would be the analog of the newly formed political party outside the Duma. Instead, it allowed the separate factions to persist.

The Kremlin's hesitancy is explained by the strength of elites during this period. This is demonstrated in part by the concessions that the Kremlin was willing to give elites in order to secure their support for the 2003 elections. Regional governors were allowed to exert personal control over regional branches of UR.¹⁰⁰ Extensive bargaining went on between the Kremlin and regional elites to have the latter's clients included on the United Russia party list and have them elected in SMD races (see for instance, Petrov 2003, Hale 2004a, Slider 2006). Putin also pushed through legislation that allowed previously term-limited regional governors to run for reelection (Ross 2005). The Kremlin was taking a more forceful line in dealing with regional elites than ever before, but in comparison to their further subordination after 2003, these concessions are notable. They were a confirmation of the governors' power and the Kremlin's need to tap that power.

Thus, the Kremlin was thinking not just of its own preferences, but also of how elites might respond to a dominant party. When asked why the presidential administration did not push more governors to become party members in 2002, 2003, and 2004, a top official in the Kremlin's directorate of Internal Politics, responded simply that the Kremlin had to take into account the "political will of governors" and their desire to "survive in politics," and therefore, most governors approached the party with petitions to

¹⁰⁰ This is in spite of the Kremlin's clear distaste for allowing governors to have influence over the regional branches of Unity. See, for instance, Surkov's early statements on Unity "Tak vot, ya vam govoryu: demkratia neischerpaema," *Kommersant-Vlast*. July 18, 2000.

join on their own accord.¹⁰¹ Moreover, sources close to Surkov, confirm that Surkov himself was hesitant to allow the party to acquire a constitutional majority in the Duma, for fear of the fact that the ‘monster’ would be difficult to control (Ivanov 2008, 136).¹⁰²

But, as noted above, in contrast to previous elections, the Kremlin made overt commitments to United Russia. Most notably, the Kremlin set as its task not just to get loyalists elected to the Duma, but to have them elected under United Russia’s banner. The Kremlin did give its assent to the launch of several smaller parties—Motherland, the Party of Life, People’s Party—but as 2003 wore on, it became increasingly clear that Putin would only support United Russia. And indeed, Putin addressed the party’s preelection congress, pledging his full support for the party.

After the elections, the Kremlin’s position vis-à-vis regional elites continued to strengthen. Commodity prices were climbing at a faster rate than in the early 2000s, reaching historical highs by 2007. Taxes and export duties from the sale of commodities swelled the federal budget and allowed for the creation of massive social spending programs, the National Projects. The Kremlin also could direct the activity of the nation’s largest state-owned oil and gas firms as they sought to invest their new-found largesse in the acquisition of new assets. This massive concentration of resources in the hands of the government gave regional elites even more reason to want to develop good relations with Moscow. In large part due to the meteoric rise in commodity prices, the economy and incomes grew apace. From 2003 until 2008, the Russian economy grew at an average rate of 7% per year, an even faster rate than in the early 2000s. Whether this was enough make Putin wildly popular--according to the Levada Center, 87% of

¹⁰¹ Author’s Interview with former official in the Department for Internal Politics, June 1, 2010.

¹⁰² Not surprisingly, this idea was Gryzlov’s.

Russians approved of Putin's work as President in August 2006--or whether his own personal characteristics added percentage points to his popularity rating is not important for our purposes.¹⁰³ The bottom line is that Putin was a uniquely authoritative and wildly popular politician, who sat atop a massive central state apparatus that was flush with oil revenues. He also held presidential powers that are unusually expansive for a country pretending to democracy.

Putin cashed in this political capital. In September 2004, a terrorist hostage taking at a primary school in North Ossetia left hundreds dead. Just after the tragedy, Putin announced the need for more centralized control over regional affairs and proposed canceling gubernatorial elections. The legislation was passed in the Duma, and the President was given the authority to appoint Russia's governors henceforth.¹⁰⁴ By depriving governors of their independent electoral bases, Putin removed one of their most significant autonomous resources. Another important, but underappreciated centralizing reform of this era was the reform which removed most of the regions' rights to determine how to use natural resources extracted from the substrate. Regional elites' political machines were further weakened by the increasing capacity of the central state in the 2000s.¹⁰⁵ As the federal state became better at collecting taxes, paying salaries, providing social services, and enforcing laws, regional elites were deprived of levers of informal influence that had formed a significant portion of their political machines.

¹⁰³ Putin was always popular. In September 2002, his approval rating was 75%.

¹⁰⁴ More concretely, the President presents his choice to the regional legislature which then confirms the choice. If the regional legislature rejects the President's candidate, the President proposes another candidate. If the legislature rejects the second candidate, the President can disband the regional legislature and call new elections.

¹⁰⁵ This was made possible largely by treasury-filling oil revenues.

With all these resources concentrated in Putin's hands, it is perhaps surprising that the Kremlin invested at all in a party, but indeed, the Kremlin stepped up its commitments to United Russia over the course of the 2000s. After the elections, the Kremlin did not equivocate in its support for the party of power as had become customary for the Kremlin to do. Instead, the President's advisors continued to work closely with the party and send clear signals of current and future support for the dominant party. In a February 2006 speech before United Russia leaders, one of Putin's closest advisors, Vladislav Surkov, held out to the party the prospect of "dominating the political system for at least the next 10-15 years."¹⁰⁶ In a July 2006 speech, Surkov informed activists from another pro-Kremlin party that the political system would be "built around United Russia" for the foreseeable future.¹⁰⁷ In 2007, as I have discussed, Putin made an unprecedented signal of his willingness to commit by agreeing to head the United Russia party list. During that campaign, Putin's reputation became almost irrevocably linked to the party: the party's policy program, "Plan Putina" bore his name, party leaders frequently equated voting with United Russia with the continuation of the Putin presidency, and as the only candidate the federal portion of United Russia's party list, his name was brandished next to United Russia's on every ballot. But Putin's most significant investment in United Russia came in April 2008, when at the Party's Ninth Congress, Putin agreed to become Party Chairmen. As noted above, Putin now meets with the party frequently in public. He campaigns for the party in some regional

¹⁰⁶ Accessed on United Russia website <http://www.edinros.ru/news.html?id=111148> March 21, 2007.

¹⁰⁷ Accessed on United Russia website <http://www.edinros.ru/news.html?id=114850> March 21, 2007

elections and presides over special party meetings devoted to ideology and party initiated spending projects.¹⁰⁸

The Kremlin also institutionalized its commitments by sanctioning the cultivation of a party-based playing field where United Russia could dominate at the expense of independents and small parties. In 2001 and 2002, Putin pushed through changes in legislation that a) eliminated the need for party nominees to collect signatures (which significantly reduced the costs of a campaign), b) allocated public funding to parties in proportion to their seat totals in the Duma, c) raised the size and organizational requirements for party registration, d) allowed political parties to appoint half the nominees to elections, and e) mandated that at least half of the seats in regional legislatures be elected on party lists. These changes were designed to benefit all parties at the expense of independent candidates and fly-by-night political organizations, but at the same time, they reduced (but did not eliminate) both the Kremlin's and regional elites' incentives to diversify their electoral strategy across multiple small parties and independent candidates.

In the years following the 2003 elections, other party-promoting institutional changes further strengthened United Russia's position. The most significant of these was the move from a mixed to fully proportional electoral system for State Duma elections. Although United Russia was projected to do quite well in SMD races, the resources and effort expended on coordinating candidates and winning these races were too high for the Kremlin to bear. Thus, as Regina Smyth and her colleagues have astutely observed, the Kremlin traded 'seats for certainty' (Smyth et al 2007). New legislation also increased

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, "Edinaya Rossiya Prishla k svoemu lideru" *Kommersant*. 9 June 2009 and "V polukruga pervom" *Kommersant*. 10 April 2010.

the barrier for gaining seats from 5 to 7%. Simultaneously, the Kremlin encouraged regional legislatures to increase their electoral thresholds for the party list component to a minimum of 7%. With most regional legislatures dominated by United Russia, the regional assemblies needed little active encouragement. All regional elections held after December 2005 occurred in regions that had raised the barrier to at least 7%, while some such as Moscow City had raised it to as high as 10%.

A further party-building reform adopted in 2005 was the introduction of an imperative mandate rule to be effective after the 2007 elections. Under the imperative mandate rule, deputies are prohibited from changing their faction affiliations once they take their seat in the Duma. This reform was adopted in most regional legislatures as well.

The Kremlin was disappointed by the electoral performance of United Russia in late 2004 and early 2005.¹⁰⁹ Thus, further steps were taken to institutionalize the electoral advantages of the dominant party. First, it mandated that all regional and municipal elections be held on one of two specially designated “United Election Days,” one in the fall and one in the spring. This allowed United Russia to simultaneously coordinate its administrative and media resources on a national scale. Second, electoral blocs were banned from participating in regional elections. This removed the governors’ final method of creating their own regional organizations to contest elections.¹¹⁰ Third, members of one party were prohibited from serving on the party lists of another party.

¹⁰⁹ In 17 regional assembly elections held during this period, the party averaged only 26% percent of the vote and even finished second in three contests.

¹¹⁰ In seven of the ten elections in the second half of 2004 regional electoral blocs gained seats in the assembly. In the first half of 2005, regional electoral blocs won seats in five of seven assembly elections and in Sakhalin, a regional bloc won the election.

This meant that United Russia members could not simultaneously run on the party list of another party without first renouncing their membership.

By supporting, and in some cases initiating these reforms, the Kremlin sought to cultivate a single dominant party that could win elections and reduce the costs associated with identifying, coordinating, and channeling resources to pro-regime candidates. Since many of the rule changes disproportionately benefited the dominant party, the Kremlin partially tied its hands by making it harder for the Kremlin to support independents or place its eggs in multiple baskets by supporting other political parties.¹¹¹

The Kremlin's increasing willingness to commit to United Russia was further demonstrated by its gubernatorial appointments in the mid-late 2000s. As Table 4.3 shows, the Kremlin increasingly opted to appoint only governors who were already United Russia members.¹¹² Crucially, in March 2009, legislation was passed that gives the party with the majority in a regional legislature the responsibility of drawing up a list of three candidates for the President to select from when nominating a governor.¹¹³ Since the reform went into effect in July 2009, all governors appointed (and reappointed) have been United Russia members. This reform sent a clear signal to governors and potential governors that party loyalty was an important criterion for promotion. Although they might have preferred to be directly elected, their consolation prize was that they were now more certain about what it would take to secure promotion.

¹¹¹ The reform had the same effect on regional elites as well.

¹¹² Although more systematic analysis of this claim is required, many have suggested that it is not just United Russia membership that mattered, but the governor's loyalty to the party and his ability to coordinate regional elites within his region's branch "Governors Appointed for Loyalty and Votes" *The Moscow Times* 26 January 2007.

¹¹³ The reform had been proposed four years earlier. "Strana Sovetov Edinoi Rossii" *Gazeta.ru* 3 October 2005.

[Table 4.3 Here]

Putin worked closely with United Russia—and only United Russia—in the Duma, giving it influence over the distribution of budgetary pork and the distribution of National Project funds (Remington 2008, Tolstykh 2008). By supporting only one legislative party at all levels of government, the Kremlin sent a signal to elites about how access to pork, rents, and policy would be determined.¹¹⁴ The elite was thus granted access to numerable patronage opportunities that could be used to maintain office. Governors, whose reappointments depended in part on the vote total for United Russia in their regions had every incentive to encourage their clients in the dominant party faction to play ball so that they could bring spending back to their regions. Duma deputies themselves whose placement on the party list depended on their rating in the region and upon their ability to generate high vote totals for the party had similar incentives to cooperate with the dominant party. Although the Kremlin rarely interferes directly in matters related to the allocation of legislature leadership posts, by sanctioning the dominance of United Russia in regional legislatures, the Kremlin also indirectly sent a message about its approved method of organizing legislative advancement.¹¹⁵

The Kremlin was hesitant to invest in a dominant party in the early 2000s. It was uncertain of whether regional elites would be able to keep up their end of the bargain by

¹¹⁴ I have more to say about this in subsequent sections.

¹¹⁵ Interestingly, the Kremlin looked on approvingly when United Russia took all committee positions for itself in the 2003-2007 Duma. At the start of the Fifth Duma, however, Putin reportedly asked United Russia to give some minor committee chairmanships to the opposition. United Russia obliged by giving 6 committee chairmanships to the opposition, though it simultaneously increased the number of committees to 32 and transferred the real authority of some of the opposition's committees to the newly created committees that it kept for itself. With 26 of 32 committee chairmanships, the party still holds leadership positions out of proportion to its seats in the chamber. See "Partiya Vlasti poshla na dolzhnostnoye otstuplenie" *Kommersant*. 19 December 2007.

not using the party to challenge the leader, shirking the party line in regional election campaigns, and thumbing their nose at party discipline in legislatures. On the latter point, the Kremlin had good reason to doubt the ability of elites to remain completely loyal to one party in the early 2000s, given the manifest inability of single member deputies to vote cohesively with their factions in the Fourth Duma (and all previous ones) and the shifting factionalism that characterized all regional legislatures. Indeed, even as late as 2004, when United Russia had managed to impose what seemed like near perfect voting discipline on its deputies in the State Duma, eleven United Russia deputies broke ranks to vote against an unpopular bill that sought to eliminate certain in-kind social benefits. Many others grumbled publicly about the bill. The Kremlin had even more reason to doubt the ability of regional elites to maintain party discipline in election campaigns. As I discuss in the next section, governors frequently supported United Russia in the 2003 Duma elections while simultaneously backing their own regional based movements in local elections held in 2003 and 2004.

And as we have seen, the Kremlin frequently worried about the possibility that the party might be captured by powerful elites and become disloyal. Indeed, the Kremlin's fears appear not to be without basis for United Russia has frequently voiced its interest in creating a party-government. Soon after its victory in the 2003 Duma elections United Russia leaders began making public statements to this effect. The Kremlin was unwilling to make such an investment in a dominant party. In a 2006 press conference, Putin unequivocally voiced his opposition to a bill allowing the majority party in the Duma to name the government, calling such a law 'irresponsible.' Putin added, "It is my deep conviction that in the post soviet space, in the conditions of a developing economy,

strengthening state capacity, and the definitive realization of federal principals, *we need firm presidential authority.*”¹¹⁶ Nonetheless, United Russia leaders have continued to state their desire to attain more influence in the government. Vyacheslav Volodin, secretary of the party presidium, described the formation of a party government as one of United Russia’s ‘main objectives.’¹¹⁷ Another vocal advocate of a party government has been Tatarstan President Mintimer Shaimyev, who has repeatedly called for United Russia to ‘fulfill its duty as a party’ and create a party-government.¹¹⁸ After Putin became party chairman and prime minister in early 2008, United Russia leaders made it known to the press that they expected the new government to be composed of United Russia members.¹¹⁹ Putin, clearly did not agree, however, and the Russian government remains predominantly non-partisan.¹²⁰

The danger that a party leader could use the party to challenge Putin was reduced by the institutional structure of United Russia, which, until Putin’s accession to the chairmanship, divided political authority between the Chairman of the Higher Council and the Secretary of the Presidium. Nonetheless, as a rule, the potential for a dominant party to develop interests of its own that might contradict the interests of the leader was a justified fear that the Kremlin had.

¹¹⁶ Samarina, Alexandra. “Edinaya Rossiya utochnyaet presidenta” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 2 March, 2006.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ “Pravitelstvo i partiya ediny?” *Novaya Politika*. www.novopol.ru 24 January 2007.

¹¹⁹ “Partiinoye pravitelstvo obkatayut k 2010 godu” *Kommersant*. 16 April 2008.

¹²⁰ In apparent retaliation, United Russia leaders have openly criticized non-partisan cabinet members for promoting policies that the party finds odious. In July 2010, First Deputy Secretary of the United Russia’s Presidium, Andrei Isayev accused Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin of “putting a stick in United Russia’s spokes” by advocating an increase in the pension age “Partiya vlasti v poiskakh vraga naroda” *Kommersant*. 2 July 2010. The party has tried to counter the non-partisanship of the government by creating special party ‘commissars’ that correspond to the ministerial departments. It is not clear that these ‘commissars’ can exercise any influence, but the similarity between the departments of the Central Committee of the CPSU and these commissars is noteworthy. “Edinaya Rossiya prokontroliruyet Putin” *Gazeta.ru* 3 October 2008.

As the decade wore on, oil prices climbed, the economy grew, and Putin accumulated significant political capital. This changed the balance of resources between the Kremlin and elites and allowed the Kremlin to risk greater investment in United Russia. It also allowed the Kremlin to make centralizing changes that significantly reduced the resources of regional elites. The Kremlin's preferences for such changes had been constant since the mid-1990s, but these reforms could not be passed when regional elites were so strong. The shift in the balance of resources away from regional elites made these changes possible. In this way, the institutional changes that redistributed power between center and regions can be seen as a reflection of the change in the balance of resources, rather than a cause of it.

By the mid 2000s, regional elites were weakened to the point that they were willing to invest in the dominant party, but were not yet so weak that the Kremlin did not need to work with them in order to win elections, pass legislation, and manage cadres. As I discuss in more detail in the next section, elites still needed to be coopted. As early as 2002, Vladislav Surkov had spelled out why the Kremlin needed to cooperate with elites in a dominant party quite clearly when he addressed United Russia leaders and sympathetic governors in the party's infancy: "We need to look to 2008; we will survive until then somehow...The president may leave (we will not stop him) and then what will happen? Some extreme left or extreme right president may come to power... We could make a mistake and not win. We can't just be on artificial respiration and an I.V. all the time."¹²¹ Interpreting this quote somewhat, the goal for the Kremlin was to create a party that would consolidate elites such that the entire political system would not depend on the President. The signals of willingness to commit to United Russia that elites sent by

¹²¹ Quoted in "Odnokii Paravoz" *Ekspert*. 25 February 2002.

relinquishing their own patronage machines, joining the party, and submitting to party discipline showed the Kremlin that elites were ready to exhibit fealty to the dominant party and that further investments in its construction could proceed.

Elites and United Russia

Like the Kremlin, elites were at first hesitant to relinquish their autonomy and invest in United Russia. Their first instinct was to retain their own political machines and make only superficial commitments to United Russia. When they did make promises to the dominant party, they had a hard time keeping them. In regional elections in 2002, 2003, and 2004, many governors who had initially supported Unity or United Russia, supported their own regional political parties or slates of independent candidates that competed with United Russia in the regional election. For example, Kemerovo Governor Aman Tuleev was a member of the party's higher council in 2003 and on United Russia's Duma party list, but he ran his own list of candidates, Sluzhu Kuzbassu (I Serve the Kuzbass), in the Oblast regional election of the same year. Almost all regional governors demonstratively rejected United Russia's offer to nominate them and, several made a point to qualify their support for United Russia in the Duma election by noting that their future support was contingent on the party's future development (Slider 2006). In regional legislative elections, the party made little progress in attracting independent candidates in 2002 and 2003. In 2004 and 2005, the party lost several high-profile regional elections, and while many independent deputies joined the party after the election, the party still often had trouble attracting strong candidates in the SMD races.

Slider (2006) recounts an instance in 2002 in Leningradskaya Oblast when the federal leadership of United Russia dismissed the secretary of the regional branch as punishment for not supporting the campaign of the gubernatorial candidate chosen by the central party leadership. In retaliation, the Speaker and half the United Russia faction quit the party.

As the next chapter makes clear, very few governors joined the party during this period. Instead they chose to affiliate with the party in some limited way: they might join the Higher Council which did not require formal membership, they might head the party's regional list in regional legislative elections, or they could put their machines to work for the party in the State Duma elections. In the early and mid-2000s, one of the rewards for the latter type of cooperation with the Kremlin was that the governor would get to take control of the UR regional branch. Such capture was usually signaled by the governor naming an official from his administration to head up the regional branch (see for example Golosov 2004, p 278), but sometimes it simply manifested itself in the firing of a regional party secretary that was odious to the governor (Ivanov 2008, p 232). Over time, this limited affiliation opened the door for the central party leadership to exert increasing influence on individual governors.¹²²

Often governors who were members of United Russia demonstrated the shallowness of their commitment by using their administrative resources against the party even while they were formally affiliated with it. In the 2004 regional elections in Yaroslavskaya Oblast, the region's governor Anatoly Lysytsin who was by that time a

¹²² Note that I am not necessarily pitting the central party leadership against the governors here as some observers have done (Konitzer and Wegren 2006). Since governors increasingly began to constitute a significant portion of the party's central leadership, I am drawing a contrast between the authority of a single governor and the collective authority of the party, whose most authoritative members were often governors themselves.

party member entered into a conflict with the head of the regional branch of United Russia and, allegedly, used administrative resources against the party in those elections. The party failed to win a majority of seats.¹²³ In other regions, governors joined the party, but tried to keep their joining the party a secret.¹²⁴

Regional elites were at first reluctant to invest in a dominant party because their independent resources were still significant. Entering the cooperative bargain with the Kremlin was attractive, but still not yet attractive enough that elites were willing to relinquish their hard-earned autonomy. Despite Putin's centralizing reforms regional elites in the early and mid 2000s continued to ensure stability in the regions by managing relations among competing financial industrial groups and enterprises (Turovsky 2002, Hale 2003, Goode 2007). The 2003 elections showed once again that corralling the governors' political machines was the best means of generating votes for the party of power. In exchange for their support for the party, governors were given the chance to have their clients placed on United Russia's party list. In regional elections held between December 2003 and December 2005, it became clear that winning majorities in regional legislatures also depended in large part on getting governors to put their administrative resources to work for the party. For their part, regional legislators retaliated against the reforms that required mixed electoral systems in all regions, by simply increasing the size of the legislature, thereby securing a large number of single member district seats for reelection-oriented legislators who were interested in avoiding the restrictions of being elected on a United Russia party list.

¹²³ Author's Interview with United Russia party official working in Yaroslavl Regional Executive Committee in 2004. Yaroslavl, Russia. 12 June 2009.

¹²⁴ "Kurskii Gubernator Taino Vstupil v Edinuyu Rossiyu" *Kommersant*. 13 March 2005.

Perhaps the best evidence of the governors' continued strength is that Putin saw fit to reappoint 34 of the 47 governors that he appointed in 2005 and 2006. Thus, even though Putin had cancelled gubernatorial elections, he still needed most governors to secure political stability and effective governance in the regions. Indeed, some have suggested that most governors were resigned to the reform because they could then lobby to be reappointed and avoid looming term limits (Goode 2007, Titkov 2007). Indeed, some of Russia's longest serving governors were among those reappointed in the first years after the reform. In exchange for relinquishing the independence vis-à-vis Moscow, governors were now able to draw on the resources of the Kremlin and United Russia. This may have made them stronger in their own regions (Goode 2007).

Thus, in the early 2000s, the tendency was for regional elites to make contingent commitments to United Russia; they would lend the party the use of their political machines for an election, but not link their political machines and regional political movements irrevocably to it. A large number of regional elites did make commitments to the party of power by joining and contributing financially—indeed, more did this than at any time in post-Soviet history—but others kept their distance.

As the 2000s wore on the balance of resources between the Kremlin and regional elites continued to shift in favor of the Kremlin. As noted above, ample oil revenues, strong growth in incomes, and Putin's unshakable popularity gave the Kremlin the political capita it needed to push through reforms that strengthened the center vis-a-vis the regions. It also left the Kremlin secure in the knowledge that regional elites would be more interested in cooperating with the Kremlin. As a result, more governors began to join the party, serve on its political decision-making organs, and place their political

machines under the partial control of the party.¹²⁵ Increasingly, regional secretaries that were governors' clients were replaced by Duma deputies and other members of the regional elite.¹²⁶ Governors began submitting to the will of United Russia's leadership in the management of regional elections. In the run-up to the March 2007 regional elections in Murmansk, Andrei Vorob'ev, chairman of United Russia's Central Executive Committee, personally flew to Murmansk in order to iron out a conflict between the regions' two major financial industrial groups (the Kolsk Metallurgical Company, a daughter affiliate of Norilsk Nickel, and "Apatit," a company controlling 85% of Russia's phosphate production) over spots on the party list.¹²⁷ In the past, the regional governor would have been given discretion over the allocation of these spots, but in this case, the United Russia central leadership decided the appropriate allocation of list spots and dictated the choice to the governor.

In the Duma, elites had since 2003 undeviatingly submitted themselves to party discipline. In regional elections, more and more SMD candidates accepted United Russia party nominations over the course of the 2000s and as more regional enterprises shifted their political allegiances fully toward United Russia, they were able to supplement the governor's machine in generating votes for United Russia. Among national business elites, United Russia had come to completely monopolize the market for political representation by the 2007 Duma elections, as demonstrated by the near absence of major business figures in opposition party lists.

¹²⁵ For a good example, Aburamoto (2010) discusses how the governor of Khabarovsk Krai's regional political movement was melded into United Russia.

¹²⁶ "Vperyod Kommissari" *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. 22 April 2009.

¹²⁷ "Murmanskikh edinorossov pomirila rukha Moskvy" *Kommersant*. 11 December 2006.

In Chapter 5 and 6, I analyze in detail why regional elites chose to affiliate with United Russia when they did. There I find that those regional elites strong in autonomous resources postponed joining United Russia for longer than those without. My interviews with regional legislators in Perm, Yaroslavl, Kurgan, Kirov, Chelyabinsk, Ekaterinburg, and Yoshkar-Ola are consistent with those findings. Deputies were unanimous in professing a desire for retaining as much autonomy as possible. Even those who had joined United Russia quite early and occupied leadership positions in the regional branch lamented centralizing tendencies within the party. Deputies who had joined the party later and, therefore, did not have leadership positions in the regional branch tended to be more concerned about remaining autonomous of the regional party leadership.

In Chapter 6, I find that the characteristics of the firms that deputies represent go a long way toward explaining when they decided to give up their autonomy to United Russia. Deputies from state dependent enterprises (i.e. state owned, easily taxed, easily harassed, or dependent on government contracts) were more likely to join United Russia. In the interviews I have conducted, most deputies, for obvious reasons, were not upfront about how their firm's dependence on the state influenced their party affiliation decisions. Although, there were some exceptions. One deputy in Yaroslavl explained that when he ran for city council in 2004, he and his investment partners calculated that United Russia affiliation was not necessary because they had already managed to get all the permits for the shopping center they were building.¹²⁸ Several other independent SMD deputies who only joined United Russia after being elected maintained that their internal polling showed that United Russia affiliation would have hurt their chances of

¹²⁸ Author's Interview March 3, 2010. The deputy's business resources came from a series of shopping malls that he owned in the oblast.

winning in their districts. Of course, some deputies thought that being affiliated with Putin's party was a boon to their campaign and so joined the party. On the basis of these interviews, it is hard to sort out who had more personal resources, but the important thing to take away from such responses is that if a candidate believed that he/she could run and win without United Russia, they usually did so.

Indeed, the most surprising thing about my conversations with regional elites was that none of them reported being coerced, cajoled, or persuaded into joining the party. Of course, this may have been a face-saving maneuver on their part, but given how open some were in declaring their dissatisfaction with the centralizing tendencies of the party, it seems odd that they would hide being coerced into the party, as such an explanation could absolve them of what otherwise appears to be mild hypocrisy.

Also consistent with the argument offered here, several deputies mentioned their respect for President Putin as a reason for joining. As one early joining deputy in Kurgan put it, "I respect Putin very much....I wanted to be a member of his party and I thought there was a future here."¹²⁹ In Chelyabinsk and Sverdlovsk, three deputies who had joined the party before it attained majority status cited their governors' orientations toward United Russia as a reason for why they joined the party. These are two regions where the governors had both headed up regional political parties---Ural Rebirth and Transformation of the Urals, respectively---that were later subsumed by United Russia. Other deputies who had earned their place on the party list by working for the party branch in the region were straightforward about their dependence on the party.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Author's Interview with leader of United Russia faction in Kurgansaka Oblastnaya Duma, 25 July 2008.

¹³⁰ A number of respondents have described the two pronged strategy that United Russia employs in the drawing up of regional party lists. Some portion of the spots are set aside for party functionaries with no

Interviewed legislators also recognized the uncertainty-reducing benefits of working within a dominant party. Even those who lamented the loss of autonomy suffered under United Russia admitted that they were able to have more influence on the legislation because the legislative process had become less conflictual under United Russia.¹³¹ Although, in spite of those benefits, this particular deputy remained independent until 2007. One leading member of the United Russia faction in Sverdlovsk oblast' (and an early joiner in that region) specifically cited the uncertainty reducing benefits of United Russia membership: "Several times each session we tell the leader of our faction which projects and initiatives are most important to us. Everyone does this and a fair division is then worked out. This way we all know that we can fulfill certain promises to our districts and our supporters....Personally, this arrangement lets me sleep better at night."¹³²

In my interviews with regional legislators almost all cited a desire to lobby their interests from within the party's legislative faction. There was an assumption that United Russia membership would translate into better legislative access. I will have more to say about this in the next section, but for now, suffice to say that the benefits of cooperating with the majority party were clear to deputies. Not surprisingly, regional legislators in Russia want access to legislative goods that will help them secure rents for their business and patronage goods for their constituents. Like deputies in the State Duma, these legislators wanted assurances that relinquishing their autonomy to a party will help them

independent resources of their own. These are easily-controllable candidates that the party rewards for their loyalty. The other portion of the list is comprised of major enterprise directors and financiers who secure their spot in the legislature by purchasing a spot on the party list. Author's Interview with United Russia deputy in Yaroslavskaia Oblastnaya Duma, 25 February 2010.

¹³¹ Interview with former United Russia faction member in Perm Krai, July 10, 2008.

¹³² Author's interview, July 2, 2007.

access these goods. Legislators took cues from the Kremlin, and from their governors, to help them assess whether the party of power would be supported into the future, because executive support for a party at either level would go a long way toward determining that party's legislative influence. The signals that Putin and the governor gave in the early 2000s were sufficient to influence those legislators with insignificant or state-dependent resources to join the party, while those with greater resources awaited deeper signals from the executive branch and more conclusive proof that they could not achieve their political goals while remaining independent.

In sum, in the early 2000s, regional elites were still basking in the independence that their political machines afforded them, but by the mid-2000s, rising oil prices, a growing economy, and Putin's star power had shifted the balance of resources back toward the Kremlin and reduced the relevance of their political machines. As this process unfolded more and more elites joined United Russia. In return for giving up their autonomy, regional elites were granted access to opportunities for spoils through United Russia. These benefits soon came to rival the costs of relinquishing their autonomy as that autonomy became less useful and significant. All that was needed at this point to draw elites in was signals from the Kremlin that it would indeed support United Russia. When elites agreed to link their reputations, relinquish their political machines, and contribute financially to the party, they made sunk costs investments that changed their incentives to defect. As I discuss in the next section, their incentives to defect from the dominant party were further diminished as mutual expectations about its independent role in distributing spoils were cultivated.

Much more can be said about how resources influence elites' decisions to join United Russia, but I leave that discussion to the next two chapters.

4.6 Making Commitments Credible: United Russia as an Institution

Dominant parties are institutions that arise to solve mutual commitment problems between leaders and elites. They emerge when the imbalance of resources between the two sides is reduced to the point that they are willing to risk investment in such an institution. In previous sections I have demonstrated how the balance of resources between the Kremlin and elites determined each side's willingness to invest in a dominant party. In these sections, I have mentioned, in passing, how actors have irretrievably transferred resources to the party in order to make their commitments to the cooperative bargain credible, but since these sections were mostly about how actors came to be in a situation where they could make these commitments I have not gone into detail why these commitments to the cooperative bargain between the Kremlin and elites are credible. Nor have I devoted much attention to how United Russia operates as an institution that structures incentives to keep the Kremlin and elites from renegeing on their promises. In this section, I briefly discuss these topics.

Dominant parties vary in the extent to which they impose constraints on leaders and elites. As a bundle of rules and norms, some may exhibit more constraining institutional features than others. In other words, some dominant parties have more institutional strength than others. The PRI in Mexico and the CPSU in the Soviet Union are dominant parties with extreme institutional strength. Indeed, it is peculiar that most of our knowledge of how dominant parties operate comes from studies of these two

dominant party regimes, even though they are outliers in the extent to which they held a monopoly over political life. Most dominant parties are less expansive in their power. They constrain actors in some areas, but are still dependent on them in others. They share influence with other actors and institutions. United Russia falls into the latter category. Even while it constrains Putin in some areas, it remains dependent on him in others. It makes loyalty incentive compatible for elites in some areas, but sometimes fails to constrain elite discord in others.

I am not the first to have emphasized that in order for leaders to make a credible commitment to not abuse elites, the dominant party must be an independent institution that distributes spoils, policy, and careers (Magaloni 2008). But Magaloni is silent on exactly how that institution comes to be independent of leaders. To the extent that it retains any independent institutional significance, I describe here how United Russia has attained that significance.

In early and mid 2000s, leaders and elites took a series of steps that made their initial commitments to United Russia more credible. For leaders, I have already emphasized how Putin made symbolic transfers of resources by linking his name and reputation to the party. The height of this commitment was his becoming party chairman. Assuming that Putin wishes to appear at least minimally resolute, dissociation from the party would incur some reputational cost. By becoming 'party leader' Putin forfeited some portion of his personalistic authority. Putin's reputation for authoritative autonomy would not be immediately recoupable if, say, Putin wished now to disband the party and pursue a strategy of personalist rule.

Elites as well took this step by first supporting the party in elections, then

agreeing to head its party list in certain cases, and finally joining. In so doing, they gradually relinquished their reputation as independent authority figures. Elites, especially business elites, also increasingly made their commitments credible by investing more and more of their financial resources into the party. For the State Duma, it is rumored that candidates must pay between \$1 and \$2 million for a place on the party list. According to one of my interview respondents in Yaroslavskaia Oblasts, a place on the party list in that region costs between \$300,000 and \$600,000.¹³³ Indeed, contrary to some beliefs, United Russia is funded in a completely decentralized fashion. Candidates are expected to pay for their own election campaigns as well as pay the party a premium for the right to run under its banner.¹³⁴

Elites also increasingly linked their political machines to the party by relinquishing their regionally based political movements. This hand-tying move made it difficult for elites to retract their commitment and, for instance, run their own slates of candidates in regional elections. The Kremlin was less successful in tying its hands through the dismantlement of parallel organizations for monitoring and coordination. The Department of Internal Politics continued to selectively micromanage regional election campaigns and interferes in internal party affairs until 2008. Though it is worth noting that the size of the staff that coordinated United Russia in this department always paled in comparison to that of United Russia's organization and its abilities to gather information at the regional level remained limited. It is also noteworthy that, with Putin's transition to the Prime Minister's office, responsibility for coordinating United Russia has

¹³³ Author's Interview with United Russia deputies in Yaroslavskaia Oblastnaya Duma, 25 February 2010 and March 3, 2010.

¹³⁴ Lisa Blaydes (2007) has argued that authoritarian elections work as a sort of auction where access to state rents is sold to the highest bidder in election campaigns. The evidence in Russia suggests this to be the case for United Russia.

shifted to the government, which retains no such department. In both 2003 and 2007, the Kremlin hinted that it might support a second party of power, Rodina in 2003 and Just Russia in 2007, though both times, in the end, it made clear that these parties were not to challenge the dominance of United Russia.

Several broader institutional changes increased the costs for the two sides of defecting from the party bargain during the early and mid-2000s. Fixed election cycles meant that United Russia majorities elected in one election would, at least according to the letter of the law, be stable until the next election. This stickiness was reinforced by imperative mandate laws which forbade national and regional legislators from switching parliamentary parties. The introduction of proportional electoral rules made it impossible for the Kremlin or powerful governors to renege on support for the dominant party in order to support individual candidates and the introduction of high thresholds for representation removed the temptation to support multiple small parties. Changes to legislation giving the largest party in regional parliaments the power to draw up lists of gubernatorial nominations for the president and then confirm those nominations also increased the costs to subverting the party.

All these commitments increased the initial costs to renegeing on the party agreement. They bought time while the party got off the ground and gathered institutional independence. The commitment problem becomes moot when the dominant party institution structures incentives and behavior to an extent that it is in neither elites' nor leader's interest to renege on the bargain. In other words it is in equilibrium, when mutual cooperation becomes incentive compatible (even in the absence of any other nested institutional restraints or sunk costs). At this point, leaders do not want to impinge

on the independent authority of the party because it would destabilize the regime and elites do not want to defect because it would devastate their chances of securing access to policy, rents, and spoils. Reaching this point requires time that can be bought with the commitments outlined above. When the party is given some institutional independence, then the costs of renegeing begin to accumulate. This is what has been happening in Russia. As Putin granted the party its limited access to spoils and careers, elites began jettisoning the resources and technologies that permitted them to gain access to these goods through elections and bilateral lobbying with the Kremlin. This makes them dependent on the party, and quite possibly, motivated to defend its role in channeling rents to them. Their careers have come to depend partially on the party and not just on their own resources and individual ties to the Kremlin. To undermine the party risks the loss of elite loyalty.

The extent of United Russia's institutional significance should not be overstated, however. The commitment problem has not been entirely overcome in Russia, such that the party is the sole guarantor of regime stability in Russia. But it is operating as an institution because it structures incentives and is not simply epiphenomenal with the behavior that leaders and elites would otherwise pursue. Below I discuss how it operates as a semi-autonomous institution that structures how policy, careers, and rents are distributed.

Influence on Policy Making and Rent Distribution

For the party to have any meaning, it must be able to channel policy and rents to

supporters. Elites must know that party affiliation gives them the opportunity to access these goods. The main avenue for United Russia to do this is through its faction in the State Duma and regional parliaments. In the State Duma, the party, along with the governmental representative to the Duma and the presidential representative to the Duma, controls the details of the budgetary process, distributing pork to key lobbies within the party. In the 4th and 5th Duma, the party supplanted the ‘zero-reading’ (a consultative, pre-floor logrolling mechanism where individual deputies bargained with the government) with closed-door meetings of the faction Presidium (Lyubimov 2005). All legislative bargaining now runs through these Presidium meetings held every week when the Duma is in session. The same is true of almost all regional parliaments where logrolling is carried out most frequently in the United Russia faction meetings prior to plenary sessions.¹³⁵ In most regional parliaments, the party has come to structure the law-making process in a way that was unthinkable in the early 2000s when almost all regional parliaments were composed of independent deputies (Glubotskii and Kynev 2003). In a study of lobbying in the regions of the Central Federal Okrug conducted by the Center for the Study of the Interaction between Business and Politics, experts found that lobbying the executive branch was necessary to ‘quickly decide a specific matter of an individual character’ while lobbying the legislative branch permitted groups to defend their general, long term interests (Makhortov 2008, 4). The report concluded that lobbying via the executive branch was most important, but at the same time, a ‘majority of respondents consider membership in a party a key factor in the advancement of one’s

¹³⁵ In interviews with United Russia faction leaders and deputies from July 1 2007-July 18, 2007 and July 2, 2008-August 11, 2008 in Permskii Krai, Sverdlovskaya Oblast, Kurganskaya Oblast, Chelyabinskaya Oblast, and Kirovskaya Oblast, nearly all respondents agreed that the key decisions on legislation were made during the faction meeting.

interests.’ (Makhortov 2008, 5). Naturally, United Russia was the most favored party among respondents. In my own interviews, some regional legislators were quite frank about their desire to lobby their business interests inside the party, although they tended not to view this lobbying as a means toward enriching themselves, but rather as a means of securing privileges for their employees, who in the case of large enterprises, are also a large chunk of their electorate. In Kurgan, the owner of a large seed factory told me how being promoted to a committee chairmanship (with United Russia’s help, naturally) had helped him steer a bill that gave preferential access to the current renters of buildings owned by the regional government when it was privatized. This allowed his factory to expand and hire more workers, he noted.¹³⁶

The party has also been given control over coordinating the disbursement of national project funds in the regions and, in most regions, a special party commission has been created to oversee allocation.¹³⁷ In a January 2006 speech before United Russia Duma deputies, Putin set out the terms of the relationship between the national projects and United Russia: “The national projects are not something handed down from above—they are United Russia’s projects....They were developed with your input taken into account. Your proposals and the proposals of the government form their basis....The realization of the national projects is strictly the work of the party.”¹³⁸

The party also controls billions of dollars in so-called "Party Projects." These party projects are coordinated by the party and funded through some combination of federal special-purpose program funding (*Tselevyie Programmy*), regional budgetary expenditures, local budgetary expenditures, party donations, and business partnerships.

¹³⁶ Interview with deputy in Kurganskaya Oblastnaya Duma 25 July, 2008.

¹³⁷ Interview with member of Presidium of United Russia Political Council in Perm Krai, July 9, 2008.

¹³⁸ Accessed at <http://edinros.nov.ru/index.php?mmm=about&id=12> March 2, 2007

These projects channel funds toward social and infrastructure projects such as water purification plants, sports stadiums, school supplies, roads, sports programs, drug treatment centers, and libraries. Sometimes these projects are coordinated at the national level and directed at groups of regions. In these cases, the United Russia leadership leans on loyal business and taps federal special-purpose programs to fund special large scale patronage projects.¹³⁹ In other cases, party project funds are divvied up on a region-by-region basis.

It is an open secret that loyalty to the party plays a key role in determining how party project funds will be distributed in the regions.¹⁴⁰ And at the regional level, the regional branches organize reverse auctions where party project funds doled out on the basis of 1) how local administrations will use the money, 2) the availability of local budgetary matching funds to co-finance the project, and 3) party loyalty.

In addition to the party projects, the party makes a practice of attaching its brand to any infrastructure project or social program funded by regional budgets. During election campaigns the party frequently hangs banners on new hospitals, roads, bridges, and the like, stating that the piece of infrastructure was built with "Funds disbursed at the initiative of United Russia." United Russia bills itself as a party of "real deeds" (*realnykh del*). Whether it be national project money, party project funds, or simply budgetary or special purpose program funds for which the party claims credit, the party

¹³⁹ The party has embarked on a series of such projects under the aegis of its "2020 Strategy" modernization drive. At a series of regional conferences, Putin himself has announced the plans for these spending projects. One such project for the North Caucasus alone was projected to cost the federal budget \$200 dollars. This is not counting the donations that the party promised to secure from business for the construction of several factories, oil refineries, and sports stadiums. See "SMS-golosovanie v tseni sem' milliardov" *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. 6 July 2010.

¹⁴⁰ "Krizisnyi razvorot partii vlasti" *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 21 August 2009.

goes to great pains to demonstrate their success in delivering these goods to voters.¹⁴¹

Regional legislators want to be members of United Russia so that they can access these legislative goods and other policy. A deputy in Perm who was asked to run by the local association of collective farms and ran as an independent explained his decision to join the United Russia faction this way: “After the elections, United Russia had a majority. I saw that all major decisions would be made inside the faction. I told my colleagues on the farms, that there was no point in running if I didn’t join United Russia now. It didn’t matter what they thought or didn’t think about United Russia”¹⁴² In my interviews, such a response was very typical for deputies who joined United Russia after the party already had a majority in a regional legislature.

A recurring theme in candidates’ responses was their desire to use the party faction to lobby their interests. All operated under the assumption that formal faction membership (and in some cases, party membership) was necessary in order to lobby their interests effectively. But at the same time, many of these late-joining deputies proclaimed that if the party attempted to impose too much discipline on them, they would leave. For the most important regional elites that are not represented in a legislature (mostly regional enterprise directors) seats on the regional political council are prized because they give these economic elites an informal forum within which they can lobby their interests with members of the governor's administration and regional legislature.

United Russia's influence on policy making in the executive branch is more limited. There are no indications that the party exercises direct influence over the policy priorities of President Medvedev or, before him, Putin. The government as well is

¹⁴¹ Polls indicate that United Russia’s popularity depends significantly on such patronage projects. “Normalnaya Reaktsiya Normalnykh Lyudei” *Izvestia*, 2 November 2006.

¹⁴² Author’s Interview. 10 July, 2008.

mostly non-partisan and the party does not exercise control over its policy initiatives, though as noted before it has been known to take stances against government-initiated policy proposals. Among regional executive branches, the picture is more mixed. In almost all regions, the governor is a United Russia member and most members of governors' administrations are United Russia members, but there is little evidence that United Russia's central leadership involves itself directly in the policy-making activities of regional executives.¹⁴³ Regional branches do, however, sometimes monitor and give recommendations on the policy proposals of regional governors.¹⁴⁴

Influence on Elections and Personnel Management

United Russia's influence over the conduct of electoral campaigns is almost total, though this has not always been the case. In the early and mid 2000s, the Kremlin frequently attempted to micromanage United Russia's regional campaigns, sending teams of 'political technologists' into the regions to run campaigns and vet party lists. Since then, it has increasingly turned this task over to the central party leadership and to regional branches (although, in the 2007 Duma elections, reports indicate that the Kremlin vetoed some party decisions on the composition of lists).

According to the version of United Russia's charter adopted in late 2004, the Presidium of the General Council confirms lists for all candidates in regional legislative elections. The clients of powerful regional governors objected vigorously to these

¹⁴³ Elections and promotions are a different story.

¹⁴⁴ I asked central executive committee heads about this in five regions. In two regions, Kirov and Perm, respondents indicated that they did make policy recommendations to the governor. In the other three regions, Yaroslavl, Kurgan, and Chelyabinsk, respondents did not indicate that the regional branch restricted its policy advocacy to the legislative branch.

amendments indicating that regional leaders expected the rule changes to lead to real changes.¹⁴⁵ The details behind the process of drawing up United Russia's lists are rarely made public, but when scandals boil over, we see that the federal party leadership plays a key role in adjudicating disputes among governors and other members of the regional elite.¹⁴⁶

Aside from managing the process of candidate nomination, the United Russia leadership in Moscow also frequently takes the lead in conducting regional campaigns (see Ivanov 2008, 266-270). The increasingly active role of the Moscow leadership in the regions is further demonstrated by several statements of high profile regional governors, sharply bemoaning the interference of the party leadership in the regions. The most frank statement of this view came from Bashkortostan President Murtaza Rakhimov in June 2009 when he declared in an interview, "...I have just heard that United Russia needs to be independent—'not under the paw of governors.'...I am sorry, but the core of the party should be formed from below. But that doesn't seem to be the case right now. The party is being run by people who have never commanded anything more than three chickens. Is that the way it's really going to be?"¹⁴⁷ Such statements indicate that the party is exerting influence on the behavior of regional elites.

Indeed, Rakhimov's statements are borne out in fact. Although more systematic data analysis on this point is needed, the party's public push to make regional party secretaries independent of governors indicates the party's increasing influence over

¹⁴⁵ "Vremennno Ostavlenniyi" *Vlast'* 10 August 2009.

¹⁴⁶ See "Edinaya Rossiya pomirila gubernatora s merom" *Kommersant* 19 January 2007 and "Murmanskikh edinorossov pomirila rukha Moskvyy" *Kommersant*. 11 December 2006

¹⁴⁷ "Dissident Respubliki Bashkortostan" *Moskovskii Komsomolets* 4 June 2009.

regional elites.¹⁴⁸ A similar principle was applied to the heads of regional executive committees, a body that the party has increasingly sought to ‘professionalize’ by removing those who had independent resources and replacing them with functionaries who had exhibited loyalty to the party.¹⁴⁹ The obvious goal here was to make governors more dependent on United Russia, where they once had controlled regional branches in the early 2000s. This would mean that political decisions in the region, such as the drawing up of party lists, would have to be coordinated with United Russia rather than dictated by the governor.

The party has a monopoly on legislative advancement in both the State Duma and regional legislatures. By rising through the legislative leadership, elites can gain privileged access to key gatekeeping points in the spoil distribution process. I have already reviewed how the party now controls the initial phases of the gubernatorial nomination process and while more systematic analysis of this process is needed, some evidence suggests that the President acquiesces to the party’s preferences on some nominations. At an October 2009 meeting of President Medvedev with United Russia party leaders, Medvedev posed the question of whether United Russia would consider the possibility of nominating a candidate from another party. Boris Gryzlov responded: “While we admit the possibility of an abstract variant in which our party fails to win a majority in a regional parliament....The election results, naturally, give us the opportunity to nominate a candidate unilaterally. I think that we will try to achieve this result in the future as well”¹⁵⁰

The party lacks, however, any influence over appointments within the federal

¹⁴⁸ “Vpered, Kommissary” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 22 April 2009.

¹⁴⁹ “Edinaya Rossiya podnimaet ispolnitelnost komitetov” *Kommersant*. 8 September 2008.

¹⁵⁰ Transcript of meeting accessed at <http://www.kremlin.ru/transcripts/5717> 13 October 2009.

executive branch. Also, United Russia is not a gatekeeper for civil service appointments. Although state employees are the largest single category of United Russia members, advancement and hiring within *most* bureaucracies is not determined by political affiliation alone. This being said, it is common for local authorities to overzealously demonstrate their devotion to the party by packing local state organs with party members and making civil servants use state resources to assist primary party cells. There are also reports that enterprise directors force their employees to join the party and then deduct dues from paychecks.¹⁵¹

Party Discipline

For the party to have any appreciable authority over the distribution of spoils, it must be able to enforce discipline. Elite must know that if they break from the party line—either in legislatures, election campaigns, or in the advancement of personnel—they stand to risk their access to the spoils that are distributed through the party. Elites cannot be afforded the option of using their own resources to lobby for spoils, but must be made to understand that access to spoils depends on working for the party. In the State Duma, United Russia has imposed near perfect voting discipline on its members, though to be fair, voting discipline was also fairly high in previous party of power factions (Remington 2006, Chaisty 2005). The biggest change has come in regional legislatures, where United Russia faction members and legislative clerks report ironclad voting discipline. Regional legislative clerks interviewed in ten Russian regions all agreed that voting discipline increased immeasurably as soon as United Russia factions were created after the third

¹⁵¹ “Chistka Konkretno” *Vlast*. 22 August 2008.

regional electoral cycle.¹⁵² The abruptness of this increase in discipline indicates that it was not simply the preferences of the deputy groups or their loyalty to the regime that generated this cohesion but the institutional structure of the United Russia faction itself. A number of regions took steps in the mid-late 2000s to make roll-call voting compulsory in an attempt to root out any defectors from the United Russia party line.¹⁵³

The party moved aggressively in 2008 to remove mayors, deputies, local administration heads, and executive branch appointees that had broken party rules by discrediting the party in public, breaking party discipline in legislatures, or supporting non-party candidates in elections. The party went to great lengths to publicize this campaign.¹⁵⁴ The most common reason for purging an actor during this campaign was that he/she did not support the party's officially supported candidate or slate of candidates. Thus, to take but one of many examples, the mayor of Amursaya Oblast's capital, Blagoveshensk, was expelled from the party in July 2008 for campaigning on behalf of a set of candidates for city council seats that were competing with the official United Russia candidates.¹⁵⁵ In 2009 in Smolensk, the mayor was excluded from the party for running for reelection, even though the party had opted to support another

¹⁵² The regions were Permskii Krai, Sverdlovskaya Oblast, Kurganskaya Oblast, Chelyabinskaya Oblast, Kirovskaya Oblast, Yaroslavskaya Oblast, Ryzanskaya Oblast, Ivanovskaya Oblast, and Nizhegorodskaya Oblast. My logic of causal inference here is philosophically akin to what is known in statistics as a regression discontinuity approach. Presumably, the preferences of deputies were relatively similar just before the factions were created and just after, but they exhibited very different behavior. If what the legislative clerks say is true, then we can be fairly confident in concluding that the legislative factions are what caused the spike in voting discipline.

¹⁵³ "Tyumen delayet tainoye poimennym" *Kommersant*. 28 May 2010.

¹⁵⁴ For just several discussions of the campaign see "Edinaya Rossiya Kompostiruyet Part Biletu" *Kommersant* 18 August 2008, «Chekisty «Edinoi Rossii» Otravilis' v problemniye regiony» *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 17 October 2008, «Edinaya Rossiya obyavlyat chistki postoyanno deistvuyuschim mekhanismom, v regionakh nachinayut ot nikh zaschischat'sya" *newsru.ru* www.newsru.ru 18 September 2008, "Edinaya Rossiya vozvodit chistku v sistemu" *Kommersant* 29 January 2009.

¹⁵⁵ "V blagoveshenske na zasedanii gorodskogo otdeleniya partii "Edinaya Rossiya" prinyato resheniye isklyuchit iz ee ryadov mera Aleksandra Migulyu" *Rossiskaya Gazeta*. 15 July 2008.

candidate.¹⁵⁶ In one of the most high-profile party expulsions, the governor of Murmansk was excluded from the party for publicly supporting a non-party sanctioned candidate in the capital's mayoral elections.¹⁵⁷ In other instances, United Russia members, attempting to appear autonomous while simultaneously enjoying the administrative backing of United Russia, were excluded for criticizing the party during their election campaigns.¹⁵⁸

It is important to note that the party was not reacting to greater indiscipline among members. If anything disloyalty was on the wane when the purges began. In the early and mid-2000s, supporting non-United Russia candidates was a common practice among United Russia members.¹⁵⁹ In 2008, the party began to call attention to this phenomenon and punish it. This campaign of high-ranking purges coincided with a decision at the party's December 2007 congress to increase the waiting period for attaining party membership and instituting more stringent duration of membership requirements for nomination to leadership positions within the party.¹⁶⁰ According to the party's website 4% of members had been excluded by February 2008.¹⁶¹

The timing of these purges is consistent with the framework offered here. Despite all the resources that the Kremlin had accumulated by 2007, it still needed to coopt some powerful regional elites that could garner votes for the party, and thus, it did not want to alienate them by letting the party impose too many constraints on their behavior. But after the elections, the Kremlin was again in a position to strengthen the party institution. They sought to show that indiscipline would not be tolerated and that receiving spoils

¹⁵⁶ "Mera Smolenska lishilsya partbiletu" *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. 4 February, 2009.

¹⁵⁷ This case was somewhat atypical, however, because the governor had recently spoiled his relations with Moscow and was not expecting to be renominated. Therefore, he had less to lose from exclusion than is normally the case. "Pobedil, no proigral" *Gazeta.ru* 16 March 2009.

¹⁵⁸ See for example, "Partiinaya Chistka" *Zvezda*. 1 July 2008.

¹⁵⁹ See Ivanov (2008, p 232) and "Edinaya Rossiya protiv Edinoi Rossii" *Vlast* 10 August 2009.

¹⁶⁰ "Edinaya Rossiya zakreplyaet uspekhi" *Kommersant*. 18 December 2007.

¹⁶¹ Accessed on United Russia website, 10 July 2010. <http://www.edinros.ru/rubr.shtml?110112>

through the party meant that you had to work for the party. As one deputy in Kirov Oblast who had been excluded from the party for criticizing it during an election told me, “I took a principled stand. [I] assumed that [my] personal connections with the governor were more important. Now I am appealing the leadership to be reincluded in the faction.”¹⁶²

These purges not only underscore the party’s crucial informational role as a device for monitoring elite commitment, but also demonstrate that loyalty to the Kremlin is sometimes insufficient when it is not accompanied by loyalty to the party. For upper echelon figures (members of the government, presidential administration, security services), there is no question that loyalty to Putin takes precedence over loyalty to the party, but at the regional and local level the party increasingly demands the loyalty of almost all political actors. Disloyalty is punished by exclusion, which deprives elites of access to the significant rent streams that run through the party.

The purge also demonstrated a necessary fact about United Russia. That is, the act of party membership has meaning. It indicates who is participating in the accommodative arrangement with the regime and who is not. As United Russia’s first party leader, Aleksandr Bespalov put it, “We want them [governors, bureaucrats] to join so that they don’t sit on the fence, so that we know exactly who is with whom”.¹⁶³ Party membership further makes clear the rules of the accommodative arrangement and by accepting party membership, elites make a commitment to upholding that arrangement. To this end, United Russia leaders understand very well Huntington’s observation that

¹⁶² Author’s Interview 31 July 2008. In another example, a lobbyist in Yaroslavl, whose own candidacy for a city council seat after the party discovered that he was attempting to organize a sub-faction within the local branch reported that he now had trouble getting clients because of his strained relations with the party. Author’s Interview 1 March 2010.

¹⁶³ “My ne moskalskie mordy” *Kommersant* 6 August 2002.

the more important the party, the harder it is to become a member. In order to be granted access to spoils through the party, elites must agree to behave in certain ways. My interview respondents in the regions recognized this clearly as they bemoaned the loss of autonomy they would suffer by joining the dominant party. At the same time, they viewed their chances of influencing policy to be contingent on the formal step of joining the party (or the faction). This seemingly minor, formal step was necessary in their minds to receive access to the lobbying privileges that they sought.¹⁶⁴

Career Advancement

Elites not only want to receive rents and policy from the regime, but also career advancement. By institutionalizing loyalty-based promotions, a dominant party can reduce the uncertainty that elites face in competing for those promotions. If this is done, then elites can know that if they adhere to the terms of the accommodative arrangement, they will receive career advancement. Has United Russia begun to institutionalize any norms of career advancement based on party loyalty?

As noted above, United Russia can claim control over careers in the legislative branch at all levels, gubernatorial administrations, local administrations, and, to a certain extent, over governors. In the early and mid-2000s, the party's strategy was complete cooptation. There were no trusted party cadres to promote in the party's early days and

¹⁶⁴ It is not just politicians who seek United Russia membership for the benefits it brings. In a controversial piece of journalism, the Russian fashion magazine, *Esquire*, published in March 2010 a series of interviews with famous cultural figures, asking them why they had opted to join United Russia. Russia's first openly gay recording artist, Boris Moiseyev, explained his decision in frank terms: "You know, I used to go on tour and half my shows were cancelled because someone didn't like something about what I was doing, but now its somehow uncomfortable to cancel my shows. After all, I'm a member of United Russia.» "Zachem baleriny i gei vstupayut v Edinuyu Rossiyu" Russian *Esquire* 24 March 2010.

there had not been sufficient time for cadres to exhibit their loyalty, so the party simply attempted to sign up the most authoritative figures that were willing to join the party. Authoritative enterprise directors, legislators, governors, and mayors could win votes for the party, so the party attempted to enlist them. So in a given electoral contest, the party would endeavor to back the strongest candidate and lobby this candidate to join the party ranks. Personal connections and resources were more important in securing advancement than partisan loyalty.

Over time, however, the party has begun to give more thought to personnel politics. More systematic data analysis of this point is necessary, but my interviews with United Russia officials in Moscow and the regions indicated that the central party leadership began taking a more proactive approach to loyalty-based promotions in 2008, while some regions took it upon themselves to put party loyalty on par with personal resources as early as 2006.¹⁶⁵

In the 2007 Duma elections, United Russia was still very much engaged in cooptation, but the 2007 lists were notably more populated by United Russia functionaries than in 2003 (Ivanov 2008). I have already noted how, no non-United Russia members have been appointed governor since mid-2009. In the press, news stories surfaced in 2009 and 2010 about how United Russia was pressuring newly appointed governors to appoint United Russia functionaries that it deemed worthy of promotion to spots in the Federation Council. One particularly intriguing example of this occurred in Chelyabinsk, where the new governor freely admitted that United Russia had encouraged him to appoint the head of the party's youth wing, 33-year old Ruslan

¹⁶⁵ Interview with United Russia Political Council Presidium member, Sverdlovskaya Oblast, July 22, 2008 and with United Russia Political Council Presidium Member in Perm Krai, July 9, 2008

Gattarov. According to press reports, the sitting Senator in Chelyabinsk, Evgenii Eliseev, also a party member, had fallen out of favor with the party. Upon hearing that he was being replaced by Gattarov, Eliseev wrote a personal plea to Putin asking him to reverse the decision. Eliseev expressed hope that the Prime Minister would overturn the party leadership's decision, but weeks later Gattarov was confirmed as Senator by the Chelyabinsk regional legislature.¹⁶⁶

The party has recently sought to develop more precise criteria for the granting party promotions and list spots. According to the Secretary of the Presidium, Vyacheslav Volodin, when deciding where State Duma deputies are included on the party list for the 2011 elections, the party will take into account “the deputy’s successes in regional elections, their activity in the region, and their work in the party’s constituent service branches”.¹⁶⁷ For regional party leaders, the key metric of party loyalty is securing strong results for United Russia in regional elections. In exchange for strong results, United Russia makes it a policy to grant promotions. To take but one example, in Tulskaia Oblast, the party rewarded the regional secretary with a promotion to Senator for the better than expected performance of the party in regional elections held there in October 2009.¹⁶⁸ Another important metric is social stability. In regions where social protests were allowed to get out of hand during the 2008-09 economic crisis, regional party

¹⁶⁶ Vice Secretary of the United Russia Presidium Sergei Neverov stated: “Mr. Eliseev has the right to appeal to the party chairman...In any case, we did not notice much activity in Mr. Eliseev’s work; therefore, we proposed to the governor Gattarov, who is an active party member” “K naznacheniyu chelyabinskogo gubernatora privekli Vladimira Putina” *Kommersant*. 28 April 2010. For another example of United Russia pressuring governors to appoint party functionaries to the Federation Council see “Edinaya Rossiya formiruyet Sovet Federatsii” *Kommersant*. 6 May 2010. and “Edinaya Rossiya perestavit funktsionerov” *Kommersant*. 5 March 2009.

¹⁶⁷ “Edinaya Rossiya Gotovitsya k vyboram v Gosdumu: partiitsam dana ustanovka uvelichit’ rezul’taty” *newsru.ru* 29 April 2010.

¹⁶⁸ “Edinaya Rossiya” zamenit tulskovo spikera i senator” *Kommersant*. 22 October 2009.

leaders were removed from their posts.¹⁶⁹ My interviews with United Russia legislative leaders also indicate that party loyalty has become a key criteria taken into account by regional political councils when they make recommendations for the assignment of legislative leadership posts.¹⁷⁰

United Russia's control over careers in the federal executive branch and the bureaucracy is more limited, as I have mentioned before. But this does not mean that the party has not tried to extend its influence over these areas. Since 2006, a 'personnel reserve' (kadrovyyi rezerv) system, similar in concept (though not in scope of application) to the Soviet nomenklatura system, has formed the basis for many intra-party promotions. Plans were launched in 2008 to make it one of several routes for the selection of cadres in the executive branch as well as in business.¹⁷¹ Initial results indicate isolated successes, but, as of this writing, United Russia's personnel reserve system was still only a minor component of the cadre management system in the executive branch.¹⁷²

Summing up United Russia's Role as an Institution

Mikhail Gorbachev is fond of saying that United Russia is a "bad copy of the CPSU".¹⁷³ By this he is likely implying that the party exhibits the centralized bureaucratic tendencies of a dominant party, but eschews the clear ideological vision that was a hallmark of communist parties. While prophecies of a return to CPSU-style, single party

¹⁶⁹ "Mitingovavshim za vsye obeshayut "protiv vseh"" *Kommersnat*. 2 February 2010.

¹⁷⁰ Author's Interview with former Chairman of Yaroslavskaya Oblastnaya Duma, 5 May 2010.

¹⁷¹ See for example "Edinaya Rossiya Budet Sorevnovatsya s polpredami presidenta" *Kommersant*. 4 September, 2008, and "Kadrovyyi inkubator partii vlasti" *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 28 July 2008.

¹⁷² Specific examples of program successes can be found on the projects web portal "Kadrovyyi Reserv: Professionalnaya Komanda Strany, <http://profkomanda.edinros.ru/index.php?pageid=about>

¹⁷³ "Vopros Nedeli," *Vlast'*, 6 August 2007.

rule are likely to prove false, United Russia is now functioning as a dominant party institution. For the Kremlin and Putin, it keeps elites loyal, makes passing legislation easier, and reduces the costs of coordinating supporters in elections. For elites, it reduces the uncertainty associated with securing access to spoils. Putin and the Kremlin are loathe to dismantle the party because Russia's leaders have already linked their reputation to the party, coupled the maintenance of the dominant party to other institutional features of the regime, limited their investment in parallel institutions for gathering information on controlling elections and distributing spoils, and, have made institutional investments in the party that give elites an incentive to defend the party's independence. The party now works to ensure elite loyalty by providing elites with reasonable and clear guarantees that they will receive spoils and advancement in the future. In 2008-09, as Russia experienced its worst economic crisis since the fall of the Soviet Union, there were no reported instances of prominent regional elites deserting the party to run their own campaigns or run on other party lists. In remarks on the state of Russia's political system during the crisis, Vladislav Surkov coolly commented, "The system is working...One party dominates and there are many minuses to this, but I am deeply convinced that there are many more pluses in this. If we had entered this turbulent zone in a more undisciplined fashion, I can assure you, the damage that the state and society would have suffered would be much greater."¹⁷⁴

Elites are further deterred from defecting by the fact that they have invested their reputations, finances, and political machines in the dominant party. Party membership has always been a sufficient condition for inclusion in the accommodative

¹⁷⁴ Remarks by Vladislav Surkov at the Strategy 2020 Forum 2 March 2009
http://www.polit.ru/country/2009/03/03/surkov_text.html.

arrangement. By joining the party, elites signal their loyalty to the regime. Increasingly, however, the party has also become a necessary condition for receiving spoils. It marks a dividing line between those who are allowed to share in the benefits of ruling and those who cannot. The party makes clear the rules of the accommodative arrangement and makes it clear who and how to punish those who deviate from that agreement.

The ultimate commitment that a leader can make to the dominant party is to step down and allow the next leader to be selected from the ranks of the party. This level of commitment has not been achieved in Russia. Putin and the presidential administration before him exerted significant informal influence over United Russia. With every passing year, Putin associates himself with the party more closely, but he is still not a party member and he retains significant personal resources that are separate from the party. Medvedev, his successor to the presidency, was not chosen from the party ranks and is not formally (or informally) beholden for his office to the collective leadership of the party. The Kremlin was always stuck between a rock and a hard place in its relations with United Russia. On the one hand, it wanted to grant the party independence and institutional autonomy in order to secure elite loyalty, but on the other, it has resented the party's attempts to accumulate authority at the expense of the Kremlin.

As of this writing, Putin's resources remain largely separate from the party, but with his decision to step down from the presidency, Putin's dependence on the party has grown. If a conflict between Putin and Medvedev were to emerge, Putin, as leader of United Russia, could call on the dominant party as a powerful resource to use against the President. But the problem is that this requires Putin to do two things that are seemingly incompatible. First, he must continue to cultivate in United Russia a singular loyalty to

himself, so that when the time comes he, and he alone, can wield the party against a potential rival. Second, he must continue the process of making United Russia a powerful institution in its own right, or else, when the time comes, the party will not be much of a weapon to wield. The solution, as Stalin clearly understood, is to expand the leader's personality cult, while simultaneously fostering the development of the party institution. In sum, there should be no illusions that regime stability in today's Russia is founded on United Russia and United Russia alone. Rather, the current regime rests upon two pillars: Putin's personal authority and the dominant party's ability to maintain elite cohesion.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a narrative account of post-Soviet Russia's experience with regime parties in order to illustrate how the balance of resources between leaders and elites in a country determines the chances that a dominant party will form. In the early 1990s, the same decentralizing processes that accompanied the collapse of the Soviet Union also made the recreation (or maintenance) of a dominant party impractical. Russia's elites were autonomous, strong, and anathema to any centralizing constraints. Yeltsin, it seems, recognized this and decided not to risk wasting resources on a strong pro-presidential party. In the absence of a strong governing party, Yeltsin expended enormous resources and effort wrangling with competing factions in parliament. With such uncertainty, the recent collapse of the Soviet Union, and Yeltsin's own priorities to destroy all traces of Communism, the non-emergence of a dominant party is likely

overdetermined in the immediate post-transition era in Russia, but the period usefully demonstrates some aspects of the commitment problem.

The failure of Our Home is Russia more clearly illustrates the theory in action. In the mid-1990s, elites had accumulated significant autonomous resources that were used to construct elaborate clientelistic networks. These machines gave governors the resources to win elections and govern their regions. They still needed to cooperate with Moscow, but they were not willing to relinquish much of their autonomy to achieve this cooperation and so they preferred to bilaterally contract with Yeltsin in order to secure preferential rents and financing. Yeltsin's fear of these elites, and especially his fear that a party could groom a leader that could challenge him, prompted him to undermine his own party of power, Our Home is Russia. Without any signals from the Kremlin that it would be supporting a single party of power, any motivation elites had to link their fates to a party of power evaporated. Thus, Our Home never became a dominant party that controlled policy, rents, or career advancement. Since there were no guarantees that spoils would be distributed through it in the future, elites had no reason to remain loyal to the party and defected en masse. Thus, although existing explanations predict that Yeltsin would have created a strong party to coopt the puissant Communist opposition and bind elites to the regime in the absence of rent revenues, the President took the opposite route and undermined his own parties of power. He did this precisely because elites were so strong.

In 1999, regional elites reached the apex of their power. In this setting, the Kremlin allowed Our Home to wither and, by mid 1999, had still not identified a party of power that it would back in the December 1999 parliamentary elections. The Kremlin

played a divide and rule strategy by sending mixed signals about which, if any, of several governors' parties it would support and, then at the last moment, endorsing its own skeletal movement to secure the support of a plurality of unaffiliated governors. But Unity was a campaign strategy, not a party. And after the elections, the Kremlin was not particularly willing to turn it into a dominant party. The 1999 elections had demonstrated just how powerful Russia's governors were, and in 2000 and 2001, they continued to rely on their autonomous resources to win elections and bargain for rents with the Kremlin. Thus, during its brief existence, Unity did not transform into a dominant party because the Kremlin still feared elites and elites were disinclined to relinquish their autonomy to a dominant party when Putin was not ready to turn that party into a dependable arena for securing access to spoils and careers.

In the 2000s, the balance of power between the Kremlin and regions changed as explosive economic growth and treasury-filling oil revenues, gave Putin enormous political capital. Given the expansive powers afforded the Russian president and the region's persistent financial dependence on Moscow, these changes were more than enough to make cooperation with the center qualitatively more attractive to elites, and, in turn, allowed Putin to push through changes that weakened, to the extent possible, elites' political machines. But through their clientelistic networks and political machines, regional elites continued to wield great authority in their regions in the 2000s. They were purveyors of political stability and could, if they so desired, mobilize their regions for the Kremlin.

In this way, the balance of power in Russia in the 2000s, resembles the balance of power that Migdal found to be characteristic of many African countries in the post-

colonial period, where state leaders could remove any one strongman at any time, but “the pattern of social control” that they represented could not be undermined (Migdal 1988, 141). Putin could deploy his resources to have any one governor removed (an act that became extremely simple after the cancellation of gubernatorial elections in 2004), but he needed the governors’ political machines in order win elections and govern cost-effectively.

Putin wanted to reduce the independence of Russia’s regional elites. And so, he took measures, such as the cancellation of governors’ elections, to chip away at their autonomous resources. But he also knew that weakening them too much would strip away the regime’s ability to win elections and govern. This, it seems to me, is likely an enduring dilemma for authoritarian leaders. How can a leader coopt the resources of an elite actor without destroying them? By removing governors from their posts and replacing them with outsiders, the Kremlin could maximize their dependence on Moscow, but these figures would not have any authority in the region and, apart from whatever skills they might possess as administrators, they would not be able to generate votes and support for the Kremlin.¹⁷⁵ On the other hand, granting full independence to governors would maximize their vote-getting ability, but then the Kremlin could not depend on being able to secure the support of the governors. The solution was to weaken them to a point and then coopt them into the party with carrots (spoils, promises of career advancement, guarantees that their positions were secure) that could be distributed in a dependable, relatively rule-governed manner through the dominant party. This is why

¹⁷⁵ Indeed, this is exactly the problem that the party is now confronting. In regional elections, it once depended on the authority and political machine of the governor. As governors lose their independent political capital in the region, the party is having difficulty finding authoritative figures that can make personal appeals in regional campaigns.

Putin renominated sitting regional executives in the vast majority of his 2005 and 2006 gubernatorial appointments.

Putin is hardly the first authoritarian leader to be faced with a need to simultaneously control and draw upon the resources of elites. In an earlier era, the first General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union faced a similar dilemma that he solved through the creation of a system that would outlive him by almost 40 years. Voslensky sums up Stalin's situation:

Stalin's protégés were his creatures. But the converse was also true; he was their creature, for they were the social base of his dictatorship, and they certainly hoped he would ensure them collective dictatorship over the country. In servilely carrying out his orders, they counted on the fact that these were given in their interests. Stalin could of course at any moment liquidate any one of them (as he often did), but in no circumstances could he liquidate the nomenklaturist class as a whole. He showed zealous concern for his protégés interests and the reinforcement of their power, authority, and privileges. He was the creature of his creatures, and he knew that they would scrupulously respect his wishes as long as he respected theirs. (1984, 51).

Putin found this approach attractive (and, no doubt, familiar). The result has been United Russia. Because elites were not so strong that they would shirk any obligations laid out for them in a dominant party, Putin could feel comfortable in investing his own resources in such a party. His signals of support emboldened elites to make their own investments.

Putin needs the cooperation of Russia's elites just as those elites need his personal and political resources to maintain their careers. He is their 'creature' as much as they are his. Putin's power is such that he can eliminate any one elite actor, but it is not sufficient to fully undermine the system of political control that regional elites command. So while fraud, repression, coercion, and patronage are indeed tools that the regime employs to maintain control, elite cohesion is an intermediate factor that makes

authoritarian rule possible.

.As of this writing, Russia's dominant party system appears stable. Sovietologists' failure to predict the end of the Soviet Union and the turbulence of the transition has made predictions of regime stability in Eurasia unfashionable. But given what we know in political science about dominant party equilibria, all signs point to medium-term stability in Russia's current regime.

Recently, the economic crisis has elicited increased demands for political liberalization. President Medvedev has made remarks that seem to indicate that he agrees with the need for political liberalization. But the Kremlin has been very careful not to let these remarks be interpreted as signals that the regime is withdrawing its support for the dominant party, because they know all too well, that by opening access to spoils to the opposition, they risk facing defections from autonomy hungry cadres in the ruling party. Thus, the Kremlin has adopted a strategy of admitting that liberalization is a worthy goal "for the future," while simultaneously affirming its support for the current system. Vladislav Surkov, who, for obvious reasons, has a strong track record of correctly forecasting the future of Russia's political system, summed up the Kremlin's attitude toward United Russia's role in the following way:

United Russia has every chance to win in 2011. And why not? That is good for the goals of modernization. The system needs to be adapted to a changing, complexifying society. But this doesn't mean that we should destroy the system. We need to preserve it, and not permit that which can destroy it....It is critically important to maintain social stability. Stability doesn't mean stagnation; it doesn't mean stopping. It is an instrument of development. From chaos there can be no modernization. And it is not a fact that Russia would survive another period of disintegration and neither can it survive in the absence of development.

I have argued with fragments of data, anecdotes, and qualitative evidence that United Russia is an independent institution operating with significant enough control over spoils that we can call it a dominant. As a matter of descriptive inference much more work in this area is needed. Dominant parties must be able to guarantee to their members that fealty to the party will be rewarded with advancement, or, else, the costs of fealty are not worth bearing. Therefore, studies of how party loyalty influences cadre advancement will be most useful in accurately gauging the depths of United Russia's influence. Party lists, legislative leadership advancement, gubernatorial appointments, regional party secretary advancement, and Federation Council appointments all can be analyzed to determine the extent to which cadres that demonstrate loyalty to United Russia are advanced. Scholars would have to be creative in how they measure party loyalty. In some settings, I expect that the length of time that a cadre has spent working in the party is a useful measure of party loyalty. Such a measure will not be so useful in mature dominant parties where party membership has been a career requirement for decades. In Russia, however, some elites cast their lot with United Russia quite early and other postponed. I, for one, would be intrigued to know if those who joined earlier are privileged for advancement. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that career advancement for Duma deputies, regional party secretaries, and governors is highly dependent on turning out the vote for United Russia. Our understanding of Russia's current regime would be furthered by systematic confirmation of this. Of course, we can be sure that partisan loyalty is not all that matters in the advancement of cadres. Patron-client ties are rife within the dominant party, just as they were under the CPSU (Willerton 1992). Responsiveness to local demands, effective governance, and policy outcomes also likely

play a role in determining who gets appointed. But without systematic analysis we just cannot know. It may also be worthwhile to study how federal special purpose funds and party project funds are directed. I would hypothesize that party loyalty also heavily conditions who gets these spoils.

In concluding this chapter, I want to say a few things about how the study of United Russia links to the study of dominant parties around the world. In this study, I have tried to bring Russia closer to the emerging literature on authoritarian regimes and recent literature on authoritarian regimes closer to Russia. In the 1990s, scholars of Russian politics fruitfully engaged with and contributed to comparative arguments about institution-building, party development, voting behavior, and a range of other topics related to democratization. As Russia became more autocratic in the 2000s, scholars of Russian politics have been slower to catch up in applying recent theories of authoritarian rule to Russia. Likewise, the recent spate of work on authoritarian regimes in comparative politics has largely missed out on the data and perspective that the countries of the former Soviet Union can offer. It is my hope that this work will inspire other scholars of Russian politics to chime in on the authoritarian politics debate, as well as bring Russia's experience to bear on theories of modern authoritarian politics.

4.8 Tables and Figures

Figure 4.1 Russia's Governors in United Russia: 2003-2007

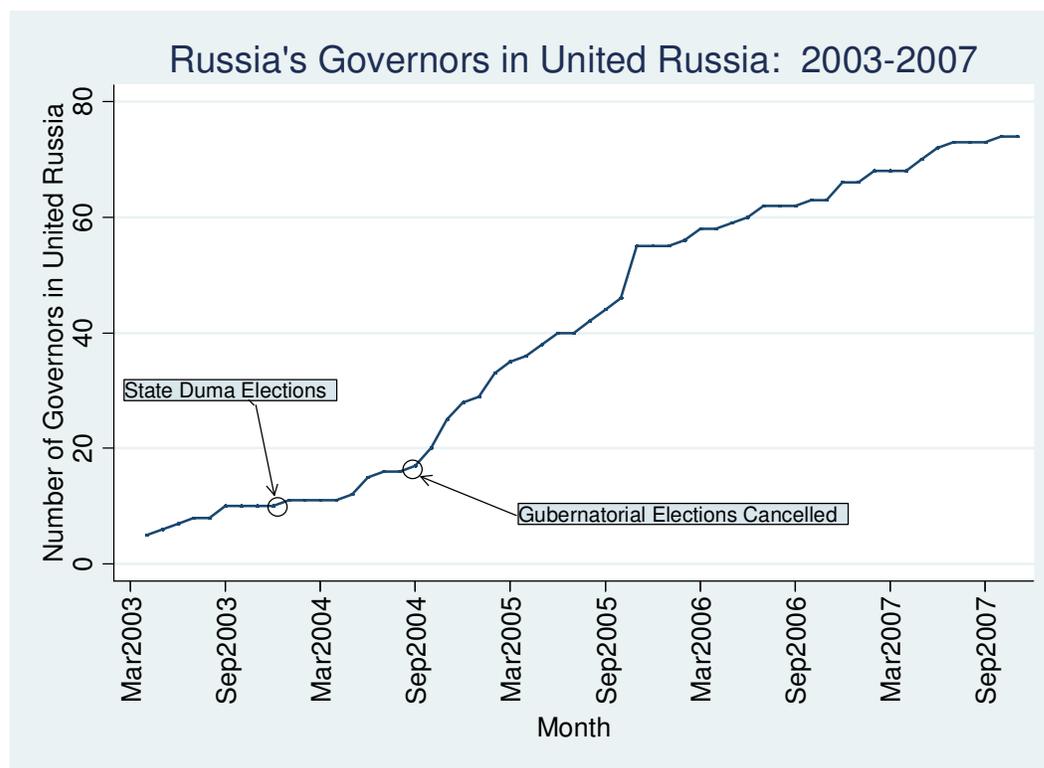


Table 4.1 United Russia Faction Size in Regional Legislatures (as share of seats in legislature)

Region	2003	2004	2006	2009
Adygei Repub	44.4	40.7	61.1	74.1
Agin-Buryat	33.3	66.7	66.7	
Altai Republ	24.4	24.4	51.2	61
Altai krai	52	46	56	66.2
Amur oblast	25	27.8	30.6	69.4
Arkhangelsk	38.5	33.3	76.9	68.9
Astrakhan ob	31	27.6	51.7	55.2
Bashkortosta	74.2	86.7	82.5	95
Belgorod obl	20	28.6	68.6	68.6
Briansk obla	4	23.3	23.3	76.7
Buryatia	26.2	41.5	50.8	72.7
Chechen rep			60	90.2
Chelyabinsk	8.9	32.9	71.7	83.3
Chita oblast	0	14.3	23.8	72
Chukotka aut	30.8	53.8	75	
Chuvash Repu	21.9	32.9	75	72.7
Dagestan Rep	3.3	19.8	52.9	76.4

Evenki	52.2	65.2	65.2	
Ingush Repub	0	38.2	38.2	74.1
Irkutsk obla	35.6	48.9	53.3	72
Ivanovo obla	25.7	57.1	68.8	77.1
Jewish auton	33.3		73.3	75
Kabardino-Ba	61.1	78.3	78.3	72.2
Kaliningrad		40.6	78.1	67.5
Kalmykia	66.7	77.8	77.8	74.1
Kaluga oblas	7.5	12.5	35	60
Kamchatka ob	28.2	52.6	52.6	80
Karachaev-Ch	17.8	67.1	67.1	71.2
Karelia	31.6	31.6	54	50
Kemerovo obl	5.7	0	74.3	97.2
Khabarovsk k	24	30.8	69.2	73.1
Khakassia		49.3	37.3	73.3
Khanty-M	48	56	78.6	85.7
Kirov oblast	18.5	22.2	53.7	66.7
Komi Republi	20.8	20	50	60
Komi-PermAO	40	53.3		
Koryak AO	0	25		
Kostroma obl	16.7	20.8	41.7	58.3
Krasnodar kr	3.2	20	79.1	87.1
Krasnoyarsk		26.2	52.4	55.8
Kurgan oblas	27.3	62.5	62.5	70.6
Kursk oblast	0	8.9	66.7	71.1
Leningrad ob	22	22	44	60
Lipetsk obla	10.5	31.6	73.2	73.2
Magadan obla		64.7	56	60
Mari-El Repu	35.8	46.2	44.8	59.6
Mordovia SSR	0	89.6	89.6	95.8
Moscow city	40	40	80	80
Moscow oblas	34	32	60	66
Murmansk obl		19.2	26.9	62.5
Nenetsk AO	6.7		46.7	54.5
Nizhnii Novg	28.9	35.6	73.3	82
North Osetia	8	37.3	29.5	77.1
Novgorod obl	0	15.4	64	61.5
Novosibirsk	0	10.2	51	70.4
Omsk oblast	36.7	40	40	86.4
Orel oblast	14			68
Orenburg obl	29.8	25.5	55.3	68.1
Penza oblast	55.6	60	55.6	88
Perm oblast	40	45	52.5	60
Primorsk kra	15.4	66.7	59	75
Pskov oblast		68.2	72.7	65.9
Riazan oblas	19.4	27.8	52.8	58.3
Rostov oblas		44.4	68.9	90
Sakha-Yakuti	31.4	37.1	61.4	71.4
Sakhalin obl	40.7	40.7	55.6	75
Samara oblas	28	10	16	62
Saratov obla	37.1	42.9	71.4	86.1
Smolensk obl	58.3	35.4	58.3	72.9
St. Petersburg	18	27.7	51.1	46
Stavropol kr	28	28	36	52
Sverdlovsk o		16.7	31.3	60.7
Taimyr	18.2		58.3	

Tambov oblas	48	52	70	68
Tatarstan	31.5	93	93	76
Tiumen oblas		52	72	88.2
Tomsk oblast	31	42.9	50	66.7
Tula oblast	22.9	29.2	37.5	60.4
Tuva	9.4	46.9	46.9	53.1
Tver oblast	42.4	51.5	57.6	66.7
Udmurt Repub	47	28	51	75
Ulyanovsk ob	0	52	60	80
Ust-Ordyn	46.7	38.9	63.2	
Vladimir obl	29.7	27	40.5	71.1
Volgograd ob	18.8	29.7	45.9	71.
Vologda obla	46.7	38.2	61.8	75
Voronezh obl	26.7	20	66.1	80
Yamalo-N	19	36.4	72.7	72.7
Yaroslavl ob	42	22	40	76
Mean	26.8	39.1	57.5	71.2

Table 4.2 United Russia in Regional Legislative Elections 2003-2010 (by six-month period)

	2003-2	2004-1	2004-2	2005-1	2005-2	2006-1	2006-2	2007-1	2007-2	2008-1	2008-2	2009-1	2009-2	2010-1
# of elections	7	6	10	8	11	8	10	15	9	11	5	9	3	8
Mean Party list Vote Percentage	47.09	45.39	28.49	29.26	45.25	37.49	44.89	44.40	64.39	49.10	66.5	58.62	62.06	50.59
Std. Dev. Vote share	19.17	18.54	7	13.52	13.69	8.9	6.7	11.79	11	10.85	18.5	12.13	5.83	9.26
Minimum Party List Result	27.38	24.43	17	17.66	29.99	27.2	34.56	23.85	51.27	50.02	49.4	43.03	55.4	39.79
Maximum Party List result	76.23	69.2	40	60.69	69.2	54.63	55.32	68.58	90.4	85.77	88.4	79.3	66.25	64.76
Mean Percentage of Mandates Won	54.65	53.9	33.7	36.58	61.63	56.20	55.56	60.12	77.89	70.5	85.2	70.39	82.1	68.32

Each column

Table 4.3 Gubernatorial Appointments and United Russia Membership, January 2005-June 2010

	# of Appointments	# New Governors Appointed			# Sitting Governors Reappointed			Total Percentage of Appointed and Reappointed Governors in United Russia
			<i>Of which United Russia Members*</i>	<i>Percentage</i>		<i>Of which United Russia Members</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	
2005	41	11	6	55	30	14	47	49
2006	6	2	1	50	4	2	50	50
2007	20	8	7	88	12	10	83	56
2008	11	9	6	67	2	1	50	64
2009	15	8	7	88	7	6	86	87
2010	23	14	14	100	9	9	100	100

*Appointee was member of United Russia prior to appointment.

CHAPTER 5 ELITE AFFILIATION AND DOMINANT PARTY EMERGENCE: UNITED RUSSIA AND RUSSIA'S GOVERNORS¹⁷⁶

5.1 Introduction

Dominant parties are most likely to emerge when neither elites nor leaders hold a preponderance of political resources. When the two-sided commitment problem is mitigated as such, both sides are more likely to risk investments in a dominant party institution that might formally solve their commitment problems. For their part, elites are more inclined to join a dominant party as the spoils, perks, and privileges associated with party membership increase relative to the benefits they receive from retaining their own autonomous control over patronage networks and political machines. When the value of their autonomous resources is high (i.e. when elites are strong), elites have little reason to invest in a party. In turn, when elite commitment is uncertain, central leaders will not make their own investments in a dominant party.

In Chapter 4, I used the case of contemporary Russia to illustrate this theory. In the 1990s and early 2000s, Russia's governors and regional elites developed formidable political machines--autonomous resources that gave them significant bargaining strength vis-à-vis the Kremlin. This left them with little incentive to tie their fates to any party project proposed by the Kremlin. In turn, knowing that Russia's regional elites were not in any position to credibly commit themselves to a party, Yeltsin had every incentive to undermine pro-presidential parties that might restrict his freedom of maneuver. By the mid 2000s, however, rising oil prices, reduced uncertainty, and sustained economic

¹⁷⁶ This chapter is based, in part, on Reuter, Ora John. "The Politics of Dominant Formation: United Russia and Russia's Governors" *Europe-Asia Studies*. 62(2).

growth shifted the resource balance decidedly away from regional elites and toward the Kremlin. Thus, after 2003, regional elites were still strong enough that the Kremlin needed to secure their cooperation, but not so strong that they were unwilling to affiliate with the emergent dominant party. The result has been United Russia.

In chapter 7, I further examine the cross-national implications of this theory through an analysis of dominant party emergence in all non-democracies since World War II. But before leaving the Russian case, this chapter and the next take advantage of United Russia's recent emergence to probe deeper into the individual-level mechanisms that stand behind my theory. This enriches the theory-testing process by demonstrating that the individual elite actors in my theoretical framework 1) have the interests that I posit for them and 2) recognize and act upon those interests in a fashion that is consistent with my theory *and* inconsistent with competing explanations.

In some countries, elites, as a whole, are stronger vis-à-vis leaders than in other countries. This is evident. But it is also evident that within any given country, some individual elites are stronger in resources than other individual elites. Thus, this chapter takes advantage of the simple fact that the strength of elites varies both between *and* within countries. And it further takes advantage of the recentness of United Russia's formation to examine original data on how variance in the strength of Russia's elites affected their dominant party affiliation decisions as United Russia emerged.

A logical implication of my theory of dominant party emergence is that when a country is moving from a situation in which elites control a preponderance of resources to one in which resources are more balanced between leaders and elites, then elites weak in resources will be the first to join the emerging dominant party. They are the first elites

for which it is more advantageous to cooperate in the bonds of a dominant party than it is to remain autonomous. Thus, I argue that elites with more significant stores of political, personal, and/or economic resources that are difficult for state leaders to repress or control are less likely to commit to a nascent dominant party. In other words, when elites can prosper politically without relinquishing their autonomy to a dominant party, they will not bind themselves to such a party. In short, strong elites are more reluctant to tie their fates to a dominant party.

This chapter tests this hypothesis with data on the timing of Russian regional executives' decisions to join the now-dominant party of power, United Russia. I analyze the behavior of Russian governors both because they are the most significant elite actors in post-Soviet Russia and because there is interesting variation in their decisions to join. I argue that regional governors with autonomous resources that are difficult for the Kremlin to control delayed joining the party for longer than those without such resources. Using original data on the timing of 121 Russian governors' party affiliation decisions from 2003-2007, I test these hypotheses with event history models. The results show that the resources controlled by governors explain much of the variation in the timing of their decisions to join United Russia. In particular, those who governed complex regional economies, had secured large electoral mandates, had been in their post for long periods of time, and/or presided over ethnic regions were less likely to join the party. If this is how individual elites in Russia decide whether to affiliate with an emerging dominant party, then it is plausible that dominant party formation depends in large part on the types of resources that elites, as a whole, control in a given country.

The chapter proceeds as follows. The next section relates my theory of dominant party formation to hypotheses about the dominant party affiliation behavior of individual elites. Section 5.3 discusses specific hypotheses about the decisions of Russia's governors to join United Russia. Section 5.4 discusses some alternative explanations of Russia's governors' dominant party affiliation behavior. Since this chapter relies on original data collected by the author, Section 5.5 offers an extended discussion of the dependent variable (governors' month of entry into United Russia). Section 5.6 lays out the research design and models. Section 5.7 discusses the results and Section 5.8 concludes.

5.2 Individual Elites and Dominant Party Affiliation

The theoretical framework presented in Chapter 3 simplifies reality by positing a bilateral interaction between the leader and elites as a whole. In reality however 'the elite' is not a single actor. Individual elites make individual decisions about investment in the dominant party. My theory of dominant party formation has clear implications about the behavior of individual elites under different circumstances.

On one extreme, in countries where all elites are weak and central rulers control a great preponderance of resources (such as Saudi Arabia), there will be no dominant party. Weak elites would be more than willing to receive the benefits of taking part in an institutionalized party of power, but the center has no incentive to commit to this arrangement, and thus, there is no reason for any elite to sign on to a party that is not providing institutional benefits. On the other extreme, when *all* elites are strong (e.g.

Russia in the late 1990s or Brazil in the immediate post-WWII era), few or no elites will be willing to make a commitment to the party and a dominant party will not emerge.

But when neither central rulers nor elites hold a preponderance of resources we are most likely to see a dominant party emerging and elites joining the party. This was Russia's situation in the early and mid 2000s. *It is in this 'zone,' where central leaders do not overbear elites, and elites, as a whole, are not overly autonomous of the center, that there will be variation in the decisions of elites to join the party, and it is here that we can observe a dynamic process of party formation that permits the testing of hypotheses about resources and elite commitment.*

To make sense of this statement, it is crucial to understand that there are country-level factors that determine the overall balance of resources between elites and leaders *and* individual level factors that determine the strength of individual elites vis-a-vis the leader within a country for a given level of overall resource balance between leaders and elites. In Russia, for instance, some governors are stronger in resources than others, simply put. Thus, dominant parties may begin to emerge under two different circumstances:

1. They may begin to emerge as the balance of resources shifts from a very strong leader towards elites. In this setting, the strongest elites will be the first to be coopted into the party, because they are the first with whom the leader needs to strike bargains.
2. Dominant parties may begin to emerge as the balance of resources shifts toward leaders in countries where elites hold a preponderance of resources vis-à-vis leaders. Here the weakest elites may be the first to make investments in the party because they are the first that stand to reap significant gains from cooperation with leaders.

Some elites make commitments to the party quite early while others postpone joining the party. Throughout this process, each individual elite has a decision to make about whether or not affiliate with the party. As Chapter 4 made clear, the emergence of United Russia falls into the second category of dominant party formation. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the resources held by Russia's regional elites gave them little incentive to commit to any party project proposed by the Kremlin. In turn, knowing that Russia's regional elites were not in any position to credibly commit themselves to a party, Yel'tsin undermined pro-presidential parties. In the early 2000s as well, Putin initially hesitated to invest heavily in United Russia over concerns that it might become a platform from which elites could challenge him. As late as 2003, President Putin's top domestic advisor, Vladyslav Surkov, expressed doubts over whether the Kremlin would be able to control the 'monster' it had created in parliament. By the mid-2000s, however, high oil prices, Putin's widespread popularity, and sustained economic growth shifted the resource balance between the Kremlin and regional elites. Under Putin, regional elites were still strong enough that their co-operation needed to be secured, but not so strong that they were unwilling to commit to a party project.

If, as a whole, elites are strong enough that they need to be coopted or appeased in some way (as was the case in Russia in the mid-2000s), then elites that are weak in resources should be the first to join the party. These elites have the least to lose in relinquishing their autonomy, but they are still strong enough that they need to be coopted into the party.¹⁷⁷ For stronger elites, the benefits of cooperation with the regime

¹⁷⁷ An important assumption for the Russia-specific analysis here is that most Russian elites were still strong enough in the early 2000s that they needed to be coopted or appeased. Repressing or sidestepping

may not be much larger than what they would receive if they were to maintain their own patronage networks and rent streams that are not under the regime's direct control. If it were possible, they would prefer to retain the flexibility to bargain with opponents and make side payments to supporters. If the balance of political resources continues to shift in favor of central leaders then elites that are stronger in resources will begin joining the party. Of course, if the balance of resources between the two sides ceases to shift in favor of central leaders then the process of incremental elite affiliation may come to a halt. But in any case, elites stronger in autonomous resources should postpone or resist joining the party for longer because they can insure their political survival and extract usable rents without linking their fates to the regime. This hypothesis is consistent with recent scholarship on party development in new democracies, which attributes the decisions of candidates to eschew party affiliation to the accessibility of non-party political resources (Golosov 2003, Hale 2006, Smyth 2006).

Elites as a whole can become weaker (or stronger) vis-à-vis the leader, just as individual elites can become weaker (or stronger) vis-à-vis the leader and other elites. To take the example of Russia, Vladimir Putin's meteoric rise in popularity gave the Kremlin a resource that strengthened it vis-à-vis all political elites. Meanwhile, any particular governor's political machine could be strengthened or weakened through things such as an electoral defeat or the governor's health. This analysis takes place in a setting where the overall balance of resources between elites and leaders was changing i.e. the Kremlin was becoming stronger. In this setting, it analyzes how static differences in the individual strength of elites affected their decisions to affiliate with United Russia. Thus,

them would not be a cost-effective governing strategy for the Kremlin. The variance that needs to be explained is the difference between those elites who were coopted early into the party and those who postponed joining and continued to maintain relations with the Kremlin bilaterally.

it does not directly consider how their *individual* resources changed over the period of analysis.

5.3 Hypotheses About Russia's Governors

In the 1990s and early 2000s, Russia's regional elites held immense formal and informal resources that gave them significant bargaining advantages vis-à-vis the central state. By far the most important of these elites were Russian governors. In the mid 2000s, Russia's governors suffered a severe loss of resources and autonomy as a direct result of the federal reforms implemented by Vladimir Putin. But this is only the most proximate factor. The antecedent factors that gave Putin the political capital to push through these reforms were the exogenous changes outlined in Chapter 4 and above (i.e. high oil prices, Putin's popularity, and sustained economic growth).¹⁷⁸

Yet even after Putin's federal reforms—and, indeed, even after Putin cancelled direct gubernatorial elections--Russia's governors still retained expansive political resources that made it necessary for the Kremlin to coopt them if it hoped to govern the regions cost-effectively and win elections. That Russia's governors were still strong enough that they needed to be coopted in the early-mid 2000s is supported by an array of literature that testifies to the enduring significance of governors' political machines through the early 2000s (cf, Slider 2005, Hale 2006, Turovsky 2006, Gelman 2009).

The Kremlin worked hard to recruit governors to lend their names to the United Russia party lists in both the 2003 and 2007 State Duma elections. United Russia vote

¹⁷⁸These federal reforms are now well-known. In 2004, Putin cancelled direct gubernatorial elections. Since that time, governors have been appointed by the President subject to confirmation by the regional legislature.

totals depended heavily on governors mobilizing their political machines. In regional elections, party vote totals depended on the extent to which the governor lent his support to the party and the Kremlin relied on governors to quell elite conflict in the regions (Konitzer 2006, Tkacheva nd). Those who were successful at this were allowed to keep their jobs after Putin cancelled gubernatorial elections in September 2004 and were able to secure the placement of their preferred candidates in the United Russia Duma lists in 2007 (Ivanov 2008). After canceling gubernatorial elections President Putin renominated incumbents in 34 of 47 regions where governors' terms expired in 2005 and 2006. Eighteen of those renominated were not members of United Russia, indicating that the Kremlin still relied on governors' control over the regions to govern cost effectively and that 'coercion' into United Russia was not an efficient strategy.¹⁷⁹

In the early 2000s, the Kremlin was willing to invest some effort and resources into Unity and then United Russia, but was not willing to grant it significant writs of institutional or policy control. In response, only the weakest governors would make a formal commitment to the party. As the resource balance (in large part due to sustained oil revenues, economic growth, Putin's personal popularity, and reduced uncertainty) continued to shift in the Kremlin's favor after 2003, the Kremlin was able to offer more to governors and these governors had less to lose. More and more governors were ready to make a commitment to the party. I argue that the first governors to formally join the party were those with less robust resource endowments while those with larger endowments of resources postponed joining for longer. Those with significant autonomous resources were able to demonstrate to the Kremlin their indispensability and

¹⁷⁹ Some have argued that Putin's decision to cancel gubernatorial elections was a boon to governors who were relieved from the term limits they were facing (see Titkov 2007)

could leverage this against joining the party. As it became clear that more and more governors would commit to the party, the Kremlin was willing to grant the party more control over policy, spoils, and careers.

A key assumption I make in this analysis is that the resource balance between the Kremlin and other elites was shifting gradually in favor of the Kremlin over the period analyzed here. I do *not* test here strategic elements of the argument by modeling how the decisions of the Kremlin depended on the decisions of governors and vice versa. The hypotheses under examination here address only the behavior of governors. As the resource balance between the Kremlin and other elites changed, variance in the decisions of governors to join the party should be determined by the resources under individual governor's control. Thus, the theory above suggests the following hypothesis about the party affiliation behavior of Russia's governors:

H1: Governors with significant endowments of political and economic resources that are costly for the Kremlin to appropriate or control will postpone joining United Russia longer than those without such resources.

5.4 Alternative Explanations

There are at least two alternative predictions about the relationship between resource ownership and the decision of a governor to join United Russia. The first is that there should be no systematic relationship, because governors were simply forced to join United Russia without any attention paid to their power bases or because individual governors saw no costs associated with joining the party and thus joined at random times. If the Kremlin could simply form a dominant party whenever it pleased then there should

be no systematic relationship between the resources elites control and their entry into the party.

A second alternative prediction about the relationship between resources and governors' decisions to join is that governors who are strong in resources join the party early. Indeed, a handful of Russia's 'strongest' governors were among the founders of the party. Tatarstan President, Mintimer Shaimiyev, Bashkiria President, Murtaza Rakhimov, and Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, leaders of the OVR coalition since 1999, were among the nominal founders of the party, though as I argue below, the actual date of their accession to the party is a matter of dispute. One of the benefits that the Kremlin receives through investment in United Russia is votes. Therefore, if the agency of governors played no role, then the Kremlin might enlist the strongest governors first in order to mobilize the most votes. One could also speculate that the strongest governors would join the party first in order to gain control of the party apparatus and secure privileged positions in the party. This chapter tests whether these alternative predictions are superior to the one I have offered.

5.5 The Dependent Variable: Russia's Governors Decisions to Join UR

The dependent variable in this analysis is the number of months it took for a governor to join United Russia after March 2003. Data on the timing of Russia's governors' decisions to join UR were collected by the author from the United Russia website and online news sources. United Russia publicizes the accession of high-ranking officials to the party, so most governors' entry into the party is documented on the site. The data are monthly, stretching from March 2003 until November 2007 and are coded 1 if the

governor is officially a member of United Russia and 0 if not.¹⁸⁰ With data missing on six governors, this amounts to 121 governors serving at some time during this period. This data provides information on the month in which each of Russia's governors joined UR. It is shown in full in Appendix 1.

I code a governor as joining the party when he/she formally accepts a party card as a full-fledged member (*chlen partii*). I do not count the following as indicators of membership (unless, of course they are accompanied by formal party membership): heading the United Russia party list in regional or federal elections, accepting the party's support in gubernatorial elections, or professing support for UR candidates in elections. Also, I do not count party supporters (*storonniki*) as members. Becoming a *storonnik* requires little in the way of verification or vetting. Membership in the party requires the member to abdicate membership in other political parties, while being a *storonnik* does not. Governors sometimes are awarded membership in the party by the regional political council (*politsovet*), though in certain cases they are awarded membership at meetings of the Presidium of the General Council.

Party membership is clearly a more credible signal of commitment than the other signs of support listed above. Joining the party requires the governor to give up other party affiliations. Entry into the party is widely reported in the news media making it difficult for the governor to deny his membership. Other possible indicators permit

¹⁸⁰ The official founding of United Russia took place in December 2001, with the transformation the Obshcherossiskoe obshchestvennoe organizatsiya «Soyuz-Edinstvo i Otechestvo (All Russian social organization “Union-Unity and Fatherland) into the Vsyarossiskaya Politicheskaya Partiya «Edinstvo i Otechestvo—Edinaya Rossiya» (All-Russian Political Party “Unity and Fatherland-United Russia”). The party then changed its name to United Russia in September 2003. Data on party affiliation date back to 2001, but only a handful of governors (five, to be exact) were in any way affiliated with the party prior to March 2003 and, several of these governors, appeared not to be actual party members until some time later. Thus, the analyses in this paper begin on March 2003. All models were also run using data stretching back to December 2001 with the same results.

governors too much leeway in making provisional commitments. In the 1990s, governors frequently supported more than one party or accepted the support of multiple parties in elections. Party membership, thus, represents a conscious decision to signal one's commitment that goes above and beyond other indicators of party support. In itself, the act of joining the party is not likely to incur heavy costs, aside from the public signal it sends, but it is the most practical proxy for other costly commitments that are likely to accompany membership such as only supporting party candidates in elections and relinquishing partial control over the nomination of personnel and candidates. Surely, there are more valid indicators of commitment to the party that could be gleaned from detailed case studies, but party membership is the most reliable measure that is also sufficiently valid.

A particularly difficult hurdle in deciding whether a governor is a member of United Russia is presented by the Higher Council (*Vyshii Sovet*). Before 2005, governors were prohibited by law from belonging to any political party, though press reports and the party's own website report that dozens of governors nonetheless became members (*chleny*) of the party in 2003 and 2004. United Russia leaders created the Higher Council as a parallel advisory council where governors could sit without being party members (Slider 2006). Only in November 2005, at the Fifth Party Congress did United Russia leaders amend the party charter to stipulate that all newly initiated members of the Higher Council be party members. This Higher Council is separate from the central decision-making structures of the party, the General Council and its Presidium, and there are no provisions in the party's charter for when it should meet. Sources close to the party confirm that the higher council is not «a governing body» (Ivanov 2008, 81). As

one high ranking party official put it to me, «Membership in the Higher Council is more an honor than a privilege» The problem is that some governors chose to join the Higher Council and only later chose to formally join the party, while others joined the Higher Council and, to the best of my knowledge, never formally joined the party.¹⁸¹ This problem is made even more acute by those governors who joined the higher council (but not the party) only to clearly flout party discipline subsequently. For example, Kemerovo Governor Aman Tuleev was a member of the party's higher council (but not a member) in 2003 and on United Russia's Duma party list, but he ran his own list of candidates, Sluzhu Kuzbassu (I Serve the Kuzbass), in the Oblast regional election of the same year (Slider 2006). By the time the region held regional elections again in October 2008, however, Tuleev had become a party member and threw his full support behind the United Russia list, helping it secure 35 out of 36 seats in the regional assembly.

For the reasons above, I do not count joining the Higher Council as joining the party unless a governor joined the Higher Council after November 2005 (when the party charter was amended to require party membership for Higher Council members). Sixteen governors joined the higher council before being party members (mostly in 2003). For governors later joined the party formally, so I code them as joining on the date they accepted their party card. For the other twelve, I code them as joining the party when they are first documented as serving on the party's Political Council in their region. According to the party's charter, party membership is required to serve on the council and it is the leading decision -making body in the regional branch. Almost all United Russia

¹⁸¹ So, for example, Orel Governor Yegor Stroyev joined the party's higher council in March 2003, but then received his party membership card in November 2005. «Egor Stroyev zavyazal s bespartiinost'yu» *Kommersant*. Voronezh 26 November 2005. Accessed online at http://www.ancentr.ru/data/media/arch_media_1948.html on 20 November 2007.

governors hold posts in the regional political council since that is the primary political organ of the party in the regions. Official membership in this organ indicates a clear signal of commitment to party activities and association with the party. To ensure the robustness of my results, I also report results where governors who join the Higher Council are coded as party members from that time.

One further difficulty with the coding rules mentioned above are the three governors that were instrumental in the party's founding, Moscow Mayor Yurii Luzhkov, Tatarstan President Mintimer Shaimiyev, and Bashkortostan President Murtaza Rakhimov. These three governors, widely viewed as Russia's most influential regional executives, appear to have never formally accepted formal party nomination, though they have been members of the party Higher Council since the beginning (Shaimiyev and Luzhkov have been members of the Bureau of the Higher Council since the beginning). More significantly, none of these three figures serve on the United Russia's political council (*politsovet*) in their region. Instead, these governors' role in the party appears more akin to the symbolic leadership post that Prime Minister Putin enjoys than it does to the leading cadre positions that most governors occupy. One way to approach this problem is to code these governors as never joining the party. But this would seem to bias against their role in the party. On the other end of the spectrum, coding them as joining from the beginning denies the arms-length relationship they appear to have developed with the party by not participating in regional leadership organs and denying themselves the title 'party member'.¹⁸² Thus, in the baseline models, I omit these governors from analysis. For robustness I also present several other models that code these three

¹⁸² For another example, see “«Edinaya Rossiya» potrebuyet obysnenii ot Rakhimova» *Kommersant* June 5, 2009.

governors as joining when they joined the Higher Council and in November 2005 when the party charter was amended to require party membership for all Higher Council members. I also present results for when these governors never join the party. As we will see, these changes have only a minor effect on one substantive variable, length of tenure in office, for which these governors are significant outliers.

Figure 4.1 presents the number of governors that were members of United Russia in each month from March 2003 until November 2007. In the 1990s, Russia's governors affiliated with various parties of power and regional political blocs, but, with the exception of the *Kommunisticheskaya Partiya Rossiskoi Federatsii* (KPRF), they very rarely became full-fledged members, preferring instead to retain freedom of maneuver. The situation was no different in 1999, when the governors faced severe coordination dilemmas in deciding which party of power to support ahead of the 1999-2000 election cycle (Shvetsova 2003). Yet even in 1999, very few governors actually 'joined' *Edinstvo* (Unity) or *Otechestvo Vsyaya Rossiya* (OVR), in fact some signatories of Unity's founding statement, "The Announcement of the Thirty-Nine," were actually surprised to learn that they were supporting a political party in signing the document, and many were active members of other political parties (Lussier 2002, 66). With United Russia, this situation began to change, though, as the figure shows, only slowly.

An implicit assumption in some of the literature on Russia's emerging authoritarian regime is that the Kremlin forced all governors to join United Russia, paying little heed to their political resources, which were expropriated for use by the party. This is a perspective implied by those recent analyses of Russian politics that privilege the role of coercion and personality as the bedrock of Russia's authoritarian

system (Stoner-Weiss 2006, Hanson 2007). Such a view would lead to the prediction that Russia's governors were coerced into joining United Russia en masse. But descriptive data on the governor's dominant party affiliation patterns cast plausible doubt on this perspective.

Though United Russia was tapped as the sole bearer of the Kremlin standard in the December 2003 parliamentary elections, governors were not forced to join en masse at this time. In addition, as the Figure shows, there was no discernible rush to join the party. Though many governors agreed to be placed on the UR party lists, for the December 2003 Duma elections (27 in fact), only 15 governors had formally joined the party by that time.¹⁸³ Another common misconception is that the most of Russia's governors joined the party immediately after Putin's proposal to cancel gubernatorial elections was passed into law in September 2004, implying that Russia's governors were essentially forced into joining the party. This proposition seems intuitive. With no independent electoral mandate, governors appeared wholly dependent on the Kremlin after 2004 and were required to curry favor with the President in order to secure reappointment. In fact, in September 2004, the number of governors in the party was only 23 and while 11 governors did join by January 2005, this was still far short of a majority. It is true that the pace of governors' joining the party slightly increased in the fall of 2004, but as the figure shows this was only a minor deviation from the linear trend. In fact, as Figure 1 shows, by far the largest increase in governor membership occurred in the fall of 2005, just after the Kremlin floated the idea of giving the largest party in

¹⁸³ I discuss below this data on governors' membership in United Russia.

regional parliaments the right to nominate candidates for regional executive posts.¹⁸⁴ The proportion of Russia's governors that were party members reached 50% only in October 2005. The party continued to grow at a steady pace in 2006, so that 67 governors were members by the end of the year. In 2007, the pace of joining slowed and by November of that year, when the analysis ends, all but 8 of Russia's governors had joined. As of November 2008, 78 of Russia's 83 governors had joined the party.¹⁸⁵

Another intuitive expectation that this figure disproves is that governors joined at an increasing rate as other governors joined United Russia. The intuition here would be that governors developed stronger beliefs about the future role of the party in distributing rents as the number of 'peer governors' joined. Such a phenomenon would be represented in the figure by a curve of *increasing* slope rather than by the constant upward linear trend depicted. The figure shows little evidence of a classical tipping point, which would be represented by a substantial increase in the rate of joining followed by a tapering off as the critical mass was surpassed (an S-shaped pattern). This does not appear to be the case. Part of the reason for this is surely that, unlike legislators, Russia's governors lack an institutional lobbying forum where majorities or supermajorities matter. Instead, as oil prices increased, real incomes grew, and the transitional uncertainties waned over this period, the Kremlin was able to offer more to Russia's governors and they were in a better position to commit to the party. The reason why some governors joined early and others later is explained in this paper.

¹⁸⁴ "Strana Sovetov «Edinoi Rossii» Gazeta.ru.» 3 October 2005. This move may be interpreted as a coercive move, sending a signal to governors that they were to come under the further control of the Kremlin or it may be seen as an institutional carrot granted the party (in which governors played a central role) more institutional authority over personnel. Kynev (2006, 6) notes the ambiguity over whether this should be considered a carrot or stick.

¹⁸⁵ Those final holdouts were Chukotka Governor Roman Abramovich, St. Petersburg Mayor Valentina Matvienko, Dagestan President Mukhu Aliyev, Perm Krai Governor Oleg Chirkunov, and Zabaikal Krai Governor Gennadii Geniatullin.

Overall, the data reveal a secular linear trend. At a time of great uncertainty about the future of United Russia some governors were casting their lot with United Russia while others were opting to remain independent. With the benefit of hindsight, it may seem that some joined while others merely postponed, but United Russia's future as a dominant party was by no means certain in this period. And while the time span (5 years) covered may seem short in historical terms, it is a very long time in the political careers of these governors, who were making key political decisions about the course of their political careers. If this variation in the timing is random, then it tells us little about why dominant parties emerge. But if on the other hand some governors joined later for specific reasons then we can examine those reasons to determine why they have opted not to join. As I argue below, this variation is explained primarily the autonomous political resources under these governors' control. More broadly, I endeavor to show that as the balance of resources shifted between regional elites and the Kremlin more governors could commit to joining (i.e. the Kremlin could induce them to join). That these governors were coopted by the party rather than coerced is demonstrated both by the enduring political capital held by the governors and the institutional carrots extended to the party.

5.6 Independent Variables: The Governors' Resources

The primary hypothesis tested in this chapter is that governors with significant stores of autonomous resources will postpone joining the party. Measuring those resources is the challenge I discuss in this section. The resources that matter for this analysis are those that allowed governors to leverage their personal political machines and clientelist

networks against inducements to join the party of power. Those with such resources were able to demonstrate to the Kremlin that they were indispensable. If the Kremlin wished to govern a particular region cost effectively, they would need to deal with that governor. Indeed, the very act of appropriating a governor's political machine via repression is costly, and so the Kremlin had an interest in coopting and using these governors. But those governors who were very strong in resources could not credibly commit to the party because the benefits of maintaining their own autonomous political machines outweighed the benefits of linking their fates to the center. Thus, the Kremlin opted to negotiate with them bilaterally. For ease of exposition, I divide the resources that governors have at their disposal into several categories: inherited political resources, economic resources, administrative /geographic resources, and ethnic resources.

Inherited Political Resources

In an extensive study of the determinants of governors' political machines in the 1990s, Henry Hale (2003) shows how the legacies of the transition gave governors the ability to build strong political machines. The most direct way to tap this observation and translate it into governor-specific terms is to measure the length of tenure of governors. Thus, governors who have enjoyed longer tenures in office are likely to have had the time to develop strong political machines and extensive clientelist networks and will be more likely to postpone joining United Russia. This variable, called *Tenure*, is the number of years that a governor has been in office. Similarly, large electoral mandates may be both

the cause and consequence of strong political machines, so the margin of the governor's most recent electoral victory is tapped. This variable is called *ElectoralMargin*.

Another inherited political factor that I include as a control variable, but do not expect to have an effect on governors' decisions to join UR, is population. While larger regions may have more bargaining capacity in Moscow, largely because they have more representatives in the State Duma, it is difficult to see how this could translate into the governor's ability to build a political machine that would make him indispensable (Suderland 2005). It is also possible that larger subjects could credibly threaten succession or to withhold tax transfers, but for the period under analysis, decreased uncertainty and increased central state capacity made make these threats non-credible, so it is not clear how governors in larger regions would have inherently more resources to leverage against party affiliation.

Economic Resources

Governors in post-Soviet Russia have been able to tap the economic resources in their region to pursue political gain. The ability to exert influence and distribute patronage has depended heavily on their ability to control regional economies. Henry Hale (2003) has argued that the complexity of a region's economy translates into the strength of the governor's political machine. Single-industry or 'single company' regions are likely to generate strong competition between the governor and that enterprise or sector. But since the region is dependent on that enterprise or sector, governors have neither the incentive nor the resources to subdue their economic opponent. When the economy is diversified,

on the other hand, governors could more effectively exploit collective action problems among economic actors and had both motive and opportunity to create complex clientelist networks that relied on divide and rule tactics. Diversified economies place the governor in a strong position to mediate interests and play kingmaker. On the other hand, concentrated economies give the governor few resources with which to oppose a unified elite, thereby weakening his machine.

A second reason that diversified economies translate into a resource for governors has to do with the expropriability of those resources. Greene (2007) argues that levels of party dominance depend largely on the state's control of the economy. When mobile, inextricable assets fuel a region's economy, the Kremlin's threat of taxation and predation is less credible. Therefore, governors in these regions will be less likely to relinquish autonomy over those rents flows and link their fates to the Kremlin's party. Highly concentrated economies are more likely to be built on immobile assets—i.e. resource extraction or heavy manufacturing.¹⁸⁶ Single-sector regions are thus more vulnerable to taxation and control and the governor's political machine is vulnerable from the bottom up. The more complex the regional economy, then the more complex the political machine of the governor and the more costly it would be for the Kremlin to govern a region cost-effectively without keeping the machine intact. Governors who preside over diversified regional economies are thus more likely to leverage this resource against party affiliation.

To tap the concentration of the economy, I employ several variables. The first, *IndustrialConcentration*, is a Herfindahl index of the proportion of GRP (Gross Regional Product) comprised by the main industrial and extractive sectors of the economy in

¹⁸⁶ For a comparable use of economic diversification measures as a proxy for asset mobility see Boix 2003.

2005.¹⁸⁷ This index ranges from 0 to 1, with larger values indicating greater concentration and lower values indicating more diversification. Governors in regions with concentrated economies should join United Russia earlier. To ease interpretation, this variable is rescaled to range between 0 and 100.

The taxability of enterprises in a region is a function of size, ownership structure and sector. Less taxable economic assets in a region are likely to constitute autonomous economic resources that governors can leverage against relinquishing their autonomy to the party. The service sector is less taxable than the manufacturing sector so I include a variable, *ServicesShare*, that is the percent of regional GDP accounted for by the services sector. Governors in regions with large service sectors should postpone joining United Russia for longer. Firms operating in the export sector are also more difficult to tax (Gehlbach 2006), so I include *ExportShare* which measures non-CIS exports as a share of GDP in 2005. One way to measure the ownership structure of the regional economy is to compute the share of enterprises in a region that are state-owned. Unfortunately, Goskomstat data does not discriminate between federally and regionally owned state enterprises. While both are probably easily taxed, regionally owned enterprises may contribute to the strength of the governor's political machine, and thus expectations about this variable are ambiguous.

Two further economic variables are included. First, GRP per capita is included, *GRPCap*. This variable is scaled in thousands of rubles. Hale (2000) finds that, during the transition, wealthy regions were more likely to make declarations of sovereignty,

¹⁸⁷ $IndustryConcentration = \sum_{i=1}^N s_i^2$, where s is the share of regional GDP comprised by the i th industrial sector. This was calculated from data in *Regiony Rossii. (2007) Goskomstat Rossii, Moscow*. All economic variables are gleaned from the *Region Rossii* volumes.

because, as he argues, they have more to lose from exploitation by other regions and are presumably more viable as separate states. This is no doubt true, but as noted in my discussion of a region's population size, the analysis at hand assumes that threats of secession or even autonomy grabs were off the table by 2003-2007, so it becomes more difficult to envision a relationship between wealth and a governor's machine. Finally, I include the share of a region's budget revenues comprised by federal subventions, *FederalTransfers*. Presumably, governors in regions that are more 'dependent' on the center should be more inclined to join United Russia. However, there are two problems with this line of reasoning. First, *FederalTransfers* is, in large part, a simple proxy for GRP per capita and governors in wealthy regions may not be any more or less inclined to join UR than those in poor regions. Second, as Daniel Treisman has shown, much of the remaining variance in the share of a region's revenue provided by federal transfers is explained by the center's attempts to use those subventions to buy support in oppositional regions (1999). As we will see below, this makes it quite likely that this variable will be highly collinear with other important variables in the analysis.

Ethnic Resources

Soviet nationalities policy codified ethnic diversity in the form of state-administrative divisions. During the transition and early 1990s, Russia's ethnic republics were among the leaders in making declarations of sovereignty and securing writs of autonomous authority. Throughout the 1990s, these leaders leveraged on their ability to mobilize nationalist/ethnic opposition in order to accrue greater autonomy from the center and

build strong political machines. Moreover, the “ethnic minority social networks” inherited from the Soviet federal system and bolstered during the transition provided a ready-made basis for strong political machines (Hale 1998, 2000). And most importantly for this analysis, with the disappearance of the CPSU, the organization of these networks became highly personalized and informally complex, making the governors who headed ethnic regions more indispensable and less likely to join UR.

I employ several indicators of political ethnicity. The first is the percent of a region’s population that is ethnically Russian, *PctRussian*. Since Muslim regions exhibited more separatist activism in the 1990s and were more likely than Buddhist, Christian, or Shamanist regions to be headed by members of the titular ethnic group, I include a dummy variable for Muslim ethnic republics, *Muslim*.

Geographic and Administrative Resources

Russian rulers since Peter the Great have invested enormous energy into controlling their vassals across the country's expansive territory (Turovskii 2005). This continues to be true. As a legislator in Nenets Autonomous Okrug said about federal proposals to reform local election rules in October 2008, «We are located in the far north. It takes a long time for the Federal winds of change to blow our way».¹⁸⁸ Governors in far-flung regions may be less likely to join United Russia, so I include each region's logged distance from Moscow, *Distance*. Second, republics may have accrued the administrative capacity in the 1990s to resist federal incursions and governors in these

¹⁸⁸ “Edinuyu Rossiyu Ogradili Bar’erom” *Kommersant*. 12 November 2008.

regions may postpone joining UR for longer. So I include a dummy variable, *Republic*, coded 1 if a region is a republic and 0 if not.

Controls

I also include a set of controls. First, to control for factors that may make the region's population more ideologically disposed to United Russia and, therefore, give the governor some impetus to join the party in order to please his former constituents, I include the share of the vote received by Unity in 1999, *UnityVote*. I use Unity's vote share in 1999 as opposed to the UR vote share in 2003 or 2007, in order to ensure that the vote share is not endogenous to the governor's dominant party affiliation. Second, a casual look at the raw data reveals that KPRF governors waited longer to join United Russia. One could be inclined to count this as a resource, but I list it here as a control. KPRF governors postponed joining the party for longer, and I include a dummy variable, *KPRFGovernor*, coded 1 if the governor is or was a member of the KPRF. Lastly, I include a region's unemployment rate in 2003, *Unemp*

I also include a variable to test for the bandwagoning process noted above. As more elites join the party, the opportunity costs of remaining outside the party logroll could become higher. *NumberGovsJoined* is simply a count of the number of governors that have joined the party at time t . To test whether this hypothesis exhibits a tipping dynamic, such that the impact of the 41st governor joining on the propensity of other governors joining is higher than the marginal impact of the 8th governor joining, we will want to square this term (without its constituent linear term if we expect the relationship

to be monotonic, as we do). Note however that the two-sided nature of the commitment problem prevents the party from becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy; that is, the center's reluctance to commit to a party that it cannot control or trust prevents the party from growing without bound as more elites join. If governors join the party purely because they observe their peers joining, while the distribution of resources between center and elites remains fixed, then the Kremlin runs the risk of channeling resources to an increasing number of elites that can challenge the Kremlin.

Finally, I included a temporal dummy variable, *CancelGubernatorialElections*, that captures the September 2004 decision to cancel gubernatorial elections. This variable is coded 1 in September, October, and November 2004.

Statistical Method

This study examines the relationship between resource endowments and the timing of Russian governors' decisions to join UR. Event history models are ideally suited to analyze data of this nature.¹⁸⁹ These models take as their dependent variable the amount of time that some object is in a state before it experiences some event. In this data, joining United Russia is the event. Much has been written about these models and they are now common in applied political science, so I will not belabor their technical details here (cf Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004).

¹⁸⁹ An OLS model of the amount of time it takes for a governor to join United Russia would be suboptimal because of its inability to account for right censoring. An example of a right censored observation in this data is one in which a governor leaves office without joining United Russia. This occurs frequently in the data. The governor should not be coded as joining the party when he leaves office, nor should we omit these cases from the analysis. Event history models account for right censoring by allowing the subject to contribute information only up to the known censoring point (i.e. when a governor leaves office).

One of the most divisive issues in survival analysis is the choice of how to characterize the nature of the baseline hazard rate.¹⁹⁰ Political methodologists have rightly warned that the underlying nature of the hazard rate is highly sensitive to included (and omitted) covariates (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004). Without strong theory to guide assumptions about the true underlying hazard (and the full range of appropriate covariates), they argue for semi-parametric approaches, such as the Cox proportional hazards model, which make no assumptions about the shape of the underlying hazard rate.

A pitfall of the Cox model, however, lies in how semi-parametric models use the information contained in the data. Semi-parametric models compare subjects at risk to other subjects that are still at risk (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004). For this reason, semi-parametric models require a great deal of data points with which to compare subjects at risk. When subjects experience the event, their information is lost as a reference point for other subjects still at risk.

Such comparative estimates are not necessary for parametric models. Parametric models estimate probabilities of what occurs to the subject given what is known about the subject (the covariates) during its time at risk (Cleves, Gould, and Gutierrez 2004). In short, less data is required for a well-specified parametric model to produce efficient estimates. Parametric models can produce more precise estimates of covariate effects when the underlying hazard rate is specified correctly (Collett 1994, Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004, 21).

¹⁹⁰ The hazard rate is the rate at which subjects end at time t , given that they have survived until time t . The baseline hazard rate is that which is not directly modeled by covariates included in the model.

Given the small size of the dataset used here, I employ a parametric Weibull which assumes a monotonically increasing or decreasing (or flat) baseline hazard. The Akaike information criterion, based on the log-likelihood and the number of parameters in the model, was used to rule out other parametric models that allow for non-monotonic hazards. The results of these tests showed the Weibull to best fit the data.¹⁹¹

5.7 Results and Discussion

The results of the models are shown in Table 1. The full model with controls is in the first column. The reduced model, shown in the second column, excludes non-significant controls and non-significant substantive variables that are inducing severe collinearity. The substantive quantities of interest discussed below are taken from this model. The results show hazard ratios and their standard errors.¹⁹² Models 3, 4, and 5 are robustness checks using the variables in Model 2 to check the robustness of results across different codings of the dependent variable introduced above and discussed in further detail below.

[Table 5.1 Here]

Inherited Political Resources

¹⁹¹ Cox models reveal similar results for all models, though, for the reasons discussed here, the standard errors are larger for some variables.

¹⁹² Hazard ratios provide an easily interpretable exposition of event history results. Hazard ratios should be interpreted relative to a baseline of 1, such that a hazard ratio of 1 means that the particular variable has no effect on the likelihood a governor joins. A hazard ratio of 2 means that a one unit change in the variable doubles the baseline probability that a governor will join the party in a given month. A hazard ratio of .75 indicates that a one unit change in the variable decreases the hazard of a governor joining by 25%.

In the model with all variables and controls, we see that *Tenure* and *ElectoralMargin* have the expected effect though only *Tenure* is statistically significant. In the reduced model, both are significant. The size of the effects are substantial. To make this hazard ratio more interpretable, consider the change in the hazard of a governor joining UR as his the margin of victory in the most recent election goes from the 25th percentile in the data (12% margin) to the 75th percentile (58% margin). The probability that this governor joins United Russia in any given month would decrease by 52% relative to the baseline hazard. For *Tenure*, a governor that has been in office for 8 years (the 75th percentile in the data) is 42% less likely to join in any given month than a governor who has been in office for one year (the 25th percentile). This difference is depicted in Figure 5.1 which shows differences in the hazard rates (the propensity of a governor to join) for governors at the 25th and 75th percentiles of the given independent variable.

[Figure 5.1 Here]

Economic Resources

Few of the variables measuring economic resources are significant with the notable exception of *IndustrialConcentration*. In such a small dataset, collinearity plagues the inclusion of these variables but *IndustrialConcentration* stands out.¹⁹³ In fact, the effect of *Industrial Concentration* is large, robust, and in the expected direction. Governors in regions with diversified economies are less likely to join the party early. This is a key

¹⁹³ Models that use broader measures such as *SectoralConcentration* also display a large and significant effect.

finding. Recalling that *IndustrialConcentration* is rescaled to range between 0 and 100, Figure 5.1 shows the difference in the hazards of joining for two levels of industrial concentration. These two illustrative levels were chosen to be roughly equivalent to the 25th and 75th percentile of *IndustrialConcentration*, though for clarity's sake I chose to make examples of two well-known regions: Chelyabinsk, with its heavy dependence on steel production and related heavy industry has a more concentrated economy than Irkutsk, with its well developed light and heavy manufacturing sectors as well as raw material extraction and processing.

ServicesShare has the predicted effect, such that in regions with large service sectors governors are likely to postpone joining, but this effect is not statistically significant. *Exportshare* also has the predicted effect, but it is statistically insignificant. *FederalTransfers* appears to have no demonstrable effect. *GRP/capita* is close to significance in Model 1 and attains significance in some later models, such that governors from wealthy regions were more likely to postpone joining, though the substantive magnitude of the effect is quite small.

Ethnic Resources

Governors of ethnic regions appear to be more likely to postpone joining the party. *PctRussian* and *Muslim* are highly collinear, however, and either of the variables on its own is significant, but likelihood ratio tests confirm a better model fit when only *PctRussian* is included. A single percentage increase in the proportion of a region's

population that is ethnically Russian increases the hazard of a governor joining by over 2%, a significant result.

Geographic and Administrative Resources

Distance is in the expected direction, such that governors in far-flung regions are more likely to postpone joining, though this effect appears insignificant. Also, when one controls for the ethnic resources outlined above, republican administrative status has no independent effect on the propensity of governors to join United Russia. *Republic* is highly collinear with *PctRussian* but AIC tests suggests that the model with *PctRussian* is the better fit.

Controls

As expected, former KPRF governors have a lower hazard of joining. They are less likely to join UR early. The effect is substantial. A former communist governor is 73%% less likely to join in any given month than a non-communist governor. In addition, the higher the percentage of the vote received by Unity in the 1999 Duma elections in the region, the more likely the governor is to join United Russia early. One may wonder whether other party affiliations may have influenced decisions to join United

Russia. Table 5.2 presents the results of an analysis that shows the effects of prior party affiliation on a governor's propensity to join United Russia.¹⁹⁴

As the table shows, KPRF affiliation has by far the largest deterrent effect. Governors affiliated with the other blocs that existed in 1999 were not significantly different from each other in their United Russia affiliation patterns, with the possible exception of All-Russia governors. Perhaps counterintuitively, former CPSU members were less likely to join United Russia. This suggests the professional norms and cultures cultivated while in the CPSU may not have been a driving force in deciding over whether to affiliate with United Russia. The reluctance of CPSU members to join is likely explained by the fact that in 2003, governors who were CPSU members were also more likely to be older and have had a longer professional career in the region.¹⁹⁵ This may have given them more material for their political machines.

NumberGovsJoined is significant in its linear form. In analyses not shown here I also tried the square term, with and without the linear term, to test for tipping dynamics, but this does not improve model fit. This result must be taken with a large grain of salt, however. The number of governors joining the party is almost perfectly collinear with time and with the baseline hazard as it turns out. In the models shown here, the shape parameter p is less than one, indicating a declining baseline hazard of party affiliation. However, if one removes *NumberGovsJoined* from the analysis this shape parameter

¹⁹⁴ Data on the CPSU membership of governors was collected by the author from official biographies. Data on the party affiliation of Russia's governors was taken from a report compiled by the East West Institute in October 1999. "A List: The Political Affiliation of Russia's Governors" *Russian Regional Report* Vol 4. No. 37 7 October 1999. The baseline category is the unaffiliated governor.

¹⁹⁵ Controlling for the *Tenure* in this analysis does significantly reduce the magnitude of the coefficient on *CPSU Membership*, but *CPSU Membership* remains significant, probably due to age and time in politics.

indicates a steeply increasing baseline hazard. If it is true that the resources of the Kremlin increase monotonically across time, as I argue, then this result is unproblematic and we are free to conclude that there is no contagious process in which governors use the behavior of other governors in deciding whether or not to join. If, on the other hand, the resources of the Kremlin are unchanged across time then the entire baseline hazard could be determined by peer membership dynamics. Without more data we cannot adjudicate among these two alternatives.

Lastly, governors were more likely to join in the wake of the Kremlin's decision to cancel gubernatorial elections in the fall of 2004. That more governors joined after Putin cancelled direct gubernatorial elections is not surprising, but what may be surprising in light of conventional wisdom is that not all governors joined at this point. In fact, the enduring significance of other variables is testament to the fact that many governors still commanded significant autonomy and bargaining leverage vis a vis the Kremlin even after 2004.

Robustness Checks

Model 3 presents the results of models when the 16 governors who joined the Higher Council prior to joining the party are coded as joining the party from the date on which they joined the Higher Council. Model 4 uses the same rules for coding party membership applied in the baseline model, but adheres to a strict interpretation of those rules by coding Shaimiyev, Luzhkov, and Rakhimov as never joining the party. Model 5 codes these three governors as joining the party in November 2005, when they party

changed its chart to require party membership for Higher Council members. The results on the controls, *IndustrialConcentration*, *Electoral Margin*, and *PctRussian* remain robust across these specifications. Only the statistical significance of *Tenure* appears to dip slightly below statistical significance. This is understandable given that these three governors are significant outliers for their length of tenure in office.

Summary Discussion

In sum, the main empirical findings are as follows. First, governors in regions with more concentrated economies were significantly more likely to join United Russia early. This effect is robust. Governors who presided over diversified regional economies are more likely to be in control of complex patronage machines that could be deployed as an autonomous political resource and leveraged against dominant party affiliation. Second, long-serving governors and those who have dominated elections in their regions, were more hesitant to join the party. Long-serving governors were more likely to have deep roots in their regions, and governors who won big in elections often had predominant personal control over levers of political influence in the region. Both of these things were resources that permitted governors to postpone joining the party. Third, leaders of ethnic regions were also more likely to postpone joining the party. These leaders sat atop ethnically-based clientelist networks that often provided the governor with important political resources. Fourth, and not unsurprisingly, KPRF governors did not rush to join the party.

These results provide evidence for the proposition that governors with autonomous resources were less likely to join United Russia. The Kremlin was unable to force certain governors to join the party, at least not at first. These governors controlled political machines that could ensure their survival without linking their fates to the center. These findings demonstrate that elites have interests in retaining their own autonomy and act on those interests. This indicates that dominant parties will not emerge when elites have autonomous political resources that give them incentives to eschew commitment to the party.

5.8 Conclusion

Dominant party regimes are the modal regime type among today's authoritarian regimes, yet little work has been done to uncover why dominant parties form in the first place. If dominant parties do contribute to regime durability as much existing literature suggests (Geddes 1999, Brownlee 2007, Magaloni 2008), then it is worth considering how these parties reach equilibrium in the first place. Where existing accounts of dominant party formation have placed the emphasis on the incentives of leaders to form dominant parties, it is also necessary to consider the incentives of elites to commit to a dominant party. When elites, as a group, are too strong in resources to commit to the party, a leader is unlikely to invest resources in a party. A corollary of this is that when elites must be coopted in some way, individual elites with significant stores of autonomous political resources will be the most unwilling to commit to the party.

Using data on the timing of Russia's governors' decisions to join Russia's new dominant party, United Russia, this chapter examined this hypothesis. Russia's governors

were not forced to join United Russia instantaneously. Instead they joined incrementally over a period of five years. As the Kremlin became stronger vis-à-vis the regions in the early-mid 2000s, more governors opted to join the party. The first to join were those weak in resources, while those with access to significant political resources that could be leveraged against dominant party affiliation postponed joining. In particular, those who governed complex regional economies, had secured large electoral mandates, were long-serving, and/or presided over ethnic regions were less likely to join the party early. The results of this analysis indicate that governors with more autonomous bases for building political machines and controlling political resources were more likely to postpone joining the party. By showing that elite entry into a dominant party is dependent on the resources under those elites' control, these results provide corroborating evidence for the broader theory of dominant party formation that privileges the incentives of elites to commit to a dominant party.

These results also have important implications for Russian politics. The Kremlin's desire to build a dominant party was a function of calculations about the extent to which elite commitment could be secured. In the 1990s and early 2000s, it had no faith in the ability of elites to commit, while by the mid 2000s, it could be more certain that elites would cooperate. The Kremlin used carrots and sticks to induce gubernatorial affiliation. The carrots were necessary because Russia's regional elites still wielded vast sums of political capital that needed to be coopted if the Kremlin hoped to govern the regions cost-effectively. During this period, carrots were channeled primarily through United Russia in the form of seats in legislatures, national project funds, and policy goods. Simultaneously, the Kremlin incrementally increased the institutional standing of United

Russia, delegating it more authority and influence. Thus, governors were given access to party-governed spoils and the institutional mechanisms of the party reduced uncertainty over the provision of those spoils. Institutional rights granted to the party expanded in step with the commitments made by elites as the strategic commitment game unfolded.

5.9 Tables and Figures

Figure 5.1 Effect of Key Variables on Hazard of Joining United Russia

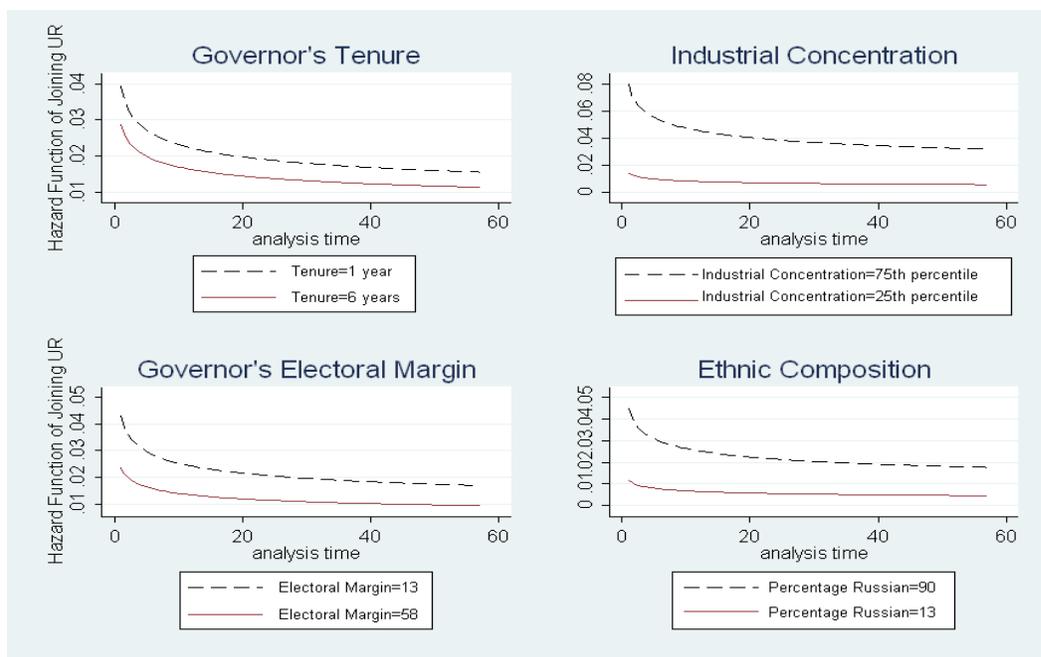


Table 5.1 Weibull Model Estimates of Governor's Hazard of Joining United Russia

VARIABLES	COEFFICIENTS				
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Inherited Political Resources					
<i>Tenure</i>	0.915** (0.035)	0.939* (0.031)	0.958 (0.030)	0.939* (0.032)	0.962 (0.031)
<i>Electoral Margin</i>	0.992 (0.006)	0.987** (0.005)	0.992* (0.005)	0.987** (0.005)	0.989** (0.005)
<i>Population in Region</i>	1.000 (0.000)				
Economic Resources					
<i>FederalTransfers</i>	0.547 (0.566)				
<i>ServicesShare</i>	0.206 (0.393)				
<i>ExportShare</i>	0.945 (0.067)				
<i>IndustrialConcentration</i>	1.049** (0.014)	1.054** (0.013)	1.042** (0.012)	1.054** (0.013)	1.046** (0.013)
<i>GRP/Capita</i>	0.997 (0.002)	0.997* (0.002)	0.998 (0.002)	0.997* (0.002)	0.998 (0.002)
Ethnic Resources					
<i>PctRussian</i>	1.029* (0.016)	1.027** (0.007)	1.022** (0.007)	1.027** (0.007)	1.022** (0.007)
<i>MuslimRegion</i>	0.529 (0.439)				
Territorial Resources					
<i>Distance</i>	0.886 (0.104)				
<i>Republic</i>	1.221 (0.676)				
Dynamics and Kremlin Signals					
<i>NumberGovsJoined</i>	1.050** (0.010)	1.048** (0.010)	1.046** (0.008)	1.047** (0.010)	1.049** (0.010)
<i>CancelGubernatorialElections</i>	2.732** (0.845)	2.832** (0.869)	2.368** (0.722)	2.790** (0.857)	2.718** (0.831)
Controls					
<i>KPRFGovernor</i>	0.250** (0.134)	0.292** (0.153)	0.288** (0.150)	0.293** (0.153)	0.270** (0.141)
<i>UnityVote</i>	1.026 (0.017)	1.025** (0.011)	1.012 (0.012)	1.025** (0.011)	1.017 (0.012)
<i>Unemployment</i>	1.045* (0.027)				
Shape Paramter P	0.729 (0.179)	0.770 (0.184)	0.550 (0.104)	0.776 (0.186)	0.765 (0.184)
Log Likelihood	-61.560	-66.403	-102.739	-66.222	-67.365
Number of Subjects	117	118	118	118	118
Failures	82	83	88	83	86
Time at Risk	2665	2684	2332	2687	2615

Entries are Hazard Ratios with Standard Errors in Parentheses

** p<0.05, * p<0.1

CHAPTER 6 ELITE AFFILIATION AND DOMINANT PARTY EMERGENCE: UNITED RUSSIA AND REGIONAL LEGISLATORS

6.1 Introduction

I have argued that dominant parties are more likely to emerge when neither elites nor leaders hold a preponderance of political resources. Elites will not join the emergent dominant party unless they stand to gain more from receiving spoils, perks, and privileges associated with party membership than they would gain from retaining their own autonomous control over patronage networks and political machines. When the value of these autonomous resources is high, their commitments to the party are far from credible. In turn, when elite commitment is uncertain, central leaders will not make their own investments in a dominant party.

A faithful examination of such a theory requires 1) a careful explication of elite interests and 2) an analysis to show that elites recognize and act upon those interests. In Chapter 5, I examined the claim that elites with more significant stores of autonomous political resources were less likely to join the emergent dominant party, United Russia. There I demonstrated that Russian governors strong in such resources were more reluctant to join United Russia in its formative years. Governors from ethnic republics, those who governed complex regional economies, those who had governed their regions for long periods of time, and those who had used their political machines to orchestrate sizable electoral victories for themselves were less likely to join United Russia. In this chapter, I extend the analysis of elite affiliation with United Russia to economic and political elites who hold seats in Russia's regional legislatures. As in Chapter 5, I argue that individual elites with significant stores of political, personal, and/or economic

resources that are difficult for state leaders to repress or control are less likely commit to a nascent dominant party.

I test this hypothesis with original, individual-level data on legislative faction membership of 635 deputies in 16 Russian regional legislatures from 2003-2006. I argue that legislators who work in or represent sectors of economy that are either a) dependent on the state and/or b) more vulnerable to arbitrary state pressure or taxation lack the autonomous resources that allow them to eschew United Russia faction membership. These types of deputies should be more likely to join United Russia factions in regional legislatures.

I find that legislators employed in private business were less likely to join United Russia than deputies employed in state institutions or those heading businesses that were state-owned. Among non-businessman deputies, employees of state institutions and professional politicians are more likely to join United Russia than those employed in independent entities such as social organizations. Data on the types of firms represented by legislators shows that, among businessman deputies, directors of firms in sectors of the economy characterized by state dependence (natural resource extraction, construction, heavy industry) are more likely to join United Russia. I also find that directors of collective farms were especially reluctant to join the dominant party. These findings lend credence to the hypothesis that elites strong in resources resisted joining United Russia. If individual elites strong in resources are more reluctant to join an emergent dominant party, then we have additional reason to believe that the process of dominant party formation is dependent, at least in part, on elite incentives to invest in an emergent dominant party.

The chapter proceeds as follows. The next section relates my theory of dominant party formation to hypotheses about the dominant party affiliation behavior of individual elites. Section 6.3 discusses data on regional legislators' faction membership that is used to test the hypothesis. Section 6.4 discusses the research design for testing the hypotheses. Section 6.5 discusses the results of the analysis and Section 6.6 concludes.

6.2 Hypotheses

The novelty of the argument offered in this dissertation is to introduce elites into the equation of dominant party formation. When leaders are sufficiently strong in resources relative to elites, a dominant party will not emerge because leaders have less incentive to coopt elites into a party. When elites are sufficiently strong in resources relative to leaders, then a dominant party will not emerge because elites value the preservation of their autonomous political machines more than they value cooperating with leaders by linking their fates to the emergent dominant party.

In Chapters 3 and 5, I emphasized that leaders rarely contract with all elites simultaneously. Rather, since the strength of elites varies within countries as well as across countries, they contract first with those that need coopting or with those that may benefit from being coopted, depending on how the balance of resources is shifting at the time. To make sense of this argument it is crucial to recognize that there are country-level factors that determine the overall balance of resources between elites and leaders *and* individual level factors that determine the strength of individual elites vis-a-vis the leader within a country for a given level of overall resource balance between leaders and elites. Thus, dominant parties may begin to emerge under two different circumstances:

- 1 They may begin to emerge as the balance of resources shifts from a very strong leader towards elites. In this setting, the strongest elites will be the first to be coopted into the party, because they are the first with whom the leader needs to strike bargains.

- 2 Dominant parties may begin to emerge as the balance of resources shifts toward leaders in countries where elites hold a preponderance of resources vis-à-vis leaders. Here the weakest elites may be the first to make investments in the party because they are first that stand to reap significant gains from cooperation with leaders.

As the overall balance of resources between leaders and elites shifts towards a point where neither side holds a preponderance of these resources, individual elites will begin joining the party. The order of their joining depends upon their individual resources and whether leaders or elites as a whole control a greater share of the overall balance of resources. Of course, if the balance of resources between the two sides ceases to shift, then the process of gradual elite affiliation, and hence of dominant party emergence, may come to a halt. But if it continues to shift such that resources become more balanced, then the gradual process of elite affiliation will continue until most elites are members of the dominant party.

As Chapters 4 and 5 made clear, the emergence of United Russia falls into the second category of dominant party formation; strong regional elites in the 1990s and early 2000s created an inauspicious environment for dominant party formation, but as oil prices went up, the economy grew, and Putin's popularity rose in the mid-2000s, the resources balance shifted toward the Kremlin and it began coopting elites into a dominant party. The result has been United Russia.

In Chapter 5, I emphasized that when elites, as a whole, are strong enough that they need to be coopted or appeased in some way, then elites that are weak in resources should be the first to join the party. These elites have the least to lose in relinquishing their autonomy, but they are still strong enough that they need to be coopted into the party.¹⁹⁶ If the balance of political resources continues to shift in favor of central leaders then elites that are stronger in resources will begin joining the party. In sum, elites stronger in autonomous resources should postpone or resist joining the party for longer because they can insure their political survival and extract usable rents without linking their fates to the regime. This hypothesis is consistent with recent scholarship on party development in new democracies, which attributes the decisions of candidates to eschew party affiliation to the accessibility of non-party political resources (Golosov 2003, Hale 2006, Smyth 2006). Thus, this theory suggests the following hypothesis about the dominant party affiliation behavior of Russia's regional elites:

H1: Regional elites with significant endowments of political and economic resources that are costly for the Kremlin to appropriate or control will postpone joining United Russia longer than those without such resources.

6.3 The Dependent Variable: Regional Legislators

Chapter 5 examined the dominant party affiliation behavior of Russian governors because they were the most important elite actors in Russia in the 1990s and early 2000s. Why

¹⁹⁶ An important assumption for the analysis here is that most Russian elites were still strong enough in the early 2000s that they needed to be coopted or appeased. Repressing or sidestepping them would not be a cost-effective governing strategy for the Kremlin. The variance that needs to be explained then is the difference between those elites who were coopted early into the party and those who postponed joined and continued to maintain relations bilaterally.

should an analysis of dominant party affiliation behavior look at regional legislators? There are two major reasons. First, the composition of a regional legislature is a vivid cross-section of the most important elite groups and actors in a region. In Russia's federal system, regional legislatures are primary arenas for the division of spoils. The most prominent figures in a regional political and economic elite--directors of the largest industrial and agricultural enterprises, representatives of large federally owned corporations and utilities and directors of major hospitals and research institutes---are all likely to be members of (or have representatives in) their region's legislature. Representation in parliament is a way for deputies to secure rents and influence for their enterprises (Gelbach, Sonin and Zhuravskaya 2008, Zubarevich 2008, Makhortov 2009). These rents and policy influence can be used for legislators' personal enrichment or to benefit the many clients that depend upon the legislator and his enterprise. Now that Russia's governors are appointed by the President and confirmed by regional legislatures, the significance of the latter has only grown. Thus, by looking at regional legislators we can be sure that we are analyzing the behavior of important elite actors.

Second, the analysis of regional legislators provides a window into the relationship of business to United Russia. Regional legislatures are dominated by the representatives of business. In my sample of regional legislators in the early and mid 2000s (discussed below), 61% of all lawmakers were employed full time in business. And this number surely underestimates the total number of business-affiliated deputies, for it only includes those deputies whose full-time place of employment (as listed in official biographies) is in business. It excludes 'professional politicians' (14%), many of whom are likely to have come out of business or have financial interests at stake. Of

those deputies who represent business, 82% are the general director, chairman of the board of directors, or president of their companies. Indeed, a plausible defense could be mounted for viewing businesses as the unit of analysis in regional legislatures rather than individual deputies. For instance, in my sample of 635 deputies in 16 regions, there are 19 separate instances of multiple deputies representing a single enterprise or group within a legislature; in only two cases did the delegation split between joining and not joining United Russia. This tells us that dominant party affiliation decisions may be ‘made’ at the enterprise level as much as they are made at the individual level. Thus, examining the party affiliation behavior of regional deputies affords a simultaneous glimpse into the party affiliation behavior of economic elites.

To analyze the relationship between resources and dominant party affiliation, I have assembled a dataset that contains the legislative faction membership of 636 deputies in 19 convocations of 16 Russian regional legislatures.¹⁹⁷ For four of the convocations data are taken from 2003, seven are from 2004, seven are from 2005 and one is from early 2006. This period in the early to mid-2000s was a crucial time in United Russia’s history and an optimal period in which to test the implications of my theory of dominant party formation. During this period United Russia’s dominance was on the rise and the Kremlin’s commitment to it was deepening, but the future role of the party was still far from certain, as was the extent to which the Kremlin would invest resources in it. Thus, this time period provides a brief window into the key moment when elites were making substantive decisions about their party affiliations.

¹⁹⁷ The regions are Udmurtia, Yaroslavl (2 convocations), Perm (2 convocations), Kirov, Kurgan (2 convocations), Novosibirsk, Magadan, Ryazan, Novosibirsk, Krasnoyarsk, Khakassia, Arkhangelsk, Kostroma, Nizhnii Novgorod, Voronezh, and Belgorod. These regions vary in the level of development, democracy, economic diversification, and size.

Conducting the analysis at an earlier time period would be inappropriate for this was a time when exceedingly few deputies were members of any faction, let alone United Russia. In the 1990s, Russian regional elections were overwhelmingly non-partisan affairs. Golosov (2003) shows that only 14% of regional deputies elected in the third regional electoral cycle (1999-2003) were party nominees.¹⁹⁸ Party labels rarely carried over into legislative organization. Indeed, prior to 2003, many Russian regions explicitly banned the formation of formal legislative factions in their legislatures.

In 2003, legislation went into effect that required all regions to elect at least 50% of their chambers on party lists. Prior to this reform, nearly all regions elected their deputies in single-member districts (SMDS). With increasing Kremlin investments in United Russia and the move to mixed electoral systems after 2003, regional legislatures began changing their charters to permit factions and legislators began forming groups at a faster rate. Glubotskii and Kynev (2003) find that, by mid-2003, over 50% of regional deputies were members of a legislative party or group. Of course, in most regions, the largest legislative faction was United Russia. In my sample, 32% of deputies in 2003 and 2004 were members of United Russia factions. In 2005, that proportion was 47%. By late 2007, all but five regional legislatures had United Russia majorities. Thus, the sheer dominance of United Russia after early 2006 makes those elections less useful for studying the decisions of elites to join United Russia. With almost all SMD deputies seeking United Russia affiliation, there would be less interesting variance to analyze—especially for a study of dominant party emergence.

¹⁹⁸ This was actually less than the percent of party nominees (21%) elected in elections held between 1995 and 1999.

All deputies in the analysis were elected via SMD with the exception of the data for Kirov Oblast where legislators were elected in two member districts in 2001. Six of the convocations in the sample were elected by SMD (or low magnitude multi-member districts in the case of Kirov) before the electoral reform (either in 2000, 2001, 2002, or 2003). Twelve were elected after the electoral reform and one, Krasnoyarsk, was elected in 2002 via a mixed system.

For the elections occurring prior to the electoral reform, there is no choice but to focus the analysis on SMD deputies. The year of analysis for these elections is the first year for which data is available on the faction composition of that legislature (2003 is the earliest year). Indeed, these types of elections are perhaps most appropriate for analysis, since nearly all deputies were elected initially as independents and then would have made conscious decisions later in the convocation to join/not join the United Russia faction.

For elections occurring under mixed systems, I focus only on SMD deputies because 1) those deputies exhibit more interesting variation 2) have more agency in their faction affiliation decisions and 3) to maintain homogeneity with the convocations in the sample elected in single member districts prior to 2003. While some deputies elected on opposition party lists migrated into United Russia factions in 2004 and 2005, the vast majority of United Russia's members in this period were SMD deputies and their party list deputies.¹⁹⁹ Analyses of party defections in other post-Soviet legislatures have shown that party-switching is much higher among SMD deputies (Herron 2002, Thames and Edwards 2006). Future work will include party list deputies, but for this study (with

¹⁹⁹ In my sample, there is no instance of a United Russia party list deputy leaving the party faction and remaining in the legislature (i.e. some leave upon death, illness, or transfer to another position).

limited access to data on enterprises, discussed below) it is best to restrict analysis to those classes of deputies that exhibit the most interesting variation.²⁰⁰ Table 6.1 shows the percent of SMD deputies in a region that were United Russia members at the time of analysis.

[Table 6.1 Here]

Data on the faction composition of legislatures was collected by the author from the websites of regional legislatures, where available. Since this information is archived for only a small handful of legislatures (most provide only the current faction composition of the legislatures), I have gathered much of the data in person (or via telephone and fax) from the apparatus of the legislative assembly. These data were collected on research trips to the regions in the summers of 2008 and 2009. The raw data contains the faction membership of deputies and their biographical information. Faction membership is an imperfect proxy for commitment to the dominant party. A better indicator would be formal party membership or, better still, a detailed analysis of each legislator's financial contributions to the party, his voting record, and behavior during elections. Unfortunately, such data are not publicly available.

²⁰⁰ The potential certainly exists for selection bias if UR deputies elected on party lists have high or low values on the resources that interest me. There is also the potential for selection bias if party list deputies from the opposition are systematically different. The latter type of selection bias is less pernicious since opposition deputies elected on party lists are rarely significant members of the local regional political and economic elite. Prominent exceptions are Just Russia and some instances of local FIGs 'buying out' the lists of opposition parties. But, more often than not, those prominent members of a region's elite who chose to remain independent of UR, did not align with another political party.

That being said, faction membership is likely to be a sufficient (but not necessary) condition for party membership. Very few party members are likely to forego membership in the faction, but many non-party members are likely to participate in the faction. Nonetheless, my interviews with regional parliamentary deputies indicate that United Russia factions have placed very strict restraints on their members voting behavior. Most indicated the presence of near perfect voting discipline. This indicates that joining the United Russia faction necessitates the relinquishing of legislative autonomy and is a useful proxy for commitment to the party institution as a whole.

6.4 Resource Ownership and United Russia Faction Membership

The primary hypothesis examined in this paper is that deputies with significant stores of autonomous resources were more reluctant to join United Russia. The resources that matter for this analysis are those that allowed deputies to leverage their personal political machines, clientelist networks, and economic autonomy against inducements to join the party of power. Elites value autonomy highly for it is synonymous with the pursuit of self-interest. Autonomy provides political elites with the freedom to pursue their self-interest, should their interests come into conflict with those who would limit their autonomy (i.e. the Kremlin or a powerful governor). Those with sufficient autonomous resources to ensure their political survival independent of the state are more likely to have resisted joining United Russia. I first examine the entire set of deputies and then move to analyze a subset that includes only those in business.

Ceteris paribus, deputies engaged in business are likely to be stronger in resources than those who are not. Aside from the fact that they can mobilize the resources of their

business to run independent electoral campaigns (Smyth 2006), their careers are less likely to be dependent on state or regional government. Indeed, as Table 6.2 shows, the vast majority of non-business deputies work in state-run institutions or (formerly) regional administrations.²⁰¹

[Table 6.2 Here]

McMann (2006) has argued that economic autonomy (i.e. employment in the private sector) provides citizens with the freedom to engage in political activity without fear of political reprisal. Here I take a similar stance: economic autonomy permits deputies to maintain their political autonomy. Table 6.3 presents the results of a simple binary logit showing that business-affiliated deputies are less likely to join the United Russia faction. Deputies affiliated with business have a 47% chance of being in the UR faction. Those outside business have a 39% probability. This table further demonstrates the mechanism of economic autonomy by showing that the probability of a being a UR member is higher for deputies in the private sector.²⁰² A deputy in private sector business is 11% less likely to be a UR faction member.²⁰³ Greene (2007) has argued that dominant party systems have trouble sustaining themselves without access to state resources. According to Greene (2007), a large public sector gives state leaders ample opportunities to distribute patronage and rents, while a small public sector limits those

²⁰¹ The largest component of the *State Institution* category is doctors followed by heads of municipal utility departments (road superintendents, housing authorities etc) and pension fund managers. The largest component of the *Politics* category is regional administration appointees, followed by professional legislators.

²⁰² 70% of business-affiliated deputies are in the private sector.

²⁰³ First Differences calculated here and throughout the paper with Clarify in STATA 10.

opportunities. The findings here are consistent with this view, but I clarify Greene's theoretical point by arguing that dominant party emergence and survival hinges, in part, on the extent to which elites' careers depend on the state.

[Table 6.3 Here]

Table 6.4 demonstrates that, relative to other categories of non-business employment, employees of state-run institutions and professional politicians were more likely to be United Russia members.²⁰⁴ The insignificance of Social Organization, Academia, Worker/Other, and Military should be interpreted only in reference to the omitted category; the affiliation behavior of these categories of deputies is not statistically different from those employed in business. To demonstrate this, Table 6.5 omits business deputies completely from the analysis and uses deputies employed in State Run Institutions as the reference category. Here we can see that deputies employed in academia and social organizations are less likely than those working in state run institutions to be United Russia members. The finding that deputies from social organizations are less likely to join United Russia makes sense in light of the theory (most social organizations are vulnerable to Kremlin pressure, but they are not state-run institutions), but deputies from academia should be more enthusiastic United Russia joiners if they considered only their economic interests (almost all universities in Russia are state owned). It is likely, however, that members of the intelligentsia hold ideological

²⁰⁴ In analyses not shown here, the year of election was also included as a variable in this and all subsequent analyses. Unsurprisingly, deputies were more likely to be United Russia members in later years. More importantly, however, the inclusion of this variable does not change the substantive or statistical results presented herein.

preferences that are incommensurate with United Russia affiliation. Further data is needed to fully examine the relationship between the intelligentsia and United Russia.

[Tables 6.4 and 6.5 Here]

Table 6.4 also tests whether incumbents are more likely to eschew joining UR factions and whether there is a systematic difference in the faction affiliation behavior of urban and rural deputies. Incumbency may indicate the presence of a strong personal vote or political machine and thus might be associated with resistance to UR membership. Studies of clientelism show that poorer, less educated, and rural voters are more susceptible to clientelist appeals (Magaloni, Diaz-Cayeros, and Estevez 2007, Scheiner 2007), so it may be the case that deputies from rural districts have stronger political machines that can be leveraged against United Russia membership. The results, however, do not indicate support for these hypotheses.²⁰⁵

I now restrict analysis to the subset of deputies who are direct representatives of business. Data on the enterprises represented by 347 deputies was collected for the author by SKRIN Ltd., a private market analysis firm in Moscow, which has access to Goskomstat registries of balance sheet information for all enterprises in Russia. I argue that two related factors affect the autonomous resources that businessman/woman deputies are able to wield. First, is the extent to which their enterprise is vulnerable to state pressure, taxation, punitive measures, and/or arbitrary sanction. The second is the

²⁰⁵ One reason for this may be the crudeness of the urban/rural measure which is simply a binary coding of whether the deputy is in a district from the capital city. A more refined measure and more data to increase the degrees of freedom would shed better light on this hypothesis.

extent to which contact with the state (e.g. obtaining permits, securing subsidies, achieving favorable regulations) is required for conducting business. I call firms in these categories state dependent.

One of the two main factors affecting state dependence is ownership structure. State-owned firms are easier to tax (Gehlbach 2006, Tedds 2007) and most certainly easier to control. Though all firms are vulnerable to political retribution or state intervention, state firms are decidedly more so. Firms owned by federal or regional authorities are directly controlled by those governments. Their managers can be removed if those governments so desire.²⁰⁶

I argue that a second major determinant of a firm's state dependence is sector. Firms engaged in natural resource extraction, heavy industry (refining, metallurgy, and heavy machinery), and agriculture are likely to be more state dependent than firms engaged in trade and services. The former are more likely to have to sell their goods through government bottlenecks (Gehlbach 2006) or be ensconced in production chains that link to state controlled bottlenecks. Moreover, production in these sectors is likely to be asset specific and thus more vulnerable to taxation (e.g. Boix 2003). The immobility of their assets leaves firms in these sectors vulnerable not only to taxation but arbitrary coercion and meddling.

This line of argument is partially validated by the EBRD-World Bank Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey (BEEPS), which surveys 9,000 firms in post-communist and southern Europe. This survey includes a question that asks whether

²⁰⁶ Obviously, for regionally-owned firms, much depends on the orientation of the governor toward the dominant party. Unfortunately, the current analysis does not contain enough regions or enough regionally owned enterprises to analyze such region-specific effects more closely.

an enterprise has been visited by the tax authorities in the last year. I use this item to determine whether firms in the manufacturing sector engage with the tax authorities more than service sector firms. The results in Table 6.6 show that, in the post-communist region, even when controlling for the size of the firm (as measured by their total sales), firms in the manufacturing sector are 15% more likely than service/trading sector firms to be visited by the tax authorities.

Table 6.7 shows some descriptive statistics on the representation of different sectors in regional parliaments. It also shows the percent of deputies from each sector who joined the United Russia faction in their parliament. The enterprises represented in a regional legislature are a reflection of the sectoral composition of the local economy. Agricultural regions have more deputies from the agriculture sector, industrial regions have more from the industrial sector, and so on and so forth. The sample of regions that I have drawn here includes a range of regions with different economic profiles.

[Tables 6.6 and 6.7 Here]

The sectoral breakdown lines up as predicted, with a few exceptions. Deputies from the natural resource sector, heavy industry, and construction appear more likely to join United Russia. The fact that deputies in construction sectors are more likely to join United Russia should not be surprising. Construction firms, public and private, constantly require building permits from the government. Moreover as one prominent deputy in the construction sector related to me in Yaroslavl Oblast, owners of

construction firms spend a great deal of effort securing permission from local authorities to hook up utilities or have them turned off. This weakens their economic autonomy.

One potentially intriguing finding in this table is that deputies from the utilities/energy sector are not any more or less likely to join United Russia. Until very recently almost all utilities were state-owned and thus dependent on the state. Simultaneously, however, it is important to remember that the Russian electricity monopoly RAO-Unified Energy Systems was headed until its dissolution by moderate opposition figure, Anatoly Chubais. Indeed, a causal look at the data reveals that almost all deputies representing RAO UES affiliates in the regions eschewed joining United Russia and most were members of SPS, Chubais's political party. This finding highlights the importance of personal connections and informal clientelist networks. Despite their dependence on the state, these deputies could rely on a powerful patron in the Kremlin, who, for reasons that need not concern us here, was not affiliated with United Russia.

Another intriguing result shown in the table is that the directors of collective farms (the vast majority of those deputies employed in the agricultural sector) were much less likely to join the United Russia faction in their regions. Given that agriculture is possibly the most immobile of all economic assets, this finding is puzzling in light of the discussion above. However, it is important to remember the political dimension of deputies' decisions as well. As Henry Hale (2003) has shown, collective farm directors have at their disposal very powerful political machines, resources that can be leveraged against dependence on United Russia. It is also possible that collective farm directors are inherently more leftist in their ideology (or their constituents are more leftist), making it

more difficult for them to compromise their values and join a purportedly center-right dominant party. This finding also aligns empirically with the difficulties that United Russia has faced in consolidating its position in rural organs of local self-government.

Table 6.8 extends these descriptive statistics with a multivariate logit analysis of the effect of sector employment on United Russia faction affiliation. In Model 1, the omitted category is *Trade/Services*. These results show that deputies from firms in the *Natural Resource* extraction sector, *HeavyIndustry*, and *Construction* were more likely than deputies from the *Trade/Services* sector to join United Russia factions. This effect is statistically significant. Model 2 essentially replicates these results omitting the *Natural Resources* category instead. In the multi-variate analysis, *Private Enterprise* remains signed in the predicted direction, but it loses its significance. This is due both to the decreased degrees of freedom in the analysis with businessman deputies only and the high correlation between *Natural Resources* and this variable. Without more data, unfortunately, we cannot be sure whether the mechanism at play is ownership structure or sector.

[Table 6.8 Here]

Model 3 includes two other control variables of some note. First, *SoleOwnership* measures whether the deputy is the sole owner or largest shareholder of the enterprise. These deputies may be better able to marshal the resources of their business for service in their political careers. This might give them more independence from United Russia. The negative coefficient on *SoleOwnership* suggests that this may be the case. Second,

Model 3 includes the size of the firm as a control variable. Its effect is insignificant. Indeed, as Model 4 shows, its positive effect is insignificant even in a binary regression. Its inclusion drops the sample size considerably, and, as a result, several of the sectoral variables that were significant in Model 2 drop slightly below conventional levels of statistical significance. With more data, I expect the standard errors on these variables to decrease. Given its insignificance and the decrease in degrees of freedom that accompany its inclusion, I draw my conclusions from the models that exclude this variable.

6.5 Discussion and Future Work

The preliminary results described above provide limited support for the hypothesis that deputies with access to autonomous resources are less likely to commit to United Russia. Deputies who work for state institutions (except academia), and professional politicians are more likely to have joined United Russia. Deputies who represent businesses were, *ceteris paribus*, less likely to join. Among businessman deputies, those from the private sector appear less likely to join, but the results of multivariate analysis appear inconclusive. The multivariate analysis does reveal, however, that deputies from more state dependent sectors (natural resource extraction, heavy industry, and construction) are more likely to have joined United Russia than those engaged in industries such as services, trade, and light manufacturing. Collective farm directors were also much less likely to be United Russia members, possibly due to the tools for building strong political machines at their disposal or their ideological predilections.

The findings presented in this chapter are preliminary. Future iterations of the analysis will include more regions and will also be multinomial (i.e. the dependent variable will be the probability that a deputy joins any number of factions or remains independent). This will give us greater confidence that the results are not simply picking up the propensity of certain legislators to affiliate with any sort of legislative party. By expanding the number of regions, I will also be able to extend the level of analysis by including region level factors (fixed effects) that affect the propensity of deputies to affiliate (e.g. the party membership of governors). The composition of political coalitions in Russia's regions is heavily dependent on governors. Thus, a fixed effects analysis is necessary to control for those region specific factors that are adding heterogeneity to the current analysis. Expanding the biographical data of deputies will also permit testing the effects of some personal resources that may impact decisions to join United Russia.

6.6 Conclusion

The institutional bonds of dominant parties reduce incentives to defection and extend the life of authoritarian regimes. Understanding these parties is important to advancing scholarship on democratization. To date, comparativists know a great deal about the equilibrium characteristics of dominant parties, but still very little about when such an equilibrium will come to be established.

This chapter has used evidence from Russia to contribute to our understanding of the origins of dominant parties. Dominant parties sometimes do not emerge because elites cannot commit themselves to such a party. This was the case in Russia in the 1990s and early 2000s. This paper examined in more detail the claim that elites make their

dominant party affiliation decisions on the basis of the resources available to them. Using data on the legislative faction membership of Russian regional legislators, it provided preliminary evidence that legislators with such resources were less likely to join the dominant party. The major finding was that those employed in state-dependent sectors of the economy were more likely to affiliate with United Russia. The findings provide insight not only into the behavior of legislators, but also into the relationship of business to United Russia.

Regional legislators join United Russia to lobby for their interests. Deputies from business can secure perks, privileges, and rents for their enterprises and for those constituents who rely upon these enterprises for wages and social services. In the 1990s and early 2000s, these deputies achieved these goals via ad hoc deals with governors and, sometimes, federal ministries. Today this process has been institutionalized within the United Russia factions of regional legislatures. Managing this patronage is one of the party's major functions at the regional level.

6.7 Tables and Figures

Table 6.1 Percent of SMD Deputes belonging to United Russia faction

Region	Year of Analysis	Percent in UR
Nizhnii Novgorod	2003	50%
Perm	2004	37%
Kurgan	2003	30%
Udmurtia	2005	54%
Kirov	2005	51%
Yaroslavl	2004	16%
Yarsolavl	2003	41%
Ryazan	2005	39%
Novosibirsk	2005	35%
Khakassiya	2004	38%
Perm	2006	59%
Arkhangelsk	2004	35%
Magadan	2005	33%
Belgorod	2004	47%
Voronezh	2005	57%
Kostroma	2005	35%
Ulyanovsk	2003	46%
Kurgan	2004	36%
Krasnoyarsk	2004	30%

Table 6.2 Professions of Regional Deputies

Profession	Proportion
Business	61%
Politics (Professional legislators, Regional Administration)	15%
State Institutions (Medicine, Municipal Utilities, Pension Funds)	10%
Social Organizations	4%
Academia	4%
Worker/Other	2%
Military	1%

Table 6.3 Logistic Regression Estimates for Effects of Business Affiliation on United Russia Faction Membership

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)
<i>Business Deputy</i>	-0.319* (0.165)	
<i>Private Enterprise Deputy</i>		-0.451** (0.171)
<i>Constant</i>	-0.115 (0.128)	-0.115 (0.107)
Observations	633	591

Standard errors in parentheses

** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 6.4 Logistic Regression Estimates for Effects of Categories of Non-Business Employment on United Russia Faction Membership (**Business is reference category**)

VARIABLES	(1)
<i>Incumbent</i>	0.163 (0.187)
<i>Urban</i>	-0.104 (0.188)
<i>State Institution</i>	0.813** (0.310)
<i>Worker/Other</i>	-1.659 (1.067)
<i>Academic</i>	-0.138 (0.489)
<i>Social Organization</i>	-0.186 (0.484)
<i>Military</i>	0.481 (1.421)
<i>Professional Politician</i>	0.498* (0.261)
<i>Constant</i>	-0.429** (0.151)
Observations	508

Standard errors in parentheses

** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 6.5 Logistic Regression Estimates for Categories of Non-Business Employment and United Russia Faction Membership (**State Institution is Reference Category**)

VARIABLES	(1)
<i>Worker/Other</i>	-1.827** (0.805)
<i>Academic</i>	-0.971** (0.482)
<i>Social Organization</i>	-0.911** (0.464)
<i>Military</i>	-0.911 (0.894)
<i>Politics</i>	-0.108 (0.305)
<i>Constant</i>	0.218 (0.221)
Observations	244

Standard errors in parentheses

** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 6.6 Logistic Regression Estimates for Effect of Sector on Likelihood of Being Visited by Tax Authorities (**Manufacturing vs. Services**)

VARIABLES	(1)
<i>Maunufacturing Sector</i>	0.609** (0.099)
<i>Size of Enterprise</i>	0.068** (0.016)
<i>Constant</i>	-0.359** (0.124)
Observations	2793

Standard Errors in Parentheses

**p<0.05, * p<0.1

Source: EBRD-World Bank Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey (BEEPS)

Table 6.7 Sector Employment and United Russia Faction Membership*

Sector	Percent of 'Businessman' Deputies Employed in Sector	Percent of Sector's Employees in United Russia Faction
Trade/Services	31%	32%
LightIndustry	20%	32%
HeavyIndustry	15%	55%
NaturalResource Extraction	12%	57%
Agriculture	7%	19%
Construction	7%	52%
Utilities/Energy	5%	38%

* 39% of deputies engaged in business are faction members

Table 6.8 Logistic Regression Estimates for Effect of Sector on United Russia Faction Membership

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	(Trade/Service s Omitted)	(Natural_Reso urcesOmitted)	(Natural_Reso urcesOmitted)	
<i>Private_enterprise</i>	-0.177 (0.258)	-0.199 (0.259)	0.072 (0.297)	
<i>HeavyIndustry</i>	0.735** (0.355)	-0.040 (0.403)	0.207 (0.442)	
<i>LightIndustry</i>	-0.137 (0.331)	-0.929** (0.392)	-0.754* (0.434)	
<i>Natural_Resources</i>	0.794** (0.386)			
<i>Agriculture</i>	-0.341 (0.468)	-1.156** (0.542)	-0.956 (0.590)	
<i>Utilities/Energy</i>	0.036 (0.535)	-0.785 (0.572)	-0.723 (0.643)	
<i>Construction</i>	0.828* (0.471)	0.014 (0.529)	0.059 (0.591)	
<i>Trade/services</i>		-0.846** (0.374)	-0.744 (0.453)	
<i>SoleOwnership</i>	-0.563* (0.327)	-0.563* (0.325)	-0.529 (0.374)	
<i>Log_Revenue</i>			-0.048 (0.058)	0.044 (0.046)
<i>Constant</i>	-0.391 (0.273)	0.443 (0.342)	0.923 (1.276)	-1.379 (0.895)
Observations	347	347	285	285

Standard errors in parentheses

** p<0.05, * p<0.1

CHAPTER 7 DOMINANT PARTY EMERGENCE AROUND THE WORLD 1946-2006

7.1 Introduction

Why do dominant parties emerge in some non-democracies, but not in others? Why is it that some countries have strong party institutions that bind elites to the regime and distribute spoils to those elites in a routine manner? This is the fundamental question that this study examines. It is argued that such institutions emerge in order to solve commitment problems between leaders and elites: elites cannot commit in the future to remaining loyal unless they know that spoils will be distributed regularly and leaders cannot commit to distributing spoils regularly unless they know that elites will be loyal. But for leaders and elites to invest in such an institution, the risk that either side will defect from any such bargain must be low, low enough that the two sides can trust a nascent dominant party institution to solve their commitment problem. It is argued here that this risk is reduced when neither elites nor leaders hold a preponderance of political resources. Dominant parties are most likely to emerge, I argue, when other elites hold enough independent political resources (relative to the ruler's supply of political resources) that coopting them is necessary, but not so many autonomous resources that they themselves are unwilling to commit to the dominant party.

In this chapter, I test this hypothesis with original data on the emergence and duration of all dominant parties in the world from since 1946. This empirical analysis presents an original measure of regional elite strength that is based on (1) histories of political decentralization (2) the geographic dispersion of population with a country and (3) the regional concentration of ethnic minorities. The resources that make leaders

strong are measured with a scale that combines economic growth and natural resource revenues. I find that dominant parties are most likely to emerge when the resources of leaders and elites are relatively balanced. That is, when elites are very weak and leaders very strong, dominant parties do not emerge. This is because leaders have no reason to coopt elites into a party. But, dominant parties are also very rare when elites are strong and leaders are weak. Here elites cannot commit to a party and, thus, leaders refrain from investing in a ruling party. These findings lend credence to a theory of a dominant party formation that privileges the deliberate decisions of *both* leaders and elites.

7.2 Hypothesis

The commitment problems that exist between leaders and elites are difficult to overcome. What is more, they vary in their severity. When elites are strong in resources relative to leaders, their commitment problem is very severe. Elites are always loathe to relinquish their autonomy, but they are especially loathe to do so when they are strong. Newly created party institutions may not be enough to solve their commitment problem in this instance. Leaders know this and will not invest in a dominant party in this instance. When leaders are strong relative to elites, an analogous problem emerges: the commitment problem is too severe for nascent dominant party institutions to dependably constrain leaders. Leaders would prefer to never be tied down by a dominant party, but this is especially so when they are strong. This logic leads to the following hypothesis.

H1: Dominant parties are unlikely to emerge when leaders are disproportionately strong (relative to elites) or elites are disproportionately strong (relative to leaders).

H1 is depicted graphically in Figure 7.1.

[Figure 7.1 Here]

On the left side of the figure elites are weak relative to leaders and a dominant party is unlikely because leaders have little reason to coopt elites into an institution. On the right side of the figure elites are very strong in resources and have little reason to relinquish their autonomy to a dominant party. Thus, leaders will not risk investment in a party and a dominant party is unlikely. In the middle of the figure, when the resources of elites and leaders are relatively balanced, a dominant party is more likely. In this range, leaders need to coopt elites and elites are weak enough to risk linking their political machines to the party. In the section on modeling strategy, I relate this hypothesis scales that I have constructed measuring elite and leader strength.

7.3. Data and Methods

Dependent Variable

How can we identify dominant parties in order to test hypotheses about their emergence ? In Chapter 2 I developed and defended the concept of a dominant party as a political institution that has the leading role in determining access to most political offices, shares powers over policymaking and patronage distribution, and uses privileged access to state resources or extra-constitutional means to maintain its position in power. How do we know a dominant party when we see one, though? In Chapter 2, I laid out a minimalist approach to operationalizing dominant parties that I employ in this chapter. In Chapter 2, I noted the perfect measure of dominant party would entail a detailed case analysis of every non-democracy in the world to determine the extent that the ruling party controls careers, policy, and rents. Since even area experts argue about the extent to which this or

that ruling party influences politics, it seems implausible and unwieldy to adopt such an approach. Instead, I adopt an approach to coding dominant parties that is, I argue, sufficiently valid and reliable enough to permit the coding of dominant parties across time and space. I refer the reader back to Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of this measure and its construction. Here I simply remind that it is based on the three criteria: 1) the regime must be non-democratic, 2) the party must control more than 50% of seats in the primary legislative chamber of parliament, and 3) it must be affiliated directly with regime leaders. The application of these coding rules to all countries from 1946 until 2006, yields 121 dominant parties that existed in 68 countries between 1946 and 2006.

In the analyses focusing solely on dominant party emergence, the dependent variable is the non-democratic country year (using the criteria described above), where 1 is the emergence of a dominant party and 0 is a country-year without a dominant party. For the analysis of emergence and duration, 1 is the existence of a dominant party and 0 is a country-year without a dominant party. There are 4735 authoritarian country-years in the analysis.

Independent Variables

The main independent variables of interest in this analysis are leader strength and elite strength. Both must be taken into consideration because the strength of one is always relative to the resources of the other. The challenge of conceptualization and operationalization for elites is harder. I address it first.

Measuring Elite Strength

Both between and within countries there is always variation in the extent to which elites hold or have access to some actual or latent base of *resources* that are autonomous from the regime. Following Dahl, I define political resources as anything that can be used to sway the specific choices or the strategies of another individual (Dahl 1961). Resources are power. Elites are important for this analysis to the extent that they control these resources. Such resources might include but are not limited to autonomous control over clientelist networks, de facto or de jure regional autonomy, hard-to-tax economic assets, and individual-specific ability to mobilize citizens.

Elites are strong to the extent that they sit atop networks that embed the loyalty of sub-elites and citizens. When elite networks form the basis of social control and/or economic management in a polity, then elites have significant bargaining power vis-a-vis leaders. Elites may be capable of mobilizing citizens in elections, on the street, or on the battlefield. They may command the loyalties of important sub-elites, such as military officers, landowners, or enterprise directors. When elites are strong in this way, leaders must often gain the willful acquiescence of elites to win votes, secure legislative majorities, implement reforms, or extract revenues.

In this cross-national analysis, I treat the strength of elites as a country-specific factor—not in the sense, that elites necessarily contract with the leader as a single, monolithic actor, but in the sense that we can identify countries where elites, as a whole, are strong vis-à-vis rulers and countries where elites, as a whole, are weak vis-à-vis rulers. Where Chapters 5 and 6 looked at how variance in the strength of individual elites within a single country impacted their individual decisions to affiliate with the dominant

party, this chapter examines how variance in the strength of all elites in a country impacts their collective decisions to invest in, and thereby abet the creation of, a dominant party.²⁰⁷

Measuring the strength of elites across countries is a challenge. An ideal measure of aggregate elite resources would be able to tap the myriad of ways that elites have exerted independent influence (*vis-à-vis* leaders) in societies down through the ages. It would quantify the extent to which governors, chiefs, bosses, landlords, caciques, clan leaders, wealthy peasants, and warlords, or, as Joel Migdal calls them, ‘strongmen’ (1988), influence politics in a given country. It would identify the characteristics of a polity that abet the construction of strong clientelist networks and political machines. Thus, one problem with the construction of a measure of elite strength is the inherent diffuseness of the concept. It must be proxied.

A second challenge is endogeneity. For the resources belonging to elites to have any meaning, they must be exogenous to the regime. That is, it cannot be easy for the regime to systematically expropriate these resources and the costs of repressing those holding these resources must be high.

My approach to these problems is to construct a scale of the historical and demographic factors that, to my mind, are most closely associated with the concept of elite strength sketched above. A good place to start in constructing this scale is to look at how power historically has been disbursed across the geographic space of a polity. The

²⁰⁷ To remind, in Chapters 5 and 6 we took advantage of the fact that Russia was transitioning from a situation when all elites were very strong *vis a vis* leaders to one in which the balance of resources was more even, to examine variation in the individual dominant party affiliation strategies of elites. When elites are all very strong or elites are all very weak, I expect very little variation in the individual dominant party affiliation strategies of elites. When elites are all strong, none should invest in a ruling party. When they are all weak, there will be no ruling party sanctioned by the leader for them to invest in.

conflicts that have defined politics throughout much of history have been center-periphery conflicts. As state leaders have attempted to exert control over society, time and again they have been stymied in their efforts by regional elites. But how can we measure the strength of regional elites cross-nationally? Unfortunately, comparative politics lacks reliable measures of the exogenous state characteristics that predispose some countries toward having strong regional elites.

A key indicator of regional elite strength, I argue, is a country's history of political decentralization. Granting state administrative authority to regional elites may be a reflection of their power or state administrative autonomy may give elites the resources to build strong local political machines. Interested as I am in the outcome, either is permissible, so long as the measure of political decentralization reflects *historical* patterns of political decentralization. Using data from the Comparative Constitutions Project (Elkins, Ginsburg, and Melton 2009), I have constructed a scale of political decentralization that is based on the constitutional powers granted to regional and local governments in all non-democracies since 1946. To make sure it is exogenous to the strength of elites, the scale is lagged by five years in this analysis. In this way, it reflects historical patterns of decentralization and not the current level of decentralization, which may be affected by the ruler's strength or the emergence of the dominant party itself.

The scale receives a score of 1 if there are no local or provincial governments mentioned in the constitution or local government chief executives are appointed by the center. It receives a score of 2 if local governments are elected OR provincial governments are mentioned in the constitution. It receives a score of 3 if provincial

governments are mentioned AND local governments are elected. It receives a 4 if subnational chief executives exist and the provincial government has the power to levy taxes (instances where provincial chief executives are selected by provincial legislatures or when they are directly elected are included in this category). This produces a four point scale of past political decentralization. I call this variable *Political Decentralization*.

Political Decentralization is a highly reliable measure of political decentralization, but its validity is limited in many developing countries. While recent work has shown that formal institutions constrain actors even in authoritarian regimes, the extent to which formal institutions reflect the informal distribution of power is, nonetheless, usually, more limited in developing countries.

Therefore, I have chosen to supplement this scale with two other proxies for the geographic dispersion of resources. These two additional proxies are meant to identify cases where regional elites have the potential to develop strong political machines, but, for whatever reason, power has not been formally decentralized. The first supplemental measure is the dispersion of human population within a country. Treisman (2008) has shown that larger countries are more likely to exhibit federal institutions. More generally, regional elites are more likely to have the tools necessary to build strong political machines when much of a country's population is spread across its territory and far from areas that are easy to control by state leaders (often the capital city). This is especially true when this population is spread across major urban centers that contain significant portions of a country's economic output. As a matter of historical fact, most states in the developing world have, at one time or another lacked the material and

infrastructural resources to exert social control across their territory. To the extent that it requires more infrastructure and financial resources to implement state authority across large distances, countries with dispersed populations are likely to generate greater opportunities for regional elites to construct the political machines.

Also, as observers from Madison onwards have noted, countries with dispersed populations are more likely to exhibit diversities of attitude, geography, and custom. This diversity may give regional strongmen more opportunity for emphasizing and fortifying their own local legitimacy at the expense of a faraway ruler.

Thus, I supplement my scale of regionalism with a measure of the geographic dispersion of human settlement. This scale combines information both on how far most citizens live from the capital and the overall fragmentation of human settlements. It uses geo-coded data from the Earth Institute of Columbia on human settlements that is based on the administrative divisions created by countries. This geo-coded data provides information on the latitude and longitude of all human settlements in the world as well as their population.

My scale of population dispersion is calculated in the following manner: The distance of each human settlement from the capital city is multiplied by its share of the total population. These totals are then summed up for the entire country. This measure can be thought of as the dispersion per capita (DPC) in the country, or the average distance of each citizen from the capital city. Formally the measure is calculated as:

$$DPC = \sum_i P_i D_i$$

Where P is the population of the human settlement and D is the distance of that settlement from the country's capital. This continuous measure provides a good proxy

for the dispersion of human population, because it taps both a country's size and the dispersion of people within its borders. For example, a country such as Saudi Arabia is large, but its population is concentrated in only a few locations. Therefore, DPC penalizes Saudi Arabia's size for the fact that its population is concentrated. On the other hand, Vietnam is not a particularly large country, but its population is spread across many different population points. DPC rewards Vietnam for this dispersion, while also taking into account its modest geographic size.

One significant flaw of this measure is it does not take into account the fragmentation of human settlement outside the capital city. For example, in Saudi Arabia, a sizable proportion of the population is located *outside* Riyadh, but this population is concentrated in only a handful of centers. Thus, in my final measure of population dispersion, I weight DPC by a Herfindahl index that measures the effective number of human settlements in the country. This weight decreases the value of DPC for countries such as Saudi Arabia and increases it for countries such as Vietnam. Finally, I transform DPC into a four point scale (with equally spaced intervals) for ease of inclusion into the broader scale of elite strength. I call this variable *Population Dispersion*.

A final component of my scale of elite strength is geographically-concentrated ethnic minorities. Some of the strongest elite political machines in non-democracies tend to be ethnically based (for evidence of this in Russia see Hale 2003, Stoner-Weiss 2006, Reuter 2010). In Africa the bases of elite strength are often the tribe or ethnic group (Boone 2003, Posner 2005). Ethnic leaders leverage on their ability to mobilize nationalist/ethnic opposition in order to accrue greater autonomy from the center and

build strong political machines. Indeed, ethnic minority social networks can provide a ready-made basis for strong political machines.

One could simply tap ethnic diversity as a measure of regional elite strength. The difficulty with this is that not all ethnic divisions can provide a strong basis for elite political machines. Groups whose populations are disbursed throughout the country are harder to mobilize. Regionally based groups are much more likely to provide bases for strong political machines. To acknowledge this fact, I start with the data on ethnic groups provided by Fearon (2003), I then use the group concentration index developed by the Minorities at Risk (MAR) project to exclude those groups that are ‘widely dispersed’ or constitute only a minority in one region ($\text{GROUPCON} > 2$ in the MAR data). The excluded groups are ‘subsumed’ into the majority ethnic group of the country and a Herfindahl index of ethnic diversity is then computed as has become standard in the literature.

In other words, this measure weights the traditional ethnic fragmentation measure by the extent to which ethnic minorities are concentrated in regions in which they constitute majority. This measure ranges between 0 and 1, but for the purposes of inclusion in the broader scale of elite strength, I rescale the measure to range from 1 to 4 at equal intervals, with four indicating higher levels of regional ethnic diversity. I call this variable *Ethnic Diversity*.

To construct a scale of elite strength, the three components of the scale (histories of political decentralization, population dispersion, and regional ethnic fragmentation) are added together to create a scale that ranges from 3 to 12. A score of 12 indicates maximally strong elites. I call this measure *Elite Strength*.

One might object that this measure is vulnerable to aggregation bias, since each of its three components appears to be related. Indeed, studies of federalism in democracies, have related a country's size and its ethnic diversity to the maintenance of federalism (Treisman 2008). I do not deny such a relationship, but only note that my additive scale is constructed as such precisely because I believe that regional elite strength is sometimes not reflected in the institutional rules of authoritarian regimes. Thus, I expect a relatively low correlation between these two measures for my sample of authoritarian regimes. Second, the measure of regional ethnic diversity is added precisely to account for the many African countries that are not particularly large, but contain a great diversity of ethnic groups that provide strong bases for the cultivation of regionalized tribalism and bossism. Therefore, I do not expect a correlation between *Population Dispersion* and *Ethnic Diversity*.

Indeed, the correlations between the components of this scale bear out these expectations.

[Table 7.1 Here]

The correlations between the variables are close to zero. The most notable positive correlation is between Political Decentralization and Population Dispersion. The second column of Table 7.1 shows these correlations for more 'democratic' regimes i.e. regimes with a Polity score of higher than 3. We note that the correlation between these variables is higher here, indicating that in more democratic regimes there may be more of a correspondence between the dispersion of human populations and decentralization of de

jure political authority. This is consistent with my justification for constructing this scale.

Measuring Leader Strength

Leaders are strong to the extent that they are able to use their political power to make political appointments, secure favored policies, and ensure social cooperation without relying on the favor of other prominent elites. But these resources must be exogenous. That is, the measure of leader strength I employ here must not depend on the strength of elites. I argue that resource rents and economic growth do an adequate job of capturing this concept. Non-tax revenues give leaders easy access to funds and can be used to buy social cooperation and enrich supporters. The perfect measure of non-tax revenues would include foreign aid, grants, and state-owned enterprise revenue (Morrison 2009), but data on these things is limited for most non-democracies in my sample. Instead, as most of the literature has done, I focus on revenues from fuel and mineral exports as a percentage of GDP (Smith 2004, Gandhi 2008). This data is from the World Bank World Development Indicators. I then scale this measure into a four-point scale coded 1 if fuel and mineral exports as a percent of GDP are less than 1. The scale is coded 2 if the percent of GDP is between 1 and 5. It is coded 3 if the percent is between 5 and 15 and 4 if the share is greater than 15. I call this measure *Rents*.

Unfortunately, there is a great deal of missing data for non-democracies on this measure. But fortunately, with some notable exceptions, *Rents* is a very slow moving variable across time. Therefore, I extend *Rents* across gaps in the time-series for a given

country. I do this for gaps that reach up to ten years. So, for instance, if there is data on *Rents* for a country between 1961-1965 and 1971-2006, but not the intervening years, I extend the values of *Rents* in 1965 and 1971 across the intervening missing years. This method of retaining data points has been deployed in other comparative studies that use rent revenues as explanatory variables (Jensen and Wantchekon 2004).

Studies of economic voting have shown that responsibility for economic performance is typically attributed to national leaders. Leaders that enjoy strong economic growth curry more favor among citizens and have more rents to distribute to supporters. This puts them in a strong position. Therefore I take economic growth as a measure of leader's strength vis-a vis-elites. I take four year moving averages of lagged economic growth using data from the World Bank, Penn World Tables, and Angus Maddison's *The World Economy: Historical Statistics*. In order to integrate this into a broader measure of leader strength, I then scale these four year moving averages into a four point scale ranging from 1 to 4 that separates the continuous measure as equal intervals. Four represents the highest four-year averages of economic growth.

The two components of the scale (*Rents* and Economic Growth) are added together to create a scale of leaders' strength that ranges from 2 to 8. A score of 8 indicates maximally strong leaders. I call this measure *Leader Strength*.

Controls

In addition to the variables listed above I include several analytic controls that tap competing explanations and intuitive correlates of dominant party emergence. First,

since measures of leader and elite strength may be correlated with levels of liberalization or democracy, I include the Polity IV interval measure of regime type. Second, I include GDP/capita.. Finally, and most importantly, I include two variables that are intended to capture the difficult to measure concept of ‘social opposition’. The first, used by Gandhi (2008) to measure the same concept, is a three point scale that measures the number of political parties that the current regime confronts when it comes to power: zero, one, or more than one. Regimes that confront existing parties upon coming to power confront situations in which some segments of society have the ready-made capability to organize. This may be either a cause or consequence of the latent level of social opposition.²⁰⁸

This measure is not without its flaws, however. In particular, it does not adequately capture variation among those regimes that inherited more than one party—the majority of the sample. Second, it does not measure the extent to which latent social opposition is actualized against the regime. To tap this notion, I exploit data on anti-government demonstrations, strikes, and riots from Banks Cross National Time Series Data Archive. This variable counts the number of each of these protest events in a year and sums them to make an index I call *Social Opposition*. Finally, I include a series of region dummies to capture additional heterogeneity.

Modeling Strategy

The hypotheses in this paper directly concern the emergence of dominant parties, but also indirectly have implications for the survival of dominant parties once in power. I begin by modelling the effect of covariates on the probability of a dominant party emerging in a sample of non-democracies that do *not* have a dominant party. Country-years without a

²⁰⁸ Note that this is not the lagged value of the dependent variable in this analysis, but rather a ‘regime-specific’ (Gandhi 2008)

dominant party are coded 0, while those with a dominant party are coded 1. Countries drop from the analysis after the year in which a dominant party emerges. Since the outcome of interest is binary I use probit models. To account for duration dependency in the data, I also include four natural cubic splines at equally spaced intervals (Beck, Katz, and Tucker 1998). This analysis can be thought of as the probability of a dominant party emerging given that there was no dominant party in the previous year. These results are presented in Table 7.2

[Table 7.2 Here]

I then I adopt a different modeling strategy and examine the determinants of dominant party existence. As before, non-democratic country-years without a dominant party are coded 0 and those with a dominant party coded 1, but here I do not drop country-years from the analysis after a dominant party emerges. Thus, this analysis examines the determinants of a dominant party existing in any given year. Hence it conflates analysis of why dominant parties emerge AND why parties endure. Here I use a probit model with a lagged dependent variable. These results are presented in Table 7.3

[Table 7.3 Here]

Table 7.4 presents an analysis of the duration of dominant parties. Here I include only dominant party country-years in the analysis and examine the covariates of dominant party survival. In this setting, I employ a probit model with natural cubic

splines at equally spaced intervals. I discuss each of these models in turn, below.

[Table 7.4 Here]

Testing my main hypotheses in these models requires analysis of a curvilinear process. As Figure 7.1 shows, the probability of dominant parties is first increasing in the strength of elites relative to leaders and then decreasing. One approach to testing this hypothesis is to multiply one of the scales (Elite Strength or Leader Strength) by -1, add the two scales together *Elite Strength* and *Leader Strength*, and analyze the effect of the resultant scale and its quadratic term on the probability of dominant party emergence. Unfortunately, this approach does not permit analysis of the contingent effects of leader and elite strength. A better approach, which captures the curvilinear nature of my hypothesis and permits analysis of the symmetrical, contingent hypothesis, is to interact the two scales and look at the resultant marginal effects. This allows us to see if the effect of *Elite Strength* on dominant party emergence changes across values of *Leader Strength* AND vice-versa.

According to my hypothesis, Elite Strength should have a negative effect on dominant party emergence when leaders are weak, and a positive effect when leaders are strong. Leader Strength should have a negative effect on the probability of dominant party emergence when elites are weak, but a positive effect when elites are strong.

7.4 Results

Table 7.2 presents the results of models that analyze the determinants of dominant party

emergence. Before including *Elite Strength* and *Leader Strength*, I first estimate a set of baseline models examining the effect of the individual components of the scale on dominant party emergence, as well as the effect of key competing explanations and analytic controls. Model 1 is the full version of this model.

Several things stand out. Model 2 is the reduced version of this model which includes only variables that were statistically significant or close to statistically significant in Model 1. Several positive findings of note are that dominant parties are less likely to emerge in wealthy countries, more ‘liberal’ non-democracies, and countries where human populations are concentrated. Dominant parties are much more likely to emerge in Sub-Saharan Africa. Finally, partially consistent with existing work (Smith 2005, Gandhi 2008), dominant parties are more likely to emerge in those countries that have inherited more political parties. Some interesting negative findings also stand out. Most intriguingly, contrary to the predictions of some existing theory, *Rents* appear to have no effect on dominant party emergence. Also, *Social Opposition* in the form of strikes, demonstrations, and riots appears to have no effect here. In Model 3, I attempt to test the argument suggested by Smith (2005) that the effect of social opposition and rents is multiplicative i.e. dominant parties are most likely in the face of strong social opposition and limited access to rents. Thus, I interact *Rents* with *InheritedParties*. The coefficient on the interaction term is insignificant and an examination of conditional coefficients indicates that the impact of neither is conditional on the other.

Model 4 presents the full model that tests my hypotheses. I include *Elite Strength*, *Leader Strength*, and their interaction. I also include statistically significant controls and competing explanations. The statistically significant coefficient on the

EliteXLeader indicates that these two variables modify one another's effects in some way, but by just looking at the coefficients we cannot determine what form this modification takes. Thus, it is necessary to look at the marginal effects of *Elite* and *Leader Strength* as they change across values of the other.

Figure 7.2 displays the marginal effect of *Leader Strength* across the range of values on *Elite Strength*. The figure is consistent with my hypotheses. When elites are weak (*Elite Strength* less than 7), the effect of a one-unit increase in *Leader Strength* is to reduce the probability of dominant party emergence. When elites are very strong on the other hand, *Leader Strength* acts to increase the probability of a dominant party emerging. Thus, when leaders are strong, making elites stronger increases the probability of a dominant party emerging. When leaders are weak, making elites stronger leads to fewer dominant parties.

[Figures 7.2 and 7.3 Here]

Figure 7.3 displays the flip side of the interactive hypothesis: the effect of *Elite Strength* on dominant party emergence as values of *Leader Strength* change. This graph is also consistent with the hypothesis above. *Elite Strength* appears to increase the probability of a dominant party forming when leaders become strong (*Leader Strength* greater than 5). When leaders are very weak, it either has no effect or when leaders are very weak, the effect of a one unit increase in *Elite Strength* is to decrease the probability of a dominant party forming. As I discuss in greater detail below, these results suggest that dominant parties are unlikely to emerge when leaders are very strong relative to

elites or when elites are very strong relative to leaders.

Another way of viewing these same substantive results is to look at the predicted probability of dominant party emergence given different levels of *Elite Strength* and *Leader Strength*. Table 7.5 displays these quantities, along with prominent examples of the type of countries that fit in each category in the data.

[Table 7.5 Here]

As we can see, dominant parties are most likely when both leaders and elites are strong. By contrast, when elites are very weak and leaders very strong, then dominant parties are very unlikely to emerge. The same is true when leaders are very strong and elites are very weak—dominant parties are unlikely. For the range of values where resources are balanced between the two sides (weak elites/weak leaders, middle elites/middle leaders, and strong elites/strong leaders), it appears that strong elites/strong leader is the category most likely to witness dominant party emergence. My theory predicts that dominant parties will be most likely in these categories relative to other categories. This prediction is partly born out, but the variation among predicted probabilities in these categories is unexplained by my theory. In other words, I cannot explain why the dominant parties are more likely when both leaders and elites are strong than they are when both leaders and elites are weak. One explanation for the finding that dominant parties are less likely when both leaders and elites are weak than they are when both leaders and elite are strong, may have to do with the idea of the total level of usable resources. In these settings, neither elites nor rulers are endowed with political capital. Rulers have no rents

to distribute and the economy is not growing. Elites have no bases of power upon which to construct their political machines. In this setting, the 'overall level of resources' in the country is low and dominant parties, as well as any other strong state institution may be problematic.

Table 7.3 presents results of the models that examine the determinants of dominant party existence; that is, the formation AND duration of dominant parties. As Model 4 shows, wealthier countries appear less likely to experience a dominant party. The same goes for more 'democratic' ones. One notable difference in these results is that *Rents* now appear to decrease the probability of dominant parties existing (in the analysis of dominant party emergence their effect was insignificant). As Figures 7.4 and 7.5 demonstrate, the conditional effects of *Elite Strength* and *Leader Strength* are only magnified in this analysis.

[Figures 7.4 and 7.5 Here]

Figure 7.4 shows that a one unit change in *Elite Strength* decreases the probability of a dominant party existing when leaders are weak (*Leader Strength* less than 5), but increases the probability when *Leader Strength* is greater than 6. Figure 7.5 shows the conditional coefficients for *Leader Strength* across values of *Elite Strength*. When elites are weak, a one unit increase in *Leader Strength* decreases the probability of dominant parties existing. When elites are strong, an increase in *Leader Strength* increases the probability of dominant party emergence.

The hypotheses above concern mostly dominant party emergence. Dominant

parties may persist for reasons orthogonal to the reasons that brought them into existence. Moreover, they may be sticky once founded, so that they become immune to shifts in the balance of resources that determined their rise. Indeed, even authoritarians are proud to emphasize the power of their coalitions to maintain elite cohesion in the face of economic crisis. Nonetheless, Table 7.4 shows the results of an analysis of dominant party survival.

Model 1 tests some existing explanations of dominant party longevity before including my main variables of interests. Model 2 is the reduced form of this model which retains variables that were significant or close to significant in the first model. This model reveals some very interesting empirical results in light of existing debates about dominant party survival. First, even controlling for the level of democracy, hegemonic party regimes (those that permit opposition parties to compete) appear to survive longer than single party regimes. And even while controlling for democracy AND hegemonic party status, it appears that dominant parties are most likely to fall at election time, both presidential and legislative. These regimes appear to fall at the hands of elections that they themselves sanction. Regimes are more likely to fall when they experience the defection of a high-ranking loyalist who challenges the incumbent in presidential elections.²⁰⁹ Regimes with a communist ideology survive longer (even while excluding the foreign-maintained regimes in Easter Europe). Lastly, as indicated by the negative coefficient on *Rents*, resource rich dominant party regimes are less likely to collapse. This finding confirms the findings of Smith (2007) who has argued that resource rents can help prop up regimes with strong dominant party institutions. Finally, dominant party regimes are more likely to collapse in the face of economic crises.

²⁰⁹ This variable is from Gandhi and Reuter (2010).

Some things that do not appear to affect dominant party survival are level of development, the number of parties inherited by the current regime, ethnic diversity, political decentralization and population dispersion. In addition, I attempted to control for the revolutionary origins of some parties by including a variable coded 1 if the party was the dominant anti-colonial movement in the pre-colonial era. Huntington (1968) intimated that he thought revolutionary parties should be more durable than others. I find this variable to be insignificant. Lastly, I attempted to control for the character-forming nature of foundational struggles against social opposition by including the initial level of social opposition faced by the dominant party regime (demonstrations+strikes+riots). This variable appears to have no statistically significant effect on dominant party survival.

Model 3 tests the impact of *Elite Strength* and *Leader Strength* and their interaction. Neither appears to have an impact on dominant party survival. One reason for this may be that since leaders and elites are strategic and self-interested, neither will invest in a dominant party that will not last. Therefore, the success of the *EliteStrengthXLeaderStrength* interaction in explaining dominant party emergence may explain why it fails to explain variation in their duration. Those dominant parties that emerge may all have similar values on these variables and thus variation in them does a poor job of explaining their survival. Dominant parties may indeed fail for different reasons than those that spur their creation.

7.5 Discussion and Conclusion

The results from the models provide considerable evidence for an explanation of

dominant party emergence that privileges the role of both leaders and elites in a strategic interchange. Nonetheless, some caveats must be highlighted and there is much room for improving these empirical analyses. I start with the evidence consistent with the theory.

Dominant parties are more likely to emerge when other elites hold enough independent political resources (relative to the ruler's supply of political resources) that coopting is necessary, but not so many autonomous resources that they themselves are unwilling to commit to the party. In other words, when elites are very strong they cannot commit to a dominant party and, thus, leader will not invest. When leaders are very strong, they have no reason to coopt other elites and will not invest in a dominant party. When neither side holds a preponderance of resources a dominant party is most likely to emerge. The results of the models above largely bear out these predictions. It was shown that elite strength decreases the probability of a dominant party emerging when leaders are very weak, but when leaders are strong (i.e. when the two sides are at more at parity) it increases the probability of a dominant party emerging. Dominant parties are more likely to form when leaders are strong and elites are strong, but when leaders are strong and elites are weak, dominant parties are highly unlikely. When leaders are weak and elites are strong, dominant parties are also unlikely.

Now for some caveats and unexpected findings from the models. On average, dominant parties are more likely when neither leaders nor elites hold a preponderance of resources, but I would have expected that the probability of dominant party emergence would be similarly high no matter how resources were balanced. That is, I would have expected that dominant parties would be (roughly) equally likely when both leaders and elites were weak, leaders and elites were somewhat strong, and when leaders and elites

were strong. Instead, we observe significant variation across these categories such that parties are much more likely when both leaders and elites are strong than when both leaders and elites are weak. I have suggested that this may be due to the fact that situations when both leaders and elites are weak represent a setting in which the total quantity of resources necessary for the construction of a dominant party is low, and, thus, their emergence is less likely. This finding deserves more study.

Second, my hypotheses do not do a very good job of explaining dominant party survival. Above, I have attributed this failure to the fact that dominant parties may fall for reasons that are separate from why they arise. Indeed, leaders and elites would not want to invest in a party that is likely to fail, so all of the dominant parties in my sample may exhibit little variation on the combination of leader and elite strength at their founding. Nonetheless, one would expect that as exogenous circumstances change the values of these variables they should have an effect on dominant party survival. I find no evidence of this and the question begs further investigation.

7.6 Tables and Figures

Figure 7.1 Relationship Between Balance of Resources and Likelihood of Dominant Party

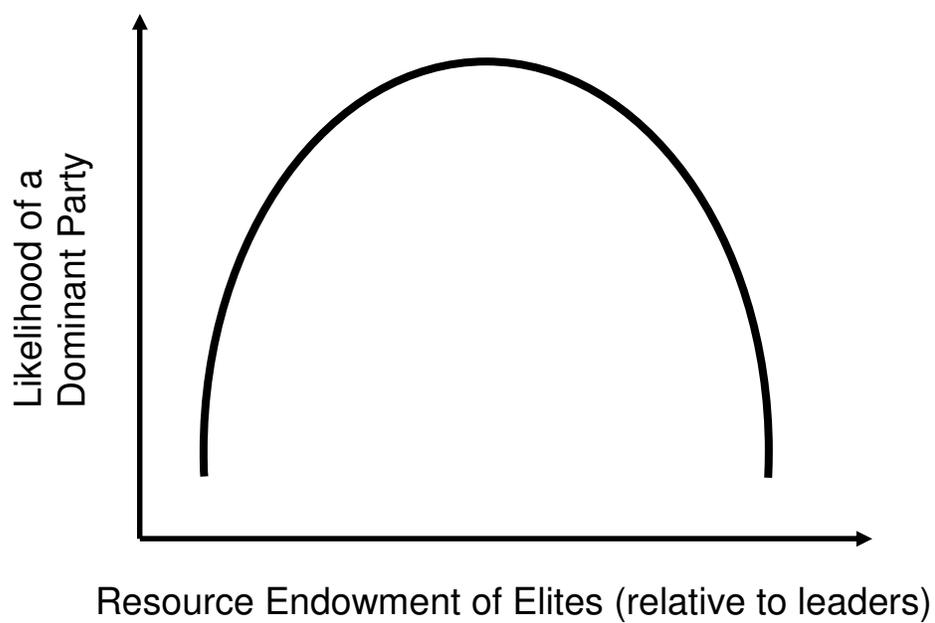


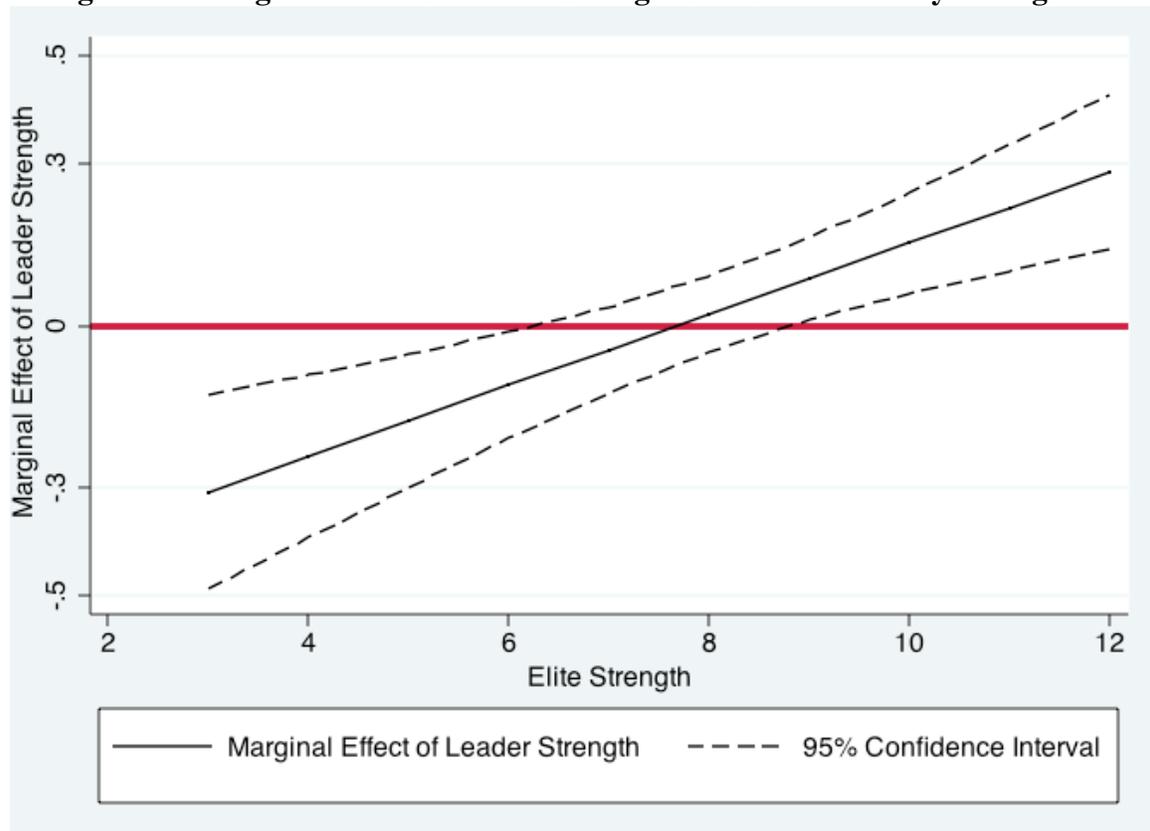
Figure 7.2 Marginal Effect of Leader Strength on Dominant Party Emergence

Figure 7.3 Marginal Effect of Elite Strength on Dominant Party Emergence

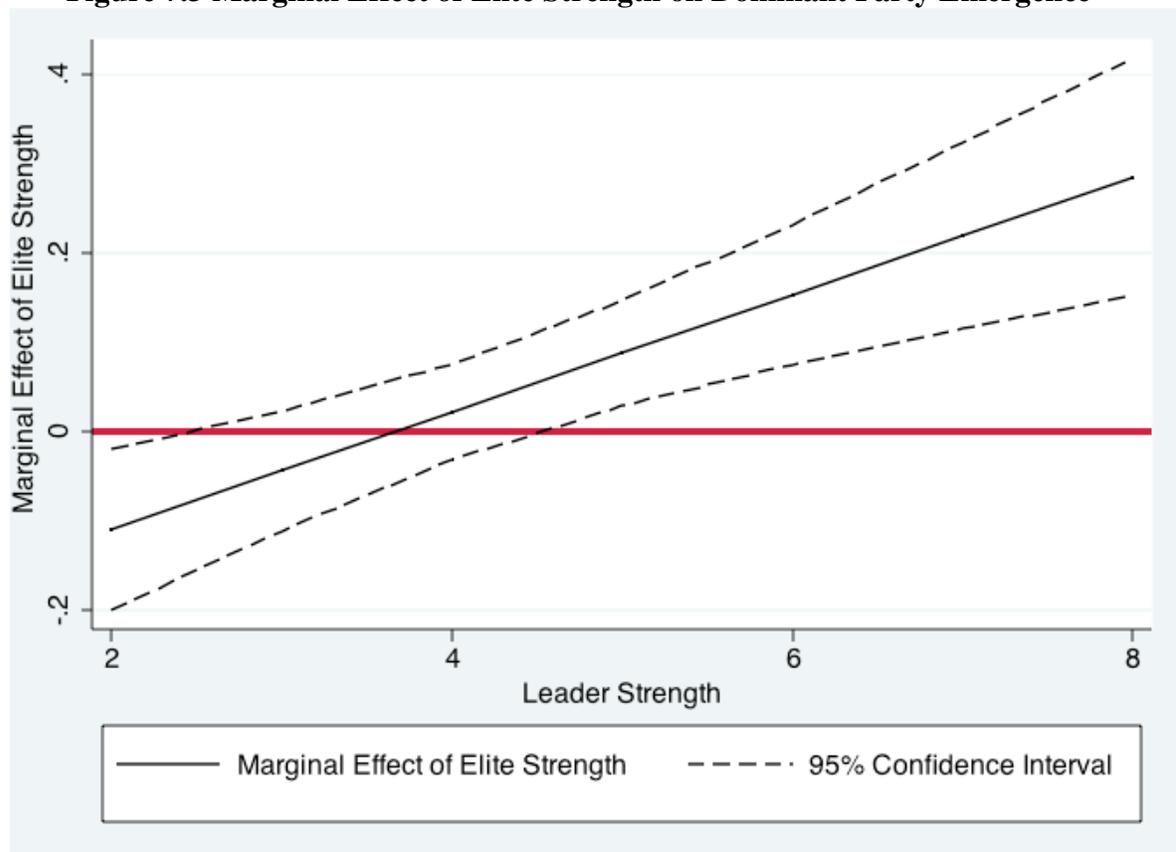


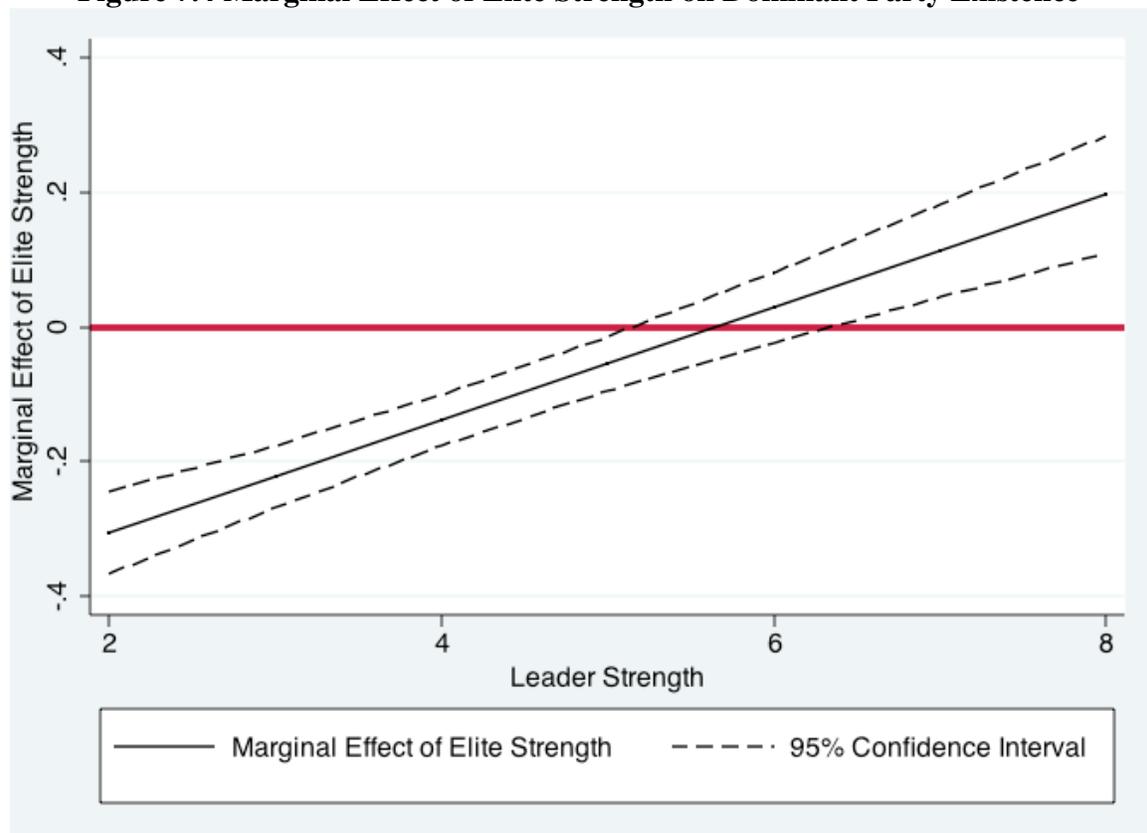
Figure 7.4 Marginal Effect of Elite Strength on Dominant Party Existence

Figure 7.5 Marginal Effect of Leader Strength on Dominant Party Existence

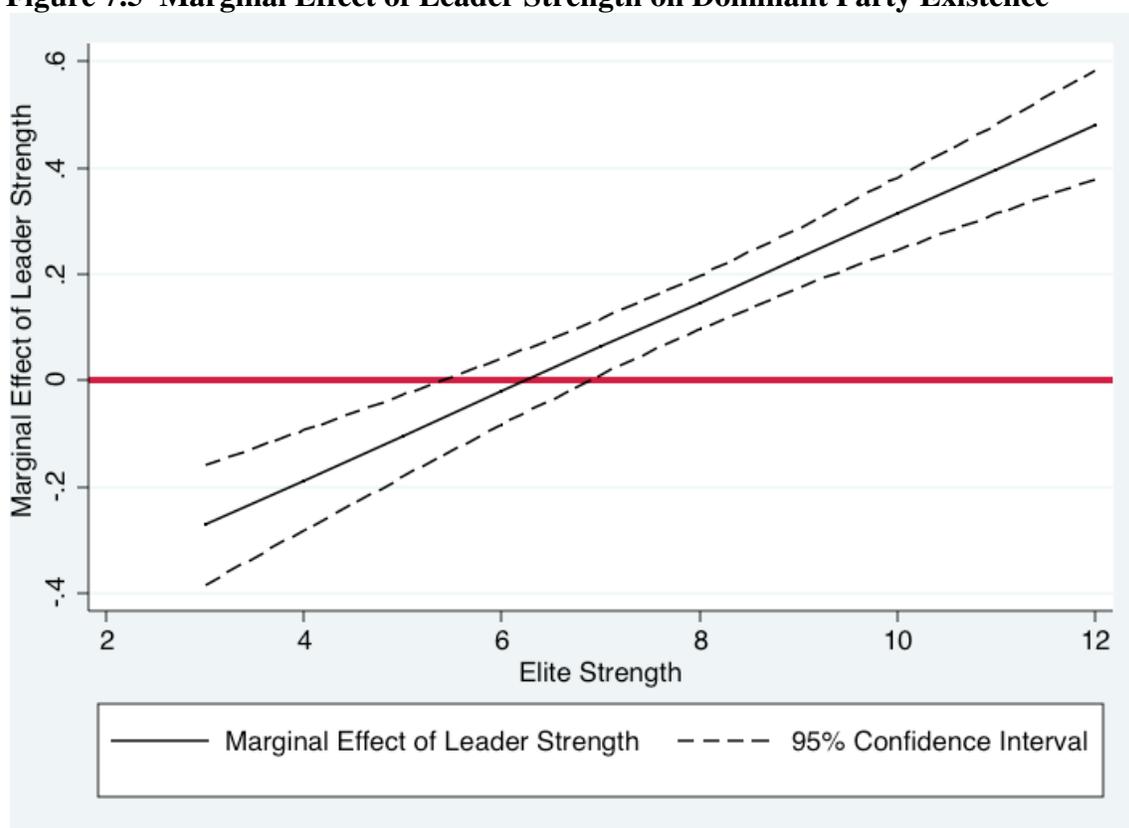


Table 7.1 Kendall's Tau-b Correlations between Components of *Elite Strength Scale*

	Full Sample			Polity>3		
	Population Dispersion	Ethnic Diversity	Political Decentralization	Population Dispersion	Ethnic Diversity	Political Decentralization
Population Dispersion	1.0000	-	-	1.0000	-	-
Ethnic Diversity	.147(.008)	1.0000	-	.035(.024)	1.0000	-
Political Decentralization	.1936(.012)	-.097(.011)	1.0000	.2581(.023)	.0952(.012)	1.0000

n

Note: Asymptotic Standard Errors in Parentheses

Table 7.2: Determinants of Dominant Party Emergence

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
<i>Polity</i>	-0.018 (0.012)	-0.020** (0.010)	-0.022** (0.011)	-0.023* (0.012)	-0.021* (0.011)
<i>Rents</i>	0.053 (0.059)		-0.119 (0.090)		
<i>Ethnic Diversity</i>	-0.033 (0.070)				
<i>Population Dispersion</i>	0.131* (0.073)	0.131** (0.058)	0.113* (0.059)		
<i>Decentralization</i>	0.044 (0.059)				
<i>Social Opposition</i>	0.010 (0.025)			0.014 (0.026)	
<i>Inherited Parties</i>	0.284** (0.091)	0.280** (0.082)	0.157 (0.103)	0.285** (0.092)	0.263** (0.088)
<i>GDP</i>	-0.104** (0.049)	-0.090** (0.042)	-0.091** (0.043)	-0.084* (0.045)	-0.073* (0.041)
<i>GDP Growth</i>	-0.002 (0.007)				
<i>RentsXInherited Parties</i>			0.089 (0.057)		
<i>Elite Strength</i>				-0.231** (0.084)	-0.241** (0.082)
<i>Leader Strength</i>				-0.485** (0.157)	-0.505** (0.151)
<i>LeaderXElite</i>				0.065** (0.019)	0.066** (0.018)
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	0.621** (0.229)	0.279** (0.124)	0.233* (0.128)	0.636** (0.220)	0.349** (0.138)
<i>Middle East</i>	0.058 (0.279)			0.151 (0.285)	
<i>Central Asia</i>	0.330 (0.378)			0.349 (0.382)	
<i>Cent. America/Carrib.</i>	0.125 (0.321)			0.130 (0.325)	
<i>Central/East. Europe</i>	0.296 (0.298)			0.371 (0.306)	
<i>East Asia</i>	0.458* (0.246)			0.603** (0.246)	
<i>Spline(1)</i>	0.003** (0.001)	0.003** (0.001)	0.003** (0.001)	0.003** (0.001)	0.004** (0.001)
<i>Spline(2)</i>	-0.003** (0.001)	-0.003** (0.001)	-0.003** (0.001)	-0.003** (0.001)	-0.004** (0.001)
<i>Spline(3)</i>	0.001** (0.001)	0.001** (0.001)	0.001** (0.001)	0.001** (0.001)	0.002** (0.001)
<i>Spline(4)</i>	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)
<i>Constant</i>	-0.553 (1.051)	-0.361 (0.897)	-0.080 (0.946)	1.163 (1.193)	1.489 (1.122)
Observations	2211	2484	2366	2165	2196

Note: Entries are probit coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses; ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. For region dummies, South America is omitted category.

Table 7.3 Determinants of Dominant Party Existence

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>LaggedDV</i>	3.363** (0.078)	3.366** (0.078)	3.385** (0.079)	3.743** (0.097)
<i>Polity</i>	-0.047** (0.007)	-0.045** (0.007)	-0.046** (0.007)	-0.049** (0.008)
<i>Rents</i>	0.143** (0.036)	0.127** (0.034)	-0.191** (0.070)	
<i>Ethnic Diversity</i>	-0.181** (0.043)	-0.176** (0.042)	-0.167** (0.044)	
<i>Population Dispersion</i>	-0.069* (0.040)	-0.066* (0.039)	-0.093** (0.040)	
<i>Decentralization</i>	-0.068* (0.035)	-0.050 (0.033)	-0.056 (0.034)	
<i>Inherited Parties</i>	0.140** (0.057)	0.148** (0.056)	-0.363** (0.107)	0.099 (0.063)
<i>GDP</i>	-0.067** (0.026)	-0.073** (0.026)	-0.073** (0.026)	-0.097** (0.028)
<i>RentsXInherited Parties</i>			0.236** (0.045)	
<i>Elite Strength</i>				-0.473** (0.055)
<i>Leader Strength</i>				-0.522** (0.097)
<i>LeaderXElite</i>				0.084** (0.012)
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	0.179 (0.140)	0.270** (0.109)	0.193* (0.111)	0.068 (0.140)
<i>Middle East</i>	-0.252* (0.151)			-0.291* (0.167)
<i>Central Asia</i>	-0.014 (0.304)			-0.233 (0.322)
<i>Cent. America/Carrib.</i>	-0.014 (0.174)			-0.034 (0.200)
<i>Central/East. Europe</i>	-0.059 (0.180)			-0.046 (0.204)
<i>East Asia</i>	0.442** (0.142)	0.535** (0.113)	0.531** (0.115)	0.387** (0.159)
<i>Constant</i>	-0.286 (0.581)	-0.268 (0.564)	0.519 (0.599)	3.049** (0.783)
Observations	4201	4201	4201	3900

Note: Entries are probit coefficients with robust standard Errors in parentheses; ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. For region dummies, South America is omitted category.

Table 7.4: Determinants of Dominant Party Longevity

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Hegemonic Party</i>	-0.288 (0.204)	-0.359** (0.158)	-0.450** (0.170)	-0.391** (0.154)
<i>GDP</i>	0.036 (0.070)			
<i>GDP Growth</i>	-0.030** (0.009)	-0.031** (0.008)	-0.031** (0.009)	-0.031** (0.007)
<i>Polity</i>	0.042** (0.016)	0.059** (0.013)	0.062** (0.014)	0.060** (0.012)
<i>Pre-Independence Party</i>	0.013 (0.203)			
<i>Communist</i>	-0.539** (0.249)	-0.560** (0.194)	-0.659** (0.216)	-0.516** (0.189)
<i>Inherited Parties</i>	-0.034 (0.142)			
<i>Elite Defection</i>	0.115 (0.403)	0.577** (0.274)	0.492* (0.297)	0.560** (0.271)
<i>Legislative Election</i>	0.286* (0.158)	0.228* (0.137)	0.269* (0.149)	0.223* (0.135)
<i>Presidential Election</i>	0.390** (0.186)	0.330** (0.163)	0.312* (0.174)	0.346** (0.160)
<i>Rents</i>	-0.129* (0.069)	-0.101* (0.055)		
<i>Social Opp. at Founding</i>	0.004 (0.041)			
<i>Ethnic Diversity</i>	-0.001 (0.081)			
<i>Population Dispersion</i>	0.047 (0.086)			
<i>Decentralization</i>	-0.097 (0.077)			
<i>Elite Strength</i>			-0.004 (0.090)	
<i>Leader Strength</i>			-0.142 (0.167)	
<i>LeaderXElite</i>			0.002 (0.022)	
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	-0.364 (0.272)	-0.103 (0.122)	-0.231* (0.140)	-0.102 (0.118)
<i>Middle East</i>	-0.369 (0.336)			
<i>Central Asia</i>	0.000 (0.000)			
<i>Cent. America/Carrib.</i>	-0.164 (0.355)			
<i>Central/East. Europe</i>	0.312 (0.435)			
<i>East Asia</i>	-0.161 (0.308)			
<i>Party Age</i>				-0.002 (0.005)
<i>Constant</i>	-1.567 (1.372)	-0.958** (0.342)	-0.359 (0.740)	-0.930** (0.311)
Observations	1407	2059	1800	2081

Note: Entries are probit coefficients with robust standard Errors in parentheses; ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. For region dummies, South America is omitted category. Coefficients on cubic splines are suppressed in table.

Table 7.5 Predicted Probability of Dominant Party Emergence Across Various Levels of Elite Strength and Leader Strength

Elites	Leaders		
	Weak (3)	Middle (5)	Strong (7)
Weak (4)	.028 (Burundi 1975, Lesotho 1980)	.008	.002 (Qatar, Libya)
Middle (7)	.020	.016 (Yemen 1990s, Philippines 1970s)	.014
Strong (11)	.014 (Brazil 1985, Ethiopia 1991)	.037	.091 (Nigeria 1999, Russia 2003)

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Summary

This dissertation began with a puzzle: if dominant parties stabilize authoritarian regimes, then why don't all leaders build such parties? Given how perplexing this puzzle was, I found it peculiar that political science had yet to tackle the question of dominant party emergence directly. In an attempt to fill this gap, I developed an argument for why dominant parties fail to emerge (and, symmetrically, an argument for why they do emerge). I began by observing that the key actors in many authoritarian regimes were leaders on the one hand, and elites on the other. I then noted that these actors faced a mutual commitment problem. Elites want dependable access to spoils distributed by leaders, and they could achieve that outcome if leaders knew that elites would be loyal while (and after) receiving those spoils, but they have no way of credibly pledging their loyalty to leaders. Leaders, for their part, want elites to be loyal and could secure elite loyalty if they promised to channel spoils to elites in a dependable, routine fashion, but they have no way to make those promises credible.

Mutual investment in a third-party institution could help solve this commitment problem. In particular, a dominant party, with its mechanisms for distributing spoils in a rule-governed manner and monitoring each side's behavior could make these commitments credible, especially if actors could make upfront investments that would make their commitments to the dominant party credible while it gathered steam.

But, it seemed clear that this approach, on its own, could not explain dominant party emergence. Instead, it was only a functionalist exposition of the benefits that

dominant parties could provide. After all, leaders and elites in any country could conceivably invest in a dominant party institution and solve their commitment problem. Why didn't they? Here I felt compelled to look at the incentives of actors to seek cooperation with the other side. I noted that there are times when leaders simply cannot construct a dominant party because strong elites value their own autonomy almost as highly as they value cooperation with the leader. In this setting, elites would be highly reluctant to commit to any dominant party project. There are other times when it is leaders who have great difficulty committing themselves to a ruling party (in spite of its long term benefits) because they see little use in coopting weak elites.

Thus, in contrast to existing work in the field, I have argued that the likelihood of dominant party emergence depends on the strength of elites vis-à-vis leaders. Dominant parties will only emerge, it is argued, when elites are strong enough that leaders need to coopt them, but not so strong that they themselves are loathe to link their fates to a dominant party.

The dissertation examined this argument across four empirical chapters. In the first three empirical chapters, it used the case of Russia to test key implications of the theory. In the 1990s and early 2000s, Russia's regional elites built strong political machines that they were reluctant to link to any party of power. Recognizing that these elites were not dependable allies, the Kremlin undermined its own parties of power in order to avoid wasting effort and resources on them. By the mid-2000s, Russia's elites still sat atop strong political machines that made them powerful purveyors of political stability, but the Kremlin was now in a stronger bargaining position due to increased revenues from oil and gas sales, sustained economic growth, and Putin's popularity. In

this setting, the Kremlin needed to coopt Russia's elites and the benefits of cooperation with the Kremlin had risen for Russia's regional elites. Thus, the Kremlin sanctioned the creation of a dominant party, United Russia, that would channel resources and careers to elites, and in exchange, elites relinquished their political machines and tied their fates to the dominant party.

Since one of the primary innovations of this study was to introduce elites into the equation of dominant party formation, I wanted to delve deeper into their interests, choice sets, and behavior. I endeavored to show, at the individual-level, that elites invest in dominant parties when the benefits of cooperation with state leaders outweigh the costs of relinquishing their homegrown political machines and clientelist networks. To do this, I needed a setting where variation in elite dominant party affiliation decisions could be observed. In non-party autocracies, this was obviously not possible, nor was it feasible in non-democracies with many competing marginalized parties and no discernible dominant party. Established dominant parties are not ideal settings either because most elites are already members and analysis would be forced to concentrate on outliers. What was needed was an emergent dominant party where elites were gradually joining the dominant party. This is exactly the situation that characterized Russia for several crucial years in the mid-2000s.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, Russia's elites enjoyed control over such puissant autonomous political machines that almost none of them were eager to link their fates to a regime party. In the 2000s, however, the balance of resources began to shift in favor of leaders, and little by little, elites began to join United Russia. This setting was ideal for the examination of hypotheses about individual elite incentives to invest in a dominant

party. My framework suggests that, in this setting, those elites weakest in resources, with the weakest political machines, should be the first to join the party. With fewer autonomous resources, they have less to lose by linking their fates to the dominant party. In Chapters 5 and 6, I showed this to be case. Russia's governors and regional legislators chose when to join the party on the basis of calculations about the costs and benefits of relinquishing their autonomous resources to a dominant party. Those with more autonomous resources were less likely to want to relinquish them and link their fates to the dominant party. Specifically, governors who sat atop strong political machines joined the party later than those without such resources. And those legislators who worked for companies that were not dependent on the state joined later than those who worked for companies that were dependent on the state. These findings lend credence, I think, to a theory of dominant party formation that is predicated, in large part, on the incentives of elites to join a dominant party.

From these chapters, I feel confident in concluding that the argument and several of its implications were supported in Russia. To the extent that we believe leaders and elites value office, spoils, and autonomy in other authoritarian regimes, we can be reasonably certain that such a dynamic explains dominant party emergence in other non-democracies as well. But, there is always the possibility that processes of dominant party formation in Russia differ from those in other countries. In fact, there is no denying that multiple factors contribute to dominant party formation. For this theory's relevance, the real question is whether the explanation here can compete with those factors and explain a significant portion of the global and historical variance in dominant party emergence. Therefore, to fully examine the external validity of my argument, cross-national analysis

was necessary.

In Chapter 7, I undertook to measure the resources available to elites and leaders and analyze how the balance of these resources affected the likelihood that a dominant party would emerge in any given non-democracy in any given year. Recognizing significant data limitations, I constructed a scale of regional elite strength based upon 1) historical patterns of political decentralization, 2) the dispersion of population across a country's territory, and 3) regionally concentrated ethnic minorities. Leaders, I argued, were strong relative to elites when 1) they ruled in the presence of strong economic growth and/or 2) they controlled access to natural resource revenues. I found evidence in this chapter that dominant parties are indeed unlikely to emerge when elites are strong relative to leaders. They are also unlikely to emerge when leaders are strong relative to elites. When neither side holds a preponderance of resources, dominant parties are more likely to emerge.

8.2 Implications and Future Work

These findings not only advance political science's understanding of dominant party origins, but also our understanding of several other important political processes. First, and perhaps most crucially, understanding dominant party origins provides insight into why some countries democratize and others do not. If it is true, as I believe it is, that dominant party institutions exert an independent and positive effect on the lifespan of authoritarian regimes, then understanding where those institutions get their start will help us better understand a country's prospects for democracy. Most relevantly, it will help us understand much of the variation in the fates of regimes after the Third Wave of

democracy. While many regimes went on to democratize relative quickly, others have backslid into so-called authoritarianism (Carothers 2002, Diamond 2002, Balzer 2003, Epstein et al 2006). Recent work has suggested that one of the determinants of stable competitive authoritarianism is a strong ruling party (Levitsky and Way n.d.). If this is the case, then this study will push the field farther toward understanding the causes of backsliding toward competitive authoritarianism by elucidating the factors that contribute to the emergence of strong ruling parties in the first place.

Paradoxically, countries with weak elites and strong rulers are less likely to enjoy the stabilizing benefits of a dominant party and, *ceteris paribus*, may be more likely to democratize than those with dominant parties. On the other extreme, countries with strong, diverse, differentiated elites are less likely to suffer the emergence of a dominant party and thus are more likely to democratize. Other studies have emphasized that some authoritarian leaders are unable to consolidate their rule because "the state is too weak and the government too fragmented." (Way 2002, 2005). This is no doubt true, but as an explanation for authoritarian instability it is dangerously close to the outcome it purports to describe. A more analytically sound approach is to identify the factors that make elites strong vis-à-vis leaders and vice versa. This study has emphasized the importance of regional elites and the factors that make them strong--spheres of administrative autonomy, geographic separation from the center, and localized ethnic enclaves--en route to explaining why dominant parties emerge. Surely, there is much room for improving upon these measures. If the concept of regional elite strength is found useful, as I think it will be, then scholars might want to enrich this measure by taking account of histories of tribalism, patterns of colonial state administration, topography, the power of regional

landlords, and pre-colonial state structures.

This study offers a similar contribution to those works that emphasize "elite cohesion" as a factor influencing the longevity of authoritarian regimes (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, Haggard and Kaufman 1995, Brownlee 2007). Some of these works have examined the factors that maintain elite cohesion in hard times and most scholars agree that one of the primary contributing factors is some sort of party institution (Geddes 2003, Smith 2005, Magaloni 2008). This study provides us with a clearer view of how elite cohesion within the party can be achieved before the party has become a full-fledged self-enforcing institution.

This study can also improve our ability to understand the causal relationship between dominant parties and regime stability. The fundamental problem of the new institutionalism is determining whether institutions exert an independent effect on outcomes that is separate from the circumstances that bring them into being. As Przeworski puts it the danger of ascribing causal efficacy to institutions is that "Conditions [may] shape institutions and institutions [may] only transmit the causal effects of those conditions" (Przeworski 2004). In the case of dominant parties' effects on democratization, we do not know for certain whether dominant party institutions stabilize authoritarian regimes or whether the conditions that generate dominant party institutions stabilize authoritarian regimes. Dominant party institutions are said to encourage elite loyalty by affecting elite expectations about how other elites will behave and by providing guarantees to elites that dictators will provide spoils to them in a rule governed manner. But, if, as I have argued, dominant parties are most likely to emerge when resources between elites and leaders are relatively balanced, then how do we know that

elite loyalty is not generated by the accommodation afforded by that balance of resources? In other words, if the balance of resources between leaders and elites are the conditions that bring about dominant parties, then how do we know that the effects of dominant parties are due to dominant parties and not the conditions that bring them about? The answer, of course, is that we can't know for certain.

What is needed in order to improve this causal claim is an empirically robust explanation for dominant party emergence, such as the one I have tried to offer here. Such an explanation will give us a fighting chance at sweeping out the effects of initial conditions when we conduct analyses of the effects of dominant parties. It is hard to see how the elite-leader balance of resources could serve as an instrument or exclusion restriction in a two-stage Heckman-style estimator because it is also likely associated with regime change. But, at the very least, including the elite-leader balance of a resources as a control variable in a parametric regression or matching on the elite-leader balance of resources could provide us some hope in holding constant that factor and varying the dominant party 'treatment.' We might be lucky to find some regimes where the institution has outgrown its initial conditions, in other words dominant parties where the elite-leader balance has changed while the institution lives on. Such cases will be crucial to establishing causal effects. The potential number of observations for such an analysis would be limited, but we should not shy away from important questions just because the data needed for the application of sophisticated and clever causal inference techniques is not close at hand.

Other avenues of research as well can benefit from this explanation of dominant party emergence. Political science now appears convinced that strong political parties

enhance representation and accountability, prevent territorial factionalization, and even moderate ethnic conflict. Is it possible that dominant parties are a praiseworthy alternative to fractious pluralism, even if they entrench authoritarian rule? This is certainly the argument that newly-minted authoritarian leaders offer. Whatever the answer may be untangling the origins of these institutions will give us a better chance at offering a definitive answer to these questions if we have an explanation for dominant party emergence.

This study also casts the effect of resource rents on political outcomes in a more nuanced light. For instance, when elites are strong, resource rents may give leaders the resources to coopt regional elites thereby facilitating the emergence of a dominant party and, consequently, the longevity of the regime. This implies that resource rents are not always associated with weak authoritarian institutions (Gandhi 2008). Indeed, they can sometimes be used to attract elite cooperation and bolster dominant party institutions.

Of course, dominant party institutions are not all there is to study in dominant party regimes. Authoritarian leaders must devise tactics for dealing with the opposition, appeasing citizens, legitimizing their rule, and defending against coups. Indeed, I think that this study of dominant parties generates some interesting research questions and puzzles about the tradeoffs that authoritarian leaders face in nurturing a dominant party while simultaneously contending with other actors. A particularly intriguing puzzle concerns relations with the opposition under dominant party rule. Authoritarian leaders grant concessions to the opposition in order to let off steam in times of crisis or tension. The difficulty is that by granting policy, rents, or careers to the opposition, authoritarian leaders that govern by dint of a dominant party are sending a signal that the dominant

party does not have a monopoly on the provision of these goods. This, it seems to me, presents a difficult conundrum for authoritarian leaders: how can leaders coopt new enemies without alienating old allies? By undermining the party's role in distributing these goods leaders undercut their allies' incentives to remain loyal. Scholars aver that dominant parties maintain elite cohesion during economic crises by providing guarantees that they will continue to receive spoils in the future, in spite of the current hardship. Thus, one hypothesis is that authoritarian leaders will take steps to strengthen the institutional potency of their dominant parties during economic crisis. But we also know that leaders must play to the demands of the opposition, if it is strong enough. During the financial crisis, Russia's leaders appeared to face just such a dilemma and have attempted, it seems to have their cake and eat it too. Just as the Kremlin and Putin took steps to strengthen the dominant party by granting it more independence, President Medvedev has announced initiatives to work toward liberalizing the political system. Tangible steps in this direction have been few, however (e.g. granting parties that receive between 5% and 7% of the party list vote 1-2 seats in the State Duma), so it is difficult to see why opposition leaders would view these promises as credible. Future work would benefit from unraveling this dilemma and identifying the conditions under which leaders coopt the opposition vs. strengthen existing institutions and when these strategies are successful.

Future work on dominant parties would also be well served by examining their duration in more detail. Why do some dominant parties survive longer than others? Greene (2010) has suggested that dominant parties wither when privatization programs take patronage goods out of the hands of regime leaders. Putting aside the question of

why state leaders would embark upon privatization if this is the case, my model expects that privatization would shift the balance of resources in favor of elites and make them more likely to defect. I expect that part of the explanation of dominant party duration has to do with exogenous shocks that change the balance of power between leaders and elites and thereby give one side an overbearing incentive to defect from the institutional bargain.

But the reasons that dominant parties persist may be separate from the reasons they emerge. Indeed, in this study I have argued that dominant party institutions solve commitment problems between leaders and elites, such that the institution determines the survival of the dominant party. So another part of the answer to why some dominant parties persist and other fail must have to do with institutions. Magaloni (2008) argues that, in equilibrium, dominant parties solve commitment problems for leaders, but she implicitly assumes that all dominant parties are the same in doing this and offers no explanation of the mechanism behind the commitment device. In Chapter 3, I discussed the many ways in which leaders and elites can craft dominant party institutions so that they become strong commitment devices. I also discussed some of the way that leaders and elites can make investments of resources to make their commitments credible while dominant party institutions are gaining institutional teeth. I took it as self-evident that not all dominant parties are alike in their institutional configurations.

Scholars can exploit this institutional diversity to examine what types of dominant party institutional arrangements are most effective at keeping leaders and elites from defecting. I would expect that dominant parties that elect the leader from their ranks would be less susceptible to being encroached upon by state leaders. This would

give elites a stronger guarantee that spoils would be distributed in the future through the party and not at the whim of the leader. This should make such parties stronger and more durable than those that have not enjoyed the privilege of selecting the country's leader. More generally, I would suspect that dominant parties whose dominance is 'nested' in other institutions might be more stable than those that are not (Tsebelis 1990). The extreme cases on this score are the communist parties of the world, whose leading role in society was enshrined in the authoritarian constitution. For other dominant parties, the task of identifying 'nested' institutional linkages is more difficult. My approach suggests that any laws or constitutional articles that privilege parties strengthen the ruler and elite commitment to the dominant party because it is easier to defect and run as an independent than it is to recruit a team of defectors to start a new party. Therefore, my approach suggests that dominant parties that hold elections under proportional representation will be less prone to suffer defections and collapse. Beyond this, if scholars can devise ways to quantitatively differentiate the independent policy-making authority of dominant parties, then I expect this factor to make dominant parties more robust. Generally speaking, more work is needed on the specific institutional configurations that bolster elite cohesion and regime durability in authoritarian regimes. Finding that specific institutional commitment devices increase the lifespan of dominant parties will not just tell us something about this mechanism but provide corroborating evidence for theories, such as this one, that posit dominant parties as solutions to such commitment problems. All this offers the opportunity for a more complete empirical model of dominant party rule.

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