5 Opposition parties in dominant-party regimes

Inclusion and exclusion in Russia's regions

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Russia's party system is now a dominant-party system, as the 2011 Duma elections bore out. United Russia won for the third consecutive time, meeting Sartori's 1976 criterion for being classified as a dominant party. United Russia's domination looks especially strong on the regional level since almost all governors are party members, and the same is true for the majority of regional legislative members. United Russia has become an important tool for recruitment into the ruling elite and, at the same time, it reflects the structure of regional elites as oversized governing coalitions (a function often ascribed to hegemonic or dominant parties, see Magaloni 2006). While United Russia includes most prominent politicians and client networks, the party's electoral support is limited and falling after its 2007 peak, which leaves significant space for the other parties. However, since every party seeks, at least in theory, to come to power, Russia's opposition parties have to make a hard choice between being incorporated into the existing distribution of power or openly resisting the authorities in the hope that, by doing so, they will receive public support and win governmental power. Comparative studies of authoritarian regimes have not examined how opposition parties make this choice.

In turn, United Russia and its patrons in the executive branch or in the business sector have a choice of their own to make: which parties to include or exclude from the power distribution in each case, be it the State Duma, a regional legislature or a municipal assembly. There is a growing debate in the comparative literature on why some authoritarian regimes coopt the opposition while others repress it. For example Gandhi (2008) argues that an opposition is more likely to be coopted when it is strong enough to threaten the regime but too weak to take power. The Russian case provides an opportunity to examine this hypothesis.

In this chapter, I elaborate on what oppositionness, as I prefer to call the subject, means and how it has changed in the course of the regime's shift towards more authoritarianism. The regional and local tiers of Russian politics are especially interesting since they present a lot of different cases of oppositionness to explore. Moreover, opposition parties and candidates have been and even now are capable of winning elections in some regions and municipalities, those

in which opposition electoral behavior is combined with less rigid authoritarian control. Oppositionness also covers the range of cases of the opposition being coopted into the ruling regime, ranging from zero to full loyalty. I tackle only issues concerning parties other than United Russia that have a significant level of political support – primarily the left-wing Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), the populist Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), and the center-left "A Just Russia" – leaving aside cases of opposition from within United Russia and opposition civic movements.

In particular, because the opposition's inclusion in or exclusion from regional legislative power in Russia has already been studied (Reuter and Turovsky 2011), I focus here on cases in which the opposition comes to executive-branch power by way of elections. I begin by analyzing governors. Representatives of the opposition have won gubernatorial elections and then remained in office after the appointments period began in 2005.[1] Indeed, a few are still in office. I also examine mayors of more or less significant towns, mainly of the regional capitals. My aim is to understand how opposition parties and their members or affiliates function within the authoritarian political regime on the subnational level once they have come to power. The hard choices faced by Russia's governors and mayors turn out to be very hard indeed, increasingly so in the 2000s, and even when they capitulate to the broader political regime they may fail to survive in office.

Russia's opposition in comparative perspective

Russia's party system is not simply polarized by a cleavage between the "party of power" and the opposition. Instead, it presents many different cases of interparty relations. Openly and straightforwardly repressing the opposition is not a feature of the current Russian regime. The opposition in Russia may be either repressed or coopted, a fact that reflects the complicated nature of Russian authoritarianism. Russian regions present an excellent laboratory for different cases. The same party can be included in the ruling group in one region while repressed in another. Such patterns are probably connected to Russia's emerging and developing authoritarianism having a strong need for democratic legitimacy and mass support.

The differences among the regions stem from the structures of regional political regimes and the patron–client relations that support them, usually headed by the governor as the key patron. In a two-tier federal (or quasi-federal) system, opposition groups may protest against federal politics but agree with the *regional* policies of the governor, even though the federal authorities and the governors support the same political party. In addition, regional politics may be favorable to the opposition when its leaders are included in the regional system of patron-client relations.

Comparative political studies of authoritarian and hybrid regimes usually focus on overall regime features, particularly the rise and sustainability of dominant parties. For example, Magaloni (2006), in her study of the Mexican party

system, reveals the mechanics of hegemonic party autocracy. She focuses on how the regime institutionalizes and monopolizes mass support, and on the role of economic performance, while noting electoral fraud and barriers to entry. Opposition parties in authoritarian regimes are less studied. Very often they are idealized as "freedom fighters," but this underestimates their sometimes opportunistic behavior or close ties with the existing regime and even their role in de facto supporting this regime. Robust party competition (as Grzymala-Busse 2007 calls it) becomes a matter of favorable conditions (meaning unfavorable trends for the ruling party). Russia is different from the new post-communist democracies where robust party competition has consistently and substantially constrained ruling parties' ability to exploit state resources. Still there is a strong need to study opposition parties in dominant-party regimes. Doing so at the subnational level can be extremely fruitful because the number of cases is multiplied.

The theme of opposition in Russian politics is widely discussed in political science. In the 2000s, Russia's opposition started to look very weak and compiled a huge record of collaborating with the authorities, thus provoking some to argue that the opposition was approaching extinction (Gel'man 2004). On the other hand, it would be wrong to say that no opposition exists or can exist in Russia. One of the main reasons is electoral. The authorities enjoy rather high but incomplete support, as all polls and most electoral results show. The share of unsatisfied voters is significant and will probably rise, as revealed by the 2011 and 2012 national elections. Besides, ideological cleavages remain relevant, and controversies over Russia's future and reforms continue, even inside the dominant party. Thus, opposition does have a place in the Russian political regime.

However, it is impossible to categorize Russian politicians and parties as ruling or opposition, in the sense those terms are used for pluralist democratic regimes (see Dahl 1971, 1973). In a pluralist democracy, the opposition does not hold power but has a chance to come to power by means of fair elections. Regular democratic change of power is at the core of any democracy. In authoritarian regimes it is different. Oppositionness is therefore a more adequate phenomenon to study in authoritarian regimes than "the opposition," understood as a group of political actors willing to take on power from the rulers. Oppositionness, instead, is about the scale of one's relations for or against the ruling elite and the extent to which one is included into this elite.

The evidence I discuss in this chapter leads to the conclusion that, in an authoritarian (or hybrid) regime, a regional or local electoral victory is a trap for the opposition. It increases the level of political instability, since an opposition-led local regime cannot coexist with the federal rulers and their loyal local supporters. Moreover, any change of governor or mayor in a regime that is based on patron-client relations leads to more complicated client networks and usually to more conflict. That means that an opposition regional or local regime is less stable both inside and in its relations with the federal center. (Hereafter, I will use the apparent oxymoron "opposition regime" to refer to cases when the chief executive office is held by an individual in some degree of opposition to the

federal center and its supporters within his or her region or city.) In reality, because they soon become alienated and fragile, many such regimes search for adaptive tactics, including the governor or mayor changing party labels and demonstrating full loyalty toward the federal center (sometimes even more explicitly than in non-opposition regional regimes). If an opposition-turned-ruling local leader fails to adapt, he or she loses power, the only difference being whether the countdown is rapid or slow.

Under Medvedev, the former opposition politicians among regional governors were no longer able to adapt, and most of them have lost their power. This relates to Medvedev's emphasis on elite transformation, when younger generations have begun to assume power, replacing the older generation of both opposition and loyalists. Yet it should be mentioned that an opposition-led regional or local regime faces threats besides those from the federal center. Its amorphous and divided internal structure bears scrutiny as well.

Opposition governors: the art of survival

Politics on the regional and local levels is crucially important both for generating and constraining the opposition in Russia. With the onset of gubernatorial and mayoral elections in 1996, the left-wing opposition as well as other opposition groups got an opportunity to secure some power. More favorable institutional conditions (fairer elections) and a higher level of electoral support for the CPRF made that short period of time the starting point for the opposition regional and local governments. Table 5.1 shows the characteristics of opposition governors and their electoral records.[2] All except one were members of or supported by the CPRF, and most started their tenure as governor in 1996.

An extensive literature examines how Russia's political regime evolved after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Initially, scholars used the theory of democratic transition, viewing Russia as a political system on its way to democracy (Schmitter and Karl 1994; Linz and Stepan 1996). Gubernatorial and mayoral elections were understood as one of the crucial turning points toward democracy. But obvious flaws in the democratic transition led Russia's political regime to be analyzed as a hybrid or authoritarian regime (with the use of such newly developed concepts as electoral authoritarianism, competitive authoritarianism and the like: Levitsky and Way 2002; Schedler 2006a; Golosov 2008b; Ross 2011a). Based on studying subnational Russian politics, however, I have argued (Turovsky 2007) that centralization not federalism and the formation of a hybrid regime characterized post-Soviet regional politics from the very start.

Two strong limitations on opposition rule at the subnational level appeared quickly. The first stemmed from the constraints on political pluralism which made it impossible to create any subnational regime that differed ideologically from the national regime. The Kremlin clearly attacked those politicians who ran for governor from the opposition side, as was shown in the 1996 gubernatorial races, when the presidential administration provided support for its list of candidates (mainly the incumbents, those previously appointed by Yeltsin). It

Table 5.1 Characteristics and electoral performance of opposition governors

Total number of opposition governors:	35
Type of region:	
Republic	2
Autonomous Okrug	2
Oblast or Krai	30
City	1
Party belonging to or supported by:	
CPRF	34
LDPR	1
Number later joining Unity or United Russia:	5
Year in which first elected:	
1993	2
1995	1
1996	19
1997	5
1998	2
1999	1
2000	4
2001	1
Average vote share in first round:	47.2% (std. dev. = 18.8%)
Range of vote shares:	20% (Mashkovtsev in Kamchatka) – 94.5% (Tuleev in Kemerovo)
Number requiring a runoff:	20
Number winning re-election:	19
Of those, number requiring a runoff:	5
Number winning re-election twice:	5
Number receiving a presidential nomination:	10

Source: Compiled by the author from data of the Central Electoral Commission of the Russian Federation and personal files.

proved impossible to create a local regime that could promote the program of the CPRF or any other opposition party.

The second limitation is the impossibility of autonomy and self-sufficiency at the subnational level. Most Russian regions lag far behind the richest, most developed few. They therefore depend heavily on the center redistributing resources to them. Such redistribution also helped boost support for the national regime in the vast periphery. It has become common knowledge that patron-client ties between the center and certain governors heavily influenced this distribution. It was seen, as early as the 1993 referenda and Duma elections, as a reward for loyalty and electoral results. Opposition regional or local regimes initiated populist and welfare programs, which enhanced their popular support. However, their lack of resources and financial dependence on the federal government made it impossible for them to supply the expenditures such programs needed.

Such contradictions produced a very unpleasant situation for opposition leaders who became governors or mayors. Opposition governors could not

follow their ideology and fulfill their electoral promises without clashing with federal authorities. In practice, then, political circumstances limited governors' oppositionness, what policies they could or could not pursue. Because the national regime's structural conditions place these limits on oppositionness, Russia's opposition governors have tended to face four political realities.

The first is low and falling legitimacy. Most opposition regimes had very limited legitimacy from the start. Of the 35 opposition governors 20 required a runoff to win election initially. The CPRF provided modest support, and many candidates lacked sufficient personal charisma to attract more voters than CPRF support could bring them by itself. After they won, their support usually decreased even more. Opposition governors therefore looked weaker and more fragmented than their loyalist counterparts did. When it turns out that they must break their promises, opposition governors' public support falls further, and many lose re-election (among CPRF members, these were Anatolii Belonogov in Amur, Ivan Shabanov in Voronezh, Viacheslav Kislitsyn in Marii El; among the left-wing non-members the examples were Aleksandr Riabov in Tambov and Aleksandr Prokhorov in Smolensk). Some of them lingered longer but lost their third terms, like Viacheslav Liubimov in Ryazan and Vasilii Starodubtsev in Tula.

The second outcome is a loss of support from their own party. Opposition governors tended to govern in a non-party fashion rather than to rule in the communist manner of relying on the party. They sought to provide the regional regime with more legitimacy and to build a professional (in Weber's terms) rather than politically oriented government since the region's economy was usually in shambles. As they muffled ideology in their policies and refused to appoint communists to the regional administration, many opposition governors lost CPRF support partly or fully. In terms of their policies, there was no clear evidence that "red" (Communist Party-affiliated) governors were different from others (Lavrov and Kuznetsova 1997). Most governors, no matter how they were affiliated with a party, tried to use their limited financial resources to please the public and get electoral support by means of social policies. Most followed the typical political business cycle of raising social expenditures before an election. Meanwhile, they could change little in the region, which dissatisfied the CPRF and its supporters. The result was widespread, sometimes open and harsh, criticism of governors from CPRF activists and even the leaders of CPRF regional branches.

On the federal level, red governors initially enjoyed the full support of the CPRF leadership. In the 1990s, especially after CPRF leader Gennadii Zyuganov's loss in the 1996 presidential election, the policy of CPRF was to attain as much power as possible on the subnational level (to grow into a governing party from below, as it was commonly described by CPRF officials). When conflicts arose, the highest party officials usually backed the governors and responded to their critics. However, the 2000s saw a growing and ill-concealed tension between red governors and Zyuganov. As the federal center became stronger and the CPRF weaker, some red governors started to criticize Zyuganov

in order to please the federal authorities. The most prominent critics were Mikhail Mashkovtsev in Kamchatka and Vladimir Tikhonov from Ivanovo. Tikhonov was one of the main players in an attempt to break up the CPRF from within and change its leader. When that failed, he briefly headed a new leftist party, the All-Russian Communist Party of the Future, which did not last long.

The third outcome involves the rather low professional competence of some opposition regimes particularly in terms of governing an emerging capitalist economy. Many opposition governors came to power as populists with no experience in regional governance. It was hard for them to recruit both party activists (who might be incompetent) and professional bureaucrats (who might be disloyal). In previous work (Turovskii 1998), I found that most red governors in the 1990s either left untouched a significant part of the previous government (which they had strongly criticized before the election and even promised to send to jail) or recruited new officials from elite groups other than the CPRF. In either case, their administrations were often unstable with a constant change of officials. Obviously Russia's regions had no institutionalized opposition in the Western sense of a "ready-to-go" shadow government.

Two of the outcomes I have just discussed merged in fact. The problem of pragmatic policy grew along with the problem of professionally trained opposition politicians ready to work in the governments. It was only a portion of the former Soviet administrative apparatus that could fill the gap in the red governors' administrations. Many experienced bureaucrats, however, stayed away from political parties after the ban on CPSU in 1991 so that they could continue to work in state agencies. Few Soviet-era bureaucrats joined the CPRF in order to regain power with its help. When Yeltsin appointed regional governors from 1991 on, he recruited experienced but loyal officials rather than newcomers from the democratic movement (Turovskii 1998). Surely, such governors formed their administrations with those like themselves. Soviet-era leftist officials, therefore, were either included in the regional governing elite or could wait for the chance to be appointed. They did not need to join the opposition.

Then, a new and strange phenomenon appeared: communist governors began facing opposition from other communists. Often, regional branches of the CPRF split into loyalists and critics, and this internal struggle created instability within the CPRF, including changes in its regional leaders. Such instability within the CPRF existed even in Tula, where a prominent leader of the national party, Starodubtsev, had come to power in 1997. Therefore, as the color of the red governor faded, he faced opposition from his former supporters. As a result, the ruling group in an opposition regional regime could be criticized from all sides, both from true loyalists to the federal government and from the more radical left opposition.

Finally, the fourth outcome derives from the clientelist structure of power relations in Russia, which has become one of the main features of Russian politics and the theme of numerous studies (e.g., Biryukov 2009). Opposition regimes usually had the most fragmented elites. When an opposition governor had gained office through a close election, the loser's clients remained where

they were. Moreover, regional antagonism toward the new governor could be very strong, sometimes supported by business or federal authorities. In rare cases, a red governor could bring order to all the existing clienteles. More commonly, however, he built his own client network which just complicated the structure. Apparently, after gubernatorial elections were abolished, such regions saw the fiercest struggles to secure appointments, with strong candidates on the official list, not to mention back-room struggles.

Thus, an opposition governor had to deal with multiple serious challenges that could derail his or her career. Given Russia's hybrid political regime and centralist federal politics, opposition governors could only survive by adapting and, usually, breaking with the party that had backed him. They needed to fit more or less smoothly into the national regime for four reasons: (1) to garner more financial support and sustain the region's development; (2) to secure the Kremlin's support at election time and prevent a candidate more suitable to the Kremlin from entering the race or, during the appointment period, from gaining the Kremlin's nomination; (3) to integrate themselves into Russia's overall political/financial establishment, which became increasingly important as hopes faded for the Communists to come to power nationally; and (4) to develop means to coordinate with other governors despite communication and transportation problems and financial dependence on the central government (on the coordination problem, Solnick 2000; Sakwa 2003; Shevtsova 2003).

Of Hirschman's (1970) famous triad of reactions to unstable organizational conditions – exit, voice, and loyalty – Russian opposition governors generally chose the latter. Voicing opposition views could have, in theory, brought more electoral support at the next elections but could also lead to one's political demise, one way or another. Exit was tried by some governors (and mayors), who refused to run for a second term. The best example was the highly popular left-nationalist Krasnodar governor Nikolai Kondratenko, who did not run for re-election in 2000. However, his exit was combined with loyalty. Those who left the governor's office and ceded power to someone backed by the federal authorities were often rewarded with a less powerful position. Kondratenko is still a senator from his region, appointed by United Russia's regional authorities. Moreover, under conditions of corruption and pliable courts, exit can be risky since it leads to the loss of immunity. Several former governors were charged with corruption and spent time in jail.

Undoubtedly, loyalty has become opposition governors' primary means of adapting: public expressions of loyalty towards the federal government combined with building clientelist ties to federal bureaucrats. Those governors who had come to power in 1996 with the support of the opposition but who were not party members found themselves better able to shake off undesirable leftist support. Soon after being elected in 1996, Vadim Gustov from Leningrad and Valentin Tsvetkov from Magadan held press conferences during which they expressed explicit loyalty towards the federal center (Turovskii 1998). Both were rewarded. Tsvetkov found federal support for his project of a free economic zone in Magadan. Gustov became a federal deputy prime minister in 1998.

During an interview with the author, one high-ranking regional bureaucrat and the leader of the regional CPRF branch pointed at President Putin's portrait and said that from now on Putin would be a supreme leader for him. Volgograd's communist governor Nikolai Maksiuta said in public that it did not matter what method he would use, communist or capitalist. The main thing for him was to be effective.

In addition to changing their rhetoric, it is clear that the red governors tried to join the nationwide clientelist system that was emerging in the process of privatization. They understood that being alienated from this system would be political suicide. It is interesting that some of them indicated in public their desire to be "like others" and not some kind of "red sheep in the family." The communist governor of Bryansk, Yurii Lodkin, in his interview with the newspaper *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, said that he was a "normal man" and not an "orthodox" communist (Turovskii 1998). "Normal" was understood to mean being part of the system then emerging.

The politics of clientelist integration had two dimensions. First, the governors were looking for partners and patrons in the federal government, what can be called mutual co-adaptation strategies. Since the federal government was becoming more conservative and pragmatic, it was easier for both sides to cooperate. This showed itself under Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin. Interactions between red governors and Chernomyrdin are well documented. It continued under Putin. One way or another, all opposition governors tried to be loyal and to be a part of the nationwide patron-client system that was developing alongside formal federative relations.

Second, opposition governors sought ties with regionally based business leaders. Under the new capitalist regime, governors were inevitably engaged in privatization, which was governed by bureaucratic procedures. They could ill afford to have business leaders – especially the richest ones, known in Russia as oligarchs – become opponents. Many authors (e.g., Zubarevich 2002) argue that business groups have played a substantial role in Russia's regional politics and even control regional governments. Red governors are interesting cases in this regard, since one might expect them, in theory, to stay away from oligarchs. But some nominally communist governors created close links with capitalist tycoons. One example is found in Volgograd, where experts say that Governor Maksiuta, a CPRF member, who ruled from 1996 until 2010, was a strong supporter of LUKOIL, which owns an oil refinery and deposits in Volgograd and is the region's chief taxpayer. LUKOIL managers got jobs in the Maksiuta government, and the company employed the governor's son. Another example was Governor Liubimov of Ryazan, who maintained close ties with TNK (Tyumen Oil Company), which owns an oil refinery in Ryazan. Liubimov used to be a member of TNK's board of directors.

If expressing loyalty and trying to become integrated into the national political and economic regime were two of the ways in which opposition governors adapted, party politics was a third. In the 1990s, the CPRF was the most popular party, but its public support was limited by widespread anti-communist sentiments.

Executive-branch leaders, including the Russian president, preferred to stay "beyond" or "above" parties, seeing parties as limiting the legitimacy of personalist regimes. Most regional regimes also tended to be personalist and clientelist (Gel'man *et al.* 2000). The opposition regimes and their leaders behaved in these ways as well.

For example, red governors did not necessarily support the CPRF with their administrative resources in federal elections. Even during the 1996 presidential campaign, the only CPRF-affiliated governor at that time, Riabov in Tambov, stayed away from the campaign while letting two of his deputies head the regional organizations of the two main rivals, Boris Yeltsin and Gennadii Zyuganov. In the 1999 Duma election campaign, red governors usually let the communists campaign freely but rarely gave them open support. After 2000, such support became even more limited. Red governors, like Russia's presidents, preferred to remain above party politics and build personalist regimes in order to strengthen their shaky legitimacy. Even so, most of them could rely on CPRF support when they ran, since the CPRF could not risk backing other candidates.[3]

In developing their regional clientelist structures, opposition governors sometimes created their own centrist parties of (regional) power, which they supported along with the CPRF or instead of it. Starodubtsev in Tula, while being a CPRF member, indeed one of the symbols of Russia's post-Soviet communist movement, created his own party-of-power bloc "For Tula Krai," with his deputy heading its list. This bloc took away votes both from the CPRF and from United Russia. In general, governors preferred to back a centrist party of power, be it the regional branch of United Russia or a party bloc specific to the region, rather than to support a party with an ideological bias. In other words, clientelist politics, hidden behind centrist phraseology, always prevailed over party politics.

A drastic change in opposition governors' adaptation strategies came with the change in Russia's party system, particularly when United Russia was created. Previously, federal-level party politics had been flexible, allowing governors to belong to different parties as long as they were loyal. Gradually this changed. Governors had to choose a new strategy. They could insist on their CPRF membership and run the risk of losing their job (in the meantime trying to combine their CPRF affiliation with the loyalty to the center). Alternatively, they could leave what had turned out to be the wrong party and decide whether to stay above party politics or join United Russia.

Opposition governors changing their formal party affiliation preceded the 2000s. Valentina Bronevich of Koryaksk, who became governor in 1996 with the support of the CPRF, a year later was heading the regional branch of what was then the party of power, Chernomyrdin's Our Home is Russia. That was the first case of a move from opposition party supporter to the party of power. It is worth mentioning that it appeared in the very beginning of gubernatorial elections, demonstrating the unease opposition governors were feeling at that point. Koryaksk was a remote region fully dependent on federal financial support, and its governor needed to remain in the federal government's good graces. So

Bronevich's decision was strongly motivated by her region's economic dependence.

After Putin had centralized Russian politics and introduced the dominant-party regime, such dependence became relevant for all the regions. It also raised the question of whether governors from other parties could coexist with a more centralized system of executive power. Before the rise of United Russia, most governors had preferred to stay away from parties. They could cling to Our Home is Russia, Unity, or Fatherland – All Russia as conditions warranted, but they mostly followed the widespread tactic of Russian political leaders to be above parties in order to gain legitimacy. By 2003, though, when Putin's policy of elite consolidation had drastically changed party politics, the above-parties governors began to join United Russia (Reuter 2010). By March 2006, 70 governors had joined the party. Reuter has shown that the weaker governors tried to join United Russia first. Obviously, most opposition governors were among the weaker.

Under the new party system, communist-affiliated governors faced their hardest choice yet. Some of them decided to leave the party. In 2003, before the first Duma elections in which United Russia participated, the CPRF was abandoned by Krasnodar governor Aleksandr Tkachev and Nizhny Novgorod governor Gennadii Khodyrev. The last of the opposition governors to take this step was the controversial case of Kursk governor Aleksandr Mikhailov, who had a long record as an active communist. He had been elected to the State Duma from the CPRF in 1993 and was a member of the party's Central Committee at the time of his election as governor in 2000. However, even Mikhailov left the CPRF for United Russia, and in return he got additional terms, being appointed by Putin in 2005 and then by Medvedev in 2010.

For the "pink" governors (those who came to power with communist support but were not party members) the task was much easier both politically and psychologically. Usually they followed a pragmatic path from the beginning of their tenures and distanced themselves from the CPRF (though the distance varied). The most interesting was the case of the very popular Kemerovo governor Aman Tuleev who was included in the top CPRF party list for the 1995 and 1999 Duma elections. However, Tuleev always had his own ambitions. He ran for president in 1991 and was going to run again in 1996 but ultimately bowed out in favor of CPRF leader Zyuganov. Tuleev combined opposition populist rhetoric with strategies of adaptation, which was clearly shown in 1996–1997 when he was coopted by being appointed a federal minister in Chernomyrdin's government. When he was appointed governor in 1997, it was as a federal bureaucrat rather than an opposition leader. During the 1999 federal elections, he was caught in double-dealing: while on the CPRF party list he gave part of his support to Unity, which did very well in his region. That hurt the CPRF the most because Tuleev was hugely popular in Kemerovo and able to manage voters' behavior. In 2000s, it was no surprise when Tuleev joined United Russia. Other pinks also joined United Russia without much hesitation. In 2004, Kurgan governor Oleg Bogomolov became a member and later was appointed for another term. The same happened in Orenburg with Aleksei Chernyshev (a former supporter of the CPRF and the Agrarian Party) and some others.

Although opposition went beyond the CPRF, no opposition liberals were elected governors, and we cannot judge their behavior. The most famous liberal governor, Boris Nemtsov of Nizhnii Novgorod, was Yeltsin's appointee and his regional policy was rather conservative indeed. Instead of more radical reforms, Nemtsov recruited old Soviet officials into his government (the key person after him was the former local CPSU Secretary Sklyarov) and tried to build his power vertical through a power struggle with Nizhny Novgorod mayor Dmitrii Bednyakov.

In addition, we can analyze the strategies of regional leaders with former LDPR affiliations (i.e., supposed nationalists), which are largely the same as for those with CPRF affiliations. Electoral support from a coalition of opposition forces in the second round of elections allowed the LDPR's Yevgenii Mikhailov to become Pskov governor in 1996. In 1999, Mikhailov switched to Unity and later moved to United Russia. But the lesson learned from electoral outcomes is that he lost his popular support through this political maneuvering and lost his third-term election in 2004. His successor, Mikhail Kuznetsov, also had begun as part of the LDPR faction in the State Duma but ran as an independent in the 2004 election and joined United Russia the following year. However, he also could not create a stable regime and was not reappointed. On the other hand, the showcase of clear pragmatism was businessman Arsen Kanokov who was elected to the State Duma from the LPDR in 2003 but moved to United Russia soon and was appointed president of his native region, Kabardino-Balkaria. Another case of successful adaptation is Leonid Markelov in Marii El who started with the LDPR and was elected but moved to United Russia and was later appointed by the president to an additional term.

Clearly, the best way to adapt after the party system changed was to join United Russia. Not all opposition governors were ready for that, however, because of their ideological views and fear of losing all public support, which they continued to care about even with elections abolished. Here we come to the second phase of the co-adaptation strategy. The main aim of Putin's regime was not to exclude communists or "pinks" completely but rather to win over those who proved to be adaptable, at least for a while.[4] As we argued, initially Putin tried to change the system of center-regional relations rather than to change the governors personally, which led to many decisions favoring incumbents (Turovskii 2010). Examples include two communists who were appointed governors in 2005, Nikolai Vinogradov in Vladimir and Aleksandr Chernogorov in Stavropol.

However, most red governors soon failed under the new regime. Rather than ideology, the main reason, as suggested earlier, was their inability to fit into the new clientelist system. Analysis of those governors who lost power under Putin shows that the federal center ousted many populists and political activists associated with regional conflicts and mismanagement. In the first stage, federal authorities used their control over judicial power and electoral commissions to

get rid of unwanted governors before elections. First, Aleksandr Rutskoi in Kursk and then Lodkin in Bryansk were removed from the ballot, which had earlier seemed an impossible thing to happen to a sitting governor. Others failed the presidential appointment process and were replaced (e.g., Starodubtsev, Mashkovtsev). Even publicly clashing with the CPRF did not pay off for some governors, who were later denied the chance for another term (e.g., Khodyrev, Tikhonov).

Chernogorov in Stavropol ended being both unpopular and unable to stabilize the region. He was excluded from the CPRF and then was forced to leave the governor's office, putting an end to his political career. Vinogradov of Vladimir declared in the beginning of 2008, before Medvedev's election, that he had suspended his CPRF membership (Maksiuta in Volgograd did the same thing). Vinogradov was appointed again, this time by Medvedev, despite protests from United Russia. He is still the only case of a red governor who survived and retained his "color." Maksiuta, on the other hand, stepped down at the end of his term in 2010.

Centralization and the dominant-party regime brought about a final phase for opposition regional regimes – extinction. Electoral performance, United Russia's of course, became the main basis for gubernatorial appointments. As Reuter and Robertson (2011) have found, governors' loyalty to the center, with strong regional voting for United Russia as evidence of this loyalty, became the way to get reappointed. This became even clearer under Medvedev when changes to the legislation on gubernatorial appointments specified that the majority party in the regional legislature, i.e., United Russia, had the right to propose candidates to the president. For red governors, all this meant a forced "exit" rather than a new term; they were rarely included in the list of candidates. For the few who were proposed, loyalty to the center had to be at its fullest (e.g., Mikhailov in Kursk), and even such loyalty did not guarantee another term.

In managing regional elites, however, the federal center was a little bit more sophisticated than typical for a dominant-party regime. The Kremlin never wanted all the governors to be United Russia members. Two reasons account for this. The first coincides with Reuter's (2011) point about the sequence of governors' membership. United Russia has limited power and is a political tool rather than a strong party. So, some influential federal-level politicians are allowed to stay outside. Another reason is that Russia's federal authorities want to demonstrate their adherence to formal democratic institutions and ideological diversity, both for the West and for the Russian public. A limited diversity therefore exists among the governors. Now they cannot be members of any party besides United Russia, but independents – former affiliates of opposition parties – are still possible. As a result, the "suspended communist" Vinogradov of Vladimir was appointed for the second time. Also, Medvedev appointed the former leader of the liberal Union of Right Forces, Nikita Belykh, governor of Kirov[5] creating a new case of supposedly liberal governance.

So, it is very hard to find a successful story of an opposition governor in Russia's authoritarian regime. Mainly it is a story of failures and conflicts. Vinogradov

is the only genuine communist (albeit with a suspended party membership) who is still a governor, having been appointed twice following twice being elected. Of course, Vinogradov did have to adapt. He used to control partly the United Russia branch in Vladimir, while keeping good relations with the CPRF. In other words, he started to play with two parties instead of one, gradually making concessions to United Russia. Probably, his secret was in his political experience, and that the federal center needed to keep a certain political diversity among governors, and Vinogradov was a showcase. But this story may also come to an end, as Vinogradov finds himself under growing pressure from United Russia seeking his resignation.

Loyalty to the center and membership in United Russia could not guarantee a governor a new term. A governor's fate depended mainly on his or her involvement in the clientelist system. More radical communists were usually alien to the patron-client system, which led to their failure. Among the more pragmatic left-leaning independents, a few successfully adapted: Oleg Korolev in Lipetsk, Tuleev in Kemerovo, and Bogomolov in Kurgan. All of them joined United Russia. All of them formerly had CPRF support and controlled the CPRF branch in their regions. The federal center appreciated the high regional electoral support generated by Tuleev and Korolev, who in turn created an effective network of relations on the federal level.

Recently, the process of extinction has been stepped up by the reasons relevant for Medvedev's rule. The new president trying to ensure his power wanted to change the governors both on individual and generational levels. This led to the change of the main part of governors, former "reds" and "pinks" among them, who were also too old in terms of age and needed replacement from the younger president's point of view. The new phase of gubernatorial change now gradually wipes away all the former opposition governors, including pinks and communists-turned-loyalists. Among those who were ousted under Medvedev were Pyotr Sumin in Chelyabinsk and Yurii Yevdokimov in Murmansk. Age as a reason has become very important and obviously long-serving and old governors have slight chances to go on now. Even with the new phase of governors' elections due to start at the end of 2012, opposition victories are unlikely because of both serious limitations in the election procedures and the huge deficit of popular political leaders.

In sum, then, victory by an opposition figure tended to turn into a trap. The resulting regional administration was weak, fragmented, and widely criticized from almost all sides. In their adaptation strategies, opposition governors faced three outcomes: full loyalty, failure, or what we can call failed loyalty, i.e., the inability to adapt to the new Putin–Medvedev regime despite serious attempts to do so. The national regime itself, starting under Yeltsin and more effectively in the 2000s, prevented opposition parties from governing in the regions. This sets Russia apart from such federal regimes as the PRI's in Mexico and modern Nigeria with their strong opposition governors and, in Mexico, capital mayors.

Opposition mayors: how it feels under pressure

Our analysis of opposition regimes at the municipal level shows almost the same patterns. The main difference concerns electoral politics. Since mayors continue to be elected by popular vote in many municipalities, it is still possible to win elections with the help of, or while belonging to, an opposition party. The mayoral level became the opposition's only opportunity to win executive office once governors became appointed. Sadly enough, opposition parties have rarely taken advantage of this opportunity. Although opposition parties did become more deeply involved in mayoral elections, their presence has been limited by a lack of strong candidates (Turovskii 2010b).

Partly the opposition parties are to blame for failures at the municipal level. Often, opposition parties have opportunistically supported acting mayors. In many cases from the 1990s on, opposition parties either supported the incumbent or abstained from any active role, in fact helping the incumbent to win. With the electoral reforms of the 2000s, however, "parliamentary parties" (i.e., those having seats in the State Duma) get to have their candidates in other elections automatically registered. Under such favorable conditions, it would be strange to stand aside in mayoral races. Nevertheless, I have shown elsewhere (Turovskii 2010a) that, in mayoral races held in regional capitals from December 2007 through the end of 2009, opposition parties fared quite poorly. In the 38 regional capitals where elections were held during that period, the CPRF participated only 16 times, and A Just Russia only seven times. The LDPR was formally the most active with 23 candidates, but it ended up with the worst results. Overall, no party except for United Russia ever won in these 38 cases.

So, the number of cases of opposition local regimes is strikingly low given the many hundreds of cities and towns in Russia. The sustainability of such regimes has been even worse than those of opposition governors. Once elected, opposition mayors face the same options: failure, full loyalty, or failed loyalty. Moreover, mayors find themselves under even more pressure for several reasons: (a) their financial resources are usually too small; (b) governors use any chance to suppress weaken rival mayors; (c) the federal authorities do not care about most mayors; and (d) mayors are vulnerable to criminal charges due to both real corruption and their political weakness. All this makes the story even more dramatic.

The politics of electoral failure shows in several cases. The most sensational case involved the red mayor of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii Yurii Golenischev who received a mere 1.4 percent of the vote while running for a second term. Recently electoral failure happened in Samara, one of the biggest Russian cities, once headed by Viktor Tarkhov, a member of A Just Russia. Tarkhov lost his bid for a second term to United Russia candidate Dmitrii Azarov from the regional government. In all such cases, United Russia took advantage of the unpopularity and managerial weaknesses of opposition mayors. Moreover, problems both with the electoral support and with the governors forced some communist mayors to choose the strategy of exit. They did not risk re-election at all, or the direct mayoral elections were abolished with the change of local legislation. As a result, communists Mikhail Yakush in Cherkessk and Leonid Sablin in Naryan-Mar served only one term.

On the municipal level, it may be easier for an opposition candidate to win election even now, but the resulting local regime becomes highly vulnerable. The monocentric character of governor-led regional political regimes (Zudin 2003) and conflicts between governors and mayors are popular themes of Russian regional research. Intra-regional centralization has deep roots in Russian subnational politics. The main reason lies in regional political economy, with most municipalities being poor and dependent on the regional budget. More independent municipalities, in turn, are considered dangerous by governors, which leads to severe conflicts and attempts to subdue them. This has even happened when both the governor and the mayor involved are communist: e.g., Riazan governor Liubimov versus mayor Viktor Mamatov, and Kamchatka governor Mashkovtsev versus Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii mayor Golenischev.

It is hard to say which tier of Russian politics is more corrupt. In terms of the number of criminal cases, however, the municipal level is definitely in the lead. For this chapter, it is important that the opposition mayors have become victims of authoritarian politics that formally was aimed at eradicating corruption but in practice removed unwanted mayors wherever possible. Partly such politics was made easy by the widespread coordination between governors and law-enforcement structures, especially in the 1990s. In the 2000s, when Russia's central authorities took a stronger hold over the regions, they probably coordinated this politics with governors. In either case, both federal and regional authorities were interested in minimizing the presence of opposition mayors, especially in cities of any significance. In other words, more effort was put into removing the opposition from mayoral offices than from the relatively more important gubernatorial positions.

Most failures by opposition mayors resulted from criminal charges. The 2000s are replete with cases of this kind. All the regional capitals were "cleaned" in a matter of several years. For example, Riazan's mayor, CPRF member Mamatov, lost his job in 2004 through a court decision and was charged soon after. In 2004, authorities began investigating another communist mayor, Nikolai Priz in Krasnodar, which led him to resign in 2005. After that, no communists have been allowed in the mayoral offices of the regional capitals through 2012.

Even A Just Russia, though considered to be a party loyal to the Kremlin, faced the same kind of ruthless attack on its mayors. The victories of Tarkhov in Samara and Dmitrii Kuz'min in Stavropol have shown that even A Just Russia is prevented from occupying mayoral offices. This treatment of A Just Russia is especially important because it illuminates the main reason opposition mayors were purged so thoroughly: clientelist politics at the regional level. Usually mayors from any party different than the governor's represent other clienteles. If a big-city-based clientele acquires administrative resource, it becomes too dangerous to the governor. Another reason is electoral. United Russia is not interested in losing votes in municipalities run by opposition mayors. The case of the

city of Stavropol became widely discussed because its mayor created a large network of supporters throughout the region and United Russia sensationally lost to A Just Russia in the regional legislative elections in spring 2007. The Kremlin shared both of these incentives. They wanted governors to generate higher vote totals for United Russia and used their control of gubernatorial appointments to reward good results and punish bad ones. They also agreed with the governors that losing their federal influence should be reciprocated with more power within their regions.

As a result, A Just Russia mayors were treated by regional regimes and federal authorities no less hard than their communist counterparts. Kuz'min came under investigation and even fled the country. (A United Russia candidate was elected instead.) Among others charged with crimes were his clients, including other mayors such as A Just Russia's Vitalii Biriukov from the popular resort city of Kislovodsk (with a United Russia candidate also replacing him). One of the latest cases of electoral victory turning into criminal prosecution occurred in the large industrial town of Bratsk in Irkutsk region. There Aleksandr Serov won the mayoral election in March 2011 with the support of the CPRF and was charged with corruption soon after. That was the fastest failure of a communist mayor, taking just a couple of months.

At the moment, only a handful of opposition mayors hold power towns of any significance. As for the regional capitals, the only one with an opposition mayor is tiny Naryan-Mar, the capital of the Nenetsk Autonomous Okrug, where CPRF candidate Tatiana Fyodorova won in 2012. CPRF mayors in other towns include Anatolii Kondratenko in Novocherkassk (Rostov Oblast), Ilya Potapov in Berdsk (Novosibirsk Oblast), Yurii Pereverzev in Pervouralsk (Sverdlovsk Oblast), and Mikhail Antropov in Apatity (Murmansk Oblast). Antropov is considered an important mayor and politician by his party, since he is a member of the CPRF Central Committee. Only a few mayors affiliated with A Just Russia remain in power in less significant towns, such as Mayor Andrei Neshin of Ob in Novosibirsk Oblast.

Opposition mayors found themselves under double pressure, both from federal and regional authorities. Representing other clienteles and lacking resources anyway, they hardly could prove their loyalty and stay in power without extra measures. Prominent cases of failures, both electoral and "criminal," make loyalty almost the only strategy for the newly elected. Yet even a strategy of loyalty failed in the most important cases. The problem is that in a multi-tier structure of subnational politics a mayor can only become successful in the rare case when two conditions prevail: he or she has federal-level support (helping the mayor parry attacks from the governor) and he or she has created a strong and self-sustainable local regime. It is almost impossible, moreover, to become really loyal to the governor without being part of his network of clients initially. In the 1990s, the center frequently supported a mayor in order to counter-balance a popularly elected governor seen as too powerful. In the 2000s, though, with the municipal reform and the abolishment of gubernatorial elections, the federal center quit engaging in the strategy of regional counter-balancing (Turovskii 2003). Direct relations between the federal center and a given mayor have become very rare. Typically, the Presidential Council for the Development of Local Self-Government consists of many federal officials and regional governors and only a few mayors. So, mayors have had to face off against their governors with little hope of support from the federal level. However, the center (and the federal leaders of United Russia) frequently have intruded into regional conflicts – making official decisions to support certain candidates in elections or sending inspections to the regions – but usually as a way to help the governor, whom they had appointed.

The closest to success was the former mayor of Volgograd, Roman Grebennikov, who won as a communist and soon joined United Russia instead. Grebennikov even managed to gain favor within the leadership of United Russia and held for some time an important job as the head of Putin's public reception office in Volgograd region. However, after a change in Volgograd's governor, the regional regime became much stricter and, in 2011, Grebennikov was dismissed by the new governor in a controversial case. This led to more turbulence in Volgograd politics, but Grebennikov has remained out of office. His federal support proved to be small, and he lost public support in his city where he was elected as an opposition member.

The other two cases of failed loyalty among regional capitals' mayors can be found in Orel and Smolensk. In Orel, businessman Aleksandr Kasyanov won election in 2006 with CPRF support and soon was charged with corruption in his previous position. He joined United Russia in 2007, but this was insufficient, and the case against him went forward. United Russia's candidate became the new mayor in the meantime. In Smolensk, local businessman Eduard Kachanovskii ran for mayor and lost his membership in United Russia which was backing another candidate. Kachanovskii prevailed, and United Russia allowed him to regain his membership. Nevertheless, the new Smolensk mayor failed to fit into the system of regional power relations and was jailed in 2010, losing his office.

Successful loyalty is still a rare case. On the level of regional capitals probably one of them can be found in Irkutsk where businessman Viktor Kondrashov won the election with CPRF support but joined United Russia soon after that. But, Kondrashov has only been in office a short while, and it is too early to draw conclusions.

Among mayors of smaller cities, there is a trend to leave their parties to become either United Russia members or independents. As for A Just Russia, most its prominent mayors did so. Vladimir Tashkinov in Ust'-Ilimsk (Irkutsk) joined United Russia. Pavel Zalesov in Serpukhov (Moscow oblast) left A Just Russia to become formally independent. In the politically turbulent town of Volzhskii in Volgograd, Mayor Marina Afanasyeva claimed that she had only suspended her membership in A Just Russia.

Conclusion

All the cases of opposition governors and mayors show that under the Putin-Medvedev regime it makes little sense for those seeking a position of executive-branch power to join an opposition party. The structural features of electoral

authoritarianism not only ensure victory by approved candidates but also force the rare opposition winners to adapt to the existing regime including by changing their political affiliation. As a result, the opposition party usually loses its member or affiliate if he or she becomes a governor or mayor. Subsequently, the governor or mayor either fits into the existing system or loses power. Thus, the legislative branch is much more flexible to accommodate the opposition than executive power. The reason lies in the system of state exploitation, or rent-seeking, by which the ruling elites try to ensure their monopoly. Under conditions of elitist politics with a rent-seeking elite at its core (Blaydes 2010), the primary task is to consolidate a ruling elite which controls the resources. In this light, it is easy to understand why the regime lets the opposition have a small place under the sun in the legislative branch while preventing opposition parties from holding executive office, where the sought-after rents are controlled.

Elections give the opposition an opportunity (or the illusion of one) to win power. Yet, in Russia, the number of possible elections has diminished with the abolishment of gubernatorial elections from 2005 to 2012 as well as of many mayoral elections (because the city manager model is often introduced after an opposition mayor resigns). In addition, authoritarian practices have led to numerous cases in which unwanted candidates were kept off the ballot or the counting of votes was "corrected." For example, the prominent A Just Russia leader Oleg Mikheev had his registration to run for Volgograd mayor rejected. In 2011, a recount of votes in the important coal town of Vorkuta (Komi Republic) showed the United Russia candidate winning by just two votes (!) while preliminary results had given the victory to the CPRF candidate. Obviously, such cases lead to widespread disbelief that an opposition candidate can win anywhere at all. Thus, both electoral fraud and pressure on opposition winners have strengthened regional authoritarianism and the country's dominant-party political regime.

Both external and internal reasons account for the numerous failures of opposition regimes at the regional and local levels, even when such regimes have switched to full loyalty. The external reasons have little to do with ideology. Rather, they flow from the impossibility of including an opposition regime into the broader system of patron-client relations. Russian politics, especially in the 2000s, has tended to produce simpler mechanisms of power relations based on close personal ties and distributing resources within closed networks of clients. Even those who have tried to fit in using formal means (joining United Russia and others) were often rejected because they lacked the necessary personal ties and inevitably created their own smaller patron-client networks, thus competing for resources. Since the ruling elite still needs a high level of control over regional finances, it uses all means it can to block unwanted newcomers from gaining executive power. When an opposition leader has complicated the regional clientelist structure, the resulting conflicts have been resolved by either administrative means (appointing a new governor, abolishing mayoral elections) or authoritarian means (instigating criminal charges, manipulating election results). Some of the reasons, though, are internal to the opposition regime. They include the low public legitimacy of opposition regimes and the frequent decline

in their leaders' popularity, weak and unprofessional governance by regime officials, and the inability to alter regional policy.

So, in an authoritarian regime, an opposition party can still be a tool to win an election, but its affiliation is too heavy a burden to bear after the victory. After being elected, the winner finds himself in a completely new political environment of existing patron-client relations, and has no other choice than to become a dependent member and an agent (in the sense of principal-agent theory) for a higher-level clientelist network.

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Notes

1 The process of selecting governors is explained in Basic Information on Russia's Regions and Regional Terminology.
2 The complete list of governors upon which this table is based is available at http://ir.uiowa.edu/shambaugh_supplement.
3 Individual communists sometimes ran against a red governor by portraying him as a traitor to the cause. Usually, however, they were either kept off the ballot or removed from the party.
4 The same was true with United Russia policy, when it refused membership to one of the governors. That was another former communist, Korotkov in Amur, who was excluded from the CPRF a long time before he won the election. But his rule was considered unprofessional (Korotkov was a former journalist and federal parliament deputy with no experience in governing). At the regional elections in 2004, Korotkov created his own bloc "For the development of Amur" that split the loyalist electorate to the great dissatisfaction of United Russia (soon after this and due to this case the federal law banned regional blocs). As a result, he could not join United Russia and was fired soon from his office (later receiving a criminal charge).
5 It is worth mentioning that Belykh's deputy governor, Scherchkov, joined United Russia in 2010. Formerly, he was a leader of the Union of Right Forces party's branch in Perm.