

**CERC WORKING  
PAPERS SERIES**

**No. 3 / 2002**

**Axel Hadenius**

**THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF  
POLITICAL  
PARTIES:**

**Russia in Perspective**



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**ISSN 1447-0071**

*Published by the Contemporary Europe Research Centre in December 2002.*

According to an oft-quoted statement by E. E. Schattschneider, "modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties" (1942: 1). As an empirical generalisation, this statement is largely true. In the modern world, fairly well-functioning democratic systems without political parties can indeed be found – in a number of island states (Anckar 1997). But these are exceptions, and a result of extremely small scale. In all states of any significant size (with respect to population and territory), democracy is associated with the existence of parties.

There is a simple reason for this. Democracy needs to take the form of representative democracy, wherein elected representatives make decisions on behalf of the citizenry. Other forms of decision-making, such as referenda, can be applied as well – but these can only function as a complement to the representative-electoral process (Kitschelt et al. 1999: 5). Electoral competition normally yields a strong incentive for candidates to form parties, or to join parties if such already exist. Parties offer a number of services which are critical for winning elections. By joining forces under a common label, groups of politicians can establish a political "brand name" which is easily recognised among voters. Moreover, parties can offer organisational, economic, and professional resources which are difficult to muster on an individual basis. They furnish candidates with a useful political label; they lower transaction costs for entering the political arena; and, due to the economies of scale they provide, they lower campaigning and other costs (Aldrich 1995; Kitschelt 2000; Snyder and Ting 2001).

It is no wonder, then, that parties normally exist in democracies. Yet it is one thing to say that parties exist; ascertaining how they actually function is another. Parties operate differently in different democracies. In some, they are the major actors on the political scene; in others, their role is more marginal. Conditions also vary with respect to party cohesion, party

organisation, and other aspects of party life. Does such variation matter?

Are democracy's fortunes affected, for example, if parties are strongly organised and highly influential - or if they are weakly structured and politically insignificant? In the modern literature on political parties, it is often held that well-developed parties are prerequisite to the maintenance of democratic government. Party "institutionalisation" (an oft-used catchword) is seen as a condition for democratic consolidation (Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Mainwaring 1998, Diamond 1999; Miller et al. 1999; Bielasiak 2001; Randell and Svåsand 2002). To my knowledge, however, there is no evidence to support this claim. The link between party development and the survival of democracy, it seems, is mainly taken for granted. There may of course be some sort of connection, but this remains to be demonstrated. It is an overstatement, in other words, to say that the existence of democracy hinges on the development of a certain type of political party.

So does the character of political parties really matter for democracy's fortunes? Quite obviously it does. It is not, however, the *survival* of democracy that appears to be the key question. Rather, it is the *nature and quality* of democracy that should be our prime concern. The way parties function affects the way the democratic system works. American parties, for example, diverge from their West European counterparts in several ways. This difference is one important reason for the well-known contrasts in political life between the two sides of the Atlantic (see, e.g., Epstein 1981).

## **I: The Elusive Concept Of Party Institutionalisation**

As noted above, it is common to speak of "party institutionalisation" in connection with the degree of party

development. The expression comes from the work of Samuel Huntington. In his influential book *Political Order in Changing Societies* (1968) Huntington points to the institutionalisation of political parties as a core condition for political stability in complex societies. What then is institutionalisation? According to Huntington, it "is a process by which organisations and procedures acquire *value* and *stability*" (p. 12, emphasis added). Among later researchers, Angelo Panebianco in particular has continued this line of thinking about political parties. Like Huntington, Panebianco (1988) talks about institutionalisation in two ways. On the one hand, he says, it involves certain values associated with an organisation (p. 53). In an institutionalised party, attachment to the party is more than just a matter of applying a means to an end (i.e., to find an instrument to promote certain interests). The party and what it symbolises has become a value in itself among its members and followers. In effect, the party builds up a reservoir of support based on affection and loyalty. On the other hand, Panebianco considers party institutionalisation an indicator of endurance: it denotes "the way the organisation solidifies" (p. 49). This aspect of institutionalisation, then, bears on the question of party stability.

This way of connecting the stability of a party organisation and the evolution of certain values associated with it can be traced back to the so-called institutionalist view championed by Philip Selznick (1957) who claims institutionalisation signifies a kind of organisational development which infuses the unit in question with value. This means that the organisation has acquired meaning as a way of life for its members and supporters. It is value-infusion that permits an organisation to endure. Thus there is, in Selznick's view, a causal relationship between the two components: value-infusion breeds organisational stability.

The clarity about the character of the relationship (of a causal nature) which is evident in Selznick, is however lacking in

Huntington and Panebianco. These two scholars use the two components as dual *definitions* of party institutionalisation. This ambiguity persists in the work of many of their recent followers, such as Mainwaring and Scully (1995) and Randell and Svåsand (2002). These authors suggest a number of different criteria for party institutionalisation. Some of these criteria are largely common-sense in nature; others are extremely vague (as in the case of Randell and Svåsand in particular). Their basic meaning is largely enshrouded in conceptual and methodological fog. Should these criteria be seen as definitions of party institutionalisation? Or are they causal conditions (or consequences) of such institutionalisation?<sup>1</sup> The reasoning, furthermore, is almost tautological at times. Mainwaring, for example, mentions a connection between institutionalisation and party age (1999: 31). Institutionalised parties are likely to have a longer organisational existence behind them. Before reaching this conclusion, however, Mainwaring has already defined institutionalised parties as those which enjoy considerable stability (1999: 26; see also Huntington, 1968).

## **II: An Alternative Approach**

As I see it, this way of addressing the problem of party development is a dead end.<sup>2</sup> On the one hand, the basic concept – that of party institutionalisation – is too vague; on the other, it is too limited. Its inherent ambiguity has been demonstrated above. Yet this ambiguity could of course be straightened out: we could simply decide to return to Selznick's approach. We would then focus on party stability, while value-infusion would be considered a possible explanatory factor. Yet this, in turn, would be too limited an approach. For it is not just the continued existence of parties that interests us when we set out to ascertain the strength and

political significance of parties. (Parties can perfectly well be old and yet weak in certain respects: the extraordinary stability of American parties – notwithstanding their organisational fragility – illustrates the point). It is this basic understanding, I assume, that has motivated Mainwaring and Scully (and others too) to lump together a broad range of characteristics under the party-institutionalisation umbrella – which has further added to the vagueness of the concept.

We need, I think, a more general and less confusing concept as our starting point. In the analysis which follows, I will speak broadly of *party development* in various areas (most of which bear on the question of party strength). Taking my cue from the work of V. O. Key (1964), I will consider development in three fields: (1) party in government; (2) party in the citizenry; and (3) party as organisation.<sup>3</sup>

However, party development (or party strength) cannot be determined out of thin air. Some point of reference is necessary. The most interesting point of reference, as I see it, is democracy – namely, how party development affects the functioning of democracy.

Huntington's concern, as we saw, was with the preservation of the existing political order. He had no specific preference for democracy as such. His interest in the maintenance of political order included all kinds of political systems – even plainly authoritarian ones. Panebianco, for his part, does not discuss party development with reference to democracy either. Taking his inspiration from organisational theory, he focuses chiefly on the internal life of parties, while party stability – in itself – appears to be his overriding objective. More recent researchers have followed in Huntington's tracks, but have been oriented more explicitly to the question of democratic stability (i.e., how it is contingent – presumably – on the development of political parties). As noted

above, however, this connection has not yet been theoretically specified and empirically verified. Until that has been done, it is premature to argue that party development (in one respect or the other) facilitates the preservation of democracy.

We do know, however, that the organisation and behaviour of parties can affect the nature and quality of democracy. To evaluate the development of parties, therefore, we need certain normative democratic criteria to serve as our point of reference.

This may appear to be pointless. We all know, after all, that several normative theories of democracy are available in the academic marketplace. Which criteria shall we choose? Is this essentially an arbitrary choice? It is not, I would argue in the case of political parties. The fundamental rationale for political parties is to serve as vehicles of political representation. Parties are the instrument by which citizens delegate authority to the men and women who exercise the power of public decision-making. Hence, representation – that is, responsiveness to the views and interests of citizens – stands out as the most relevant criterion. Of course, other democratic values, such as participation or deliberation, might be thought applicable here as well. Where the latter criteria are concerned, however, the natural focal point is by no means political parties. Participation and deliberation, it could be said, are better served by other means than through parties. I would contend that, in the case of democratic representation, political parties serve as a vital prerequisite.<sup>4</sup> This may be illustrated by a closer look at the logic of representation.

Democratic representation entails the delegation of political authority. All forms of delegation, in turn, present a principal/agent dilemma. The challenge faced by the principal turns on his/her ability to steer the actions of the agent (and thus to guarantee proper representation by the latter). In general terms, there are three difficulties here. One is to find an agent with the requisite

personal qualifications – both morally and in respect of competence (the agent, after all, could turn out to be a complete failure or a crook). Moreover, even if this problem is not present, two other difficulties remain. Asymmetry in preferences and in information between the principal and the agent may impel the latter to act in a manner unrepresentative of the interests of the former. Accordingly, the more the principal knows about the personal qualities and preferences of the agent, and the more the agent shares information with the principal, the better equipped is the principal to select a suitable agent, and to hold him or her accountable (Moe 1984; Strom 2000).

In political life, it is parties which have supplied the answer to the principal/agent dilemma. Parties offer the voters a choice among different policy packages. Herein, of course, lies a limitation: there are, normally, only a restricted number of policy packages from which to choose (only certain parties, namely, stand a chance of being elected). Still, the existence of parties makes the voter's choice easier and more reliable. It increases the ability of the principal (i.e., the voter) to find an agent who holds similar preferences, and who is able – by means of concerted action with fellow party representatives in decision-making bodies – to act effectively in support of such preferences. Coherent parties offering relatively distinct policy alternatives make it easier for the voters to find a policy platform according with their own political agenda, and to hold their chosen agents accountable (through upcoming elections). The risk of preference-asymmetry can thus be reduced.

Where the screening of candidates' personal attributes is concerned, parties normally have an interest in being able to project a clean and professional image; accordingly, they tend to apply codes of behaviour whereby individuals who do not meet certain standards find their career ambitions thwarted. In addition, parties serve as channels of information on policy matters, both during and

between elections, as they may have an interest in (and resources for) explaining their position on current questions to their followers.

It is generally to the advantage of voters, then, if the party system is basically stable. This follows from the fact that it takes time to build up a political reputation. A history of policy stands and voting records is required; it is only thus that voters can be furnished with the information requisite to making a well-informed choice. By contrast, a fluid party system – wherein parties quickly come and go – increases the likelihood of preference-asymmetry (Mainwaring 1998; Rose et al. 2001). A longer record also makes it easier for voters to make a valid judgment of the personal qualities of candidates, as well as of the accuracy of information provided by parties. Besides, it takes time to set up appropriate procedures for internal screening and information exchange.

### **III: Criteria Of Party Development**

Using a three-fold typology drawn largely from the work of V. O. Key, we can distinguish a number of criteria that seem relevant in regard to political representation:

Party in Government. The question here is the extent to which parties serve as agents of representation in the organs of public decision-making. In well-developed party systems, the following conditions apply:

1. Persons tied to political parties *dominate all representative organs* – both parliamentary and executive, and at both national and regional levels (Rose et al. 2001). This is not to say representatives at the regional level must be attached to national parties; regional parties can exist as well. However, a weak presence of national parties at the regional level often indicates a weakly developed party network out in the country. Such weakness

may undermine the capacity of the party in question to act vigorously on the national level.

2. Parties operate *as unitary actors* in representative organs. They form stable party blocks whose members act in concert. There should be no floor-crossing among the deputies – no constant movement between party blocks. Nor should the votes of individual representatives diverge on important political issues from the party line. In other words, the parties must be able to control the behaviour of their representatives (Keiwiet and McCubbins 1991). This presupposes a frequent and effective use of the party whip. The advantage of such practices, from the standpoint of representation, is that unitary parties can more easily be held accountable (Strom 1990).

Party in the Citizenry. The question here concerns the relationship between parties and the citizens. Three aspects will be observed: the stability of parties, party attachment among citizens, and the coherence of party support.

1. As we saw, a high degree of *party-system stability* enhances voters' ability to choose rationally among parties, using political platform and past performance as a guide. Stability manifests itself in the magnitude of change between elections.<sup>5</sup> This can be measured in two ways. One is by counting the number and proportion of parties that appear and disappear in elections (Rose et al. 2001).<sup>6</sup> Another is by noting the level of volatility – i.e., the overall change in electoral outcome for different parties from one election to another. This is normally expressed in an index ranging from 0 to 1 – with the former extreme indicating no change at all, and the latter indicating total change (Pedersen 1979). A stable party system, accordingly, exhibits a high degree of “frozenness” (c.f. Lipset and Rokkan 1966), together with a low magnitude of change (volatility) in elections.

2. Stability in the party system presupposes stable patterns of voting – that many people vote for the same party in election after election. Such patterns of voting, in turn, presuppose a high degree of *attachment between parties and citizens*. Attachment of this kind is usually assessed by measuring party identity – a method which taps the mass basis of party support. Studies of party identity seek to measure the proportion of citizens who regard themselves as supporters of a given party (Weisberg 1999). Another way of assessing party attachment is to investigate the magnitude of split voting. If voters select different parties in different elections, this is a token of weak ties between parties and citizens (Aldrich 1995).

3. If effective representation is to be achieved, it is desirable that people of the same “sort” – in respect of demographic characteristics or policy orientation – cast their vote for the same party. This way, parties can serve as a channel for certain interests and policy demands in society (Kitschelt 2000). If this is the case, we can expect those who vote for party A to be different from those who vote for parties B and C. This is a matter of *electoral coherence*. People of similar background are able to join forces behind the same party. Their votes, accordingly, are not arbitrary – and the parties can offer a real choice.

Party as Organisation. A party apparatus is a means for gaining recognition and support (Panebianco 1988). A developed organisation provides resources that encourage electoral coherence, party attachment, and party stability. In addition, it can enhance party dominance and party unity in representative organs. However, access to vital resources can also create a troublesome dependence on the external interests providing such resources. From a representation standpoint, moreover, the mode of decision-

making – i.e., the incidence of internal democracy – should be considered as well.

1. Where *party resources* are concerned, a number of parameters play a role. It is normally an important asset to have a sizeable number of members, as well as a core of supporters which can be drawn upon for party work. Traditionally, a large and committed group of followers was the essential instrument for reaching out and communicating the party agenda. In modern times, by contrast, more direct forms of communication – advertisements, media, etc. – have come to play an ever-greater role. Nonetheless, it is still a plus to have access to party people on the ground (Aldrich 1995). It is advantageous, moreover, to have an organisational network – party units and party offices – all over the country. Furthermore, economic resources are critically important. Once upon a time, membership fees could be a major source of revenue (which in turn added to the weight of a large membership). Today, however, party financing relies primarily on external sources, of a public or private nature. Besides contributions in cash, support in kind can be most helpful. Such support can take various forms. Well-organised parties have often developed close ties with strong interest groups in society. A connection of this kind can help to strengthen a party's profile (the party can, so to speak, borrow identity from its support group). In addition, it can serve as a vital source of recruitment – of both leaders and members. Finally, the party can draw on the organisation and communication network commanded by the auxiliary group (Crewe 1982).

2. This brings us to the problem of *independence*. On the one hand, as we saw above, access to resources strengthens a party's ability to reach out and gain support in elections. This can enhance the party's capacity to serve as an instrument of representation. On the other hand, the way in which these resources are supplied may entail strings of dependency vis-à-vis the interests in society

commanding such resources (Panebianco 1988). This can have detrimental consequences from the standpoint of representation, since it builds in a tendency towards structural preference-asymmetry between voters and their party representatives. (The risk is that the representatives will come to regard themselves as agents of those providing external support – sooner than of their voters.) This is indeed a tricky balance. The usual ways of coping with the problem include establishing rules for the regulation of support (especially financial support) from private sources, as well as introducing public subsidies for parties in order to make them less dependent on private sponsors.

3. This final criterion – the use of *democratic internal procedures* – stands out as the most controversial. From the standpoint of such democratic values as participation and deliberation, the use of such procedures may seem to be quite obviously called-for; after all, internal democracy promotes activity and discussion among party members (Scarrow 1999; Teorell 1999). It has been argued, however, that the use of such procedures has unfavourable effects from the standpoint of representation. To cut a long story short, one effect in particular is of concern here: the fact that internal democracy opens the door to highly effectual intervention by party activists. Such activists are prone to hold more extreme political preferences than supporters of the party in general. The system of representation can thus get distorted (May 1973; McKenzie 1982). All the same, I would contend that democratic internal procedures do overall promote the ideal of representation. The use of open procedures for decision-making provides opportunities for party members to gain insight into, and influence over, the selection of party representatives. An important “filter” – whereby candidates can be screened for their personal qualities – is thus established. In addition, the use of such procedures puts constant pressure on the party leadership to give an account of its activities between

elections. This lessens the risk of information-asymmetry. On both counts, the tendency towards “dark room politics” can be counteracted. At the same time, it becomes possible to curtail any drift towards personalism (whereby the party becomes merely an instrument for a dominant individual).<sup>7</sup> Party activists normally play an important role in these regards. Moreover, it is these activists in particular who tend to lobby for the intensification of the policy platform, thus serving to counteract tendencies towards a political congruence between parties, and a resultant lack of distinctive alternatives in elections. Furthermore, it is this group which puts the greatest pressure on political representatives to adhere to party voting (Alrich 1995; Grofman et al. 1999). Thus, while this group is not necessarily representative with regard to policy preferences, it can contribute in several ways – via democratic procedures of internal decision-making – to strengthening the mechanisms of representation.<sup>8</sup>

#### **IV: Russian Parties In Perspective**

On the basis of the criteria laid out above, I shall now examine the development of parties in Russia.<sup>9</sup> In an effort to put Russian conditions in perspective, I shall at each point provide a (necessarily brief) description of the standing of parties in Western Europe and in the United States.<sup>10</sup> In certain cases, moreover, I shall compare the development of parties in Russia with that in the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe, and Latin America as well.

Party in Government. The question here, as we know, concerns the dominance and cohesiveness of parties in representative bodies. Where dominance is concerned, it is well-known that the electoral system plays a part. The general rule is

that parties are better able to dominate the scene in proportional systems, since the latter feature elections by list in large districts. Such lists require a common designation (indicating that a group of some kind lies behind the electoral effort). Moreover, the list in question must enjoy fairly broad support from the electorate if its candidates are to be elected; this requirement is particularly plain in systems where a party's vote must exceed a fairly high threshold if the party is to enter parliament. Individual (i.e., non-party-affiliated) candidates make their mark more easily in elections from single-member districts (SMD). Elections of this type exhibit a strong local connection. Here, more than in proportional systems, it is a question of serving one's district. A candidate's personal standing in the locality in question can be of great aid in getting elected. Another important factor is whether an absolute majority of votes is needed in order to be elected, or whether a mere plurality is sufficient. The latter type of arrangement increases the chances of election, which favours non-party-affiliated candidates. The manner in which the executive is chosen is important too. Parties have, as a rule, a stronger position in parliamentary than in presidential systems. The former type of system requires more in the way of coordination and cohesion in the legislative body – and it is parties which are able to supply this. Presidential elections may also feature a significant personal element, which renders the candidates less dependent on party backing. This effect is reinforced if the presidential election does not take place on the same date as the legislative one (Epstein 1981; Shugart and Carey 1992).

Where the cohesiveness of parties is concerned, we have seen that (due to necessity) it is more pronounced in parliamentary systems. It is also often greater in unitary than in federal states, inasmuch as strong regional interests are usually present in parties within states of the latter type. The procedures by which elections are conducted have an impact as well. The critical thing here,

however, is not whether the elections are proportional or based in single-member districts. An important factor – irrespective of electoral system – is how the nomination of candidates is done. The cohesiveness of a party is affected by whether nominations within it are controlled by the central leadership, or whether instead they take place under local control. In the same way, the degree to which the leadership can control the resources needed for winning elections is important (a matter to which we shall return below). Such resources give the leadership a strong trump card in dealing with recalcitrant party delegates. Similarly, control over career opportunities and access to resources in the parliamentary organs endow the leadership with a weapon for maintaining cohesion (Kitschelt et al. 1999; van Biezen 2000).

Let us now consider conditions in Western Europe and the United States. In both cases, parties exercise a large measure of dominance in the representative organs – and at both national and regional levels. With only occasional exceptions, the members of legislative bodies and the occupants of executive office are associated with parties. Elected representatives are furthermore faithful to their party in a high degree: floor-crossing is unusual. Where voting in legislative assemblies is concerned, however, there is a difference. In votes of a party-dividing kind, cohesion tends to be very strong in West European parties: in many countries, representatives vote with their party in more than 95 per cent of such cases. In the United States, party-line voting has certainly increased over recent decades, but it remains lower than in Western Europe: in party-dividing votes, approximately 80 per cent of members of congress toe the party line.

Let us turn our attention now to Russia. Where the *dominance of parties* is concerned, conditions in that country are undeniably different. In elections to the State Duma, a mixed electoral system

is applied. Half the members are chosen through proportional list-elections (with a threshold of 5 per cent); the other half are elected from single-member districts. Those elected on a proportional basis are, as might be expected, party-connected throughout. In the other category, by contrast, an extremely large number of independent candidates have been elected. (This applies in the case of all three elections to that body: in 1993, 1995, and 1999.) The proportion fell in 1995, but it increased again in 1999. In the latest election, according to the calculations of Rose et al. (2001), a majority (51 per cent) of the members elected from single-member districts were independents.<sup>11</sup> This, furthermore, is probably to some extent an underestimate. In a good many cases, those reckoned as associated with a party had an extremely weak connection to it. At times, it was simply a matter whereby a party expressed its support for a local candidate who seemed to have a good chance of winning (Ishiyama 2000). Furthermore, the electoral procedure applied (only a plurality is needed), together with the great number of candidates (on average 10 per district), meant that only a modest measure of support was required in order to get elected. In general, those winning election from single-member districts in 1999 had the support of just 30 per cent of the electorate; in some cases, the share of the vote was actually under 20 per cent. It is likely that these conditions made it easier for independent candidates to win (Rose et al 2001). As we know, comparable electoral procedures are applied in many countries – Great Britain and the United States, for example – without comparable effects. In these cases elections are completely party-dominated, notwithstanding the use of single-member districts. The difference is that the parties with a serious chance are substantially fewer, and better equipped in terms of resources.

In the present Duma, then, a mere three-quarters of the members can be classified (generously) as elected with a party connection. In addition, the corresponding proportion in the upper chamber, the Council of Federation (the members of which are chosen by regional organs), is appreciably smaller still. In this chamber, it is only a minority of members who can be said to represent a party (and sometimes only diffusely). In view of the composition of corresponding bodies in other federal states – e.g., Germany, the United States, and Brazil – this is a remarkable fact.

The presidential office in Russia is extremely powerful. The striking thing is that the two occupants of this office hitherto (Yeltsin and Putin) have not represented any party. Their mandate, rather, has been a personal one. To be sure, both presidents have had a “party in power” (of a shifting kind) associated with them. But they have not themselves been the leader – or even a member – of the party in question (McFaul 2001). This is, in comparative perspective, an exceptional circumstance. Nowhere else in the democratic world are similar conditions known to prevail. In Latin America, it is true, political “outsiders” have appeared several times over the course of recent decades, and have triumphed in presidential elections (as in Brazil, Peru, and Venezuela). All of these leaders, however, have ended up creating a party (or at any rate a political movement) to serve as a basis for their operations. Yet this has not been the case in Russia. The parties employed by Russian presidents have been disposable goods: in no case have they lasted longer than a single term.

Turning now to the regions, we see that parties tend to have a very weak standing in legislative assemblies at that level. A study of these organs’ operation between 1993 and 1997, by Stoner-Weiss (2001), has demonstrated a heavy dominance by independent candidates (see also Golosov 2000). At the end of this period, parties controlled c. 17 per cent of the places in such organs

– 11 per cent in the case of national parties, 5 per cent in the case of regional ones. Among the national parties, only one could boast representation of any significance – the Communist Party, with 7 per cent. Among the other parties which cleared the threshold for representation in the Duma election of 1995, all had a share of less than 1 per cent in regional bodies.<sup>12</sup> As expected, parties were best represented in regions applying some kind of parliamentary system.

In gubernatorial elections (which are politically much more important), parties have sought to make their mark as well. Here too, their efforts have met with but limited success (albeit greater success than in the case of the regional legislatures). Stoner-Weiss reckons that 19 of the 73 governors (or 26 per cent) who were elected between 1995 and 1997 were clearly associated with the Communist Party. By contrast, other national parties won just a few governorships here and there, as did the regional parties. In other words, a clear majority of governors had no party affiliation at this time. However, later figures from the same author point to a clear improvement for the parties. In the gubernatorial elections of 2000, independent candidates emerged victorious in just 18 per cent of the cases (8 of 44). Candidates associated with national parties won in all the other cases. The elections went best for the Communists, who won 12 gubernatorial posts (27 per cent). It bears noting, however, that more than one party often declared itself the winner (since the candidate in such cases had dual – or diffuse – party affiliations). In the more unambiguous cases too, moreover, the winning candidate's party connections have tended to be tenuous. In their actual policies, most governors demonstrate independence; seldom do they follow any clear party line. In this regard, however, they are scarcely unique to the Russian Federation. Governors in the United States, after all, take positions on concrete political questions very freely, notwithstanding the national parties to which they belong.

As for the question of the parties' *parliamentary cohesiveness*, we may note that the studies which have been done of voting behaviour in the State Duma testify to a relatively high degree of party unity. Even in the case of voting patterns in the first Duma of 1994–95, studies have demonstrated a surprisingly high degree. In many of the party groups, 80 to 90 per cent of members voted with their party on politically controversial questions. Only occasionally did the figure fall to 70 per cent or just under (Haspel et al. 1998; Remington 1998). Moreover, studies of the second Duma (that of 1996–99) have indicated a successive improvement in the parliamentary cohesion of the parties (Thames 2001; Belyaev et al. 2002). In view of the fact that the Russian party system has been created practically from scratch (Fish 1995), this could be seen as a remarkable development. The level of cohesiveness for most of the Russian parties is now nearly on a par with that in Western Europe (and higher than that in the United States). Perhaps, therefore, we can say with McFaul that "the core of a party system has emerged within the Russian parliament" (2001: 1171). The representative function of parties, we might then conclude, is becoming stronger in Russia.

Unfortunately, however, this appears to be an overstated conclusion. There are two important factors which make for a less palatable impression. The one has to do with the relationship between parties as electoral organisations and as parliamentary units. It is critical, from the standpoint of representation, that the party formations which stand in elections find their direct correspondence in parliament (Rose et al. 2001). To a substantial extent, however, this is not the case in Russia.

The party groups in the Duma are of two kinds. First, all parties winning representation in the proportional part of the election have the right to form parliamentary factions. Second, groups consisting of at least 35 deputies can come together and

form a deputy group with a certain designation. There are strong incentives to belong to a parliamentary group, since membership yields advantages in terms of administrative resources, influence over the Duma leadership, better opportunities to take part in floor debates, etc. (Haspel et al. 1998; Thames 2001). By such means, the leadership of these groups is often able to exert great influence over the voting patterns of the members. This was shown in the above-mentioned studies. The problem is that these groups correspond only in part with the parties (or party blocks) that stood for election. First, several large parties have split into different fractions in the Duma: this took place, for example, at the inauguration of the present Duma in the case of the Communists and Fatherland-All Russia. It is also common that persons who had been elected as party representatives from a single-member district – but whose party did not clear the threshold in the proportional election – join up with another party's faction. Second, parliamentary groups have been created which do not correspond to any of the parties which stood for election. Often these consist of independent candidates; however, they have also gathered deputies who were chosen as representatives for a party – both in the proportional election, and in the single-member districts. The re-grouping which has thus taken place has embraced some 25 per cent of the Duma members after the election of 1999. In the present Duma there are, in addition to the party factions, three deputy groups. One of these corresponds to a party which failed to clear the threshold but which did better in the single-member districts (and which also acquired deputies from another party). The other two may be regarded largely as bodies created *ad hoc* (Rose et al. 2001).

The other circumstance making for a dispiriting impression is the substantial measure of floor-crossing which has taken place. To be sure, deputies have generally been members of a Duma group

(and have voted with it); however, there has also been great mobility among the groups. It has been calculated that, in the first Duma, 25 per cent of the deputies changed group affiliation at least once over the parliamentary term. The proportion in the second Duma was approximately as large (Haspel et al. 1998; Rose et al. 2001). In comparison with legislative bodies in other countries, the Russian Duma exhibits very high figures in this area. To find anything comparable, we must make our way to Brazil, a country which is conspicuous – even by the standards of Latin America (where parties are generally considered weak) – for its extremely high level of floor-crossing (Mainwaring 1999; Mainwaring and Scully 1995). It is thus clear that the positive picture considered above – which looked attractive as long as we restricted our investigations to voting behaviour within the parliamentary groups – proves to be much less attractive when we take into account how these groups have been formed, and still less so when we recall the degree of mobility among them. The establishment of the “core of a party system” in parliament – which, in many countries, has served historically as the basis from which a stable and well-developed party system has emerged (Duverger 1954) – remains for the most part to be accomplished.

Party in the Citizenry. Let us now consider the parties’ contact with their principals – those whom they exist to represent: the voters, and through them the population as a whole. There are three aspects to bear in mind here. The first is the stability of the party system, which is a question of party permanence and of mobility between elections. The second is the intensity of attachment between parties and citizens, which can be measured in two ways: in the level of party identification in the population, and in the incidence of split voting. The third aspect treated here is the degree of political coherence among citizens. The question is

whether those who support, or vote for, a given party exhibit any group characteristics – i.e., whether they, in respect of social traits or political attitudes, have anything in common.

Let us again begin our examination with a look at conditions in Western Europe and the United States. We find several common denominators here. The level of stability in both cases has been extremely high. In Western Europe, Lipset and Rokkan (1966) noted that the party structure established at the time of democracy's breakthrough in the early 1920s remained, in all essentials, unchanged at the start of the 1960s. Forty years later, this "freezing" of the party system mainly persists. The old parties – socialists, liberals, conservatives, and Christian democrats – still dominate the scene in the great majority of the countries of Western Europe. Certain changes have indeed occurred. Communist parties have retreated, making way for left socialist parties. Newer arrivals have included green parties, regional parties, and parties of the far right. But on the whole, the changes have been marginal. Generally speaking, the old parties – with roots reaching back 80 years or more – attract close to 90 per cent of the vote in Western Europe. The old left/right division remains; indeed, it has come to set the tone of political conflict all the more. More and more clearly, there are two blocks of parties confronting one another. The electoral support accruing to each block, furthermore, is almost exactly the same as in the 1950s. In the U.S., for its part, political life has been dominated for a hundred and fifty years by the same two parties: the Democrats and the Republicans. A so-called Progressive Party was established at the end of the nineteenth century, and for a few decades it enjoyed some significant successes. Similarly, a formation known as the Reform Party appeared in the early 1990s. For a short time, it attracted substantial support in opinion polls and among voters. Its story,

however, was a brief one, and today it is practically gone. It is the two old parties, once again, that dominate the scene completely.

The normally high degree of party loyalty exhibited by voters is also evident in the degree of volatility, i.e., in the changes in party support taking place from one election to another. In the United States it has long been under 10 per cent, a sign of great stability. The average figure in Western Europe was long around 10 per cent. Recently, however, it has increased to about 15 per cent - this too is a low figure in comparative perspective.

In Western Europe, as in the U.S., the level of popular attachment to established parties has traditionally been high (which of course is one explanation for the above-noted stability). One common way of measuring the level of attachment is through surveys asking people about their party identification. As we shall see, however, this can be done in a variety of ways. Comparisons are thus not always so easy. It is however clear that, notwithstanding a certain decline in recent years, the level of party identification remains relatively high. For Western Europe's part, the level generally lies over 60 per cent (and in certain cases, such as Great Britain, it reaches as high as 90 per cent). In the United States at present, close to 80 per cent normally identify themselves with a party.<sup>13</sup> As for the other aspect – split voting – it is of interest in particular to look at the conditions in the United States, which, as in Russia, bears the mark of strong presidentialism. In the U.S., voters have tended, increasingly, to choose one party in congressional elections and another in presidential elections. In recent years, some 30 per cent of electors have distributed their votes in such a manner.

The parties of Western Europe have traditionally distinguished themselves by the high degree of political cohesiveness among their voters. Parties have represented relatively distinct groups in the population – groups marked off from each other by fissures of social

origin and political orientation. The basis for this firm segmentation has no doubt weakened with the years: social and political mobility among the voters has increased. Yet despite talk about a drift towards so-called catch-all parties – parties with a vague political profile that try to gather support in all societal groups – the shape of the party structure remains much the same as ever. In the U.S., by contrast, the parties have had a more diffuse electoral foundation. The Democratic Party, in particular, has exhibited features (in respect of social and political heterogeneity) that bring it close to the ideal-type of a catch-all party. Even so, there are differences in the type of voter attracted by the two parties. The districts typically won by each party do not look the same. They diverge both socially (in respect of average income, for instance) and in terms of attitudes (liberal versus conservative). Available data suggest, moreover, that the difference between the parties has become more pronounced in recent decades (Grofman et al. 1999; Fisher 1999).

Let us return now to Russia. We begin with the *stability of the party system*. Table 1 shows the parties which won representation to the State Duma in the proportional elections of 1993, 1995, and 1999. Of the eight parties that won representation in 1993, only three are left in the Duma today: the Communist Party of Russia, the Liberal Democratic Party, and Yabloko. Together, these parties received the support of 36 per cent of the electorate in 1999. In the second election (that of 1995), a new party made its entrance: Our Home is Russia, the new party of power. It disappeared, however, in the next election. In the third election (that of 1999), three new parties won seats in the Duma – among them Unity, the party of power. Taken together, these new parties obtained 45 per cent of the vote – substantially more than that achieved by the three “old” parties. This is, of course, an indication of a very high – and furthermore increasing – level of instability.

When we look at volatility, the conclusion is the same. It was 43 per cent in the election of 1995. In the next election, it rose to 52 per cent. By way of comparison, it may be mentioned that volatility in Latin America has tended to lie at around 25 per cent on average – with Brazil as an outlier, at an average level of some 40 per cent. In the other formerly Communist states of Eastern Europe, the average level has been about the same as in Latin America. The highest figures in this region have been those in the most recent elections in Bulgaria and Lithuania: 47 and 50 per cent, respectively (Bielasiak 2001). Where individual high figures are concerned, then, Russia is not unique. In respect of its average, however, Russia stands – with 47.5 per cent – in a class of its own.<sup>14</sup>

<b>Party:</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1999</b>
Agrarian	8		
Communist	12,4	22,3	24,3
Democratic	5,5		
Liberal Democratic	22,9	11,2	6
Russia's Choice	15,5		
Women	8,1		
Yabloko	7,9	6,7	5,9
Our Home is Russia		10,1	
Fathersland - All Russia			13,3
Right Forces			8,5
Unity			23,3

Source: Biryukov and Gusev  
2002

If mobility is so high, the level of *attachment between citizens and parties* ought to be low. Several studies have been done of the level of party identification among Russians. The trend is an upward one. The level of party identification – which was extremely low at the beginning of the 1990s – has clearly increased (Miller et al. 2000). Where exact figures are concerned, however, the uncertainty is greater. Estimates for the mid-1990s and the years following have yielded mixed results. In this area, it is well known, the answers given depend to a great extent on the questions asked (Weisberg 1999; Sanders et al. 2002). The method of measurement has a heavy impact on the outcome. Colton (2000) asked the respondents if they considered any party to be “my own”: as a result 31 per cent of Russians stated a party identification in 1996. Miller et al. (2000) focused instead on opinion representativeness: is there, they asked, any party which “expresses your views better than any other party?”. In this way, an identification level of 52 per cent was registered for 1995, and a level of 61 per cent for 1997. In the Russia Barometer taken just after the election of 1999, finally, the focus was also on opinion representativeness: does any party, respondents were asked, have “policies closer to you than others” . The result was that 49 per cent reported a party identification (Rose et al. 2001).

In our own Russian survey, which was carried out in 2000,<sup>15</sup> the following question was asked: “Do you usually think of yourself as a supporter of a particular party or movement?”. Those answering “no” were then asked: “Is there still some party or movement that you feel closer to than others?”. Those answering “yes” to any of these questions were asked to state which party they had in mind. When asked in this way, 41 per cent of respondents reported identifying with a party (and among these a clear majority said their identification was a strong one).

As we have seen, measuring party identification is not an exact science. Different methods measure partly different things. Our method forms part of a common core of survey questions being applied in a coordinated fashion in some ten European countries. It involves asking about support for and closeness to a party (not opinion representativeness), and as such it aims at capturing the kind of value-infusion which organisations may acquire. As we know, this is a quality thought to contribute to the durability of organisations.<sup>16</sup> But it bears noting that, for such a quality to be registered, it must be possible to ascertain that the identification is in fact a lasting one – and that it is directed towards one and the same party over a substantial period (Aldrich 1995). This can only be done by means of a panel study, i.e., follow-up interviews with the same respondents in 2002. A high level of party identification that flows back and forth among the various parties does not, of course, infuse the party system with much stability. And there is much to indicate that it is still, in large measure, a fleeting identification of this kind which is to be found among the voters of Russia (Colton 2000; Rose et. al 2001).

Nevertheless, a large number of individuals in Russia state a party identification. What this identification is worth, of course, can be questioned. But it expresses support for and closeness to a party. What then sets this group apart? How does it differ from the rest of the population? The investigations of Miller et al. (2000) report little in the way of demographic differences. The most divergent traits of those who state a party identification are their greater political knowledge and their heavier exposure to the media. In our study too, both knowledge and exposure to the media yield correlations ( $r = 0.13$  and  $0.20$ ). Another feature marking off this group is a higher-than-average age ( $r = 0.14$ ).

To a large extent, however, this last-mentioned factor (the age of the group) is an artifact of its party-political composition. As

we see in Table 2, 45 per cent of those stating a party identification are adherents of the Communist Party. The table also shows the number of respondents – expressed as a percentage of those reporting identification with a party – who aver that their identification is a strong one. Here too the Communists are in a class of their own. It is also worth noting that, much as we might expect, the three “old” parties (the Communists, the Liberal Democrats and Yabloko) have a higher proportion of supporters expressing strong identification than do the more recently formed parties (Unity, Fatherland-All Russia, and Right Forces). What is most striking is the fact that the differences observed are not greater, particularly where Yabloko is concerned.<sup>17</sup>

Experience from other countries suggests that party identification is a factor stimulating electoral participation, and thus voter support for the party in question. Russia is no exception. The disposition to vote is clearly higher within this group: the proportion who have voted is a good 10 per cent higher than for the population as a whole.<sup>18</sup> A very large proportion also report having voted in elections to the Duma for the party with which they identify. The proportion is highest in the case of the Communists: 98 per cent of those identifying with that party voted for it as well. Next come the other two older parties, LD and Y, with 94 and 92 per cent respectively; then RF with 89 per cent; U with 80 per cent; and FA with 80 per cent.

<i>Parties</i>	CP	L	U	FA	Y	RF
Party Identity %	44,9	7,1	17,7	5,6	11,4	8,9
Strong Identity %*	51	38	21	23	30	23

\*Calculated as the share of people indicating party identity who express a strong identity.

Another way of estimating the attachment between parties and citizens is to measure the incidence of split voting. The interesting thing here is to see whether those who supported a given party in the Duma election also supported that party's candidate in the subsequent presidential election. The leaders of three parties – the CP, the LD, and Y – ran against Putin in the presidential race. To what extent did they receive the votes of those who had supported their respective party in the earlier Duma election? In both the LD and Y, there was a heavy preponderance for Putin. Among those who had supported the LD in the Duma, Putin obtained 55 per cent of the vote, as against 36 per cent for the party leader. The corresponding figures for Yabloko were 61 and 34 per cent. Among adherents of the CP, 41 per cent supported Putin and 55 per cent the party leader. In this last-mentioned case, then, the party's own candidate mobilised a majority; yet the proportion supporting Putin was strikingly large. The proportion supporting the party leader was higher among those stating a party identification; the difference, however, was insignificant. For the CP the figure was 60 per cent (as against 35 for Putin); for the LD it was 42 per cent (47 for Putin); and for Y it was 39 per cent (57 for Putin). This in turn indicates that the effect of party identification is not particularly strong. In this area too, the Communists diverge from the others: split voting is the least dramatic among them. But it is considerable all the same. The fact that as many as a third of

the party's self-proclaimed supporters voted *against* their party's candidate in the presidential election speaks for itself.

Now to the third question: that of the *political coherence* of the parties' voters and sympathiser. What do we find in Russia? Is it the case that the parties there win support from all the various sections of society (in terms of both social position and political orientation), with the consequence that the parties display considerable similarity in their composition – as in a political landscape characterised by catch-all parties? It bears recalling that, in Latin America, the party system in many cases displays such a character. Brazil is a well-documented example (Mainwaring 1999). Or is it rather the case that the parties each function as a community animated by common interests and beliefs? It is of course the latter state of affairs – wherein the parties exhibit clear differences – which is to be preferred from a representation standpoint (Kitschelt 2000). In view of the parties' weak position in Russia, however, this is scarcely to be expected.

Let us begin by examining the social composition of the various parties, as seen in Table 3. The differences between the parties prove, in many cases, to be considerable. In respect of incomes, the CP stands out as the party of the worst-off; the composition of the LD, at the level of the voters, is similar. FA and RF are both a sharp contrast in this regard. The supporters of these parties enjoy incomes clearly above the average for the population as a whole. When it comes to education, it is above all Y that is the outlier, although RF and FA have a clear foothold among the well-educated too. The CP, on the other hand, is the party of those with little education. Where the age composition of the parties is concerned, we see dramatic differences. The CP has an average age of 55, while the typical follower of RF is almost 20 years younger. The CP diverges sharply from the other parties in this area – its people, generally speaking, are more advanced in age. The

impact of gender is also strong, although it follows a different pattern. RF is strongly overrepresented among women, as is Y (at the level of the voters). The LD, by contrast, is heavily dominated by men. To a much lesser extent, finally, FA displays a masculine predominance too, as does U (at the level of its supporters).

**Table 3: Social Composition of Parties<sup>19</sup>**

Parties	CP	LD	U	FA	Y	RF	Pop. Average	squared eta
Income							2740	
PS	2330	2830	3730	4540	3060	4920		0,228
PV	2200	2330	3290	4135	2990	3400		0,161
Education							2,1	
PS	1,9	2,1	2,1	2,4	2,5	2,5		0,289
PV	1,9	2,1	2,1	2,3	2,5	2,4		0,283
Age							43	
PS	55	40	42	41	42	36		0,435
PV	54	42	44	44	46	37		0,369
Gender % female							55	
PS	54	32	44	48	58	65		0,223
PV	56	36	51	46	67	66		0,167
Urbanisation							2,1	
PS	2	2,04	2,06	2,42	2,44	2,53		0,27
PV	1,96	2,03	1,94	2,43	2,38	2,44		0,285
Skills							0,24	
PS	0,25	0,16	0,29	0,45	0,45	0,4		0,212
PV	0,23	0,24	0,24	0,48	0,4	0,39		0,164
Knowledge							2,1	
PS	2,1	1,8	2,5	2,1	2,6	2,6		0,217
PV	2	1,9	2,3	2,3	2,4	2,5		0,175
Media							3,4	
PS	3,6	3,7	3,7	3,7	3,8	3,6		0,139
PV	3,5	3,7	3,6	3,7	3,7	3,4		0,152
Organisation							0,47	
PS	0,42	0,66	0,76	0,54	0,77	0,72		0,17
PV	0,36	0,65	0,6	0,53	0,72	0,6		0,141

In addition, place of residence – i.e., in a larger city versus a smaller centre – confers a special character on some of the parties. It is most especially RF, FA, and Y that display an urban character. No party, on the other hand, stands out as clearly centred in the countryside. The next trait we consider has to do with people's organisational contacts. In our interviews, those citizens who were

backing Y, U, RF, and the LD reported having relatively extensive organisational contacts. The CP people, once again, diverge in the opposite direction.

We have also investigated the impact of skills in working life, of level of political knowledge, and of exposure to the media. The first-mentioned variable has a heavy impact. People tied to FA, Y, and RF have a clearly professional background, while adherents of the LD in particular diverge in the opposite direction. We see a similar pattern in respect of knowledge level: RF and Y, and to a lesser extent FA and U, diverge in a positive direction. The LD, on the other hand, diverges in a negative direction in respect of its adherents' knowledge level. Where exposure to the media is concerned, the LD comes out better. In this area, however, the differences between the parties tend to be small. Without presenting the matter in table form, finally, I can report that the impact of ethnic and religious distinctions is insignificant. In general, Russians and Russian Orthodox believers are overrepresented (although not very strongly). But the differences between the parties in this regard are marginal.

Up to this point, we have considered the *average values* for the parties. Such a method of measurement shows, one might say, what the typical voter for (or sympathiser with) a given party possesses in the way of social characteristics. But it says nothing about the range within the group. We also want to know about the homogeneity of the parties – i.e., their degree of cohesiveness in social regards. For this we need another, and statistically more advanced, technique. The method we have chosen is variance analysis. The results are expressed in an overall figure – a squared eta-value – for each variable. The results are shown in Table 3.<sup>20</sup> If we take an eta-value of higher than 0.15 as a sign that the parties differ significantly in their degree of social cohesiveness, we discover that the differences are indeed significant in most cases.

The picture thus proves to be somewhat different from how it appears when we focus on the average values of the parties. Now it is the variables of age, education and urbanisation, which have the strongest effect. It is in these areas, we may conclude, that the parties display the greatest social homogeneity.

To summarise the results so far, we can say that parties in Russia clearly vary in their social composition. If we regard the parties' differing composition as a sign that a range of different interests in society are being represented (as is often assumed in the research on parties), then there is no doubt that, to a great extent, this is true in Russia. The CP is the party of the underprivileged: its people tend to be advanced in years, to have low incomes, to reside in medium-sized towns, to have little education, and to enjoy but limited access to organisational networks. The LD people share some of these characteristics; in addition, they display a heavy masculine preponderance. RF and FA are distinguished for their greater backing among professionals, the well-educated, those living in the big cities and those enjoying access to extensive organisational networks. They also attract the support of a large share of women. RF furthermore stands out as the party of the young, as well as of those earning high incomes. The latter applies to FA as well; this party too seems to attract professional, well-educated urbanites. U, finally, seems to be the party in the middle where social composition is concerned. Its followers enjoy, however, relatively good organisational contacts and incomes clearly above the average.

How do things look at the level of attitudes? Are there differences there as well? There are certain particular issues, which have stood at the centre of political conflicts in Russia. One dividing line has been that over the form of government: democrats have confronted those associated with the old order. A subsequent conflict has concerned economic reform: champions of privatisation

and the market economy have squared off against forces opposing them. This question has recently broadened into a more general division into left and right. Parallel with this, a nationalistic dimension has been present in Russian political life. A central question here has been how (by what means) the unity of Russia should be preserved. A more general conflict between centre and periphery has also emerged: in recent years, the central authorities have sought to strengthen their position vis-à-vis the regions (Urban and Gel'man 1997; Myagkov and Ordeshook 2001).

A number of questions in our study took up issues corresponding to those adumbrated above. We sought to measure support for democracy with a series of questions, the results of which were combined into an additive index. Attitudes towards economic reform were measured with a question about state ownership. We also asked respondents to place themselves on a left/right scale. To measure nationalism, we asked whether it was justified to use the army to impose order in Chechnya. Finally, we included a question about whether the central government should have a strong measure of control over how the regions are governed (the aim here being, of course, to measure attitudes towards centralisation).

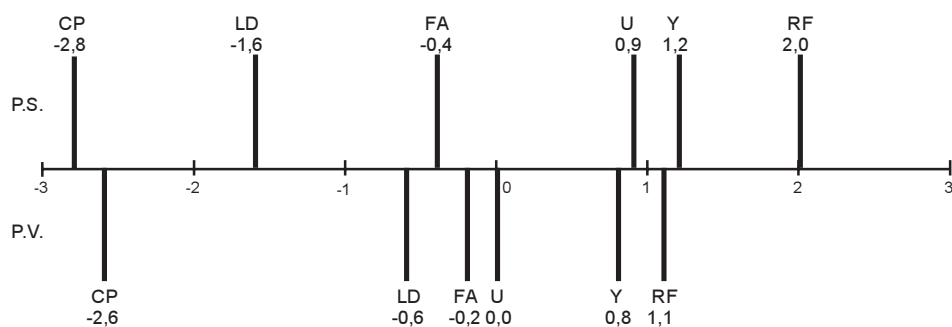
The results are shown in Figures 1 to 5. Here we see the average position on various scales for the parties' sympathisers and voters. The figures furthermore present information on eta-values. If we begin with the scales, we see that there are certain parties which plainly diverge from the others. Communists show a clear preference for non-democratic alternatives, while adherents of RF in particular take a clearly pro-democratic position. The other parties are scattered between these poles: the LD stands closest to the CP; Y and U are closest to RF.

Much the same pattern emerges in the area of economic reform. The CP people are strongly opposed. Respondents who

prefer RF and Y are much more favourable. We see as well that the party distribution has a leftward tilt (expressing a positive attitude towards state ownership). The parties take differing positions, but on the whole they merely vary in the degree of their skepticism towards privatisation. The distinctive traits of Communists can also be seen in how respondents place themselves on the left/right scale: those favouring the Communist Party stake out a clear position on the left. The other parties stand relatively close together towards the middle of the scale. As earlier, furthermore, (and as the party name suggests), those preferring RF stand furthest to the right.

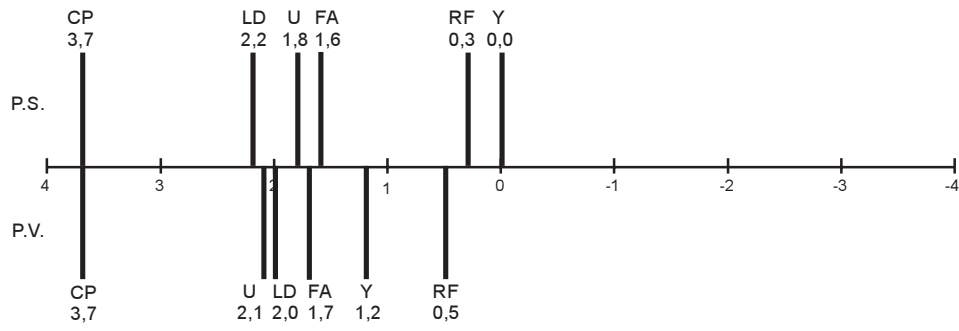
The two remaining scales - nationalism and centralism – display substantial similarities, inasmuch as there all parties cluster towards the one extreme. All favour the use of military means to restore order in Chechnya. The idea of increased federal control over the regions musters even greater support. The Communists do not differ on these issues from the others; rather, they exhibit the same pattern as do adherents of several other parties. If they stand out at all, it is simply as vanguard representatives for a more generally embraced nationalism and centralism. The ones who partly deviate here are the adherents of Y and RF: they express a more reserved attitude towards the war in Chechnya, and towards centralisation as well.

**Figure 1: Democracy**<sup>21</sup>



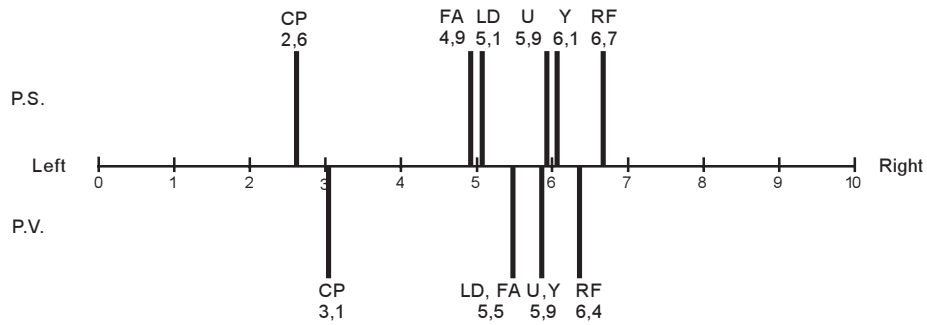
Eta sq. : P.S.: 0.497; P.V.: 0.377

**Figure 2: Reform (Public Ownership)**



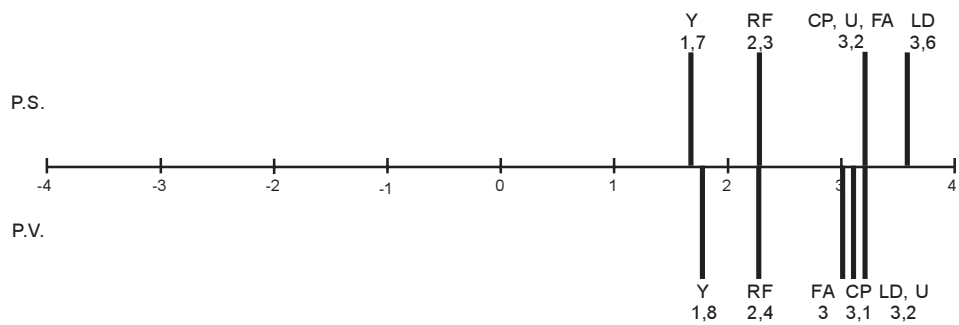
Eta sq.: P.S.: 0.426; P.V.: 0.114

**Figure 3: Left/Right**

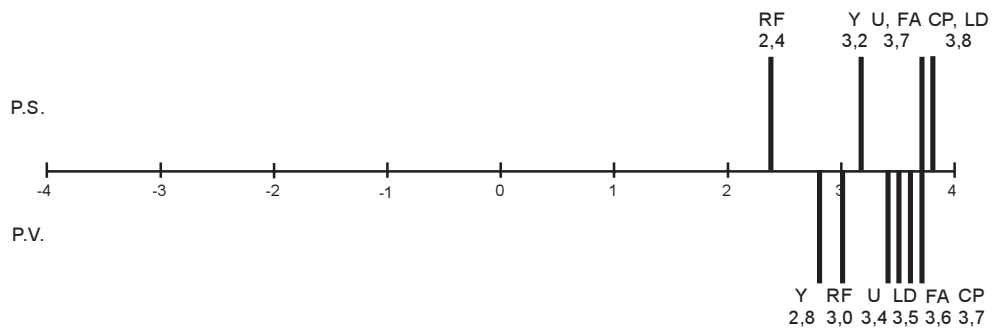


Eta sq.: P.S.: 0.598; P.V.: 0.276

**Figure 4: Nationalism (Chechnya)**



Eta sq.: P.S.: 0.206; P.V.: 0.175

**Figure 5: Centralism**

Eta sq.: P.S: 0.184; P.V.: 0.170

With regard to democracy, economic reform, and the left/right scale, we find clear differences. The typical voter for each respective party is distinctive in these areas. The variation is less where nationalism and centralism are concerned. Here too, however, we see that at least certain parties deviate to a degree from the others. We have also seen that, generally speaking, those who describe themselves as supporters of a party (i.e., those reporting a party identification) hold opinions of a sharper profile than do those who vote for the party – the span is wider in the former group. This is also what we might expect. Those who stand close to a party (and who constitute the recruiting pool for party activists) tend to have more distinctive political notions than do those who vote for the party.

Where we turn to the eta-values, we find that the impact of the attitude variables is stronger than that of the social variables. In certain cases the figures are strikingly high. The two questions dividing respondents into party groups most sharply are democracy and the left/right scale. It is on these questions that the parties' sympathisers and voters diverge most significantly. By contrast, the question about reform (for or against state ownership) shows a clear result among the parties' supporters, but not to any great

extent among their voters. Nationalism and centralism have a modest yet significant effect within both categories of party followers. We find, furthermore, that the results are generally stronger, and in several cases appreciably stronger, among party supporters than among voters. The opinions held by those belonging to the former group are not just more marked, as we saw earlier; they are also more homogeneous (within each party).

What emerges is a party picture in which a political left confronts a political right – a picture which moreover coincides with the distribution of attitudes towards democracy: the right is favourable, the left opposed. Furthest left stand the followers of the CP; furthest right are the followers of RF and Y. Between these extremes, the followers of the remaining parties distribute themselves in a somewhat variable pattern. The LD people are closest to the Communists where attitudes towards democracy are concerned; however, they find themselves in a middle position – together with U and FA – with regard to economic reform and the left/right scale. Where nationalism and centralism are concerned the situation is different. Here it is the followers of Y and RF who diverge – from the broad concentration of opinion at the activist end of the scale.

It is furthermore interesting to note that the manner according to which the followers of the parties place themselves on the strongest attitude dimensions – those bearing on democracy and the left/right scale – coincides in large measure with the pattern observed in connection with the parties' social base. In social terms too, it was often the followers of the CP who formed the sharpest contrast with those favouring RF and Y, while adherents of the other parties ended up in a middle position (the pattern being particularly pronounced in regard to income, age, skills, knowledge level, and degree of organisation). To a great extent, then, attitudes and interests appear to coincide.<sup>22</sup> In both

cases, the difference between the parties can be largely explained in terms of class. 'Have-nots' on the left stand against 'haves' on the right. That, of course, is the pattern which traditionally has dominated the party scene in many of the countries of Western Europe. To this extent Russia is not unique. One difference on the social level, however, is the fact that the followers of the different parties in Russia are more sharply divided by age, and to some extent also by gender, than is usual in Western Europe.

Party as Organisation. We will now shift focus to the internal life of parties. We begin by examining the parties' access to resources of various kinds. Such an examination raises the question of the parties' independence (or lack thereof) vis-à-vis interest groups in society that command great resources. Finally, we shall review the internal forms of decision-making, to examine the state of democracy within the parties.

The parties of Western Europe, for many decades, were the very model of so-called mass parties. In the mid-twentieth century, large portions of the population (in some countries almost 20 per cent) were members of a party. Since then, generally speaking, memberships have sharply declined. Today, about 5 per cent of citizens are members of a party in Western Europe. This is still a high figure, comparatively speaking. In the United States, on the other hand, membership parties of a corresponding kind have never developed. Citizen participation in American party politics has been of a more short-term kind, taking place largely in connection with electoral campaigns. Notwithstanding these differences in formal structures, however, large groups have taken part in party politics in the U.S. also. Studies show that about 20 per cent of the population has carried out some sort of activity in support of a party (and such activities have been almost wholly restricted to one and the same party). The resource increment furnished by

members/activists is probably, in practical terms, about as great in the U.S. as in Europe. In both cases, the parties can count on substantial efforts by "their people" at the grass roots. Conditions are also similar when it comes to the organisational apparatus of the parties; as a rule, it is well-developed. The parties typically dispose of a network of offices and local representatives covering the entire country. This, needless to say, demands economic resources. Still greater resources, moreover, are needed to cover the enormous cost of electoral campaigns. This is a question of great sums of money – in the United States especially, but in Western Europe too. On both continents, the financial resources of the parties have greatly increased over recent decades. The sources of the funding, however, are quite different in the two cases. In Western Europe, public financing is the dominant factor (although membership dues play a role as well, albeit a small one). American parties receive public subsidies too; private contributions, however, are far more important (Medvic 2001). The dependence that can hereby arise is a hot political issue today. Demands have been raised for stricter legislation in this area. In Western Europe too private contributions play a role. Secret contributions have come to light in several countries, creating political scandal. As we have seen, however, the proportion accounted for by private contributions is lower in the case of Western Europe. Another important difference is the fact that, in the United States, external financing goes largely to individual candidates, rather than – as in Western Europe – to the parties centrally. This contributes to a higher degree of political fragmentation in the U.S.

The mass parties of Western Europe have claimed, as a rule, to be built on democratic foundations. Organs on all levels have applied largely democratic forms of decision-making. One line of criticism, dating back to the days of Michels, has held that the leadership has in fact been heavily dominant, notwithstanding the

representative framework applied. A similar critique was directed at American parties at an early point. The purpose of the Progressive reform movement that broke through around the turn of the last century was, among other things, to put an end to the boss-rule that marked the established parties. As a result, many states introduced legislation requiring that primary elections be held for the nomination of candidates (referenda and so-called recall procedures were also set up at this time). The tendency throughout the twentieth century was in the same direction: towards an increased role for direct elections in the nomination process. The leadership of the parties, for its part, lost control over this process to a corresponding degree. This too has contributed to fragmentation within the parties. In Western Europe as well there is a trend – albeit a modest one as yet – towards the increased use of direct-democratic methods. Primaries on the American model have been introduced in some cases, and direct elections are increasingly used to select the party leader. One of the purposes behind this has been to enhance the attractiveness of party membership – and thus to reverse the tendency towards decline in this area (Scarrows 1999; Grabow 2001). The overall aim has thus been – in the U.S. especially, but to some extent in Western Europe too – to vitalise democracy within the parties.

How are things in Russia in these regards? Few parties, to begin with, have any membership to speak of. The exception is the Communist Party, which claims to have 500,000 members. This puts it nearly on a par with the German CDU, which boasts some 600,000 members (Ishiyamara 2000; Grabow 2001).<sup>23</sup> Otherwise, however, the membership of Russian parties is small, at least as far as can be judged (oftentimes the parties provide no information on the subject). It could perhaps be that, as in the U.S., the small size of the formal membership is balanced by the availability of a cadre of faithful activists ready to enter the fray when the party calls. This

does not appear, however, to be the case. In our interviews, we asked about a wide range of party activities (membership, volunteering, meeting attendance, economic contributions, etc.). Fewer than one per cent of the respondents, *in toto*, reported taking part in any way. Moreover, since half these individuals reported an affiliation with the CP, little public participation was left for the other five Duma parties to share. By contrast, available data from Eastern Europe suggest that many of the parties in that region have been much better able to attract citizen participation (Mair and van Biezen 2001).

Where the organisational presence of the parties is concerned, a similar pattern can be seen. The CP has an organisation covering almost the entire country, and reaching out to many of the smaller centres. This, together with the large membership, is for the most part a legacy from the Soviet-era party apparatus which the party inherited. The other parties – which had to begin practically from scratch – dispose of a much less impressive apparatus. Many have tried to make it without “a party on the ground”. They have tried, rather, to get their message out through the media, as well as with the help of commercials. During the 1990s, however, the LD did make an ambitious attempt to build an organisation across the country; in all essentials, however, the effort was a failure. Yabloko’s strategy has been a more cautious one. The idea has been to put down roots in areas where the party enjoys strong support. Yabloko has thus been able to achieve an organisational presence in the big cities, particularly in the western regions of the country (Byryokov and Gusev 2002; Golosov 1999). Some of the parties of power, meanwhile, have sought to create an organisation using regional power-holders (especially governors) as a base – and thus to do without a party apparatus throughout the country. In general, however, this strategy has only worked on a short-term basis – the local potentates have usually had their own (highly

independent) political agenda. The leaders of Russian Unity (the new party of power, formed in 2001 through an amalgamation of U and FA) are no doubt conscious of this history; it is likely for this reason that the party is now trying to build up an independent organisation throughout the country. It is still too early to say whether or not this effort will succeed. It is however clear that, in many cases, the new party is meeting with active resistance from representatives of the regional power structure (Ledovski 2002).

Public party subsidies in Russia are extremely limited. By contrast, the situation faced by parties in the new democracies to the west is for the most part much more favourable in this regard (Toole 2001). Moreover, with the partial exception of the Communist Party, no Russian parties collect membership dues of any significance. The parties also largely lack any pool of volunteers on which to draw; furthermore, they depend heavily on costly media exposure in order to get their message out. External contributions, in cash or in kind, are therefore required. Parties in Western Europe have often had close ties with well-organised popular movements – churches, trade unions, business organisations, cultural and non-profit associations – which have been able to furnish significant support for the parties' activities. But little in the way of such a support structure exists in Russia. The growth of a free network of organisations – also something which has had to start almost from scratch – has not proceeded very far as yet. The requisite resources have instead been arranged in other ways. All of the parties have established close contacts with monied industrial and financial groups. For each party, one or more such groups can be pointed out. Such groups provide economic resources; sometimes, moreover, they are in a position to offer valuable access to the media (such portions as stand under their influence). Parties which control the public sector, on the other hand, have had a complementary source of funding to which to

turn. This has been the special privilege of the parties of power (Biryokov and Gusev 2002). In addition to being able to use the public apparatus as an organisational resource (which is a great advantage, given prevailing circumstances), the parties of power have been able to parlay their position into a means for obtaining economic support, access to public media, and valuable business contacts. On the regional level especially, this has proved to be a winning strategy. The rule of regional bosses is based – in classic machine fashion (Hadenius 2001) – on a far-reaching exploitation of the public organs. The parties in power at the national level have applied the same methods, albeit with less success at the beginning. The first such parties enjoyed only weak support in elections, and their existence was brief. However, the new creation for the election of 1999 (Unity) acquired a much larger share of the vote than did its predecessors, and it is now seeking to broaden its base by amalgamating with FA and building up a party apparatus. It remains to be seen whether this party will become anything more than an extension of the public apparatus out in the country (meaning that part of the apparatus under the control of the central government).

It is well known that parties of the machine (or clientelist) type are ill-suited to serve as instruments for opinion representation; after all, their policy profile tends to be very unclear. On the other hand, they are quite suitable for the kind of pork-barrel politics that provides people with concrete benefits (Kitschelt 2000). They can thus function as channels for interest representation (of a narrow, particularistic type). From a democratic standpoint, however, parties of this kind have several disadvantages. For one thing, machine politics leads to a systematic imbalance in the political game between insiders and outsiders. For another, it requires for its functioning that strict legal and administrative principles be set aside within the public machinery. It

presupposes, that is to say, the existence of a “soft state” – a state that can be exploited politically. States of this kind are typically attended by a low measure of efficiency, as well as (over the longer term) a low measure of legitimacy among citizens. Finally, machine politics has repercussions for internal party life, in the form of hierarchy and elite rule (Hadenius 2001). We shall return to that aspect shortly.

As we have seen, however, dependence on the public sector is just one aspect of the matter. In addition, there is a far-reaching dependence on financial centres of a more private sort (it bears recalling that the boundary between public and private is fuzzy in Russia). Powerful economic interests are thus able to buy access to the organs of public decision-making. It is difficult to determine, of course, just how much the parties are directed by such interests (or how much the different parties may vary in this regard). The problem is not, of course, unique to Russia. Similar conditions prevail in the United States. The difference is that parties in the latter country are not one-sidedly dependent on particular financial and economic centres. Corporations have a tendency to spread their favour among the parties. In addition, contributions from private persons and from public sources account for a much greater share (Medvic 2001). In Russia, finally, legislation and oversight are relatively undeveloped in the area of external contributions.

Let us turn, finally, to the question of internal democracy. No Russian party applies any direct-democratic procedures in its internal life. The CP, however, does have a fairly well-developed process of representation. Party programmes, the choice of leaders, and the like are recurrently decided by organs chosen from below in the party apparatus (Isyhiyama 2000). In this area too, then, the CP is the party which follows the West European model most closely. Yabloko also applies (at least in form) proper democratic procedures for internal decision-making. One special factor is the

element of personalism. Here the LD stands out. It is a party built in all essentials around its leader (Zhirinovskiy). At the beginning of the 1990s, this individual was chosen (typically enough) as party leader for life. The leader of Yabloko (Yavlinskii) also dominates his party, which survives to a great extent on his personal charisma. Right Forces, Fatherland-All Russia, and Unity are all parties created around a small circle of political notables. It is these elite coterie who have dominated party life (Biryokov and Gusev 2001). Centralism has also been a prominent characteristic of the newly formed party of power, Russian Unity. The proposal for its charter was sent out to regional units for approval in November 2001. The proposal was sent with only the shortest of notice. A directive laid down, moreover, that only one decision was possible: approval. According to the charter (which was approved despite certain protests), it is the central party leadership which has the decisive word when it comes to candidate nominations on the regional level, and this principle has been applied in practice. Regional opinion has been without effect when it has opposed the central leadership (Sarychev 2001; Ledovskoi 2002). Centralism with a democratic polish (in the form of apparent local participation) seems to be the model for the new party of power.

## **V: Conclusion**

We have examined the Russian parties in three of their roles: in government, in the citizenry, and as organisations. Where the first aspect is concerned, we can say that the parties have as yet but a weak dominance at the national level. The persons who have been elected president of the republic have run for that office in a purely personal capacity. In the upper chamber of the parliament, parties are hardly present at all. In the Duma, of course, their position is much stronger. The proportional procedure employed in

elections to that body (whereby the entire country is treated as a single constituency) guarantees the parties control over 50 per cent of the seats. However, no more than half the winning candidates (generously reckoned) from single-member districts are affiliated with the parties. In the latest election, moreover, their share of the vote fell in such districts. At the regional level, the standing of the parties in legislative assemblies is extremely weak. On the other hand, they have turned in progressively better performances in gubernatorial elections. Where voting patterns are concerned, the party factions in the Duma have demonstrated a strikingly high (and increasing) level of cohesiveness. The procedures of the Duma have helped in this regard. At the same time, the party factions are extremely fragile units: they do not always correspond with the parties that stood for election, and considerable floor-crossing takes place. Briefly put, the parties have an unusually weak presence in the halls of government, and they continue to display a low degree of cohesiveness. This renders them very weak as instruments for representation.

When it comes to their presence in the citizenry, the parties in Russia are marked by great instability – both in terms of their existence over time, and in terms of electoral volatility. Party identification has increased over time. As it seems, however, it is still of the shallow and ephemeral type. The high level of split-voting in presidential and Duma elections supports such an interpretation. The most divergent finding in this study has to do with the relatively clear party map found among the followers of the parties. This is a fact which has not emerged so clearly in earlier research;<sup>24</sup> nor is it something one might have expected, given the generally weak position of the parties. Parties have come and gone, and their profiles have often been less than clear; notwithstanding this, however, Russian voters have proved themselves more than

equal to the task of placing themselves in party camps. Voters sort themselves into clearly distinct groups, in respect to both social position and political orientation. In many cases, moreover, these groups display a high degree of internal homogeneity, particularly at the level of attitudes. Voters are no fools, as V. O. Key has put it in reference to the American electorate (1966: 7f.). The same can certainly be said of voters in Russia.

In organisational terms, finally, the parties in Russia face great difficulties. The membership in most cases is extremely small, and the organisational capacity highly limited. Nor do the parties have any surrounding organisational network on which to draw. Dependence on external resources is great. The parties of power are able to utilise the public sector; the others rely on financial centres that provide economic support and media access. It cannot be denied that such dependence is worrying, from the standpoint of representation. Forms for internal democracy have been developed in some cases. A high degree of personalism infuses certain parties, however. In the other parties too, the closed rule of an elite prevails, but in a more collective form. In many cases the channels for ensuring accountability and influence from below are extremely limited.

Russian voters and party supporters orient themselves strikingly well on the party map. This illustrates, at the same time, that Russian parties are functioning well as political labels. However, the ability of the parties to represent the interests and attitudes which are expressed is very limited. There are few signs, moreover, of any imminent improvement in that regard.

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#### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Randell and Svåsand try to escape the analytical fission of which they report (and to which they also contribute) by declaring that "most interesting and fruitful

concepts in political science are multi-dimensional and riddled with ambiguities and tensions" (2002: 12).

<sup>2</sup> This is not to say that the work by Panebianco, Mainwaring and Scully, and others is without merit. On the contrary, these studies give a useful account of party life in different countries. What I am questioning is the clarity and relevance of their underlying conceptual structure.

<sup>3</sup> Where the second category is concerned, Key refers to "party in the electorate". I apply a broader category.

<sup>4</sup> For a similar view, see, e.g., Ranney 1964. For a contrasting view – wherein parties are mainly considered as instruments of expression – see Sartori 1976: 27f.

<sup>5</sup> I am focusing here on electoral stability. Another (and somewhat related) aspect is party-system stability. In that case, the formation of governmental coalitions could be used as a prime indicator (Mair 1997). However, this indicator is suitable above all in systems marked by a substantial measure of parliamentary government – which is not, so far, the case in Russia (MacFaul 2001).

<sup>6</sup> A more indirect indicator of party fluidity is the effective number of parties (Bielasiak 2001).

<sup>7</sup> Aware of this limitation, personalist leaders tend to surround themselves with organisational networks marked by fuzzy procedures of decision-making. It should be noted that personalist (or charismatic) parties are normally considered to provide the least substantial form of political representation (Kitschelt 1999).

<sup>8</sup> The party-activist-disparity argument has been questioned on empirical grounds by Herrera and Taylor (1994) on the basis of American data. In any case, the danger of preference-asymmetry is normally counteracted by a high degree of concord between party leaders and voters (Aldrich 1995).

<sup>9</sup> These criteria should be seen as *definitions* of party development in different fields. The causal relationship between these fields is an open empirical question. Some have been suggested above.

<sup>10</sup> Where no specific reference is given, the account of conditions in Western Europe presented herein is based on Mair (1997) and Gallagher et al. (2001). In the case of the U.S., my sources are Aldrich (1995) and Wattenberg (1998).

<sup>11</sup> In 1995, the proportion without any party affiliation was 46 per cent. Stoner-Weiss's analysis (2001) of the Duma elections of 1993, 1995, and 1999 gives the same trend over time and approximately the same figures for the proportion of successful independent and party-affiliated candidates respectively.

<sup>12</sup> The figures reported by Stoner-Weiss (2001) for later elections do not indicate any improvement by the national parties.

<sup>13</sup> In the U.S., respondents are usually directly asked whether they consider themselves a Democrat or a Republican. Surveys in Western Europe typically ask about support for, adherence to, or inclination towards a party (Weisberg 1999).

<sup>14</sup> The average for Bulgaria is 25 per cent; for Lithuania 40 per cent (Bielasiak 2001).

<sup>15</sup> The sample is a multi-stage stratified probability sample of all residents living in the Russian Federation as of October 2000. It includes 1733 respondents aged 16 or above. All interviews were conducted face-to-face. The average interview time was 56 minutes. This estimated response rate is (weighted) 73.1 per cent. Due to the sampling technique applied, the data has been weighted with regard to household size. The survey was carried out in cooperation with VCIOM.

<sup>16</sup> A similar idea is in Hirschman (1970): it is loyalty, an emotional connection to an organisation that dissuades one from leaving it – even when one is unhappy with its actions. Unhappiness is expressed by voice not exit.

<sup>17</sup> The following abbreviations will henceforth be used: Communist Party: CP; Unity: U; Fatherland-All Russia: FA; Liberal Democrats: LD; Right Forces: RF; Yabloko: Y.

<sup>18</sup> A multivariate analysis of the factors explaining participation in the Duma election of 1999 shows that party identification has a significant independent effect. However, the effect of such factors as age, education, life-satisfaction, and exposure to the media is greater (adjusted  $R^2 = 0.24$ ).

<sup>19</sup> Figures are mean values for each party. P.S. = Party supporters (people expressing party identity); P.V. = Party voters in the 1999 State Duma election.

<sup>20</sup> The squared eta-coefficient corresponds to explained variance ( $R^2$ ) in regression analysis.

<sup>21</sup> P.S. = Party supporters (people expressing party identity); P.V. = Party voters in the 1999 State Duma election.

<sup>22</sup> It may be of interest here to note that the supporters of the two parties that joined together after the 1999 election, FA and U, are close to the other in terms of political attitudes. In their social composition, however, the followers of FA more nearly resemble those of RF and Y.

<sup>23</sup> The German SPD has approximately 800,000 members.

<sup>24</sup> See, e.g, Myagkov et al. 1997; Moser 1999; Miller et al. 2000. Rose et al. 2001, however, have published findings on voter attitudes (but along other dimensions) which are in line with those presented here. A certain similarity is also evident with the work of Brader and Tucker (2001), who compare the "core voters" of different parties. At the same time, these studies find only weak correlations between voting patterns and social traits. In this regard, the results presented here paint a more structured picture.

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This paper was presented at the conference *Democracy in Russia*, held at Uppsala University, April 12–13, 2002.

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