

Party System in Modern Russia: Innovations and Problems of Functioning

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In article the priority directions of realization of political reform in modern Russia, increase of civil activity and responsibility of the power and society are analyzed. The special attention is paid to innovations and trends of development of party system of modern Russia, and as to problems of formation and functioning of political parties. The author focuses attention on ambiguity of a phenomenon of the multiparty membership which has been a consequence of liberalization of the legislation on parties.

Key words: Russia, political reform, Political parties, Party systems,
The multiparty system and the problems of party's functioning. +qaz

The study of the formation of the party system in Russia at the present stage is of particular relevance, because of the continuous changes in the political system. Liberalization of relations between state and society, the formation of qualitatively new democratic institutions, what were the political parties and the party system, changed the desire of the political elite to take full control of all the country's political processes.

The changing nature of the political regime, the aggravation of personalistic, monocentric traits led search for a new format of

the party system, which would minimize the potential for instability in the political system and has become an effective mechanism for maintaining the status quo. In the view of the political elite of modern Russia monocentric party system consisting of a servile political parties that perform a particular function, creates the basis for long-term stability and continuity of the current political regime.

Trends accompanying folding the Russian party system, allow us to say that this process has its own logic, which is evident in the consistent implementation of pragmatic interests of the political elite, the weakening effect on the power of civil society, as well as in strengthening the monocentric trend in Russian politics as a whole. The formation of the trend monocentric

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Russian party system is primarily influenced by factors such as the reform of the law, which was aimed at monopolizing the political elite of the party and electoral spaces, as well as changes in political preferences and attitudes of the Russian population, the loss of confidence in the political forces that were to hope for democratic change. Results of the parliamentary elections of 2003 and 2007 indicate that *mopotsentrichnost* becomes a basic characteristic of the party system in Russia. Dominance of the party in power in the framework of the established party system becomes unshakeable opposition take place “Kremlin projects” that are extremely loyal to the highest representatives of the country’s political elite.

Thus, the relevance of the dissertation research is due to the need for a careful study of the process of institutionalization of the party system in the context of modern Russian peculiarities of the Russian political system, the specifics of the electoral space, as well as the norms of electoral and political party laws.

METHOD

The object of research is the party system in modern Russia. The subject of the study are factors that led to the formation of a trend in the monocentric development of the party system in modern Russia.

The methodological basis of the research is a set of scientific methods and approaches that allow to implement scientific problems posed. Specific stages of the research used a systemic, structural-functional, institutional, dialectical approach, which allows to show the inner contradictions of the process of development of the Russian party system.

As a theoretical basis for the PhD thesis of the author used the classical theories of political parties and party systems, conceptual models of electoral behavior, the theory of political and electoral space.

Scientific publications on problems of formation and functioning of political parties are rather popular in Russia and abroad, it is evidences by the analysis of foreign scientific literature. Social bases, functions, structure of political parties in the certain countries in historical and modern contexts become object of research. For example,

J. Zinger in the USA (Joshua N. Zingher, 2014), Paolo Parighi and Laura Sartori in Italy (Paolo Parigi, Laura Sartori, 2014), Roberto Casal, Enrique Gomez and Antonio Liszt in Spain (Roberto Cabaleiro Casal *et al.*, 2013), Saban Esen in Turkey (Saban Esen, 2012), Vlastimil Havlík in the Czech Republic (Vlastimil Havlík, 2011), Lanset in Great Britain (The Lancet, 2012), Zjuzan Skerrou in Germany (Susan, 2012). Party desires of voters are very actively investigated, and violations in the course of vote (Emily Beaulieu, 2014). However publications of foreign authors on party system of the Russian Federation practically are absent, though in recent years in political process of modern Russia, in electoral laws, an electoral system there were essential transformations. So, for the last 3 years (from 2012 to 2014) in Scopus magazines practically there are no articles concerning party system of Russia. The vast majority of authors was publishing articles at the 90-h-beginning of the 2000th years. Among them it is necessary to call Georgy Golosov (Grigorii V Golosov, 2002), J. Ishiyam, Sara Shafkat (John T. Ishiyama and Sahar Shafkat, 2000), Stefen Whyte, Mathew Vumfn, Olga Kryshstanovskaya (Stephen White *et al.*, 1995), Theodor Gerber (Theodore P. Gerber, 2002; Theodore P. Gerber, 2001), Aaliyah Guseva (Akos Rona-Tas and Alya Guseva, 2001).

The results

The goal of political reform in Russia

A political reform, which aims to increase civic engagement and responsibility at all levels of government and civil society is being carried out in the modern Russia. It should be contributed by such policy innovations as abolition of the requirement to comply with the residency for a candidate for the Senate, the formation of the Federation Council (the upper chamber of the Russian parliament) of the deputies of the regional and municipal parliaments; return to direct popular election of governors, which were canceled in 2004 (before the reform the governors were chosen by the members of the Legislative Assembly on the proposal of the president). There is a new procedure for elections into the State Duma (the lower chamber of the Russian parliament) in Russia. For the first some amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation were introduced and entered into force. These provide the increase of

the terms of office of the President of the Russian Federation from four to six years and those of the State Duma from four to five years. Now the government is obliged to report annually to the Parliament about the progress, which before was on its sole discretion. The similar procedure is provided for mayors. The reform provides also extension of the control functions of the local (municipal) deputies. In particular, they can initiate retirement of a mayor who does not perform his duties properly. Enhancement of the municipal level of the government is expressed in the mandatory support to a gubernatorial candidate by the municipal deputies in the form of signatures.

Multi-party system in Russia

By the beginning of 2012 there were only 7 parties in Russia, but in fact there was a party system with a dominant party, "party of power" where there is only one party with a real political power. The party "United Russia" has a majority in the federal parliament and representative bodies at regional and local levels. It also controls the executive branch in almost all regions, cities and regions. The reform provides that a candidate for a governor post is now offered by a party which has won the elections into the regional parliament, whereas in the recently, it was offered by the Plenipotentiary representative of the president in seven federal districts, and regional parliaments approved it. However, the President of Russia retained the ability to influence the process. The President can consult off his own bat with the representatives of the parties before nominating candidates. A kind of a "presidential filter" is also being introduced and the parliamentary opposition considers it a flagrant violation of the law about political parties, interference into their internal activities and pressure on the electoral campaign.

Monocentrism Russia's political system

Dominant party and the party in power, tend to act as a system element monocentric party systems. Such party systems may result from the fact that the country's borrowing democratic institutional structures 7 are unable to build a stable competitive party system, or political elites are not interested, w Formation monocentric party system using the strategy of building the party in power and its positioning in the political arena was a response to the political elite of Russia on the situation of democratic transition and the

manifestation of its pragmatic interests.

The choice of the political elite of the party system - perceived need institutionalization queries arising in civil society. When civil society is under development and the need for structural design of public interest is not clearly expressed, normal political practice can be regarded as a situation where the power structures independently determine the vector of development of the party system. In particular, the monocentric party system is the choice of the government in the process of overcoming the political chaos. But the prolonged existence of a party system, turning it into a means of retaining power jeopardize the democratic reforms and the full development of civil society.

In the study of the phenomenon of monocentric party system we have identified indicators and criteria for institutional effectiveness. Within the overall institutional effectiveness, we have designated as the ability of the party system in the first place, to create conditions for a periodic change of political elites in power, and secondly, to ensure free and fair competition for the possession of the authorities on the basis of independent election procedures, thirdly, to form and maintain confidence in the elected bodies of state power.

On the other hand, in the preservation of inefficient institutions may be interested political leaders and some groups that are part of the political elite, pursuing narrow group interests. With regard to the party and electoral systems of constant changes in the law can be interpreted as an inefficient use of state social capital.

To date, the vertical power permeates the entire political system of Russia. The transition from the "feckless pluralism" to monocentric party system required the use of funds from the government's political and institutional engineering, along with efforts to monopolize the electoral space. Dominance of the "United Russia" as a project of the political elite is a fundamental factor in the development of the party system as a whole. This is due to the lack of political power, which could offer alternatives to compete with the power in the party space. "United Russia" after the parliamentary elections in 2007, finally secured its position as the dominant party, gained a monopoly in the party system. Other parties connected to the monocentric party system as a

satellite party in power. Logic formation in Russia monocentric party system required the political elite not only create the dominant party in power, but also the parties that would serve as its imaginary alternatives or are a safety mechanism for the “steam release” disaffected population policy authorities.

DISCUSSION

Gubernatorial elections without the “presidential filter”

It is fairly that the President’s statements pro or against any candidate for a post of a governor can be partly regarded as illegal campaigning tool and psychological impact on voters (Zaernjuk *et al.*, 2014). On the other hand, the direct election of governors without a “presidential filter” that existed in Russia in the 1990s, as well as their practical purpose, is not able to block the arrival of non-professional, immoral and often criminal personages into the power structures of this and other levels. It is true that the statements of the President in favor of or against a particular candidate for Governor, part of this can be regarded as illegal propaganda and a tool of psychological influence on voters. On the other hand, the direct election of governors without the presidential filter that existed in Russia in the 90 years of the twentieth century, as well as practice of their appointment, are not able to block the arrival in power structures of this and other levels unprofessional, unethical, often criminal elements. Today in Russia, the process of rotation of governors is being held actively. On the 14 of September, 2014 the next election campaigns of various levels, including the elections of the heads of the 30 regions of the Russian Federation (11 scheduled and early 19th), as well as elections of deputies of legislative bodies of state power in 14 subjects of the Russian Federation will be held.

Liberalization of legislation

Up to the 2012 it was rather hard to register a new political party in Russia. Liberalization of the legislation after the massive protests of 2011, decrease of the minimal number of the party participants from 45,000 to 500 persons at the moment of registration of new parties have led to a rapid growth of its number. Since 2012 when the new version of the law “About political

parties” came into effect, the total number of the registered parties has grown more than ten times. According to the information of the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation, in April 2014 there were 77 registered parties in Russia. By the way, there are 70 more advisory committees which have a goal to create a political party. The consequences of such a sudden growth of the number of the parties are more likely to be adverse than positive. Many of the registered parties have the same or partly the same names and that can complicate elections. The investigation of the names of the parties has shown that such words as Communist, Socialistic, Popular, Social justice, Rebirth are used more often. The idea of social justice is widely used: four or more parties have these words in the names. But the concept of the popular party is the most “best-selling” – seven parties are named in such a way. The scale of corruption on each level of the vertical power structure and insufficient struggle with this social disaster are reflected in the name of such a party as “Nation against corruption”. According to the names of some parties their chairmen hardly realize the tasks they will need to resolve if they come to power. Some of them are: “Smart Russia”, “Homeland”, “Pro our Patria”, “Pirate party”, “Truth”, “Party of action”, “Dignity” and others.

Multi partisanship in modern Russia

A list of many parties can embarrass the electors and lower significantly their selective activity instead of arising it. It is no wonder that now there are some counter-proposals directed to the increase of the limit of the number of party participants. That will make it possible to block up appearance of tiny parties, aimed to be of interest of a leader and his confidants and not that of social strata. The number of such parties is often limited by the authorities in the center and at the local level. These are often created on basis of personal, or even family, relations, sympathies, friendship and not on the basis of solidarity in intentions. The clientele-parties which appeared in Russia express the interests not of separate social strata but those of their clients. Any person or group including criminals which are interested can act as their clients.

One more adverse consequence of multiparty in the modern Russia is creation of “spoiler parties”. Thus in the end of November

2013 in became known that the party "Homeland" changed its name and became "National Alliance". Previously the supporters of Alexei Navalniy, one of the opposition leaders, have tried twice to register a party with this name. The experts say that creation of the party named "National alliance" along with "Alliance" of Alexei Navalniy, Communist party of Social Justice along with CPRF, "Civil Power" along with "Civil platform" is directed to deepen the control over the opposition and its activity from the side of authorities which now have the power. In particular, such a process as abdication of the oppositional leader by the breakup of the party is often used. We saw such actions in the 2005 when the ex-prime minister Mikhail Kasianov was not allowed to lead the Democratic party of Russia. The technology of breakup of the party was used successfully when Mikhail Prokhorov was abdicated from the position of the leader of the party "Right Cause". Today there are registered parties of all the political and non-political courses in Russia: political party "Born in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics," political party of the "Taxpayers", Russian Political Party "Russian Party of gardeners", Russian Political Party "Automotive Russia", etc. There is also a political party with a symbolic name "Against all" in the list of the registered parties under the №39.

In the XXI century parties ceased to follow any ideology. In the western countries its activity is often of seasonal nature (from elections to elections), being a member of the party doesn't always mean to act in any of party cells and quite often is limited by buyout of a membership card once a year. There are many newly created parties in Russia which do not declare any ideological preferences- "Union of citizens", "Party of the Russian pensioners", "Young Russia", "Honesty (Person, justice, responsibility)", "Party of the spiritual transformation of Russia" and others. Soon more than 150 parties are expected to appear and that can promote the manipulation of the choice of the electors. Some of the parties will deprive the CPRF's and the "A Just Russia" votes and the other part of the parties will promote the policy of compromising, serve as support for the "United Russia" party legitimizing its decisions and actions, improving the image of the power party.

CONCLUSION

Summing up, it should be noted that the development of the party system of modern Russia is largely contradictory. Russian party system can be regarded as an example of institutional anomalies, ie accordance with the formal models of party systems of democratic countries its functional mechanism and efficiency have changed significantly, a feature of a multi-party system became monotseitrichnost. (Kalinin, 2007; Ziryakov, 2007, Isaev, 2008; Kryukova, 2013)

One more adverse consequence of the multi-party system is a new type of business - the business for creation and registration of the parties of any realm of politics on the desire of a client. On different sources, the "turnkey" party in Russia costs from 1 to 3 million. As the successful businessman in this political segment, the Russian mass media repeatedly called the political technologist Andrey Bogdanov who more than ten federal parties acted as the founder. A Campaigner Andrey Bogdanov, creator of more than 10 federal parties is often mentioned in this political segment as a successful businessman. According to the evidence of A. Bogdanov, he has "worked" with the Democratic party of Russia, the United party of Russia "Rus", the "United Russia", "Party of the Russian pensioners", the Unity of the shareholders of the joint stock "MMM", Party of the national capital of Sergei Mavrodi, and also he was occupied in the creation of the "Strong Russia" and the "Popular-patriotic movement". Refusing creation of the parties from the very beginning, i.e. its organization, realization of all the preliminary and final events for the registration of the parties, A. Bogdanov accepts that he has consulted them. In May of the 2012 he expressed his readiness to assist "about 30 parties" (Bogdanov, 2014).

These are just some of the innovations in the policy of the modern Russia. In the whole they are aimed to raise the significance and influence of parties and other institutions of the civil society just as the subjects of the public policy. Social solidarity of the Russian society shouldn't be a model of a public policy imposed by the higher authorities, but a consequence and an indication of the consolidation of confidence of the citizens

to the political institutions, an indication of the readiness of the authorities and the society, the state and the citizens to build relations, oriented on a long-term communication, organization of a constructive discourse and an effective cooperation.

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