The Limited Reach of Russia's Party System: Underinstitutionalization in Dual Transitions

KATHRYN STONER-WEISS

While Russian political parties appear to be institutionalizing to some degree at the national level, they are surprisingly absent at the regional level. This is a result of the dynamics of Russia's dual economic and political transition. Regional elites prefer a "partial reform equilibrium" in political institutional development so that they can avoid widening the sphere of accountability for their decisions in order to protect the gains they have made in the early stage of the economic transition. Strong political institutions—like competitive political parties that penetrate the periphery—would render transitional winners more broadly accountable to wider societal interests as well as to national political actors. The argument suggests that the territorial penetration and further institutionalization of Russia's party system are not necessarily inevitable. Under the conditions of dual, simultaneous economic and political transitions, elites may prefer an equilibrium of political underinstitutionalization to preserve their early winnings from the economic transition.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the elections to the State Duma completed in 1999 and the election of a new President in March 2000, a Russian party system, although fragile, is perceptible. Using comparative measures, we can begin to see the rough outlines of an institutionalizing, if obviously not yet institutionalized party system—at least at the national level. Party factions are active and somewhat enduring within the State Duma, Russia's lower house; party identification among citizens, while still low comparatively, appears to be increasing, and we can now speak of trends in national legislative elections such that at least some parties endure from one elec-

The author would like to thank Sheri Berman, Robert Moser, Jeffrey Herbst, Jeffrey Kopstein, and Michael McFaul for useful comments on earlier versions of this article. This research was completed with the generous support of the Smith Richardson Foundation.

POLITICS & SOCIETY, Vol. 29 No. 3, September 2001 385-414

toral period to the next. Yet, despite these positive gains, a peculiar and possibly enduring characteristic has also developed—a failure for parties to have penetrated significantly the political institutions of most of Russia's eighty-nine provinces. The representation of national parties in both regional legislatures and executives is strikingly low. Furthermore, in most regions, regional political party development is also faltering. This article seeks to explain why it is that when Russia's party system may be institutionalizing slowly along other measures, political parties have still not managed to penetrate politics in the periphery.

The lack of institutionalization of political parties in the provinces has troubling implications for the future of Russia's fragile democracy. Indeed, no democracy in the world exists in the absence of political parties. Parties serve a variety of important functions. In democracies, parties act as conduits between civil society and the state, and also, therefore, between center and periphery. They can promote policy coherence in policy platforms across nation states. Parties can solve collective action problems between central and local governments in that they integrate the polity as well as aggregating interests. They help "bury private or personal preferences for the sake of general social objectives."[1]

Parties are supposed to accomplish these tasks in at least three ways. First, they are supposed to broaden political loyalties and "institutionalize participation beyond the village."[2] Through recruitment and training, parties also systematize and incorporate new and varied interests and leaders into the political process. Second, parties, through programs, define policy. Third, through organization, parties also assist in ensuring policy implementation by linking national and local political actors. If a representative from the provinces owes his or her electoral victory to the agency of the President or head of the party, "presumably [s]he is willing to do what the President asks without much hesitation, thereby also eliminating the President's cost of bargaining."[3] While this does not altogether eliminate the high costs of bargaining with local politicians, it can at least lower those costs.[4] As a result, Martin Shefter notes that parties are "institutions of representation, but also of control."[5] An important task of political parties in Russia and elsewhere then is not just the aggregation of interests within society, and their representation in a national legislature, but also the enhancement of the stability and authority of a political system by linking political actors at various levels of the polity.

But due to the pervasive and persistent underinstitutionalization of political parties of all ideological stripes outside of Moscow, Russian parties fail to provide many of these benefits. In particular, the Russian state remains poorly politically integrated as it is held together through unstable clientelistic ties between central and regional political officials. There is, for example, a pervasive inability for the central state to implement policy reliably and coherently across Russia.[6] Frequently, throughout the 1990s provincial governments flouted central authority by passing laws in direct opposition to federal law and the constitution. As a result, Russian central officials resorted to largely failed attempts to bribe

regional political actors into following central policy dictates.[7] This is far from a stable base upon which to approach the remaining formidable task of consolidating Russia's fragile democracy.

Other work on parties in Russia has tended to focus on electoral politics and the development of a party system at the national level. With a few notable exceptions, most of the research done thus far has focused on institutional incentives and constraints on party system formation and how parties operate within national institutions.[8] While all of this work has been important and necessary in learning more about the development of Russia's party system, this article differs in three ways. First, it moves to the next logical question regarding the degree of institutionalization of Russia's young party system. Second, it focuses on the question of why, to the extent that Russia's party system appears to be institutionalizing, it is doing so in a particular way—apparently without reaching deeply into the country's heartland. That is, the empirical findings here point to a disconnect between the degree of institutionalization of the party system at the national level versus the eighty-nine regions of Russia. Third, after considering alternatives, the article provides an explanation as to why political parties in Russia have found pathways to the periphery elusive.

I argue that the nature of dual economic and political transitions makes the underdevelopment of political institutions preferable for regional political elites who have benefited from the early stages of economic change. That is, they prefer a "partial reform equilibrium" in political institutional development so that they can avoid widening the sphere of accountability for their decisions in order to protect the gains they have made in the early stage of the economic transition. This is because strong political institutions—like competitive political parties that penetrate the periphery—would render transitional winners (in this case regional political elites) more broadly accountable to wider societal interests as well as to national political actors. Building on the findings of scholars in East European contexts, I argue that regional political elites work against party development in order to control the pace and scope of political inclusion and to protect their early transitional winnings. Moreover, the elite preferences for a partial reform equilibrium in the economy in dual transitions are supported by parallel preferences in forestalling the further development of strong competitive political institutions.[9]

The more general findings here question some closely held assumptions regarding how party systems are formed and how they come to be institutionalized. My argument suggests that the territorial penetration and further institutionalization of Russia's party system are not necessarily inevitable. Under the conditions of dual, simultaneous economic and political transitions, elites do not necessarily flock to the safety and predictability of political parties. Rather, they may prefer an equilibrium of political underinstitutionalization to preserve their early winnings from the economic transition.

The article is organized as follows. In the second section, I discuss in a preliminary way in what sense Russia's party system can be seen to be making progress

toward institutionalization at the national level. This section notes that while there is visible progress toward institutionalization of all-Russian parties in national politics on some measures, there is still remarkably little progress on the part of national parties in penetrating provincial politics and providing meaningful organization to political life there. Section 3 then provides data on the degree to which parties lack a presence in Russian provincial politics. Section 4 tests various hypotheses for why all-Russian parties are weakly represented in provincial legislatures and among executives. This section puts forward the argument regarding the importance of entrenched economic interests in regional politics and why these interests are likely to continue to shun political parties in the near term, preferring instead an equilibrium of underinstitutionalization and partial political reform. Section 5, the conclusion, discusses the implications of the lack of all-Russian party presence at the provincial level for the consolidation of Russian democracy, political pluralism, and governance of the Russian state.

2. TO WHAT DEGREE IS RUSSIA'S PARTY SYSTEM INSTITUTIONALIZING?

A reasonable definition of political institutionalization is Samuel Huntington's: "Institutionalization is the process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability."[10] Particularly helpful is Huntington's emphasis on institutionalization as a process and not a singular or sudden event. In the post–Soviet Russian case, it is only now (after almost a decade of transition) that we can even begin to speak of a gradual political institutionalization. As a result, it would be a mistake to interpret the following discussion regarding the degree to which Russia's party system is institutionalizing as an argument that it is now fully formed, institutionalized, and more or less immutable. My intention instead is to point out the fact that Russian parties are especially unsuccessful in penetrating politics in the provinces and to discuss the implications of this for Russia's future political development.

Comparative political theory offers various methods and approaches to the evaluation of party system institutionalization. Most of these, however, have been derived from the experiences of mature democracies in Western Europe in particular. Scott Mainwaring has noted that these theories, therefore, are not wholly satisfactory for newer, third-wave democracies.[11] For example, the social cleavage approach and emphases on ideological difference in party system formation of Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, Giovanni Sartori, and others clearly explain the development of some party systems better than others. In many third-wave democracies social cleavages may be less pronounced and other forms of cleavage (ethnicity, old versus new economic interests, etc.) may be more salient in party system formation and institutionalization. Finally, theories derived from the experiences of more advanced democracies, in focusing on ideological and social cleavages, tend to emphasize more the influence of societal forces in party

system formation rather than the elite influences that appear important in newer transitional settings where civil society is weak or nonexistent. That is, in the older literature, there is an emphasis on the process of party system formation and institutionalization as bottom up (from societal cleavages) rather than top down (from elite choices). This older emphasis is not wholly appropriate for the analysis of more recent democratic transitions, nor dual economic and political transitions in the post-communist world in particular.[12]

Research, therefore, on political institutionalization in other third-wave democracies provides more useful comparative references for post–Soviet Russia. Mainwaring, with Timothy Scully, compares Latin American party systems along four dimensions that incorporate, but also extend and greatly refine, the measures other scholars of more advanced democracies have employed.[13] Mainwaring and Scully begin with the important point that the degree of institutionalization of a party system is a continuous, not a dichotomous variable. At one end of the spectrum of institutionalization, therefore, are fully institutionalized party systems while at the other are inchoate party systems. Most party systems lie between the two extremes.

Among the advantages of Scully and Mainwaring's schema is how well their measures lend themselves to comparisons across country contexts and also comparisons across time within party systems. Furthermore, the characteristics of institutionalized party systems that they identify translate relatively easily into concrete comparative measures. Moreover, along various dimensions, their approach enables a researcher in any democratic or democratizing country context to evaluate in what ways a party system can be seen to be institutionalizing or even deinstitutionalizing as the case may be.

To what degree, then, is the Russian political party system institutionalizing? Along some measures, the Russian system can be seen to be moving—albeit haltingly—away from the inchoate end of the continuum toward institutionalization. However, although some of the evidence presented below provides clear indications that Russia's party system is in some ways institutionalizing, other measures, particularly those indicating the degree of territorial penetration of the party system, demonstrate that the system is far from institutionalized.

Measuring the Degree of Institutionalization of Russia's Party System

Stability and Patterns of Party Competition

Regarding Scully and Mainwaring's first measure—the stability of interparty competition and the regularity of patterns of party competition—Russia's party system after three national elections to the State Duma can be seen at least in rough outline. There is at least some continuity in the parties gaining representation in the Duma, although parties do come and go in Russian politics with startling frequency.

Russia has a mixed electoral system for national legislative elections such that 225 seats of the 450 seats in the Duma are elected through proportional representation party list, while the other 225 seats are elected through single mandate elections. Between the first elections to the State Duma in December 1993 and the third and most recent elections in December 1999, three parties (the Communist Party of the Russian Federation [KPRF], Yabloko, and the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia [LDPR] under Vladimir Zhirinovsky[14]) have consistently cleared the 5-percent barrier parties must jump in order to gain representation in the national legislature through party list voting. In addition to these three parties, a fourth more fluid grouping (the name of which and membership of which has changed between electoral periods) has consistently represented the government at the time of the election—a "party of power." The number of deputies elected to the Duma as independents has decreased between the first and third electoral periods, indicating that gradually more candidates for national office may be opting for party affiliations than previously. Thus, a "three plus one" party system can be seen in rough outline in Russia at the national level.

As Table 1 indicates, while there has been tremendous volatility in terms of the rise and fall of national parties in Duma elections, three parties—Yabloko, KPRF, and LDPR—have consistently cleared the 5-percent hurdle since 1993. In addition, a rotating "party of power" (in 1993 Russia's Democratic Choice, in 1995 Our Home is Russia, and in 1999 Unity/Medved) has consistently jumped the 5-percent barrier to gain representation through party list voting. Further evidence of the recognition by candidates of the need to join political parties to win national office can be found in the decrease in the number of independents winning seats in the Duma since 1993, although fewer candidates won as independents in 1995 than in 1999. Moreover, these three electoral periods demonstrate that there is some, although limited, stability in the party system providing at best a rough pattern to party competition at the national level in Russia.

Citizen Perceptions of Parties

After three elections to the national legislature, the degree to which citizens are becoming connected to parties, Mainwaring and Scully's second criterion of institutionalization can also now be evaluated in Russia. Citizen perceptions of parties are particularly important because of the role that parties play in democracies. Parties are a crucial mechanism by which citizens are incorporated into the competitive political process. Although parties are almost universally negatively regarded and mistrusted in post–Soviet Russia, presumably because of the overarching and threatening presence of the Communist Party since 1917, there is evidence of rising voter identification with parties.

In 1993, Richard Rose, Stephen White, and Ian McAllister found that although most respondents in a national survey were antiparty and/or did not identify themselves with any party, 22 percent of voters in national elections were either strongly committed or committed partisans.[15] Only two years later, however, prior

Table 1
Proportion of National Vote of Leading Parties (those having cleared the 5-percent PR barrier at least once) in Elections to the State Duma in 1993, 1995, and 1999

Electoral Year	1993	1995	1999
Yabloko			
PR%	7.86	6.89	5.93
Total seats	23	45	20
LDPR			
PR%	22.9	11.2	5.98
Total seats	64	51	17
KPRF			
PR%	12.4	22.3	24.29
Total seats	48	157	114
Agrarians			
PR%	7.9	3.8	NA
Total seats	33	20	0
Women of Russia			
PR%	7.86	4.6	2.04
Total seats	23	3	0
Party of Unity and Concord			
PR%	6.76	0.4	NA
Total seats	19	1	0
Russia's (Democratic) Choice			
PR%	15.5	3.9	NA
Total seats	70	9	0
NDR			
PR%	NA	10.1	1.19
Total seats	NA	55	1
Unity			
PR%	NA	NA	23.32
Total seats	NA	NA	73
Union of Right Wing Forces			
PR%	NA	NA	8.52
Total seats	NA	NA	29
Fatherland/All-Russia			
PR%	NA	NA	13.33
Total seats	NA	NA	67
Number of deputies elected as independents of 450	141	78	114
Total number of parties running	13	43	26

Source: Central Electoral Commission of the Russian Federation, Rose, White, and McAllister, p. 123 and pp. 224-25.
Note: Total seats denotes total number of seats won in both proportional representation and single mandate contests. NA indicates that the electoral organization in question did not exist or did not meet registration requirements in time for the election. The total number of deputies elected may not sum to 450 in any given year because some seats went unfilled and elections for those seats were postponed. LDPR = Liberal Democratic Party of Russia; KPRF = Communist Party of the Russian Federation.

to the second elections to the State Duma in December 1995, Timothy Colton found a jump in partisanship. In a national sample of voters, Colton found that 49 percent of respondents were partisans (classified as either strong, moderate, or weak). In contrast to the results cited by White, Rose, and McAllister, Colton also found the margin of nonpartisans to partisans was strikingly thin, with nonparti-

sans accounting for 51 percent of respondents.[16] Alternate ways of posing questions that might uncover partisanship may account for some of the differences in results here, as Colton himself points out. However, the difference in figures may also indicate an actual increase in partisanship between Russia's first and second parliamentary elections. Colton's data do appear to be particularly conscientiously derived in that citizens were asked a series of questions to probe their partisanship. Thus, there is good reason to believe that levels of partisanship among Russian voters increased between these first two elections to the State Duma.[17]

Significantly also, there is some preliminary evidence of partisanship at times other than elections suggesting voter attachment is not just a transitory, electoral phenomenon. Colton reports that in a Russia-wide survey of 1,541 adults in January-February 1998 (at almost exactly the midpoint between the 1995 and 1999 elections to the State Duma), he and his colleagues found that 32 percent of respondents described themselves as partisans.[18] Moreover, while in the aggregate, Russian voters are generally antiparty, increasingly it seems they are establishing party attachments.

There is also, of course, variation among parties as to which have more firmly committed partisans. Rose, White, and McAllister and Colton all find that the Communist Party has the largest percentage of partisans. In 1995, Colton found that of the partisans in his sample, 28 percent (or 14 percent of all citizens) could be counted as supporters of the KPRF, which is approximately as much as the second-ranking LDPR, third-ranking Our Home, and fourth-ranking Yabloko combined.[19] There exists then, the curious (but by now well-known) phenomenon of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (the successor, after all, to the detested Communist Party of the Soviet Union) as the most appealing party to the most number of "post-communist" Russians.[20]

In sum, there is at least preliminary evidence of a gradual increase in partisanship among the Russian citizenry. In comparison with the United States and Britain, where only 13 percent and 8 percent, respectively, identify themselves as nonpartisans, Russian partisanship is still low as we might expect.[21] But given the short period of time in which Russian parties have had to establish a political presence, their progress toward institutionalization on this measure is rather striking.

Elite Perceptions of Parties

Reverting to Mainwaring and Scully's framework, a third measure of institutionalization concerns elite perceptions of parties. In a more institutionalized democratic political party system, parties in elections are viewed as the central means of determining who governs. As Adam Przeworski and others have also argued, for institutionalization to take place, serious politicians must view parties and elections as the most important vehicle for gaining power.[22]

Russia's score card on this measure is mixed. Clearly, most political elites in Russia perceive the need to form organizations, call them political parties, and use their labels in national elections. That said, as has already been noted, there is star-

tling fluidity in membership of elites in parties and many parties rise and fall between electoral periods. The elections to the State Duma in 1999 are an excellent example of this with Unity (the most recent incantation of the government's "party of power"), second only to the KPRF in proportion of the popular vote, having been formed slightly less than three months prior to the December election.

Many all-Russian parties (both relatively old and new) are similarly focused on a single personality, and should the leader abandon the party, it would likely dissolve. Nonetheless, there is also the persistence of older parties like Yabloko and the KPRF in particular that have persistently run candidates in national legislative and presidential elections since 1993 and the organizations of which appear bigger than their leaders. Moreover, although elites (particularly provincial elites) often switch party affiliations between national elections, or hold several party affiliations during a single electoral campaign, their propensity toward forming electoral organizations, and the overall decline in the number of deputies winning national office as independents since 1993, indicates that elites attribute some value to political parties in elections to national political institutions. However, the fleeting existence of many of these organizations, and the fluidity of elite membership in them, cautions against arguments regarding deep institutionalization of the Russian party system.

Organization

Mainwaring and Scully note the importance of solid party organizations, discipline in factions in the legislature, and penetration of parties into not only national institutions but local political institutions as well. In the Russian case, organizational measures also help to highlight the contrast in the way in which the party system is developing in the center as opposed to the provinces. Clearly parties, for all their other weaknesses, have a presence in national legislative institutions and have even penetrated the executive to some degree (although neither former President Yeltsin himself, nor current President Putin have carried a formal party label, certain cabinet members have done so). Thomas Remington and Steven Smith's work on the organization of the Russian Duma also shows that party organization and faction discipline exist in the Russian legislature and even help to provide some logic to lawmaking.[23]

Significantly, however, as section 3 demonstrates, as weakly institutionalized as Russia's party system seems at the national level, its most significant organizational challenge remains penetration of the country's heartland. For despite the fact that the Russian party system is making halting progress away from the inchoate end of the party system spectrum toward the institutionalized end, parties and the party system are even weaker outside Moscow. The territorial challenge to the institutionalization of the party system is serious enough to warrant separate treatment in the section that follows.

3. NATIONAL PARTIES IN PROVINCIAL POLITICS

There have been four major opportunities for most parties competing in the 1993, 1995, and 1999 national elections to the State Duma and the 1996 and 2000 presidential elections to contest races in the provinces. These include the elections in 1993-94 to the reformed regional legislatures (regional dumas or assemblies), the reelection of these bodies in 1995-97 (most were originally elected for only a two-year period), the 1996-97 elections for regional governors across Russia, and the reelection of both regional governors and republican presidents as well as regional and republican legislatures throughout 1998 and 1999.[24]

As a result, between 1993 and 1999 at the subnational level in Russia there were more than 200 elections.[25] Hence, since the adoption of the Constitution in December 1993 and the first parliamentary elections also held in December 1993, all-Russian political parties have had ongoing opportunities to affect electoral outcomes and, by extension, political practice in the provinces. Yet, with a few exceptions, they have accomplished neither of these tasks.

National Parties in Regional Legislative Elections

Table 2 provides some descriptive statistics regarding the degree to which national parties have penetrated provincial legislatures. In the first electoral round of 79 regional legislative elections held in 1993 and 1994, 13.8 percent of newly elected deputies carried a political party affiliation, while 86.2 percent carried no party affiliation.[26] The low party penetration of the periphery in this electoral round is in some ways peculiar given that parties had just fought national elections to the State Duma and some regional elections were even held concurrently with national parliamentary elections. Presumably, all-Russian parties could have used the regional branches they may have developed to fight parliamentary elections in December 1993 for the advancement of their parties in the regional races that were either held concurrently or followed soon after. For the most part, however, the main all-Russian parties that did best in the 1993 elections to the State Duma proved unable to make significant electoral inroads to the newly formed regional legislatures.

One might be able to understand this given the context in which the national and local parliamentary elections took place. In the wake of the October shelling of Parliament, President Yeltsin had temporarily banned opposition parties and called snap elections for the new State Duma. Although the KPRF did field candidates in these elections in December 1993, some other opposition organizations did not. It also was difficult for these young and often poorly organized parties to field candidates in the regional legislative elections that followed. Despite this, however, the KPRF appeared to capitalize on its success in the State Duma elections (leveraging some of its old Communist Party of the Soviet Union networks) and managed to elect the highest number of deputies to regional legislatures—

Table 2
National Parties in Regional Legislative Elections, 1993-97

Years of Legislative Elections (number of regions holding elections)	Leading Party						Percentage (number) Deputies with All-Russian Party Affiliations	Percentage (number) Deputies with Local Party Affiliations	Percentage (number) Deputies with No Party Affiliations
	KPRF (%)	NDR (%) (RC in '93-94)	Yabloko (%)	LDPR (%)	APRF (%)	Other (%)			
December 1993-December 1994 (79)[a]	6.3	NA (1.4)	0	0	1.6	5.7	13.8	NA	86.2[b]
January 1995-1997 (72)[c]	7.3	0.3	0.5	0.1	1.1	2.2	11.5 (336)	5.3 (155)[d]	83.2

Note: RC = Russia's Choice; KPRF = Communist Party of the Russian Federation; LDPR = Liberal Democratic Party of Russia; APRF = Agrarian Party of the Russian Federation.

a. From Darrell Slider, "Elections to Russia's Regional Assemblies," *Post Soviet Affairs* 12, no. 3 (July-September 1996).

b. This is based on subtraction of the percentage of deputies with all-Russian party affiliation subtracted from 100 percent of deputies elected during this electoral period. The number of deputies elected from regional parties was not reported separately for this electoral period. However, 86.2 percent of deputies without any party affiliation whatsoever is an estimated figure, and the true figure may be just slightly lower if deputies with regional party affiliations are included in it. This information is not available to my knowledge. The point remains, however, that only 13.8 percent of deputies elected had all-Russian party affiliations.

c. From *Vyboryi v zakonodatel'nie organi fosudarstvennoi vlasti sub'ektov Rossiiskoi Federatsii 1995-1997* (Moscow: Tsentral'naia Izbieratel'naia Kommissiia, 1998).

d. This figure comes from my own analysis of the electoral statistics for each region of Russia published by the Central Electoral Commission of the Russian Federation in *Vybopry v zakonodatel'nie (predstavitel'nie) organi gosudarstvennoi vlasti sub'ektov rossiiskoi federatsii 1995-1997: elektoral'naia statistika*.

6.3 percent of all deputies elected (see Table 2). The Agrarian Party of Russia, which garnered 1.6 percent of all elected deputies to regional assemblies, followed the KPRF. These two parties received a combined total of 7.9 percent of all deputies elected to regional legislatures in seventy-nine regions. Although they were by far the most successful parties in this initial round of legislative elections in the provinces, their relative victories hardly amounted to a sweep of Russian regional assemblies. Parties of the democratic center did particularly poorly, as Table 2 indicates.

While all-Russian parties might have been expected to do poorly in regional legislative elections in 1993 and 1994 because both parties and legislatures were young and weak, context cannot really explain the continued low penetration of parties in the periphery in subsequent elections to regional legislatures in 1995-97. The Central Electoral Commission reports that more than 17,900 candidates participated in elections for a possible 3,021 electoral mandates in seventy-two of Russia's eighty-nine regions between 1995 and 1997.[27] Of this number of candidates, approximately 25 percent were nominated by electoral organizations or electoral blocs (two or more parties in combination), while 75 percent of candidates ran as independents. Overall, of 2,934 deputies elected, 16.8 percent had party affiliations but 83.2 percent did not. Of that 16.8 percent, only 11.3 percent had national party affiliations, while the remaining elected deputies (5.3 percent) were sponsored by local party organizations, having no ties to national parties whatsoever (see Table 2).

The KPRF, Yabloko, the LDPR, three of the parties that crossed the 5-percent hurdle in the national proportional representation (PR) vote for the State Duma in all three national elections since 1993 do have at least some representation in a few regional legislatures. But even for the KPRF, this hardly demonstrates a controlling interest in regional politics. Paralleling elections to the State Duma, the left opposition has certainly been more successful in regional legislative elections than "democratic/centrist" parties. However, they have in no way been as electorally successful in the provinces as at the national level, where in 1995 and 1999 the KPRF alone garnered more than 20 percent of the vote.

Undeniably, the KPRF does reach farthest into the periphery, but its degree of penetration is less than impressive. In 1995-97, it registered 776 candidates in forty-six subjects of the Federation, and 215 candidates in thirty-seven subjects were successfully elected. This amounts to an average of slightly less than six deputies per legislature in fewer than half of all those legislatures for which elections were held in this period.[28] As in the first round of provincial legislative elections in 1993-94, the Agrarians were also relatively successful winning thirty-two seats, but this also amounts to a handful of deputies in a handful of regions.[29] Further continuing earlier trends, the democratic centrist parties fared much worse: NDR ran candidates in sixteen regions, but ten deputies won in only six regions; Yabloko ran candidates in nineteen regions and fifteen candidates won in only five

regions; Democratic Choice of Russia ran in eleven regions and won only three races in two regions. Interestingly, Vladimir Zhirinovskii's LDPR had among the more developed regional party structures (second only to KPRF), running more than 400 candidates in forty-eight regions, but won only three races in two regions.

Although the Communists can correctly claim to have the largest number of elected deputies in the regions, it is difficult to argue that the KPRF maintains a powerful hold on politics in the periphery. Furthermore, the KPRF's support is geographically limited to those regions where it had done well in parliamentary elections—Russia's agricultural red belt. Even here, however, the Communists hardly ever managed to claim more than 50 percent of deputies elected in any of this group of oblasts (ten of twenty-five in Stavropol, thirteen of thirty-five in Belgorod, ten of sixteen in Volgograd, eleven of forty-five in Voronezh, and eight of twenty-five in Riazan).[30]

More recent elections to regional legislatures demonstrate the same pattern. The few elections that took place in 1998 for which data are available indicate that all-Russian party influence may even be declining in regional legislative elections. Of the seventeen legislative elections that took place in 1998, most were in traditionally Communist strongholds in the Black Earth region of Russia. Furthermore, although the KPRF did manage to win seats in fifteen of seventeen elections, the Communists appear to have lost some support in their traditional strongholds. Finally, as in the previous two electoral periods, in 1998 other parties continued to win only a handful of seats in regional legislatures.[31]

On average, therefore, since the first electoral period in 1993 through 1998, more than 80 percent of winning candidates in regional legislatures have consistently spurned all-Russian party affiliations *and* voters in these elections even appear to prefer candidates without party affiliations—be they national or regional. That is, the problem is not only that there is an insufficient number of candidates running with party affiliations in regional elections but also that the candidates who carry party affiliations are often passed over in favor of candidates who run as independents.

More striking, although the data is somewhat incomplete, the number of deputies winning seats in regional legislatures having an all-Russian party affiliation may be declining. According to Table 1, in 1993 and 1994, 13.8 percent of elected deputies in provincial legislatures declared a national party affiliation, whereas in the subsequent round of elections between 1995 and 1997, this number dropped slightly to 11.5 percent such that 88.5 percent of deputies in the provinces did not have national party affiliations compared with 86.2 percent that did in 1993-94. This is particularly interesting given the fact that Russia's main political parties worked steadily to develop their regional organizations and increased the number of candidates they ran in regional elections between electoral periods. Thus, where we might expect to see an increase in the number of deputies in regional

legislatures elected with all-Russian party affiliations, in fact we see a slight decrease since 1993. This provides a very preliminary indication that the lack of all-Russian party presence in the Russian heartland may prove to be an enduring phenomenon.

Regional Executive Elections

Of particular note, is the poor showing of national parties in the gubernatorial elections that took place in seventy-three regions of Russia between 1995-97 and the reelection of some governors in 1998. It is possible that national parties failed to penetrate regional legislative elections because regional legislatures, since Yeltsin's 1993 replacement of the relatively more powerful Soviets with the smaller and less powerful regional assemblies, may not be considered a particularly big prize for Russian political parties with limited financial resources. That is, these bodies may be thought to have less real power, so parties might reasonably not go to much trouble to expend scarce resources in electing their candidates. This, however, is not the case with the office of regional executive or governor. Faced with weak legislatures, governors (or regional heads of administration as they are also called) can wield enormous power. The office of governor, therefore, is a political jewel in any region of Russia.

In light of this, we should expect that all-Russian political parties might devote considerable effort in electing their preferred candidates. Recent analyses of the seventy-three gubernatorial elections that took place between 1995 and 1997 indicate that pro-Kremlin and opposition forces made great efforts to influence the outcomes of these elections.[32] The results indicate, however, that even in elections where the stakes mattered and the office up for grabs actually held considerable power, Russian national parties, regardless of political stripe, still fared poorly.

For example, of the 153 "real candidates" in this initial set of gubernatorial elections, only one-third had a discernible ideological orientation.[33] So fuzzy were some candidates' affiliations, that the two major opposing ideological blocs in the elections—the progovernment bloc the All-Russian Coordinating Council (OKS), backed by the Yeltsin administration and the KPRF's umbrella organization in the provinces, the Popular Patriotic Union of Russia (NPSR)—both claimed victory in the elections.[34] This is a result of the fact that, in some instances, "the NPSR even supported the same candidate backed by the Yeltsin government."[35] In other cases, although a candidate may have run and won with an ostensibly Communist label, the Presidential Administration in Moscow declared the winner a moderate with whom they could work and so claimed the new governor as a win for their side anyway.

Indeed, one observer noted that the NPSR played little independent role in nominating (or financing) candidates, and played a "more limited role in extending endorsements to candidates already on the ballot."[36] Overall, there is general agreement that the role of parties in these elections was limited—even the role of

the Communist Party and its affiliated organizations. Despite the frequent claim that the Communist Party of the Russian Federation is Russia's only truly national party,[37] of the seventy-three governors elected between 1995 and 1997, only nineteen (26 percent) carried an unambiguously Communist orientation.[38]

Our Home is Russia and Yabloko fared even worse in the gubernatorial elections. This is despite the fact that Yabloko has pervasive grassroots organizations, and Our Home is Russia was thought to serve as the party of power in both the center and periphery. Yabloko has not, however, "demonstrated a capacity to win majoritarian votes. Significantly, in the fifty gubernatorial elections of 1996-1997, Yabloko ran only a handful of candidates and won only one vote."[39] Vladimir Zhirinovsky's misnamed LDPR, despite doing surprisingly well in elections to the State Duma in 1993 and 1995, also managed to win only one gubernatorial race between 1995 and 1997, echoing its poor performance in provincial legislative elections during the same period. Moreover, as their subsequent actions have demonstrated, "none of the winners were likely to feel strong bonds of loyalty" to any ideological camp.[40]

In 1998, ten more gubernatorial elections took place. In four of these elections, incumbents managed to maintain their offices, while in six, they were defeated. Only in one of the ten regions was the winner clearly a partisan of any all-Russian party (Smolensk, where the new governor was a Communist). Following the patterns established in the 1995-97 elections, winning candidates for governor more often than not spurned the sponsorship of any of the leading all-Russian parties.[41] At the time of writing, results were available for only seven gubernatorial elections held in 1999. Of these, in only one region (Belgorod) can the Communists clearly claim a victory. In all the others, candidates are reported to have been nominated by a group of voters, candidates were nominated by a few regional parties (as in the case of Sverdlovsk), or all-Russian parties nominated candidates, but those candidates consistently lost the elections.[42]

Finally, a preliminary analysis of the forty-four gubernatorial elections that took place in 2000 indicates that party identification and/or support continues to mean little in practice. Instead, incumbency appears to matter more than party identification: "In almost every case where incumbent governors managed to move up election dates and therefore give their competition less time to prepare, the incumbent won."[43] Paralleling previous trends, both the current "party of power" (in 2000 it was Unity) and the KPRF claimed victory—many times in the same region due to the fact that victors had overlapping or otherwise unclear party sponsorship. Moreover, of the forty- four governors elected, twenty-nine incumbents were victorious in 2000, twelve Communists were reelected, and seven candidates supported by the Kremlin were elected, slightly less than the eight candidates who won as independents. The remaining successful candidates were ostensibly sponsored by one or several other parties that ran candidates in the 1999 Duma elections.

Again, following earlier trends, winning Communist candidates reportedly maintained very loose ties to their party. Both winning Communist candidates and non-Communists tended to emphasize their loyalty to newly elected President Putin. Indeed, election analysts reported that the only difference between the elections of 2000 and those of 1995-97 was that "during the earlier round of elections all contenders emphasized their independence from the center and the unpopular former President Boris Yeltsin."[44]

In sum, over the past seven years of regional electoral activities, Russian political parties have shown themselves to be particularly ineffective in organizing politics in the provinces. The evidence underscores the fact that it is not just parties on the right that are weakly institutionalized in the Russian provinces. Even leftist parties like the KPRF are far from a commanding presence in provincial politics. Parties—all national parties but even regional parties too—are clearly not viewed as vital vehicles for election to provincial legislatures or executives. Party labels (both regional and national) are either shunned completely or easily exchanged and discarded by provincial politicians: exit over loyalty.

Even where candidates whom national political organizations officially sponsored won elections, the national organization frequently exercised little influence on concrete political activity and policy outcomes at the local level. A study of regional governors by the United States Information Agency, for example, found little correlation between a governor's stated party label and his policy preferences. Furthermore, there is also evidence that in places where the KPRF did well in electing a relatively high number of deputies to regional legislative organs, the party did not have the strength to implement its own policies nor ensure that its people always won top jobs within the legislature.[45]

Given the broader implications for Russian political development, it is important to test various explanations for why the Russian party system has made few inroads into provincial politics.

4. EXPLAINING THE LIMITED REACH OF RUSSIA'S PARTY SYSTEM

It is not unreasonable to question whether it is too early in Russia's political development to assess institutionalization. Undeniably, institutional development and consolidation are best studied over several decades rather than one decade or several years. There have been since 1993, however, three national elections for parliament, two for President, and more than 200 at the regional level. Furthermore, many other post-communist countries have established more institutionalized party systems within roughly the same time frame and in as many electoral periods.[46] Thus, there has been ample opportunity for the Russian party system to make some steps toward institutionalization and indeed seems to be moving toward this on some measures, as section 2 demonstrated. It remains a party system in formation, naturally, but it does seem to be forming in a particular way—without penetration of the periphery.

The vast comparative politics literature on parties and party systems presents a range of explanations for this that can generally be grouped together as institutional, sociocultural, and economic.[47]

Institutional Influences

At the national level in Russia, clearly the introduction of a system of proportional representation has helped to promote the crystallization of a party system.[48] The introduction of a system of proportional representation with a 5-percent minimum requirement has lowered the organizational barrier for parties to be represented in the State Duma. As Table 1 demonstrated, the number of independents gaining representation was lower in both 1995 and 1999 compared with 1993, and parties are integral to the formation of factions and effective participation of individual deputies in the State Duma.

But in provincial Russia, most legislatures have shunned the adoption of proportional representation electoral systems. Indeed, only four regions of eighty-nine (Krasnoiarsk, Kaliningrad, Koriak autonomous okrug, and Ust Ordinsky/ Buriat autonomous okrug) have established a mixed proportional representation and single mandate system (such that some deputies are elected by one system and others are elected by the other system) in unicameral legislatures. Sverdlovsk oblast employs a proportional representation system in one of its two legislative houses and has a majoritarian system in the other house (it is one of a few regions with bicameral legislatures). Saratov oblast used a mixed single mandate and proportional representation system in initial elections to its legislature but reverted to a single mandate system in subsequent elections.

Since electoral rules appear to have some effect on party system institutionalization at the national level, we might expect then that both national and regional parties would make better inroads into the five provincial legislatures where proportional representation electoral systems exist in conjunction with single mandate systems. Because only five of eighty-nine regions have adopted mixed systems for their legislative elections, there is no compelling evidence that this has helped all-Russian parties penetrate provincial politics, but it is worth examining these cases in closer detail to see if electoral rules might hasten party penetration of the provinces.

Table 3 demonstrates that electoral rules do seem to make a difference in the provinces for party penetration. Compared with the national average for the sixty-seven regions in 1995-97 that maintained only a single mandate system, the five regions with mixed proportional representation/single mandate system political parties—both national and regional—made significant inroads into provincial legislatures. Although very few regions have opted for a mixed electoral system, it seems plausible that an extension of mixed proportional representation/ single mandate electoral systems would help to extend the reach of national parties into the periphery.

Table 3
Mixed Electoral Systems and Party Penetration of Regional Legislatures

Oblasts with Mixed PR and SM Electoral Systems	Percentage with All-Russian Party Affiliation	Percentage with Regional Party Affiliation	Percentage with No Party Affiliation
Krasnoiarsk oblast	52.2	29	19.5
Kaliningrad oblast	18.8	15.6	65.6
Sverdlovsk oblast	32.4	41.2	26.5
Koriak autonomous okrug	33.3	11.1	55.6
Ust Ordinsky/Buriat autonomous okrug	15.8	5.3	78.9
Average across five with mixed PR/SM system	30.3	15.2	49.2
Average across all others with SM system only	10.1	4.2	85.4

Source: Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation. Data culled from *Vybory v zakonodatel'nie (predstavitel'nie) organi gosudarstvennoi vlasti sub'ektov rossiiskoi federatsii 1995-1997: elektoral'naia statistika* (Moscow: Isdatel'stvo "Ves' Mir," 1998).
Note: PR = proportional representation; SM = single mandate.

The average percentage of deputies having all-Russian party affiliations across the five regions having a mixed electoral system was three times higher (30.3 percent as opposed to 10.1 percent) than those regions having a single mandate system alone. This small group of regions provides tentative evidence that a mixed electoral system might also promote the development and electoral success of regional political parties. The average number of deputies elected with regional party affiliations across the five mixed system regions was 15.2 percent as opposed to 4.2 percent in the regions with single mandate systems. The number of deputies elected as independents in regional legislatures was significantly lower in mixed electoral systems (49.2 percent) as opposed to 85.4 percent in those regions with majoritarian systems. Clearly, electoral rules make some difference in determining the degree of party penetration in the regions, but strikingly few regions have adopted mixed electoral systems that might promote party development in regional legislatures.

The arguments I present later to explain lack of overall party penetration help also to explain why so many regions have spurned mixed electoral systems and why they are unlikely to be adopted widely in the near future. Furthermore, although the number of deputies having national party affiliations was noticeably higher in regions with mixed electoral systems, almost 65 percent of deputies elected in those regions had either no party affiliations (49.2 percent) or regional party affiliations (15.2 percent). However, while changing electoral institutions to mixed systems might have a positive effect on party institutionalization and penetration in the provinces, electoral rules alone do not appear to be the only impediment to party development at the regional level in Russia.

A second institutional explanation with regard to party development in provincial legislatures is that party development shadows the development of state insti-

Table 4
Breakdown of Party Affiliations by Oblast and Krai, Republic, and Autonomous Region in Legislative and Executive Elections 1995-97

Territorial Delineations	Percentage (average) Deputies with All-Russian Party Affiliations	Percentage (average) Deputies with Local Party Affiliations	Percentage (average) Deputies with No Party Affiliations
Krais, oblasts + Moscow and St. Petersburg	17.0	6.4	76.6
Autonomous okrugs and oblast	5.7	4.3	90.0
Republics	9.9	2.5	87.6

Source: Central Electoral Commission of the Russian Federation, *Vybopry v zakonodatel'nie (predstavitel'nie) organi gosudarstvennoi vlasti sub'ektov rossiiskoi federatsii 1995-1997: elektoral'naia statistika* (Moscow: Ves Mir, 1998).

tutions. Where legislative institutions are weak relative to executives, party development will be weak as a result.[49] Similar arguments have been made regarding the relative strength of the State Duma vis-à-vis the president at the federal level, but in the national legislature, parties are taken seriously and do provide a mechanism for the organization of politics. Finally, and most telling, provincial executives are very powerful and they actively shun joining a party for regional elections, as section 3 demonstrated. Where they do accept all-Russian party sponsorship for their own electoral bids, they tend to shed it quickly once in office.

Beyond these plausible, but apparently incomplete, institutional explanations, ethnocultural variables might better account for weak all-Russian party penetration of the periphery. The Russian Federation, after all, is a multiethnic state that is divided into a complicated and unwieldy three-tier, quasi-federal system with twenty-one non-Russian republics at the top of the pyramid, fifty-five predominantly ethnically Russian *oblasts* and *krais* in the middle with the two special status of St. Petersburg and Moscow, and ten autonomous *okrugs* and one *autonomous oblast*, which are also non-Russian ethnic units. We might expect that where we see strong non-Russian nationalist or ethnic movements, we might see regional party development and some resistance to national party incursion into regional affairs. In republics and the autonomies, particularly where strong nationalist or ethnic claims were advanced through the 1990s, we might expect to see indications of regional ethnically based parties in formation. Conversely, perhaps in ethnically Russian regions (the fifty-five oblasts and krais plus the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg) we would see less active resistance of national political movements and more penetration of all-Russian parties than in nonethnically Russian regions.

As Table 4 demonstrates, at least in the elections held between 1995 and 1997 for regional legislatures (for which the most comprehensive data are available), there is some evidence that candidates running as part of all-Russian parties do slightly better in predominantly ethnically Russian regions (oblasts and krais)

than in the ethnic republics and the autonomies in particular. In the forty-eight oblasts and krais that held legislative elections between 1995 and 1997, on average 17 percent of elected deputies held national political party affiliations as compared with 9.9 percent in the twelve ethnic republics holding similar elections and 5.7 percent in the autonomous areas.

Significantly, however, there is little indication that ethnically based regional parties have picked up the slack in the nonethnically Russian regions. Indeed, deputies with regional party affiliations were marginally more plentiful in ethnically Russian oblasts and krais (with 6.4 percent) than in the autonomies (4.3 percent) or republics in particular (2.5 percent). Moreover, in those places where we might have expected that all-Russian parties might have been beaten out in legislative elections by regional parties with strong ethnic messages, there is little sign of regional party representation in regional legislatures. Although there is some difference among types of territorial units in terms of party penetration, given that even in predominantly ethnically Russian regions, 76.6 percent of deputies carry no party affiliation (neither national nor regional), ethnocultural distinctions alone do not seem to explain satisfactorily a persistent underinstitutionalization of parties in Russia's provinces.

In light of the fact that ethnicity does not appear to make a huge difference in terms of party penetration of the periphery, and given also that in non-Russian ethnic regions even regional parties do not do particularly well as electoral vehicles for legislators, it is worth investigating other, possibly more powerful, explanatory variables for weak party penetration of the periphery more generally. Economic factors, therefore, are a third set of reasonable explanations.

It is important to reiterate that there is not tremendous variation among regions in the degree to which national parties have penetrated provincial politics (recall Table 1, where since 1993 consistently more than 80 percent of provincial deputies are independents). Still, it is worth exploring to what degree the relative wealth of a region might influence party penetration. We might expect that in wealthier regions, national and regional political parties might have made more inroads into political life. This is because higher relative wealth might have created higher living standards, and more social differentiation such that interests might become more diverse, requiring formalized political representation in the form of parties.[50]

The previous empirical sections of this article indicate that in poorer agricultural regions, the KPRF tends to do better than other parties. (For example, Belgorod, Kursk, Penza, Riazan, Kemerovo, Kirov, Kaluga, Volgograd, Briansk, and Stavropol all have 60 percent or fewer deputies elected as independents and the highest number of deputies backed by the KPRF.) Conversely, in wealthy industrial regions (particularly those rich in natural resources like oil, gas, diamonds, etc.) there tends to be less party penetration, both national and regional, into provincial politics.

This is particularly evident in many of the twenty-one republics of Russia and may help to explain the small amount of variation we observed above between republics and oblasts in degree of national party penetration. In the majority of the republics holding legislative elections between 1995 and 1997, more than 90 percent of deputies were elected to republican legislatures as independents. In the three wealthiest and most politically powerful territories of Russia, the republics of Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, and Yakutia, 90.0 percent, 98.9 percent, and 92.5 percent, respectively, of deputies were elected as independents—having neither a national nor a regional party identification. Similarly, in Khantii-Mansi and Yamalo Nenets autonomous okrugs—Russia's main oil and gas extractive regions—95.2 percent and 100 percent of deputies, respectively, were elected as independents (driving up the number of independents in the average for the autonomies in Table 4).

At the oblast level, it is likely no accident that some of Russia's richer regions (in terms of natural resource wealth and industrial output and investment activity) also lag in terms of party development. In Tiumen's oblast, the heart of Russia's oil and gas sectors, for example, 96.0 percent of deputies won office as independents. Similarly, in industrially powerful Samara, 92 percent were elected with neither national nor regional party affiliations. In Novgorod oblast, renowned for its ability to attract foreign investment relative to other regions of Russia, 100 percent of deputies were elected as independents.[51]

Tentatively, there appears to be a weak negative correlation between party development and all-Russian party penetration and relative wealth of a region. However, given that party penetration and development is universally weak across Russia and variation among the vast majority of regions is not great, there is a related but more compelling argument than relative wealth or investment potential regarding why parties have failed consistently to penetrate the Russian periphery.

An Equilibrium of Underinstitutionalization

This explanation is more closely related to the simultaneity of Russia's attempt to build proto-democratic institutions and its efforts to assemble the building blocks of a market economy. That is, although both national and regional political parties are weakly institutionalized in provincial Russia, there *are* organized local interests that are deeply involved in regional politics. There is an organizational principle in Russian provincial politics that is outside the scope of organized, formalized political parties. The partial transition equilibrium of the economy has created entrenched interests in the provinces who see little benefit in joining national parties or even in formalizing their particularistic interests as parties.

Local elites (political actors in both legislatures and executives as well as regional economic elites) see little to gain but much to lose in joining national parties, because at this stage of the post-Soviet transition from plan to market, the

establishment of strong political institutions, like parties, constrains their freedom to extract rents and amass greater wealth. That is, local political and economic elites derive more benefit from relying on old networks than forming new institutions, the cost of which is high—especially ones that might constrain their freedom to make decisions for private rather than public good. Those in control of financial resources that might help with party building are not interested in constructing organizations that might enable the national state to introduce curbs on their own avenues of direct influence and authority over regional political affairs. Powerful economic interests have little interest in building political institutions like political parties that might constrain their freedom of access or expand their political accountability to wider societal interests.

Further support for the influence of partial reform equilibrium on political and economic behavior in transitional economies comes from other Eastern European cases. Joel Hellman argues that contrary to dominant perspectives in the political economy of transitions literature, opposition to continued reform in the post-communist world often comes not from the short-term losers in the reform process but from short-term winners,

> from enterprise insiders who have become new owners only to strip their firms' assets; from commercial bankers who have opposed macroeconomic stabilization to preserve their enormously profitable arbitrage opportunities in distorted financial markets; from local officials who have prevented market entry into their regions to protect their share of local monopoly rents; and from so-called mafiosi who have undermined the creation of a stable legal foundation for the market economy.[52]

Thus, Hellman argues, those who benefit most from the initial phases of the economic transition prefer to freeze the progress of market construction at some partially transformed stage so as to maximize the benefits they accrue and rents they amass.

This finding has important implications for other areas of the transition. The underinstitutionalization of Russia's party system in the periphery indicates that a similar partial reform equilibrium may be hindering *political* institutional development. In particular, with respect to the construction of parties, short-term winners have little interest in constructing political institutions that can broaden participation in public life and thus possibly regulate and restrict their activities or access to rents, property, and other transitional economic opportunities. By conscientiously ignoring the task of political institution building, and especially by keeping political parties weak, short-term winners ensure that the broader spectrum of losers from the transition in society more generally have limited avenues through which to express their discontent.

In this dual transitional context, the benefits that the institutionalization of parties might provide in other developing contexts are not highly prized. Rather, local elites prefer to particularize power rather than even narrowly institutionalize it through parties that might force them to share more broadly their early transitional

winnings. Thus, short-term winners can continue to extract rents and acquire property with the aid of political actors whose support they have effectively purchased and without fear of institutional oversight or wider public accountability.

Moreover, there is, then, at the regional level in Russia, a universal urge to conserve and protect what has already been gained through partial reform. In those regions that have gained a little more than others, in those that had more to gain from the beginning, this general urge appears to be even stronger. This might account, therefore, for the slightly weaker party penetration we observed in wealthier regions than in poorer ones. It might also account for the general propensity of regional elites to prefer single mandate to proportional representation electoral systems. Since regional elites do not want parties interfering in politics in the periphery, they are likely to avoid any change in the electoral system that might promote party system formation and the reach of national parties into provincial politics.

The construction of competitive national political parties that more broadly incorporated winners and losers would work against the interests of short-term winners. As Hellman notes, "political inclusion can act as a restraint on winners, undermining their capacity to hold the economy in partial reform equilibrium."[53] Political inclusion through the institutionalization of parties in regional parliaments would also undermine the capacity of early reform winners to hold political institutional development in partial reform equilibrium. Thus, not only do short-term winners work to stunt further economic change that might threaten their early gains from the transition, the evidence here indicates that they also work to stunt further political institutionalization that might similarly threaten to curtail their winnings from partial economic reform. It follows then that promoting strong, competitive parties that would broaden the accountability of political actors in the periphery to wider societal interests is not likely to be a high priority for the newly emerging economic elite nor for the protectors of older economic interests in Russia in the near term. Instead, they work to maintain an equilibrium of political underinstitutionalization.[54] Their rationally preferred outcome is to actively avoid further political institutionalization in order to protect the gains they have made thus far in the dual transition and to avoid the construction of institutions that might prevent them from gaining more in future.

The strategies that regional economic and political elites in the provinces employ to maintain an equilibrium of underinstitutionalization of political parties are many. First and foremost, regional political leaders control the rules of electoral competition—for the most part choosing single mandate over mixed single mandate/proportional representation systems. Second, through regional and republican constitutions and the legal control they exercise over the appointment of respective electoral commissions, they can effectively control candidate registration requirements (including age, language, and residency requirements).[55] Third, they often control the local electronic and print media such that they can greatly

influence the ways in which candidates are presented to and perceived by voters. Fourth, through their often overlapping ties with local economic elites, political elites possess independent and often significant financial means to run regional elections.[56] Using these and other mechanisms, regional governors in particular more often than not actively oppose the incursion of political parties—regional or national—into provincial politics. Governor Mikhail Prusak of Novgorod for example (a region where 100 percent of deputies in the legislature are listed as independents by the Central Electoral Commission) has publicly acknowledged that he actively opposes political parties in his region because "parties cause problems. Instead, I call our legislature the party of business."[57]

Further evidence of the influence and overlap of particularistic regional economic interests on provincial politics comes from a close look at who sits in regional legislatures. In 1997, the Central Electoral Commission reported that

> in practically all legislative organs of the subjects of the Federation it is possible to meet leaders of strong enterprises and commercial structures of the region. In the Republic of Sakha (Iakutia) it is the leaders of diamond and gold enterprises, in the Republics of Komi and Tatarstan and Tiumen and Sakhalin oblasts it is oil companies. In Cheliabinsk oblast it is metallurgical factories, and in Murmansk oblast, it is the Kol'skii Nuclear Power Station.

Further, of the 2,777 "active" deputies elected between 1995 and 1997, approximately 35 percent (944) came from the "productive" (industrial) sphere, and an additional 30 percent (850) came from the "nonproductive" (commercial) sphere.[58] This results in the "strengthening of the influence of economic lobbyists on the economic policies of subjects of the Russian Federation. Aside from this is the threat of confrontation of the regional elite with the federal center in constructing the interests of the regions."[59]

In the absence of competitive national political parties able to capture, incorporate, and neutralize particularistic provincial interests, highly fluid patron-client relationships dominate the landscape of Russian center-periphery relations and also politics within the provinces. Ruling elites prefer not to institutionalize these relationships into parties (even single, monopolistic parties) to avoid even a low level of accountability to an institution as opposed to a more narrow group of clientelistic interests. That is, political parties by their very nature would introduce a level of accountability to a wider sphere of interests that directly collides with the rationally preferred outcome of political underinstitutionalization of early transitional winners at the provincial level. They therefore shun party development and actively work to maintain an equilibrium of underinstitutionalization.

5. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

When we think about what it is that institutionalized competitive party systems do in democracies, the implications of Russia's equilibrium of underinstitutionalization are cause for concern. Parties are supposed to aggregate interests as they

integrate disparate parts of the polity. They help to convey electoral success into concrete policy accomplishments and provide accountability and representation to a wide swath of society. Yet in the Russian case, because the national party system in particular does not penetrate provincial politics, few of the potential gains party systems can provide are present.

The territorial underinstitutionalization of a party system has important consequences not only, therefore, for democratic consolidation and the growth of political pluralism but also for national integration and central state capacity. With regard to the effect of underinstitutionalization on political pluralism, without the establishment and further development of regional and national political parties in the Russian provinces, emergent political interests will go underrepresented in provincial political institutions. Regional politics will be dominated by particularistic, clientelistic concerns.

This, in turn, has important negative implications for state integration. While having a poorly institutionalized party system in the periphery does not, in itself, pose a direct threat to Russia's territorial integrity, it does contribute to a growing problem of vertical integration of the Russian state.[60] In the absence of strong national political parties, central political actors must compete for the loyalty of regional governors with local economic interests possessing rival political agendas and autonomous economic resources. As damaging is the fact that even if the central government could buy off regional political leaders strategically in return for their support on key policies, patronage of this sort is a less predictable and more costly mode of linkage especially as the center runs out of money and favors to distribute. Clientelistic ties that result from a weakly institutionalized party system will ensure the subordination of public interest to private interests at the regional and national levels of the state.

If regional political actors feel no loyalty to a national party for their election to office, then bargaining costs over policy will be high for the center in its dealings with the periphery. Since political parties are not a viable means by which to reduce such costs, provincial political loyalties to central political authority will be weak, fleeting, and highly personalistic. Clientelism, rather than institutionalization, encourages further rent seeking and ensures continued corruption in government. It is, therefore, hardly a firm foundation on which to build a state capable of sustaining any degree of socioeconomic development.[61]

The weakness of all-Russian parties in the provinces will also contribute to a continued inability to implement policy evenly across the Russian Federation.[62] Low institutionalization of center-periphery linkages perpetuates the vicious cycle that pervades other developmental contexts. In particular, without cohesive political parties, the tendency toward personalistic rule in both Moscow and the provinces "is difficult to translate . . . into the political ability to accomplish policy goals. Policy failures, in turn, tend to undermine popular support. The strategies for winning power thus come to be even further removed from solving develop-

mental problems."[63] That is, without strong parties in a competitive party system to support their electoral efforts and help implement policies, political leaders will tend to back away from making tough decisions that might improve Russia's deeply troubled economy in order to win elections.

The result for Russia in the near term is likely to be a chronic cycle of weak institutions as public officials lacking autonomy from emergent financial interests and, lacking the benefit of coherent, linking, national institutions, continue to subordinate their public service role to exogenous interests. The state becomes weaker as a result, as it is hijacked for personal gain. In an equilibrium of political underinstitutionalization, therefore, low state capacity is pervasive.

The more general comparative lesson of the territorial underinstitutionalization of Russian political parties is that we should expect resistance to political institutionalization during dual transitions. That is, this case demonstrates that there is not necessarily an inexorable march toward political institutionalization. This defies the expectations of some theories but tends to confirm the experiences of other party systems in third-world democracies.[64] Robert Moser, for example, expected in Russia that "the direct election of regional and local executives should introduce party competition to this level of government and gradually erode the non partisanship of regional executives."[65] There is, however, no evidence that this is happening. The theory expounded here also questions the assumption of Angelo Panebianco, for example, that penetration or diffusion of national parties at the regional level is inevitable.[66] Finally, this case questions the assumption of John Aldrich and others that rational politicians will opt for the stability and predictability that political parties provide.[67] Instead, the findings here indicate that stalled development of the party system in the Russian provinces is a more likely outcome than further institutionalization, at least in the near term. The fact that Russia's party system has moved toward institutionalization in other ways over the past seven to eight years suggests that the lack of party penetration in regional politics may be a more enduring feature.

This is not to argue, however, that this situation will necessarily persist beyond what is presumably still an early stage of Russia's transition process.[68] Rather, an equilibrium of political underinstitutionalization such as this is due to the very nature of dual, simultaneous economic and political changes. These dual processes are not mutually supportive necessarily. Economic transition from plan to market does not necessarily portend political development and the institutionalization of democracy. On the contrary, the elite preferences that Hellman uncovered for a partial reform equilibrium in the economy are supported by their preferences for a partial reform equilibrium in political institutionalization. Not only do short-term winners prefer a stalled transitional equilibrium in the economy but they preserve their early winnings by forestalling the development of competitive political institutions like political parties and a competitive party system that might render them more widely accountable to other societal interests. In

sum, short-term winners in dual transitions really do "take all" economically but also politically in exercising their preferences for an equilibrium of political underinstitutionalization.

NOTES

1. Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968), 23.

2. Ibid., 36.

3. William Riker, *Federalism: Origins, Operations, Significance* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1964), 93-96.

4. Ibid., 96.

5. Martin Shefter, *Political Parties and the State: The American Historical Experience* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 16.

6. Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, "Central Weakness and Provincial Autonomy: Observations on the Devolution Process in Russia," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 15, no. 1 (January 1999). See also Daniel Treisman, *After the Deluge: Regional Crises and Political Consolidation in Russia* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).

7. Treisman, *After the Deluge*.

8. See, for example, Steven Fish, "The Advent of Multi-Partism in Russia, 1993-1995," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 11, no. 4 (October-December 1995); Robert Moser, "Independents and Party Formation: Elite Partisanship as an Intervening Variable in Russian Politics," *Comparative Politics* (January 1999): 147-62; Herbert Kitschelt, "Formation of Party Cleavages in Post-Communist Democracies: Theoretical Propositions," *Party Politics* 1, no. 4; 447-72; Herbert Kitschelt, "The Formation of Party Systems in East Central Europe," *Politics & Society* 20, no. 1 (March 1992): 7-50; Thomas Remington, "Political Conflict and Institutional Design: Paths of Party Development in Russia," *Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 14, nos. 1 and 2 (March/June 1998): 201-23; Thomas Remington and Steven Smith, "Theories of Legislative Institutions and the Organization of the Russian Duma," *American Journal of Political Science* 42, no. 2 (April 1998): 545-72; Thomas Remington, Moshe Haspel, and Steven Smith, "Electoral Institutions and Party Cohesion in the Russian Duma," *Journal of Politics* 60, no. 2 (May 1998): 417-39.

9. Joel S. Hellman, "Winners Take All: The Politics of Partial Reform in Post-Communist Transitions," *World Politics* 50, no. 2 (January 1998): 203-32.

10. Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968), 12.

11. Scott Mainwaring, *Rethinking Party Systems in the Third Wave of Democratization: The Case of Brazil* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 22-23.

12. Ibid., 22. See also Kitschelt "Formation of Party Cleavages," 448 for criticisms of Stein and Rokkan in particular on the saliencey of social cleavages in party system formation in non-European contexts.

13. Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully, eds., *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 1995), 5.

14. Note that in the 1999 Duma elections, the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) initially failed some registration requirements and Zhirinovsky reregistered the party under the name "Zhirinovsky's Bloc" although Zhirinovsky referred to the bloc as the LDPR throughout the election and its candidate list was virtually identical to the LDPR's originally submitted list. The Bloc should therefore be considered to be the LDPR in form if not in name.

15. Rose, White, and McAllister, *How Russia Votes* (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House Publishers, 1997), 138.

16. Timothy J. Colton, *Transitional Citizens: Voters and Elections in Post-Soviet Russia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000) 150.

17. See Arthur Miller, William Reisinger, and Vicki Hesli, "Leader Popularity and Party Development in Post-Soviet Russia," in Matthew Wyman, Stephen White, and Sarah Oates, eds., *Elections and Voters in Post-Communist Russia* (London: Edward Elgar, 1998); Ted Brager and Joshua Tucker, "The Emergence of Mass Partisanship in Russia, 1993-6," *American Journal of Political Science* 45, no. 1 (Winter 2001).

18. Colton, *Transitional Citizens*, 166.

19. Ibid., 151.

20. This makes the Communist Party of the Russian Federation's (KPRF) lack of success in provincial elections even more puzzling. See section 3.

21. Moser, "Independents and Party Formation," 147.

22. See, for example, Adam Przeworski, "Institutionalization of Voting Patterns or Is Mobilization the Source of Decay?" *American Political Science Review* 69, (March 1975): 49-67; John Aldrich, *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995).

23. Remington and Smith, "Theories of Legislative Institutions," 545-72.

24. Final results for those regional elections held in early 2001 were not available for analysis at the time of final submission of this article to *Politics & Society.* Preliminary results for gubernatorial elections held in 2000 are included anecdotally in the section titled Regional Executive Elections.

25. This figure does not include elections to municipal governments in which parties also could have participated.

26. Darrell Slider, "Elections to Russia's Regional Assemblies," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 12, no. 3 1996: 261.

27. Central Electoral Commission of the Russian Federation, *Vyboryi v zakonodatel'nie organi fosudarstvennoi vlasti sub'ektov Rossiiskoi Federatsii 1995-1997* (Moscow: Tsentral'naia Izbieratel'naia Kommissiia, 1998), 584.

28. Ibid., 635.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid., 637.

31. See Vladimir Kozlov, "Vybory v Regionakh," in Nikolai Petrov, ed., *Regioni Rossii v 1998: Ezhegodnoe Prilozhenie k Politicheskomy al'manachy Rossii* (Moscow: Carnegie Center, 1999), 156-66.

32. For example, Marc Zlotnik, "Russia's Governors: All the President's Men?" *Problems of Post-Communism* 43, no. 6 1996: 26-34; Steven L. Solnick, "The 1996-97 Gubernatorial Elections in Russia: Outcomes and Implications," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 14, no. 1 (January-March 1998); and Jeffrey W. Hahn, "Regional Elections and Political Stability in Russia," *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics* 38, no. 5 (1997): 251-63.

33. Michael McFaul and Nikolai Petrov, "Russian Electoral Politics after Transition: Regional and National Assessments," *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics* 38, no. 9 (November 1997): 533.

34. "All Sides Claim Victory in the 1996 Gubernatorial Elections," *Institute for East-West Studies, Russian Regional Report* 2, no. 1 (8 January 1997).

35. McFaul and Petrov, "Russian Electoral Politics after Transition," 545.

36. Solnick, "The 1996-97 Gubernatorial Elections in Russia," 10.

37. Akimov interview.

38. McFaul and Petrov, "Russian Electoral Politics after Transition," 533.

39. Ibid., 542.

40. Solnick, "The 1996-97 Gubernatorial Elections in Russia," 18.

41. Kozlov, "Vybory v Regionakh," 156-66.

42. Results of the 1999 gubernatorial elections are available on the website of the Central Electoral Commission of Russia (http://www.fci.ru/elections/default.htm). The results provided there were supplemented by the online version of the *Russian Regional Report* 4, no. 33 (2 September 1999; New York: East West Institute) regarding Sverdlovsk's election.

43. This quotation and other preliminary information on the 2000 gubernatorial elections comes from Julie S. Corwin, "Endnote: The Incumbency Advantage," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Russian Federation Report* 3, no. 1 (3 January 2001).

44. Corwin, "Endnote."

45. See Deborah Javeline, "Does It Matter Who Governs? Political Parties and Leadership Behavior in Russia's Regions" (paper delivered to the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, 31 August-3 September 1998). For information regarding the KPRF's electoral results, see Kozlov, "Vybory v Regionakh," 162.

46. Herbert Kitschelt et al., *Post-Communist Party Systems: Competition, Representation, and Inter-Party Cooperation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

47. See, for example, Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross National Perspectives* (New York: Free Press, 1965); Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State* (London: Metheun, 1954).

48. Robert G. Moser, "The Impact of the Electoral System on Post-Communist Party Development: The Case of the 1993 Parliamentary Elections," *Electoral Studies* 14, (1995).

49. Fish, "The Advent of Multi-Partism."

50. Lipset and Rokkan, *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*.

51. *Vybopry.*

52. Hellman, "Winners Take All," 204.

53. Ibid., 232.

54. Anecdotal evidence that party development in particular is undesirable in provincial politics comes from Governor Prusak of Novgorod who reported on a trip the United States that in his legislature there were no political parties since "parties cause problems." Instead he said, in Novgorod where 100 percent of deputies were elected as independents, the legislature is known as the "party of business." See Stoner-Weiss, "Central Weakness and Provincial Autonomy."

55. See as two examples the requirements for the election of the President of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan in their respective constitutions. For evidence of the extent of regional control over respective electoral commissions, see, for example, "Veshnyakov Wants Greater Control over Regional Electoral Commissions," in the electronic version of *Russian Regional Report* 5, no. 47 (20 December 2000; New York: East West Institute).

56. Myriad examples of the use of such tactics abound throughout all three major regional electoral periods (1993-94, 1995-97, 1999-2000). Recent examples of blatant and typical regional media manipulation as well as a quick change in electoral requirements to benefit the incumbent governor include the behavior of the Pskov legislature and the reelected governor of Pskov, Yevgeny Mikhailov. See "Pskov Incumbent Re-Elected by a Narrow Margin," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Russian Federation Report*, no. 40 (1 November 2000). Another example of a common method of media manipulation can be found in "Tver Inspector Defends Anti-Government Paper," *Russian Regional Report* 5, no. 47 (20 December 2000; New York: East West Institute) (electronic version).

57. Prusak's comments in a 3 March 1998 meeting are cited in Stoner-Weiss, "Central Weakness and Provincial Autonomy."

58. *Vybopry*, 636.

59. Ibid., 637.

60. Stoner-Weiss, "Central Weakness and Provincial Autonomy."

61. See Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, especially p. 31, and Atul Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 198 for more on the relationship between patronage and reduced state authority.

62. Stoner-Weiss, "Central Weakness and Provincial Autonomy."

63. Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent*, 386.

64. Cf. Mainwaring, *Rethinking Party Systems*.

65. Moser, "Independents and Party Formation," 162.

66. Angelo Panebianco, *Political Parties: Organization and Power* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

67. Aldrich, *Why Parties?*

68. Should, for example, property rights become more firmly established, it is possible that political institutionalization would become desirable to those who benefited most during the initial transitional phase. At this point, it may well be advantageous for these short-term winners to opt to protect their winnings by institutionalizing to their advantage. There is no evidence, however, that this time has come yet in Russia.