From communist boss politics to post-communist caciquismo — the meso-elite and meso-governments in post-communist countries

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Introduction: unitarization of Russia under Putin?

After the financial crisis in 1998 the Yeltsin Administration lay on its deathbed. Not surprisingly, it was regional chiefs (governors and republican presidents) that first proposed a design for the post-Yeltsin government. In August 1999, the “Fatherland” guided by Moscow Mayor Y. Luzhkov and “All Russia” composed of influential regional leaders such as Tatarstan president M. Shaimiev unified with each other. Moreover, this united organization, the OVR, succeeded in having E. Primakov (who was very popular at that time) as its president. It was obvious that these regional chiefs were promoting Primakov as the future candidate for the Russian presidency. It is not difficult to surmise what would have happened if it had not been for the Second Chechnya War and that the OVR had kept its popularity throughout the electoral cycle of 1999–2000. If Primakov had won the presidential election, a political regime similar to the American one during the second half of the 19th century...
would have emerged: the Russian government would actually have turned into a coalition of regional chiefs, the Federal Council would have become the most influential central organ, and President Primakov would have played a decent role as a symbolic monarch. This scenario appeared attractive to the voters in the summer of 1999, when Yeltsin repeatedly reshuffled prime ministers only for the sake of his and his family’s safety after the end of his tenure.

If the Yeltsin regime functioned on a subtle balance of power between the center and regions, this “gubernatorial scenario” was an obvious deviation from that modus operandi. In other words the alliance between the presidential faction and regional elites which had existed from 1994 to 1998, a lifeline of Russian “reformers” from communist revenge, declined at this moment. Under this situation, the presidential faction launched the Second Chechnya War on the pretext of dubious terrorist acts in Moscow. Plagiarizing the OVR’s centrist slogans, an alternative center (the Yedinstvo) took shape. “Dirty” information technology and psychological manipulation, which had been targeted at communists in 1996, was this time fired towards the centrist opposition. Luzhkov was alleged to have ordered the killing of the owner of the Hotel “Slavyanskaya.” Human viscera were shown on television under the disguise that the scene was that of the operation which Primakov had undergone. Just as the communists had been dispirited long before the voting day of the 1996 presidential election, the centrist opposition of 1999 had already lost its morale on the eve of the parliamentary elections. As a result of its inactive electoral campaign, the OVR was defeated. Regional chiefs, such as Shaimiev, Bashkortostan president M. Rakhimov and St. Petersburg Mayor Yakovlev, loudly declared their secession from the OVR or appeared to become oblivious of its existence, and jumped onto the Putin’s bandwagon.

Despite this gubernatorial appeal, and in contrast to Yeltsin in the 1996 presidential elections, Putin’s Yedinstvo had its own local organizational bases. One was the institution of “civil defence”, at the top of which stood the minister for emergency situations, Sergei Shoigu. As a remnant of the militarist old regime, this institution covers all the locales of the CIS and continues to be quite active. Other grass roots organizations were sports associations, the mobilization of which became possible because of the inclusion of the national heroic wrestler Alexander Karelin at the top of the candidate list of the Yedinstvo. A third type were local associations of Afghan veterans. Exploiting these quasi-social organizations, Putin was able to realize an electoral campaign distinguishable from Yeltsin’s 1996 campaign which was bluntly dependent on regional/local administrations. This could not but influence the balance of power between Putin and regional chiefs.

On the other hand, however, the corporative solidarity of regional chiefs continued to be alive even after the defeat of the OVR, which limits Putin’s centralizing tendency. One centralizing measure requires another concession to regional or subregional elites. True, regional chiefs were deprived of the status of senators.1 Instead,

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1 If direct elections of senators had been introduced (as Putin intended in his original bill), it would have caused as much an impact on the Russian party system as impact on the American party system caused by the similar transformation of the US Senate by the 17th Amendment to the Constitution at the beginning of the 20th century, but hardly more. The supporters of unitarist principles of state building,
however, the “State Council” composed of regional chiefs was introduced. The proposed statification of counties accompanied by the appointment system of county chiefs would undoubtedly have made the Russian state more unitary. However, on the contrary, parliamentary amendments to Putin’s bill, which were to compensate for the newly introduced prerogative of governors to fire mayors and county chiefs for their alleged legal violations, consolidated counties’ legal status as units for local self-government.²

True, federal districts have proved to be playing a pivotal, if not decisive, role, in particular in the campaign to overcome contradictions between federal and regional legislations. However, the manner of this coordination reveals that the Russian Federation has become even more asymmetrical than under Yeltsin. First of all, Putin appointed the former prime minister Sergei Kirienko, the only civilian among the seven presidential representatives of federal districts, to the post of the Volga District plenipotentiary. Thus Putin expressed his respect towards Tatarstan and Bashkortostan. If Kirienko organized a coordinating commission with Tatarstan representatives and the process of this legal coordination is based on mutual and consent principle,³ the “coordination” with the legislations of Sverdlovsk Oblast (one of the most influential, ethnically Russian donor-regions) assumes command methods: the regional assembly has been obliged to make amendments to regional laws, responding to numerous protests of the regional Prosecutors Office. There is no coordinating commission between Ekaterinburg and Moscow. This asymmetric characteristic reminds us of the Russian Federation on the eve of the adoption of the 1993 Constitution, when only national republics were privileged and, on the other hand, Russian donor-regions were humiliated by being downgraded to the states of the poor, subsidized regions.

such as Yabloko, believe that direct elections of senators will make the Russian state more unitary. But this premise can be questioned. For example, state parliamentary elections in the US were more “federalized” under the system of indirect elections (nomination of federal senators by state parliaments) since under this system regional elections inevitably became sensitive to federal issues, as was exemplified by the renowned debate between A. Lincoln and S. Douglas in Illinois in 1858. When the Japanese government introduced a modern system of local self-government in 1890, councilors of prefecture assemblies were to be elected by and from among city and county councilors. The Japan Ministry of Internal Affairs feared that direct elections of prefecture councilors would politicize prefecture politics excessively. What happened was the opposite. Under the system of indirect elections of prefecture councilors, city and county politics became too politicized since the electorate were conscious that they were voting not only for local but, in practice, also for prefecture councilors. Thus prefecture issues, which had been significantly nationalized by this period, began to influence local elections. Observing this, the Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs switched course and introduced the system of direct elections of prefecture councillors as early as 1899.

³ If federal representatives find one or another provisions of Tatarstan legislation more “progressive” than its federal counterparts, they promise to make the federal laws closer to Tatarstan ones. This happened in regard to the coordination of the Russian and Tatarstan Land Codes (Interview with Galeev M.G., member of the Presidium of the Tatarstan State Council. Tatarstan’s leading representative to the Kirienko’s Coordinating Commission, December 20, 2000, Kazan).
True, Putin has been tough in regard to fiscal centralization: regions were forced to compile the 2001 budgets according to the new Tax Code which will make regional budgets heavily dependent on federal transfers. Local budgets were made even more vulnerable since VAT, the most stable source of revenue, was excluded and only taxes on profits and income, both of which are extremely difficult to collect under the widespread tax evasion and salary arrears, were left to municipalities. However, Putin proved to be tolerant in regard to the issue of intra-regional institution building. Kirienko’s coordinating commission, for the first time on behalf of the Federation, recognized officially that the statification of raions (counties) and cities in Tatarstan and the appointment system of chiefs of these units had produced “certain positive results” and it was worth continuing this “experiment,” although this form of local institution is an indisputable violation of federal laws.

The completion stage of this preferential treatment of Tatarstan is Putin’s tacit support for the third term of Shaimiev’s presidency, although the third term of regional chiefs is prohibited by the Federal Law on General Principles of Organization of Legislative and Executive Organs of Power of Federal Constituents adopted in October 1999. In November 29, 2000 an amendment to this law, stating that chiefs’ terms are counted not from the beginning of their tenure but from the adoption of the law (namely, October 1999), was proposed to the Russian State Duma. Thus Shaimiev and the other sixteen chiefs who wish to run for their third term will be allowed to do so, if the amendment is adopted in time. A number of Duma deputies resisted this amendment but after three votes it passed the first reading. Judging from the experience of the confirmation of Sergei Kirienko as prime minister by the State Duma in the spring of 1998, this process implies that a huge sum of money operated behind the scene. This is the extent to which Putin needs Shaimiev. Despite the harsh battle in 1999, a symbiosis of Putin and Shaimiev, which does not yield to the former Yeltsin–Shaimiev amicability, took place during the first year of Putin’s presidency.

Such nuances of Putin’s regional policy have not been analyzed by foreign observers in an adequate manner. One of the reasons for which foreign and also Russian observers overestimated Putin’s centralizing tendency seems to be their insufficient understanding of the origin and raison d’etre of the Yeltsin regime. The astonishment caused by Putin’s rapid promotion made these observers believe that the Yeltsin regime, characterized by asymmetrical, semi-confederative federalism, was the product of Yeltsin’s ill health or political maneuvers to prevent communist revenge. This is why it is worth reconsidering the history of

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4 Aforementioned interview with Galeev M.G.
5 For Shaimiev, by the end of January 2001. However, the Power Sharing Treaty between the Russian Federation and Tatarstan signed in February 1994 listed intra-regional institution building in the items of exclusive competence of Tatarstan (in contrast to the Russian Constitution which lists the issue in the items of “joint realization”). Therefore, according to the principal position of Tatarstan regionalists, Shaimiev has the right to run for his third term, irrespective of the amendment of the federal law. According to them, however, this is not the case for other chiefs of regions whose power sharing treaties are less favorable (Interview with Khakimov R.S., adviser of the Tatarstan president, December 22, 2000, Kazan).
center/regional/subregional relations in post-communist countries in a comparative perspective, which would prove that Russia’s shift towards confederation during the last decade was a much more substantial process than it appeared. Actually the political regimes of post-communist countries have diversified in terms of the issue of how and to what extent regimes have become unitary or, to the contrary, deconcentrated (see Fig. 1). In my view, a crucial reason for diversification has been whether communist boss politics in a particular country (or region) has adapted itself to post-communist conditions and thus evolved into caciquismo, a form of machine politics.6

Communist regimes were not alien to machine politics. There existed at least four

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6 Caciques are rural bosses who played the role of political brokers between the central authorities and local communities in South European countries in the nineteenth century. This concept is often also adopted for rural bosses in East European and Latin American countries. Caciquismo is regarded as a variant of semi-polyarchy, see Kern and Dolkart (1973). Although the term “caciquismo” is often used interchangeably with the term “machine politics” in political science, I prefer to rely upon the former, since the latter term, due to its American origin, is associated with urban politics, while its post-communist version in the FSU is characterized by the rural emphasis of the recruitment of bosses and mobilization of votes. It is obvious that Russian and Ukrainian “parties of power” mobilize votes much more effectively in rural than urban areas. Several theoretical frameworks which pay attention to meso-elites in post-communist countries are introduced in Matsuzato (2000a, pp. 145–152).
preconditions for them. First, a hidden deconcentration of power by virtue of the unofficial independence which the regional and local elites, in particular, party first secretaries, used to enjoy. Second, the existence of patron–client hierarchies among these elites. Third, electoral technology aimed at the extreme mobilization of votes. Fourth, a patriarchal political culture which idealizes khozyain (master)-style political leadership. The only condition for machine politics which was lacking under communism was competitive elections. When the epoch of competitive elections arrived and the CPSU (which was cementing the state) disappeared, the Russian communist regime naturally evolved into a typical caciquismo. Have similar phenomena taken place in other post-communist countries? If not, why?

In the next section I will describe the diversification of post-communist political regimes through an international comparison. In the third section, I will try to prove that meso-elites (regional and local bosses) were a crucial actor in caciquismo building through a comparison between Samara, Tambov, and Sverdlovsk Oblasts in Russia. The obvious inconsistency of the geographic scope of the analysis is justified by the assumption that the same motive generated both interregional and international diversification of post-communist regimes.

Seven criteria for international comparison

The level of deconcentration of post-communist states can be measured, in my view, by seven criteria: (1) constitutional definitions; (2) electiveness of governors, mayors and county chief executives; (3) are meso-parliaments (regional and county assemblies) elected directly by the population or, in contrast, do these assemblies consist of delegates from the lower local authorities?; (4) do regional or local budgets exist or, in contrast, are the public finances at these levels incorporated into the single state budget (konsoldirovannyi obshchegosudarstvennyi byudzhet)?; (5) if governors, mayors or chief executives are appointed from above, from what group of leaders are the candidates nominated, local or non-local?; (6) career pattern of regional and local elites: do they prefer to remain the head of a cat than to become the tail of a lion? In other words, is it regarded as a promotion if a regional or local chief executive is recruited to the post of a department head of the central or regional government respectively?; and, finally, (7) functioning of the institutions which manage state properties, including their privatization.

In other words, if a regime defines itself as a unitary state in its constitution, if there are no directly elected meso-parliaments, if regional and local chief executives are appointed from above, especially if they are often appointed not from the representatives of the region or locale (i.e. ignoring one or another candidate’s “territory of influence”), if the regime compiles only an integrated single national budget, if mayors willingly abandon their posts to become department heads of the regional administration, and if its privatizing organ is actually, not just verbally (as is the case with Russia), centralized, the regime can be regarded unitary. Obviously, the first three criteria—(1), (2) and (3)—focus on the constitutional outlooks of the regimes, whereas the last three—(5), (6) and (7)—pay more attention to the reality
of their functioning. The fourth criterion, the mode of budget structure, is both constitutional and functional.

The characterization of post-communist political regimes according to these seven criteria is shown in Table 1, which confirms the contents of Fig. 1. What is characteristic is that, despite the contrast between political regimes in Eastern Central European and Central Asian countries in terms of their “closeness to democracy”, in both groups of countries independence and the influence of meso-elites and meso-governments have been effectively confined after the decline of communist regimes. Poland and the Czech Republic largely fulfill all of the seven conditions of unitariness, although the 2001 local reform in the Czech Republic softened its unitariness to an extent. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, not only regional/local chief executives but also chairs of regional/local assemblies are appointed from above (regional assembly chairs are de jure nominated by the President, while city and village assembly chairs are de facto appointed by county akims [chiefs]7). Being on the top

Table 1
Typology of post-communist political regimes according to seven criteria

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<th>Countries</th>
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<td>Tatarstan</td>
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<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
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7 In Kyrgyzstan the assembly chairs of villages (ayl), the only units of local self-government in the country, are elected by and from among the assembly deputies, and the county akims appoint them to

a Constitutional definition: ○ = federal state or the presence of strong meso-governments; × = unitary state.

b Chief executives: ○ = elected; × = appointed from above; △ = partially elected and partially appointed.

c Meso-parliaments (regional and county assemblies): ○ = directly elected by the population; × = consist of delegates from the lower authorities.

d Independent regional and local budgets: ○ = exist; △ = municipalities compile their own budgets, while regional authorities, although incorporated into the single national budget, prepare preliminary budgets; ×-1 = municipal budgets exist only at the community level, while regional and county public finances are incorporated in the single national budget system; ×-2 = even “municipal” finances at the community level are incorporated in the single national budget but meso-governments compile preliminary budgets to negotiate with the higher authorities.

e If chief executives are appointed, from what group of leaders are they nominated?: ○ = almost exclusively local; × = irrespective of whether local or non-local; △ = in principle local, but with exceptions.

f Regional/local leaders’ preferences in career pattern: ○ = the head of a cat rather than the tail of a lion; × = the tail of a lion rather than the head of a cat.

h Management of state properties: ○ = decentralized; × = centralized.
of the chevron, political regimes in ethnic Russian regions of the RF are characterized by the extreme deconcentration of state power (in the sense of not only an almost confederational federalism but also a de facto continental system of local government\textsuperscript{8}), meaningful elections at all levels of government, and the rising power of meso-elites. Between ethnically Russian regions of Russia and the eastern and western extremes of the post-communist territory there are two marginal zones: the western one extends from Slovakia to Ukraine and the eastern one is represented by national republics of Russia.

As shown in Fig. 2, this chevron takes an ideal form if we concentrate on the first three constitutional criteria. In particular, the second criterion, i.e. electiveness of chief executives, distinguishes in relief the political regimes in ethnically Russian

![Fig. 2. Typology of regional and local governments in post-communist countries (based on constitutional appearances).](http://online.ucpress.edu/cpcs/article-pdf/34/2/175/3496/cpcs_34_2_175.pdf)

\textsuperscript{8} On the de facto continental characteristics of the Russian system of local self-government, see Matsuzato (1998: pp. 16–19).
regions of Russia from the other political regimes, as Table 2 shows. There are two types of approaches to restrict the electiveness of meso-institutions. The first is the Czech and Ukrainian type which allows only basic settlements (cities, towns and villages) to have self-governing bodies with elected (directly or indirectly) executives. The second is the Tatarstan and Central Asian type which statified not only counties but also cities. Only in Russian regions of Russia are chief executives at all levels of government elected. Moreover, in Russia deputies of meso-parliaments are elected by the population. This situation has resulted in the well-known endless marathon of elections in Russia. Probably, the weight of the total expenses for elections within the GDP in Russia is the largest in the world. It is not surprising that professional assistance for electoral campaigns (“image-making” in the contemporary Russian lexicon) has become a profitable industry only in Russia among CIS countries. Thus Leonid Kuchma had no alternative but to hire “image makers” from Russia in his campaign for the second presidency in 1999.

During 1994–1995 Ukraine surprised the world twice. First, by the overwhelming victories gained by the incumbent regional chief executives and regional Rada (Soviet) chairs in the 1994 gubernatorial elections. Second, after only a year these victors were transformed into state officials (who could be fired by the President of Ukraine even during their period of tenure, namely before 1998) under the Constitutional Agreement concluded between the President and the Supreme Rada in June 1995. What was even more surprising was that none of these governors, including the usually defiant eastern ones, resisted this degradation of their status. It is obvious that meso-institutions in Ukraine had lost their meaning as elective bodies even before the Constitutional Agreement. By contrast, the issue of whether or not their offices are elected has been very important for Russian regional and local elites, although the incumbent governors and mayors in Russia are much less secure in

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<th>City mayors</th>
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<td>Poland after the 1998 reform</td>
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9 Before its local reform in 1998 Poland belonged to this type.
10 In 1992–1994 they were named “Representatives of the President of Ukraine”. After the local elections in 1994 until the Constitutional Agreement in 1995 they were officially “Chairs of oblast Radas”, and after 1995 they became “Chiefs of oblast state administrations”. Despite these frequent reorganizations their functions continued to be almost the same.
competitive elections than their Ukrainian counterparts. It was often the Russian regional elite themselves that requested Yeltsin to relinquish the appointment system of governors.

The importance of electiveness of their offices for Russian meso-elites is demonstrated by the history of arguments around the status of counties in Russia. Russian counties have remained self-governing bodies despite constant attempts of the presidential administration, in tandem with a number of “progressive” Russian jurists, to adopt the Ukrainian model (i.e. statification of counties). After the October 1993 events Yeltsin allowed only cities but not counties to reintroduce representative organs. One reason was that the fate of counties in the post-Soviet local institutions was not yet clear. When the Russian Federal Law on General Principles of the Organization of Local Self-Government (1995) did not specify counties as units of local self-government (Art. 3, Clause 1), many observers thought that Russia had chosen the Eastern Central European path to statify or abolish county governments. However, during 1995 and 1996 not only cities but also counties adopted municipal charters and county chiefs and assemblies were elected at the end of 1996. As a matter of fact, the Ukrainian model could not be realized in the fateful year of 1996, when Yeltsin desperately needed county bosses’ support to win the presidential elections.

Thus at the end of 1996 it seemed that the status of Russian counties as self-governing bodies had been consolidated. In January 1997, however, the decision of the Russian Constitutional Court on the Udmurtiya Case (constitutional debate caused by the attempts of the Udmurtiya republic authorities to statify cities and counties of the republic) not only confirmed the right of federal constituents to introduce state organs at the city and county level, but also articulated its sympathy towards the statification of counties, arguing that the obligatory existence of county self-governments deprives the population of the right to organize self-governing bodies at the lower, rural community level. This argument would be repeated in 2000 by Putin in his explanatory memorandum attached to the bill to statify counties. This January 1997 decision of the Russian Constitutional Court, not surprisingly, made...
the Udmurtiya republic authorities anticipate that the federal authorities would agree to statification of counties, and the second round, less famous than the first, of the “Udmurtiya Case”, targeted at statification of counties under the tacit consensus of the Russian presidential administration, began.\footnote{This attempt eventually failed as late as the spring of 1998. For details see Egorov and Matsuzato (2000: pp. 320-345).}

In 1998, influential governors such as Eduard Rossel of Sverdlovsk and Ivan Sklyarov of Nizhegorod began to advocate for the statification of cities and counties, as well as for the appointment system of mayors and county chiefs. Thus the way was cleared for Putin’s bill to statify counties, which was, however, also defeated. This brief overview of the history of argument on Russian counties will reveal how consistent the attacks on counties have been. On the other hand, this also indicates how invincible Russian county elites are, since they have been able to survive the last decade as not only de facto but also de jure independent local bosses.

As for the third criterion, meso-parliaments composed of delegates from the lower authorities function in the present Czech Republic at the okresni level and functioned in Poland and Hungary before the local reforms in these countries in 1998 and in 1994 respectively (Ieda, 2000: pp. 63, 95 and 142). In 1996–1997 the President of Ukraine tried hard to introduce pre-1998 Polish-style regional Radas in Ukraine, but this desire was not realized under the Law on Local Self-Government in Ukraine adopted in May, 1997, which prescribed direct elections of oblast Rada deputies. The immediate reason for this failure was the opposition of the Supreme Rada, but, in my view, the real reason was that the regional elite in Ukraine had been able to preserve stronger independence than their Polish counterparts did (Matsuzato, 2000b: pp. 41–42).

Even in countries where regional/local chief executives are appointed from above, if the regional and local assemblies compile their own independent budgets, these assemblies, as well as the meso-elites rallying around these assemblies, are able to control, to some extent, the regional and local state administrations. This is why the fourth criterion is important. However, most post-communist countries have chosen unitary budget systems, which can be divided into two subgroups from a formal point of view. The first includes countries where regional and county public finances were incorporated into single national budget systems, while basic local self-governments are allowed to compose their own budgets. For example, in Poland, even after the 1998 local reform only communities (gminas) compose their own budgets. The second subgroup consists of Central Asian countries and a number of Russian national republics in which even basic local self-governments are incorporated into single national budget systems.

What is more important, however, is the mode of this incorporation. In FSU countries it is often the case that local administrations and assemblies compile tentative budgets, submit them to the regional authorities, and negotiate to make their original ideas be realized as much as possible. Regional authorities repeat this time consuming process with the central ministry of finance. This deconcentrated budgetary prac-
tice requires the existence of representative organs, however nominal they are, even at stratified regional/local tiers of government. This is the case not only for Kyrgyzstan and Tatarstan, but also for apparently highly unitary Moscow City, where prefectures (districts) have representative organs. In contrast, in Poland regional (wojewodztwo) and county (powiat) public finance is actually no more than a part of the single state budget. There are no regional and county taxes in Poland (Ieda, 2000: p. 74). One of the characteristics of the 1998 local reform in Poland was to divide state and municipal functions at the regional level. As for the state functions, the various fields of public expenditures at the regional level are no more than parts of one or other central ministries’ expenditures. Therefore, what appears to be spatial distribution of budget expenditures is actually the competition between central ministries. As for the municipal functions of regional authorities, the Ministry of Finances proposes “model budgets” for them and the regional assemblies confirm these model budgets after certain modifications. The situation is the same for counties which are formally self-governing units.

The troublesome, deconcentrated budget process in FSU countries is a symptom of the underdevelopment of Weberian bureaucracy. In FSU countries, central ministries are not able to concentrate information themselves, figure out “objective” necessities and possibilities of regional and local communities, and impose budgets on these communities from above. This is why the deconcentration of the budget process in the FSU has a long history. Rather, the lack of centralized budgetary process determined the development of modern local self-government in the Russian Empire, the origin of which can be traced to the emergence of the concept of “local levies (zemskie povinnosti)”\(^\text{13}\) From the beginning of the 19th century various levies began to be classified according to their purposes and methods of collection into all-state (gosudarstvennye) and local (zemskie). Following this development, not surprisingly, a problem emerged as to how to manage these local revenues. The participation of local educated society (then, provincial noble assemblies) in this management was taken for granted from the very beginning. Thus, the management of these levies was an embryo of Russian local self-government, and the two concepts, “local self-government” and “management of local levies”, were mutually exchangeable in pre-revolutionary Russian state theory.\(^\text{14}\)

We are already shifting to functional criteria to examine the diversification of post-communist political regimes, and these criteria cannot but modify the ideal, symmetrical chevron shown in Fig. 2. Here, Russian regions’ deconcentrated characteristics lose their extreme salience, while the unitary-ness of the countries of eastern Central Europe is highlighted to a greater extent. As for the nomination of chief executives, despite the apparent predominance of the appointment system of regional/local chief executives in post-communist countries, in FSU countries the

\(^{13}\) In Russian public financial theory at the time, the word *povinnosti* meant not only levies in the strict sense in English. Rather, it included all kinds of transfer of resources from the population to the state or public institutions: monetary taxes, levies in kind, and corvée labor.

\(^{14}\) For details, see *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar’ — F.A. Brokgaui I. A. Efroim*, tom 24 (XII-A) (St. Petersburg, 1898), pp. 514–518.
candidates for these offices are selected from the local politicians. In other words, not only in Marginal Zones 1 and 2, but also in Central Asia, the higher authorities cannot govern the territories without the help of lower bosses.\(^{15}\) In contrast, in Poland wojewodas (governors) are literally prefects, who are delegated from the center, irrespective of their local political base. This results in radical reshufflings of wojewodas after any change of national governments.\(^{16}\)

As was the case with budgetary processes, this contrast in the functioning of appointment systems between Eastern Central Europe and the FSU also seems to be explained by the different levels of “Weberization” of these countries. The underdevelopment of Weberian bureaucracy in the USSR and the FSU forced and continues to force the central (or regional) authorities to rely upon regional (or local) bosses who know where to seek unofficial resources to govern and are able to make regional (or local) patron-client networks operate. This practice of intra-regional or intra-local nomination of top leaders began in the Brezhnev era, when the rough and ready cadre policy under Stalin and Khrushchev became unacceptable because the national economy and government became too complicated for this method. Moreover, the intra-regional/local nomination resulted in the notorious “feudalization” of party first secretaries, which, in turn, hindered the development of elements of Weberian bureaucracy in the USSR. Thus intra-regional/local nomination continues to be the only way to govern post-soviet regions and locales. The latest challenge to this state of affairs was Gorbachev’s “paratroop” cadre policy, according to which “non-local” leaders were preferably appointed as the first secretaries of CPSU regional committees. The catastrophic performances of these “paratroopers” are still fresh in the memory of FSU elites, and this prevents the introduction of a pure appointment system in the Polish style.

The sixth criterion, the career pattern of regional/local elites, reveals a contrast between Central Asian and the other FSU countries. While Russian, Ukrainian and Tatarstan meso-elites prefer to be the head of a cat rather than to become the tail of a lion, Central Asian meso-elites’ behavior is the opposite. For example, in Kyrgyzstan, governors and county chiefs (akims), as a rule, serve in their posts only for one or two years and are “promoted” to department head or a similar post at the central or regional level respectively. Considering that, in Russia, Samara mayor Oleg Sysuev was recruited to the center as a federal minister and Nizhegorod governor Boris Nemtsov was promoted to vice-prime minister, it is obvious how insignificant the status of meso-elites of Kyrgyzstan is.

As for the seventh criterion, the Funds of Properties (institutions which manage state properties and control their privatization) in the CIS are decentralized institutions, irrespective of how the country or region defines its constitutional structure

\(^{15}\) However, we can witness exceptions (i.e. non-local nominees) in Kyrgyzstan more often than in Russia and Ukraine. It is not clear if these cross-regional/local nominations become possible because of the small size of the country, or if it indicates a relative unitary-ness of Central Asian countries. To answer this question, we need to examine regional cadre reshuffling in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the scales of which are significantly larger than that of Kyrgyzstan.

\(^{16}\) In this sense, the Polish governorship is similar to the Japanese one before World War II.
(federal or unitary) and despite the fact that even in Russia the Fund of Properties is a federal organ and thus should be centralized. In CIS countries decision-making of regional and local Funds of Properties has been highly influenced by the regional and local elites, thus providing the latter with important resources for their electoral politics. In contrast, the Polish Ministry of the Transfer of Properties has been a truly centralized institution and there is no room for local elites to influence the privatization process. Thus in Poland official policies of privatization can be modified only through individual negotiations between enterprises and the ministry. A historical reason for the contrast between the CIS and Poland is that in the Soviet Union and CIS “sovereignization” of properties preceded their privatization.

Our analysis based on the functional criteria (5), (6) and (7) has destroyed the ideal chevron presented in Fig. 2, but instead provided Fig. 3. What is characteristic of Fig. 3 is that, first, Marginal Zones 1 and 2 are closer to ethnically Russian regions of Russia than to Eastern Central Europe. Second, the eastern extreme, Central Asian countries, are less unitary than the countries in Eastern Central Europe.

If ethnically Russian regions adopted electoral systems to select chief executives

Fig. 3. Typology of regional and local governments in post-communist countries (based on actual functioning of government).

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17 Even in unitary Tatarstan, the cities and counties of which are defined as state institutions, if an asset is transferred from republican to local jurisdiction, the local officials unofficially call this “municipalization”.
and thus gave birth to *typical* caciquismo, in Marginal Zones rampant bossism is camouflaged by constitutional unitarism. Based on case studies of Ukraine and Tatarstan, I have advocated the term “centralized caciquismo” for these regimes. Joachim Hesse, in a collection he edited (Hesse, 2000) gave an answer to a traditional question posed by specialists of local government: why local governments of typically continental and most unitary type could emerge in France and South European countries, which are renowned for their powerful meso-elites? Hesse and his colleagues explained that in the countries with local institutions of the South European type, local elites tend to “colonize” central institutions despite the appearance of unitary-ness of the states (Hesse, 2000: p. 606). A typical vehicle for this colonization is the famous system of “cumul des mandates” (concurrence of local and state duties) in France (Hesse, 2000: p. 439). Centralized caciquismo can be regarded as a variation of this phenomena of “colonization”.

In countries and regions with centralized caciquismo, despite the predominance of appointment systems of chief executives, politics at the meso-levels are determined by electoral performance. Regional and local chief executives in Ukraine and Tatarstan are required to prove themselves before Leonid Kuchma or Mintimer Shaimiev by not only administrative but also electoral performance in their regions and locales (Matsuzato, 1999a, 2000b). Kuchma fires governors who cannot mobilize enough votes for him in presidential or parliamentary elections. So does Shaimiev, who, in addition, obliges newly appointed chief executives to run for the nearest by-elections of local and republican deputies. If chief executives lose one or two of these elections, Shaimiev fires them, admitting that the appointment of figures who cannot earn enough popular confidence was a mistake. In short, regional and local chief executives in Ukraine and Tatarstan are not bureaucrats in the Weberian sense, but boss politicians who are responsible for running electoral machines for the sake of higher authorities.

The relative weakness of meso-elites in Central Asian countries seems strange at first glance. Considering the patriarchal political tradition common for Eastern Slavs and Turkic nations and also the underdevelopment of Weberian bureaucracy common in FSU countries, in Central Asia it would have seemed more natural to see more deconcentrated regimes similar to centralized caciquismo. As for Kyrgyzstan, it is in fact nothing but a luxury to sustain the Soviet-type territorial division with twofold meso-structures (oblasts and raions) because of the small size of the country. However, we cannot explain the unitary-ness of the Kyrgyzstan state solely by its small size since Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are even more unitary than Kyrgyzstan, even though they have much larger territories and populations.

Let me tentatively explain this paradox by the following factors. First, in Central Asian countries infringements (falsifications) in elections are even more rampant than in Russia and Ukraine. Therefore, in Central Asia there is less need actually to

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18 For example, immediately after the 1998 parliamentary elections Kuchma fired as many as 15 of the 27 governors of the Ukraine, who could not mobilize enough votes for the then only pro-presidential party, the Popular Democratic Party of Ukraine. Kuchma repeated this practice between the first and final rounds of the 1999 presidential election.
mobilize votes and, accordingly, the elite are less ardent in combining state building with electoral politics than in Russia and Ukraine. In other words, where the elite are not facing serious challenges of competitive elections, communist boss politics cannot evolve into caciquismo. Second, even if the Kyrgyz elite tried to mobilize votes seriously, counties are not always useful for this purpose. Kyrgyz people shifted to a sedentary life after the socialist revolution and thus have still preserved strong tribal and clan networks, while homogeneous county-wide local communities have barely emerged. Under these conditions President Akaev prefers to rely upon ayl [large village] notables rather than county elites to win elections.

The analysis in this section has show that the relations between the center, regions and locales have been influenced by intra-regional or intra-local power structures. So let us add another factor of legislative/executive relations at regional and local levels. By adding a line indicating executive-legislative relations at subnational levels to Fig. 3, we obtain Fig. 4. The dotted line in the Figure represents representative-executive relations at subnational (or subregional) levels, whereas the solid line, as in Fig. 3, represents the level of deconcentration of power. As for the dotted line, we see a clear tendency: the further east the country is located, the stronger its subnational executive organs become and, accordingly, the more nominal its control by legislators.

Fig. 4. Typology of regional and local governments in post-communist countries. (Level of deconcentration and legislative executive relations.)

19 A typical example of this combination in Russia was that Yeltsin allowed elections of governors and local chief executives immediately after he entered the second term of his presidency and recognized that he would not run for his third term.
In Poland and the Czech Republic municipalities adopted the council system, in which municipal executives are elected or appointed by the municipal representative organs. Under this system, it is easy for councillors to control executives. Somewhere in Marginal Zone 1 the system of mayors elected directly by the population (the so-called system of strong mayors) begins to appear. In the ethnically Russian regions of the RF two systems become dominant—the strong mayoral system and its extraordinary variant, in which mayors are not only elected directly by the population but also preside over the local representative organs (we might call this the system of extraordinarily strong mayors). Somewhere in Marginal Zone 2 the appointment system of chief executives (in other words, statification of local institutions) begins to appear and this system becomes predominant in Central Asian countries.

As for the solid line (deconcentration of power), let me only add an explanation for Eastern Central European countries. Until recent times, in the Czech Republic subnational institutions had consisted only of state executive organs at the county (okresni) level and municipalities at the lower level of government (obec).21 This structure reminds us of the Anglo-Saxon system of local government in federal states (the USA, Canada, Australia) in view of the coexistence of county state organs and small-scale municipalities, although Czech experts explain that this system is a revival of the local reform in the 1860s under Austro-Hungary, which was based on a moderately continental model.

In Poland the position of meso-elites was significantly damaged as early as 1975, when counties (powiat) were abolished and regions (wojewodztwo) were divided into smaller “regions”. After 1990, similarly to the Czech local reform, counties were revived as branches of the regional state authorities, with regional chief executives being state officials. Under pressure from the European Union, the 1998 local reform introduced regional self-government with directly elected regional assemblies, but even this reform could not affect two credos of the unitary Polish state: the appointment system of wojewodas (governors) and the integrated single national budget.

The existence of regional self-governments and the continental practice of the delegation of state competence to municipalities (in other words, the absence of county state institutions) distinguish Hungarian local institutions from Czech and Polish unitarism. Thus Hungary belongs in Marginal Zone 1. In this country, however, state competence is delegated only to lower local self-governments (varos and kozseg) and the realization of this delegated competence is controlled by state

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20 It must be noted that the republican parliaments of national republics of Russia often enjoy more competence, authority and resources than their counterparts in ethnically Russian regions of Russia. One reason for this is that, in order to legitimize their statehood before Moscow, the national republics need to introduce relatively strong parliaments. Second, the elite of the national republics like to demonstrate their solidarity before the population, and the relatively strong parliaments serve this purpose. However, in the case of Russia’s regions, including national republics, I am referring to local representative organs, since these representative organs (not the republican ones) are the equivalents of the subnational parliaments of independent states.

21 In 2001, however semi-regional (Kraj) self-governments were reintroduced in the Czech Republic under pressure from the EU and because of the decline of the unitarist Vaclav Klaus. Counties remain as units for state administration.
officials at the regional (megye) level, not by regional self-governments. In this sense, Hungarian regional self-governments play only a decorative role.

Typical caciquismo emerges in the sphere circled in Fig. 4. Caciques require the maximum deconcentration of state power. As for the optimal subnational representative-executive relations for caciquismo, Fig. 4 shows that regional or local chief executives should be strong, but not so strong that they can ignore the representative organs completely.

What finally determined the diversification of post-communist countries in the unitary/deconcentrated dimension? Indisputably, the level of “Weberization” of the country is a decisive factor. In contrast, the scale of the country and its ethnic composition should not be overemphasized. True, Russia’s territory is much larger than Ukraine’s. But Ukraine is more heterogeneous than Russia in terms of language and ethnicity. Thus it is difficult to deny that arguments for a federal system during the preparation of the 1996 Constitution of Ukraine were more convincing than those for a unitary system. But eventually the unitary version won out. Kazakhstan is larger and more heterogeneous than Kyrgyzstan. In Kazakhstan, however, the amalgamation of oblasts in 1997 significantly damaged the former oblast elites. In contrast, regional elites in Kyrgyzstan have so far managed to survive, since the former administrative-territorial units have remained intact. Both the Czech Republic and Slovakia are territorially compact and ethnically homogeneous, but after the division of Czechoslovakia the two successor-states adopted different strategies of state building. Lithuania introduced unitary local institutions, while Croatia, almost the same size as Lithuania, introduced strong regional self-governments.

Polish Catholic conservatives and Ukrainian national democrats often justify their support for unitarism by security factors. According to them, young, premature Polish or Ukrainian statehood can be threatened by federalism or strong regional governments. This view appears obsolete at this moment, ten years after the transition. Yet this unitarist view becomes more arguable, if we consider, for example, that Croatia introduced strong regional self-governments despite the constant war threat and along with its tough nationality policies. On the other hand, we cannot deny that a stable framework of regional (trans-national) security would provide post-communist countries with the opportunities to choose more deconcentrated ways of state building. A state official in Kyrgyzstan told me that in Central Asian countries gubernatorial elections would be conceivable only when a trans-national confederation covering all the Central Asia emerges. This is an interesting point which could not be examined in this paper.

Overall, the typology shown by Figs. 1–4 is determined mainly by the subjective preferences of the national, regional, and subregional elite of the country. Among objective factors, the development of Weberian bureaucracy is saliently important.

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22 Slovakian local institutions are more continental and deconcentrated than Czech ones.

23 Interview with Murzaev S.K., head of public administration department. Academy of Management under the President of Kyrgyz Republic (June 19, 2000. Bishkek).
Other objective factors, such as spatial, ethnic and security issues, become relevant as far as they influence the subjective preferences of the elite.

**Interregional comparison within the RF**

In this section we will examine the conditions for the emergence of the post-communist caciquismo in detail by comparing subregional politics in the three ethnically Russian regions of the RF: Samara, Tambov, and Sverdlovsk. I focus on subregional politics, since caciquismo, as a rule, takes shape at a local (but not regional) level. In the theoretical framework of caciquismo, regional leaders belong to the category of “senior caciques” or “bosses of bosses.”

I picked out one region where a typical caciquismo regime emerged (Samara Oblast) and two deviant regions where caciquismo could not develop (Tambov and Sverdlovsk Oblasts). This sampling is interesting even at a glance, since the two deviant regions contrast with each other in terms of their political orientation. Sverdlovsk Oblast is the birthplace of Yeltsin and has been distinguished by extremely pro-reform electoral behavior, whereas Tambov Oblast is “the reddest region in Russia.” Nevertheless, both of them turned out to be unfavorable for caciquismo.

The result of a comparison of subregional politics in the three regions is shown in Table 3. We can discern five conditions affecting the caciquismo building: regional political culture, survival (or decline) of the pre-1990 elite (so-called nomenklatura), attitude of the regional administration towards local leaders, resources available for local leaders, and the development of local party politics.

**Regional political culture**

Caciquismo can develop in regions, where political culture is pragmatic. This is not only because ministerialismo (i.e. the inclination of elites to remain or participate in ruling factions by any means, even sacrificing their political credibility) is an important attribute of caciquismo, but also because of specific features of its post-communist version. First, the post-communist caciquismo requires tolerance on the part of the electorate towards the volte-face of the former communist leaders. Actually, in many regions of the RF the population do not pay attention to the political or moral consistency of their leaders, if only they are good managers. For example,

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24 It implies that regional leaders (administrations) can mobilize votes for the incumbent President or governors only with the help of local leaders (administrations). See Matsuzato (1998, pp. 14–16).

25 The revival of the governor in 1995 Oleg Betin, the regional leader of “Our Home Is Russia,” as a result of the gubernatorial elections held in December 1999 does not seem to indicate an ideological conversion of the former communist leaders. Rather, it was caused by miserable economic and administrative performance of the Popular Patriot incumbent, Aleksandr Ryabov (1995–1999).

26 Subregional party politics in Samara and Tambov Oblasts were analyzed in detail in Matsuzato (1999b). Subregional party politics in Sverdlovsk Oblast was analyzed in Matsuzato (1998). This section is a theoretical summary of the descriptions in these essays.
Table 3
Conditions for successful caciquismo building at the subregional level\textsuperscript{a}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional political culture</th>
<th>Samara Oblast</th>
<th>Tambov Oblast</th>
<th>Sverdlovsk Oblast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survival of pre-1990 local elite</td>
<td>Pragmatic</td>
<td>Idealistic</td>
<td>Pragmatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentages of the cities and raions, where the Gorbachevite policy of concurrence of the first CPSU secretary and the Soviet chair was realized in spring, 1990</td>
<td>Survived</td>
<td>Survived</td>
<td>Did not survive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The former CPSU local first secretaries and the former ispolkom chairs</td>
<td>New people</td>
<td>Favorites of the democratic revolution in 1990</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On whom the governor bet, when he appointed local chief executives for the first time in 1991-1992</td>
<td>The former ispolkom chairs</td>
<td>Rare (14%)</td>
<td>Often (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reshuffling of these firstly appointed chiefs during 1992–1996</td>
<td>Rare (13%)</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victories of the incumbent chiefs in the elections in 1996</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude of the regional administration towards local leaders</td>
<td>Tolerant</td>
<td>Tolerant</td>
<td>Repressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources available for local leaders</td>
<td>Abundant</td>
<td>Scarcce</td>
<td>Scarcce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>«Party-izedness» of local politics</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local party system</td>
<td>One party dominance</td>
<td>Competitive, polarized two-party system</td>
<td>Competitive, moderate multi-party system</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a} Statistic data on the cadre reshuffling at the local level shown in this table is based on my own quantitative analysis. For details, see Matsuzato (forthcoming).

during 1991–1995 Samara Governor, Konstantin Titov, changed his party affiliations four times, starting off in the CPSU and ending up in “Our Home Is Russia”, and thus received the honorable nickname “faithful son of five parties”.\textsuperscript{27} But Samarians are not disgusted by this behavior, so long as Titov is a good pragmatic manager. This is not the case, however, for Tambov Oblast. The humanitarian, idealist tradition

\textsuperscript{27} Recently he changed his party affiliation again, becoming one of the national leaders of the “United Right.”
of this oblast from the imperial period did not bless the transformation of the former communist leaders into capitalist caciques. In this oblast it is very important if he is a “defector” or not.

We should not attribute this “moral purity” of Tambovites to their ideological orientation. Located in the same Red Belt, for example, Orel and Lipetsk Oblasts have a political culture far removed from the Tambov one (in other words, close to the Samara one). Therefore, in these regions caciques did develop, only with another political orientation different from the Samarian caciques.

Moreover, in regions with pragmatic political cultures the electorate tends to distinguish regional and local elections from federal ones. This was particularly important in 1995–1996, since the federal elections during this period (i.e. the 1995 Duma and the 1996 presidential elections) were extremely ideologized. Therefore, a key for the incumbent governors and mayors to win in 1996–1997 was to convince the electorate of the difference between federal and regional/local elections, and thus make even Zyuganov’s supporters vote for them.

Survival of the nomenklatura

Since Russian caciques derived from the former communist bosses, the extent of their survival affected the caciquismo building decisively. Sverdlovsk Oblast in 1990 was in a revolutionary situation. As a result of the local Soviet elections in the spring of the year, the then existing local Soviet leaderships obedient to the oblast and local party committees were uprooted in most counties and cities, yielding their duties to new leaders recruited mainly from economic-managerial structures (so-called khozyaistvenniki). Most of these new leaders could remain in power until the first mayoral elections in 1996, despite the two changes of regional governments in 1993 and 1995, as Table 3 shows. However, this stable status of these “favorites of the democratic revolution” did not guarantee their victory in the first mayoral elections in 1996. During 1990–1996, many of them were discredited by their incompetence, dictatorial tendencies, and corruption. In this oblast, the 1996 mayoral elections allowed only 40% of the incumbent local chief executives (mayors) to be reelected, whereas the corresponding percentages in Samara and Tambov Oblasts

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28 Note that it was Tambov where Molokans, an origin of Russian Baptists, broke out: and where the local Bolsheviks conducted a merciless food levy during the Civil War and provoked the Antonov Uprising, whereas in neighboring regions of the same Central Black Soil, for example, Penza, the local Bolsheviks manipulated to lower the norm for levy, lest the local class struggle should intensify. Today, the region’s typically rural socio-economic structure is compensated by abundant “social capital”: the concentration of institutions of higher education in Tambov City and a dense network of civic organizations, such as reading, musical, and handicraft circles.

29 In contrast, most of the “favorites of the democratic revolution” promoted in 1989–1991 proved their administrative and political incompetence, and even those who survived until 1996 were almost washed out in the competitive elections of that year.

30 In 1993 the governor Eduard Rossel was fired by Yeltsin because of his attempt to create the Ural Republic. The next appointee of Yeltsin, Aleksei Strakhov, was easily defeated by Rossel in the gubernatorial elections in 1995, thus Rossel came back to the gubernatorial chair.
amounted to 66% and 68% respectively. To sum up, Sverdlovsk Oblast experienced two Big Bangs, in 1990 and 1996, and the fundamental reshuffling of local leaders caused by these Big Bangs precluded the development of the caciquismo.

Both Konstantin Titov (Samara Governor, 1991–present) and Vladimir Babenko (Tambov Governor, 1991–1995) were from marginal nomenklatura. However, while Titov was conscious of his weak position in the regional ex-nomenklatura community, and put his faith in the existing leaders (former local CPSU first secretaries and chairs of the local Soviet executive committees), when he appointed the local chief executives at the end of 1991, Babenko behaved in the opposite manner, although for the same reason. Babenko recruited a significant number of the local chief executives, violating the standard career pattern and thus pushing a significant portion of the existing local elite into opposition. Moreover, Babenko’s cadre policy from 1992–1995 was very unstable. From the introduction of the appointment system (at the end of 1991) to the first mayoral elections in 1996 41% of the local chief executives in Tambov Oblast were reshuffled, whereas in Samara and Sverdlovsk these percentages were 14 and 13 respectively.

As a whole, the extent of the survival of the pre-1990 leaders turned out to be highest in Samara Oblast, moderately high in Tambov Oblast, and lowest in Sverdlovsk Oblast.

Attitude of the regional administration towards the local elite

Under the party-Soviet hierarchy the relationship between regional and local leaders was characterized by the principle “live and let live”. Of course, this paternalistic protection of the local leaders by the regional leaders was combined with the existence of a strict control of the former by the latter. In many regions of Russia this principle in regulating the relations between the regional and local elites continues to function even after the collapse of the Soviet system. As I have already noted, caciquismo can develop only when the higher authorities protect local caciques, thus creating a favorable environment for the latter.

This continuation of the hierarchical relationship between the regional and local elites has its institutional aspect. The Soviet system was an extreme version of the continental system of local government, in which state competence was delegated to local authorities. After the demise of the Soviet system many regions of Russia chose the continental model of local government to which they had been accustomed. Among the three cases analyzed here, the Samara and Tambov oblast administrations belong to this tolerant group. If the tolerant attitude of Samara Governor Titov towards local leaders was an intentional strategy, Tambov Governor Babenko was too weak to dictate to local leaders. Moreover, the fateful year for Russian local government, 1995, when the federal and regional laws on local self-government were prepared and adopted, coincided in this oblast with a harsh battle in regional politics.

31 Titov was the chair of the Samara City Soviet, but only a member of the bureau of the CPSU city committee. Babenko was the director of the oblast hospital.
resulting in two changes of governors, resulting in two changes of governors,\textsuperscript{32} which determined the weak initiative of the oblast administration in the subregional institutional building. As a whole, in both Samara and Tambov Oblasts the continental system of local government continues to function. Subregional branches of the oblast authorities were not introduced and state competence is realized by the delegation of the competence to local administrations.

True, machine politics emerged in large cities in the United States, a country with the Anglo-Saxon local government system. But large cities by their nature require the concentration of resources to mayors, irrespective of whether the higher authorities delegate state competence to them or not. If we put these exceptions aside, we can surmise that the continental system is more favorable for caciquismo, since under the Anglo-Saxon system, i.e. under the coexistence of subregional state institutions and municipalities, the status of municipal leaders will not be higher than that of local notables providing daily care to their communities. Without a nationwide party system, these local notables would not be incorporated into the hierarchical relationship with the regional elite, nor would be promoted to become regional or national statesmen. This is exactly what Sverdlovsk Governor Rossel and his party (the Transformation of the Urals) pursued by introducing subregional state institutions named administrative districts (upravlencheskie okruga) and thus trying to limit the function of municipalities to purely local affairs. Before long, it became evident that even in this oblast it was too costly to reorganize the traditional continental system into an Anglo-Saxon one.\textsuperscript{33} Nevertheless, Rossel’s anti-municipal policies were effective enough to prevent local bosses from consolidating their position.

Remarkably, centrifugal regional leaders in relation with the federal center, such as those of Sverdlovsk Oblast and national republics, tend to be very restrictive towards the local self-governments in their own territories since they think that strong local self-government risks the internal “solidarity” of their regions and thus facilitates the center’s intervention. However, if in a number of national (especially Turkish) republics local elites’ independence has been de facto guaranteed by the practice of centralized caciquismo, Rossel’s municipal policies have been actually repressive.

\textit{Resources available for local leaders}

It is well-known that machine politics is built on the personal distribution of resources (such as subsidies, education and job opportunities) by local bosses. The underdeveloped market economy in Russia adds the most fundamental economic opportunities (for example, distribution of gasoline and firewood, and collection and

\textsuperscript{32} In February, 1995 the modest democrat Babenko resigned, passing the gubernatorial post to the centrist Oleg Betin. Since Betin introduced the “Our Home Is Russia” movement to Tambov Oblast, he fell into a serious confrontation with communists, who in turn put up their own candidate, Aleksandr Ryabov, in the gubernatorial election in December of that year and won.

\textsuperscript{33} The purposes and difficulties of the attempt to introduce administrative districts are analyzed in Matsuzato (1998, pp. 13–14).
sale of agricultural products) to this category of “resources” exploited by local administrations for political (electoral) purposes. In this sense, local leaders in Samara Oblast are most blessed among those in the three regions analyzed here. Economic performance of the oblast is relatively good (because of the oil deposit and the relatively civilian character of its economy), and the oblast administration is tolerant towards local bosses. So is the Tambov oblast administration, but the oblast itself is too poor to raise strong caciques.

Sverdlovsk Oblast was extremely militarized under the old regime, so it has been suffering a serious depression for almost ten years. Moreover, the oblast authorities concentrated and continue to concentrate resources and competence in their own hands. A typical example of this strategy is the introduction of the intra-regional transfer system of public finance in 1996. Political exploitation of this budget transfer system enables the oblast administration to hinder paying salaries to teachers and medical workers, as well as cut the supply of gas and power immediately before mayoral elections, if the incumbent mayor fell in disgrace with the oblast administration. Moreover, the oligarchic (semi-monopolistic) structure of enterprises in the region, which emerged during the second half of the 1990s, enables Rossel to dictate these oligarchs-entrepreneurs which of their branches should pay taxes, in other words, in what locales they should pay taxes. Thus Rossel can enrich municipalities under his favorite mayors and likewise starve the opposite.

“Party-izedness” of local politics

As the nature of machine politics is ministerialismo (see above) or eternal self-reproduction of power, it seems to develop, above all, in locales, where the party of power (or supporters of the “present course of reform”) is predominant. However, this premise cannot be justified. Examples of Sverdlovsk Oblast and the Western Ukraine regions show that if the supporters of the present, pro-reform governments are extremely strong, they tend to split among themselves, and begin to fight with each other for trivial reasons, the significance of which is difficult to understand for outside observers. As a result, one party (faction) dominance is destroyed, and a competitive, moderate multi-party system emerges.

To the contrary, in such regions as Samara, where the electorate revealed a “fifty-fifty” preference on federal issues (between Zyuganov and Yeltsin) in 1996, the supporters of the “present course of reform” consolidated themselves, putting aside differences of opinions, to overcome serious challenges of communists. Moreover, they tried to neutralize regional and local politics, to distance confrontations at the federal level. The pragmatic political culture on the part of the regional electorate facilitates these attempts. Thus the Samarian establishment has developed one party

34 As a matter of fact, it is difficult even for political scientists specialized in these regions to explain programmatic differences between several regional parties in Sverdlovsk Oblast, and also differences between the Rukh and the UNSO competing in Lviv Oblast.
dominance in regional and local politics, despite the radical electoral behavior of the
regional electorate in federal elections.

In Tambov Oblast caciques cannot develop, not because the CPRF is too strong
(caciques did develop in other regions of the Red Belt, as I mentioned above), but,
to the contrary, because there are an unexpected number of supporters for “the
present course of reforms” at the local level. Under this condition, local politics
becomes too competitive to forge caciquismo. Programmatic and ideological factors
determine the population’s electoral behavior even in local elections, and therefore
the room for personal political exchange, a driving force for machine politics,
shrinks.

To sum up, the post-communist caciquismo emerges in regions, in which the polit-
ical culture is pragmatic; where the pre-1990 local elite has survived; where the
regional administration helps local bosses to consolidate their positions; where
resources available for local leaders are abundant; and finally where the local party
system is characterized by one party dominance, in which votes are cast not for
programs or ideas but for concrete interests or personal confidence in leaders, and
vice versa. The next question is: at what point did Sverdlovsk and Tambov Oblasts
deviate from the ordinary path of the caciquismo building? For Sverdlovsk Oblast
two factors were decisive: radical cadre reshuffling caused by the two Big Bangs in
1990 and 1996 and Rossel’s merciless municipal policy. What was decisive for Tam-
bov Oblast was its specific political culture, not such subjective factors as Yeltsin’s
bet on Babenko at the end of 1991. Even if Babenko had behaved like Titov, he
could hardly have become Titov.

The failure of the caciquismo building in Sverdlovsk and Tambov Oblasts made
the local leaders’ style of leadership more westernized than those observed in the
Samara Oblast. We meet with such local leaders that remind us of Richard Daly
(Chicago mayor, 1955–1976) or Kakuei Tanaka (the prime minister of Japan, 1972–
1974) much more often in Samara Oblast than in the other two.

Conclusion

State building in post-communist countries attracts our attention, above all, since
the political regimes of these countries, which seemed homogeneous before 1989,
diversified significantly in a relatively short period. Undoubtedly, causal analyses of
this process will contribute to the development of comparative politics. After the
collapse of Soviet communism political scientists have been questing for models and
concepts to analyze the newly born political regimes in the post-communist space.
It appears that the transitionist approach to measure the “distance from democracy”
of each of these political regimes, relying upon abstract and ahistorical criteria of
democracy, are losing persuasive power. The alternatives to this teleological
approach should be historical and comparative. This paper is one of such attempts.

This paper testifies to the usefulness of focusing on subregional politics to compare
political regimes in post-communist countries since the characters of political
regimes are often determined by this “point of tangency” between the elite and the
population. In other words, subregional studies exist not only to satisfy lovers of fieldwork, but also to categorize national political regimes as a whole. Another methodological finding of this paper is that we need to analyze regional and subregional politics in post-communist countries in a complex of elite realignment, institution building, elections, and subnational party systems.

One thing can be suggested from the comparison between unitary states in Eastern Europe and the deconcentrated political regime in Russia. The deconcentrated structure of the state enables the national government to stay in power for a long period since under this system discontents of the electorate diffuse to various authorities and politicians. Some people think that their mayor is to blame, others think that their governor should be accused. As a result, Yeltsin could deflect accusations directed at him. This is an unnoticed reason for the contrast between frequent changes of national governments in the space between Poland and Romania and the strange stability of the federal government in Russia. The latter pattern might be more desirable for a consistent economic transformation, although this is not to say that this political regime, which allowed the person who shelled parliament and launched into a reckless war to win his second term of the presidency, is better than the unitary democracies.

We are witnessing not only diversification of post-communist political regimes, but also a tendency towards their convergence. The unitary systems of government in Poland and the Czech Republic are constantly criticized by the EU, and these countries need to respond to this criticism at least by cosmetic measures. In Russia, President Putin appeared to be trying to overcome the excessive deconcentration of power, in particular regional elites’ dismissive attitude towards federal laws. In order to follow Putin’s reforms carefully, we need to bear in mind that the Yeltsin regime based on semi-confederative, asymmetrical federalism was neither the product of Yeltsin’s ill health nor of political maneuvering to halt communists’ influence. The Yeltsin regime emerged in the struggles of the former communist bosses to survive the epoch of competitive elections.

References


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