

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT IN RUSSIA'S REGIONS: THE "THIRD LEVEL OF AUTHORITY" OR EXTENSION OF THE SECOND?

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Introduction

Local self-government has long occupied a central place in Western liberal thinking on a democratic institutional order.² The "localeness" of this institution is meant to ensure that citizen interests are represented, aggregated and articulated at the smallest levels, and local services delivered in the most efficient way, since only the "grassroots" know what is best for them. Local self-government (LSG) was accordingly given special priority in Gorbachev's efforts to liberalise the entire Soviet political system, and its reform continued well into the Yel'tsin era. These reforms have been accompanied by much normative talk on LSG's role in the "schooling in civil society," by lavish government-sponsored conferences and seminars, and an influx of

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² See Tocqueville, Alexis de. "Townships, Municipal Administration, State Government." In *Democracy in America*, edited by J. P. Mayer. London: Fontana Press, 1994; and Putnam, Robert. *Making Democracy Work*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. For a discussion of the various normative approaches to local government, see Stoker, Gerry. "Introduction: Normative Theories of Local Government and Democracy." In *Rethinking Local Democracy*, edited by Desmond King and Gerry Stoker. London: Macmillan, 1996.

European Union money. The text of the European Charter of Local Self-Government now graces the former obkom-turned regional bureaucratic offices, and is much cited locally.

And yet, Russia's LSG reform has almost universally been regarded as a massive failure. LSG's failure to "awake from slumber" has been blamed on poor legislation, small budgets, and lack of citizen initiative.³ Local government has thus been looked upon from the point of view of its *weaknesses*. Such a policy and academic angle has served to obscure the enormous significance LSG has come to play in Russia's regional political process.

This paper looks at Russia's LSG from the point of view of its *power*, an angle different from prevalent analyses of the topic. This power is not meant here in the traditional sense of the independence of the institution, its capacity to decide on issues of local significance, and its role in the exercise of local citizen rule. Instead, I argue that the so-called "third level of authority" has become important, if not central to the exercise of regional regime rule. I here borrow Stone's definition of the term "regime." He describes it as "an informal yet relatively stable group *with access to institutional resources* that enable it to have a sustained role in making governing decisions" (original emphasis).⁴ The definition is well suited for our understanding of regional regimes and for the purposes of this present paper, which takes an institutionalist approach. Even in regions with highly personalistic rule like Bashkortostan, key decision-makers rely on or form coalitions with powerful business or other groupings. These groupings exercise rule through formal political institutional channels, hence the importance accorded to the design of these agencies in regional charters and constitutions. Implicit in the above definition of regime is also the *narrowness* of the decision-making group.

Control over localities, their citizens, organised groups, and, most importantly, local resources, is crucial for the "stability" of such narrow regimes due to their unrepresentative nature. The paper argues that it is the institution of local government, which allows *narrow* regional groupings to exercise power and rule in a frequently uncontested fashion over large territories. In other words, rather than serving as an instrument for the empowerment of *broader*

³ For an example of such an approach, see Kirkow, Peter. "Local Self-Government in Russia: Awakening from Slumber?" *Europe-Asia Studies* 49, no. 1 (1997): 43-58; and Young, John. "At the Bottom of the Heap: Local Self-Government and Regional Politics in the Russian Federation." In *Beyond the Monolith: The Emergence of Regionalism in Post-Soviet Russia*, edited by Joan de Bardeleben, Peter Stavrakis, Larry Black. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1997.

⁴ Cited in Stoker, Gerry. "Regime Theory and Urban Politics." In *Theories of Urban Politics*, edited by David Judge, Gerry Stoker and Harold Wolman, 54-71. London: Sage Publications, 1995, 58-9.

citizenry at all levels – from large cities to tiny villages – LSG has become central to the exercise of the rule of the few.

The paper is thus concerned with explaining regime stability (dependent variable) by looking at local government institutional structure, functions and make-up (independent variable). The word “stability” may appear to be simplistic, and might obscure the more complex nature of regional politics. However, it is a convenient way for describing regimes with one significant actor or power grouping and the lack of other major political contenders or *effective* challenge there-from (as opposed to regimes with two or more major actors, which are successful at ensuring regime turn-over). The distinction between uni-actor or “dominant” versus multiple actor regimes is here borrowed from other Russian regional studies, notably those of Gel'man and Ryzhenkov.⁵

The article focuses on the institutions of local government and the facilitating mechanisms that they create for the exercise of such narrow regime power. As such, it differs from actor or elite-centred studies influenced by “community power” approaches.⁶ While the questions addressed in community power studies is “who rules?” or “who governs?” this paper is more preoccupied with the question of the institutional mechanisms through which this rule is exercised and regime stability is achieved. In other words, different regions might have different power or elite groupings, but the institutions through which their power is exercised might be very similar.⁷ It also differs from other actor-centred approaches. One notable study has

⁵ Gel'man, Vladimir. “V poiskakh avtonomii: reforma mestnoy vlasti v gorodakh Rossii.” Paper presented at the Seminar, Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales, Sciences Po, Paris 2000; Gel'man, Vladimir. “Regime Transition, Uncertainty and Prospects for Democratisation: The Politics of Russia's Regions in a Comparative Perspective.” *Europe-Asia Studies* 51, no. 6 (1999): 939-956; and Ryzhenkov, Sergey. “Regional'naya elita i mestnoe samoupravlenie: akty, pravila igry i logika reformy.” In *Reforma mestnogo samoupravleniya v regional'nom izmerenii*, edited by S. Ryzhenkov and N. Vinnik. Moscow: Moskovskiy obshchestvennyy nauchnyy fond, 1999.

⁶ For examples, see Hunter, Floyd. *Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision-Makers*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953; Dahl, Robert. *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966; and Polsby, Nelson W. *Community Power and Political Theory*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980. For an application of Hunter's “Reputational” approach to Russian regional elites, see Matsuzato, Kimitaka. “Local Elites Under Transition: County and City Politics in Russia 1985-1996.” *Europe-Asia Studies* 51, no. 8 (1999).

⁷ For studies of regional elite, see Hughes, James. “Elites, Old and New in Novosibirsk.” *La Revue Tocqueville/The Tocqueville Review* 19, no. 1 (1998): 103-115; Hughes, James. “Sub-national Elites and Post-communist Transformation in Russia: A Reply to Kryshchanovskaya & White.” *Europe-Asia Studies* 49, no. 6 (1997): 1017-1036; Kryshchanovskaya, Olga, and Stephen White. “From Soviet *Nomenklatura* to Russian Elite.” *Europe-Asia Studies* 48, no. 5 (1996): 711-733; Melvin, Neil J. “The Consolidation of a New Regional Elite: The Case of Omsk 1987-1995.” *Europe-Asia Studies* 50, no. 4 (1998): 619-650; and Young, John F. “Institutions, Elites, and Local Politics in Russia: The Case of Omsk.” In *Local Power and Post-Soviet Politics*, edited by Jeffrey W. Hahn Theodore Friedgut. London: M. E. Sharpe, 1994.

identified the existence of competing political actors and elite cleavages as accounting for more or less independent local government, particularly at regional capital level, because these actors would have an incentive to foster LSG's independence as a personal power base. Absence of such political actors, it has been argued, accounts for LSG's lack of independence.⁸ This paper shifts the explanatory focus from elite cleavages and agreements to institutional factors. Looking at LSG as an independent variable, it argues that LSG is used to prevent the emergence of such alternative power contenders, which are expected to be present considering the stakes involved in regional privatisation, the distribution and allocation of resources. Where they have emerged to contest regional regimes it is because of the greater *institutional* independence of LSG from regional bodies. The argument is particularly salient in such entities as Bashkortostan, whose resource rich nature was bound to generate sufficiently powerful contending actors. Yet, this did not happen, and the stability of the Rakhimov regime remains to be explained.

The mechanisms of narrow regional regime rule strikingly resemble the Soviet regime's usage of the local soviets for control over vast territories of the Soviet empire and its populations. Accordingly, the paper takes a path-dependent view of local government in post-Soviet Russia, an approach that has been applied to studies of local government in other post-Communist settings.⁹ The paper is a comparative study of two republics – Bashkortostan and Adygeya. However, drawing on examples from other republics and regions, it argues that local government has been used as one of the key instruments of power and rule by the regional regimes throughout Russia's constituent entities. The purpose of the paper is to demonstrate the similarities in the usages of LSG for regime consolidation and rule despite the “most different” nature of the two cases. I argue that this rule is exercised through the following facilitating factors: (1) through institutional arrangements, which fuse local governments into regional executive hierarchies; (2) through the “selectorates” involved in municipal council elections, which ensure that “notables” in control of large social, business and enterprise networks get in, while other competing interests stay out; and (3) municipal control over local agenda-setting, which enables influence over public opinion with the help of ideologies that stigmatise potential political opposition.

⁸ Gel'man, Vladimir. “V poiskakh avtonomii.”

⁹ For an example of a path-dependent approach to local government institution building in Poland, Hungary, and East Germany, see Wollmann, Hellmut. “Institution Building and Decentralization in Formerly Socialist Countries: The Cases of Poland, Hungary, and East Germany.” *Government and Policy* 15 (1997): 463-480.

The article is structured as follows. First, it discusses the role of the local soviets in the Soviet system in consolidating and maintaining the Soviet regime. I then introduce the cases of Bashkortostan and Adygeya and compare their local governing bodies' structure, composition, and functions. The precise levels of investigation are the two capital cities – Ufa and Maykop – on the one hand, and the lower level district municipalities and the republics' *rayony*, on the other. The selection of these two levels allows for generalisations about the usage of local government for the purposes of regime consolidation and rule in both the wealthy and potentially powerful regional capitals, and the poorer and smaller localities. Control over capital cities is important because they tend to concentrate much of the regions' wealth and are thus potentially biggest generators of contending economic and political actors. They also tend to have the regions' most educated, democratic-minded and politically aware populations.¹⁰ Control over smaller and poorer localities at all levels is likewise essential for regime maintenance in order to prevent the emergence of mass bases of support for potential opposition and to ensure that the regime continues to be “voted” into power. The empirical part of the paper is based on a series of interviews conducted in the two republics in 1998 and 1999. The interviewees were local government actors, as well as activists in the political opposition not connected to the local administrations. The final part of the paper attempts to generalise to Russia's other constituent entities by drawing on factual data on their local government.

“All Power to the Soviets!”

The Soviet system was founded and legitimised by the notion of people's rule through the institution of the soviet. The soviets, however, had quickly come to be perceived as sham rubber-stamp bodies likened to governmental institutions in “the way that zombies might resemble the living.”¹¹ Despite the slogan of “all power to the soviets!” it is the Communist party that exercised power and decision-making in the localities through its loyal functionaries in the

¹⁰ For statistical evidence, see Berezkin, Andrei V., Mikhail Myagkov, and Peter C. Ordeshook. “The Urban-Rural Divide in the Russian Electorate and the Effect of Distance from Urban Centers.” *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics* 40, no. 6 (1999); and McMann, Kelly M., and Nikolai V. Petrov. “A Survey of Democracy in Russia's Regions.” *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics* 41, no. 3 (2000): 155-182.

¹¹ Urban, Michael. *More Power to The Soviets: The Democratic Revolution in the USSR*. Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1990, 2.

soviets' executive branches, the *ispolkomy*, corrupting the representative function of the local bodies. As far as the soviets' service functions – another important aspect of local government – these too were arguably reduced considering the vast resource base of the industrial ministries, which had ostensibly come to take over many of local government's traditional service prerogatives.¹²

The local soviets, however, had come to occupy important functions in the overall exercise of Soviet regime power. Both the soviets and the *ispolkomy* served as oversight agencies vis-à-vis the local societies. Like the Party organs, local governing institutions permeated the localities all the way down to the smallest village level. Furthermore, they permeated the whole of the local social fabric through various “voluntary agencies,” “neighbourhood societies,” and other purportedly “community groups” that they controlled.¹³ While key decision-makers within the *ispolkomy* were drawn from the narrow *nomenklatura*, the local councillors were meant to represent the “ordinary” Soviet man. In practice, however, the councillors too tended to be exemplar individuals from enterprises and “voluntary” associations. Drawn into the regime in such a way, the point of these functionaries was less to represent, than to control the various networks in which they continued to work on a full-time basis. Locked into the straightjacket of democratic centralism, the bodies ensured that Party directives were carried through at all levels.

Another factor, traditionally associated with the soviets' weakness, was likewise a source of its strength. It stemmed from the soviets' service function – a crucial aspect of local government. Since the Party was unable to exercise oversight when it came to the smallest administrative decisions, the soviets acquired important micro-managing functions.¹⁴ While the preoccupation with such small matters might be construed as the overall weakness of these bodies in the Soviet decision-making hierarchy, it served to increase the dependence of the local societies on these bodies. The very socialist nature of the Soviet economy served to perpetuate

¹² For a discussion of the role of industrial ministries, see Whitefield, Stephen. *Industrial Power and the Soviet State*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

¹³ See Friedgut, Theodore H. “Community Structure, Political Participation, Soviet Local Government: The Case of Kutaisi.” In *Soviet Politics and Society in the 1970s*, edited by Henry W. Morton and Rudolf L. Tokes. New York: The Free Press, 1974; and Friedgut, Theodore H. *Political Participation in the USSR*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.

¹⁴ For a discussion, see Oliver, James H. “Citizen Demands and the Soviet Political System.” *American Political Science Review* 63, 2, June (1968); Friedgut, “Community Structure”; and Hahn, Jeffrey W. *Soviet Grassroots: Citizen Participation in Local Soviet Government*. London: Tauris and Co. Ltd., 1988.

this dependence with the soviets performing many of the functions that in the West are transacted by voluntary agencies or the private sector.

The above two factors – the institutional saturation of the local societies by the soviets in order to demonstrate their “representativeness,” as well as the service function in and of themselves ensured the complicity of the ordinary citizens with the regime. In other words, the fact that the local soviets and their auxiliary agencies exercised oversight over all Soviet citizens and the massive social dependence on the local state organs created disincentives for the emergence of social or political opposition to the regime.

And yet, the local bodies also performed another important function vis-à-vis the society, an ideological one. Although its importance diminished as the Soviet regime consolidated power locally, it continued to be exercised throughout the Soviet period. The soviets helped project the party’s doctrines into the masses through its presses, through the various “neighbourhood” committees, which punished “saboteurs,” “idlers,” and proponents of the “bourgeois values,” and through the regular sponsorship of such ideologically coloured events as the *subbotniki*.¹⁵ The exercise of ideological function was greatly facilitated by the two factors identified above. The democratic-centralist structure of the soviets and their permeation of the localities down to the lowest levels institutionally facilitated such an ideological projection. The fact that the local populations depended on the municipalities for essential social services ensured that they complied with the ideological directives, irrespective of the prevalent social cynicism, since punishments could be tangible.

The Gorbachev-era famous call for the return of “All Power to the Soviets!” started a decade of reforms of local government with the ostensible aim of making it genuinely democratic and to strengthen its representative branch. The major milestone in the above reforms was the first contested elections to the local soviets, held in March 1990, which produced highly politicised assemblies. However, following the August 1991 coup and the October 1993 crisis, during which the local soviets were accused of siding with the anti-Yel’tsin forces, many local soviets were disbanded. Local power shifted to executives appointed by and loyal to the federal

¹⁵ On the role of these agencies, see Friedgut, *Political Participation in the USSR* ; and Friedgut, *On the Effectiveness of Participatory Institutions in Soviet Communities, Research paper / Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Soviet and East European Research Centre, no. 42*. Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem Soviet and East European Research Centre, 1981.

executive or regional regimes.¹⁶ This situation continued even after the new 1993 constitution made LSG “independent” and “separate from state power” (art. 12). Yet another cycle of local government reforms was started in 1995. Against the background of increasing “legal separatism” and the consolidation of regional regimes Yel’tsin had come to regard LSG as a potential check against them. In 1995 a new law on the basics of local self-government was passed with the aim of strengthening its independence from regional and state power. The president’s discourse surrounding the passage of the 1995 law and the various conferences and seminars sponsored by the Kremlin around that time made no secret of the political role as a check on regional regimes that LSG was to perform.¹⁷

Yet, the implementation of the law and other relevant legislation¹⁸ has been slow and patchy at best and LSG continued to be fused into executive hierarchies in many of Russia’s regions. In a number of regions the election of local executives has led to the emergence of the “mayor against governor” cleavage.¹⁹ The most notorious example is Nazdratenko’s infamous conflict with Cherepkov in Primorskiy kray. Many regions, however, have continued to sabotage

¹⁶ “Postanovlenie Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo soveta RSFSR O deyatelnosti Sovetov narodnykh deputatov RSFSR vo vremya gosudarstvennogo perevorota.” *Vedomosti Soveta narodnykh deputatov RSFSR* 35, no. 29 August (1991): 1427-1428; “Postanovlenie # 1455 S'ezda narodnykh deputatov RSFSR Ob organizatsii ispolnitel'noy vlasti v period radikal'noy ekonomicheskoy reformy.” *Vedomosti Soveta narodnykh deputatov RSFSR*, no. November (1991): 1722.

¹⁷ For a discussion, see Turovskiy, R. F. “Otnosheniya 'tsentr-regiony' v 1997-1998 gg.: mezhdru konfliktom i konsensusom.” *Politiya* 1, no. 7 (1998): 5-32. See also official speech of Viktor Chernomyrdin, “On the implementation of the Constitutional provisions on local self-government and the organisation of state power in Russian Federation Components.” In *Report by Russian Federation Premier V. S. Chernomyrdin*, Moscow: Rossiyskaya gazeta, 1995; and Yel’tsin’s official statements on LSG, “On the Effectiveness of State Power in Russia.” *Yeltsin's annual message to Russian Federation Federal Assembly*, Moscow: Rossiyskaya gazeta, 1995; and “Russia: The Individual, the Family, the Society, the State.” *President Boris Yeltsin's Action Program for 1996-2000*, Moscow: Rossiyskie vesti, 1996. For a discussion of the political debates surrounding LSG reform and the various political forces that tried to influence the draft law provisions, see Gel'man. “Federal'naya politika i mestnoe samoupravlenie”; Gel'man. “V poiskakh avtonomii.”; Kirkow. “Local Self-Government in Russia”; and “Aktual'nye problemy formirovaniya mestnogo samoupravleniya v Rossiyskoy federatsii ('kruglyy stol' v Institute gosudarstva i prava RAN).” *Gosudarstvo i pravo* 5, no. 1997 (1997): 24-45.

¹⁸ Most notably “Federal'nyy zakon "O finansovykh osnovakh mestnogo samoupravleniya v Rossiyskoy federatsii.” *Sobranie zakonodatel'stva Rossiyskoy Federatsii*, no. 39 (1997); and “Zakon Rossiyskoy Federatsii "Ob osnovnykh garantiyakh izbiratel'nykh prav i prava na uchastie v referendumе grazhdan Rossiyskoy federatsii.” *Sobranie zakonodatel'stva Rossiyskoy Federatsii* 38 (1997). For an overview of the legislation, see Young, John F. “Zakonodatel'stvo Rossii po mestnomu samoupravleniyu.” In *Tret'e zveno gosudarstvennogo stroitel'stva Rossii: podgotovka i realizatsiya Federal'nogo zakona ob obshchikh printsipakh organizatsii mestnogo samoupravleniya v Rossiyskoy Federatsii*, edited by Kimitaka Matsuzato, 109-129. Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, 1998.

¹⁹ For a discussion, see Smirnyagin, Leonid. “Mayors against Governors?” New York: East-West Institute, 1999. See also Mendras, Marie. “How Regional Elites Preserve Their Power.” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 15, no. 4 (1999): 295-311; and Kirkow, Peter. “Regional Warlordism in Russia: The Case of Primorskiy Krai.” *Europe-Asia Studies* 47, no. 6 (1995): 923-947. This has in fact become the dominant political cleavage replacing that between the executives and regional legislatures observed in 1991-1996. Afanas'ev, Mikhail. “Dinamika konfliktov v pravyyashchikh regional'nykh gruppakh.” *Vlast'* 9 (1997): 36-39.

the implementation of the law and have maintained control over the large cities' administrations. The Kremlin has in fact facilitated such practices, although it appeared to be inconsistent with its earlier line of strengthening LSG as a check on regional regimes. This is because the presidential administration appreciated the importance of control over municipalities for delivering the presidential vote through the use of the "administrative resource." Moreover, while the regions would concede to changing other legislation that violates federal laws, they fiercely clung on to their prerogatives to appoint or otherwise control the nomination of local heads of administrations. At the same time, the local councils have remained weak bodies in many ways also fused into the executive hierarchies. These facts allowed for continued control over the localities by the regional authorities. Thus, over a decade of LSG's reform has done little to change the perception and usage of LSG as an instrument for the furthering of regime rule – federal or regional.

The Two "Most Different" Cases: How Different from the Other Regional Regimes?

The two cases – Adygeya and Bashkortostan – were chosen according to the "most different" criteria. The purpose of such a method is to demonstrate that cases different along a number of dimensions (such as size, wealth, dependence on the federal centre) have similarities along the dimensions of investigation (the usage of local governing bodies for the exercise of regime power). While both cases are ethnically defined republics, they have different degrees of dependence on the federal centre, size, and ethnic composition. However, as the sections below hope to demonstrate, in both the cases municipalities are used for the exercise of republic regime rule much like they are in the other regions. While the two republics differ between themselves and the other regions in terms of the institutional factors, local council make-up, and their ideologies, I argue that these differences are those of *degree*. The broadly outlined practices are observed in many regions.

Bashkortostan: The Paradox of the Rakhimov Clan Power

The republic of Bashkortostan is one of Russia's most populous and wealthiest entities. It has been in the forefront of the "parade of sovereignties" and has managed to extract important concessions from Moscow in the process. Bashkortostan is located at the junction of the Urals and the Middle Volga geographic regions. The titular group occupies only slightly over 20% of the republic's population of over four million, in which the Russians, with 39.9%, are the largest group. The presence of the third sizeable group – the ethnic Tatars (28.4%) adds to the complexity of the republic's ethnic situation. The early 1990s witnessed an upsurge of democratic and nationalist movements accompanying Murtaza Rakhimov's rise to power. Yet, the Rakhimov regime has managed to curb the political opposition of the early 1990s and has since ruled in a virtually unchallenged way.

More impressive for outside observers, however, has been Rakhimov's ability to consolidate power locally despite contending economic interests. Bashkortostan is Russia's largest oil processing center, as well as its third largest oil producer (after Tyumen oblast and Tatarstan).²⁰ It is from this sector that the formerly little known director of an Ufa oil processing factory named after the XXII party congress, now called "Ufaneftekhim" Murtaza Rakhimov emerged to contest the seat of Bashkortostan's Supreme Soviet Chair.²¹ The republic's oil industry managers had originally laid stakes on him as the figurehead who would advance their interests.²² However, they were disappointed as Rakhimov consolidated power locally swiftly doing away with political and economic rivals. Local enterprise directors were not the only aggrieved interests in the process. Powerful federal banks attempted to enter Bashkortostan's lucrative oil market, but were prevented from assuming control or any substantial presence in the republic by such powerful local monopolists as the Bashkreditbank, run by the Rakhimov clan and those loyal to him. They have since in vain tried to foment opposition to the regime from below, funding the activities of rival politicians and opposition nationalist and democratic groups.

²⁰ Gabdrarifkov, Il'dar. *Respublika Bashkortostan: model' etnologicheskogo monitoringa*. Moscow: Rossiyskaya akademiya nauk, Institut etnologii i antropologii, 1998, 12.

²¹ Rabinovich, Igor', and Sergey Fufaev. "Khozyain: shtrikhi k politicheskomu portretu prezidenta Murtazy Rakhimova." In *Nad gnezdом Murtazy: gazetnaya khronika vlastvovaniya pervogo Bashkirskogo prezidenta*. Moscow: IntelTekh, 1998, 9.

²² Ibid, 8.

One example of their failure is Alexander Arinin, who had twice been elected to the federal Duma from Bashkortostan, but was prevented by Rakhimov from contesting the Bashkir presidency.²³ Arinin has been the head of the local public association with a Slavic ring to it, called *Rus'* and founded with the ostensible goal of advancing the cultural interests of the republic's Slavic populations, as well as democracy and human rights. *Rus'* boasted local chapters throughout the republic and published its own newspaper *Otechestvo*, which became the main vehicle for opposition opinion in the republic. Arinin's critics ridiculed *Rus'* as a smokescreen for powerful "aggrieved *nomenklatura*" interests, and have questioned the sources of its funding. When I visited one of the group's clandestine locations in Ufa in 1999, I was greeted by the then director, a former porcelain factory head, equipped with a mobile phone and other regalia suggesting an image more of a "new Russian" than a benign promoter of Slavic culture. Yet, despite the support from Moscow's then powerful banking interests and the Slavic and democratic appeal of *Rus'*'s label, it has not been able to influence local politics in any substantive way, or to rally mass-based opposition to the Rakhimov regime. Throughout the 1990s, Bashkortostan remained an authoritarian regime, with Rakhimov apparently set to stay for yet another presidential term.²⁴

Local Self-Government Reform

Prior to the counter-reform of local government, individuals like Arinin were associated with the opposition centred on the Ufa city soviet. Arinin himself was not a deputy, but as a party functionary (he was in charge of inter-nationality relations in the obkom prior to becoming a professor at the university) he was well placed to challenge the regime.²⁵ When the party

²³ For an account of Arinin's failed election bid, see Lankina, Tomila. "Showcase of Manipulated Democracy: Shadow-Puppet Elections in Bashkortostan." *Transitions* 5, no. 8 (1998): 62-64. On the 1995 Duma elections in Bashkortostan, see Igrunov, V. V., ed. *Vybory-95: Monitoring izbiratel'noy kampanii v regionakh Rossii: Gosudarstvennaya Duma, organ gosudarstvennoy vlasti sub'ektov Federatsii, organ mestnogo samoupravleniya*. Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyy institut gumanitarno-politicheskikh issledovaniy, 1996.

²⁴ Or even two terms, until the year 2013. On the proposed recent amendments to the relevant legislation, which would nullify the terms already served by the republic presidents, see <http://www.strana.ru/stories/2001/01/26/980511367/980516328.html>

²⁵ The Rakhimov regime did not set obstacles to his election to the federal Duma in 1993, however. Arinin was to become the regime's archenemy during his tenure in the Duma and unsuccessful bid for Bashkir presidency in 1998. For a discussion of the 1993 election in Bashkortostan, see Hale, Henry E. "Machine Politics and Institutionalized Electorates: A Comparative Analysis of Six Duma Elections in Bashkortostan." *Journal of Communist Studies and*

structures collapsed, opposition figures like Arinin enjoyed the institutional support of the Ufa soviet, which emerged as the key contender against the emerging Rakhimov regime. The soviet's opposition was defined in democratic, and, to a lesser extent, ethnic terms as deputies cautioned against the excesses of sovereignty and "Bashkirisation." The opposition's mouthpiece was the soviet's daily *Vechernyaya Ufa*, whose regular invectives against Rakhimov and narrow "partocracy" and "apparatus rule" perpetuated the image of the soviet as the "conscience of the city."²⁶

Yet, although the first contested elections accounted for a share of "casual" people, many individuals within the soviet and its executive structures were high profile enterprise managers and former party *apparatchiki*. The city concentrates many of the republic's oil processing facilities. It is the location of such industrial giants as Ufaneftekhim. In 1990 the jurisdictional ambiguity concerning the republic's assets generated institutional conflicts between the city and republican bodies. For a brief period in 1990-1991 these were decided in favour of the city accounting to its enormous revenue and wealth, now remembered with envy and nostalgia.²⁷ Anatoliy Baranov, an Ufa soviet functionary recalls how the deputies were at one point considering purchasing an airplane for the city and its apparatus as they did not know what to do with the extra money...²⁸ This period was not to last very long. Not only did the Rakhimov regime associate the emergence of centres of opposition to his rule with the local soviets and wanted to crush their power; he was determined to make them serve the interests of the consolidation of the regime.

The mechanisms of regime rule

As elsewhere, following Yeltsin's municipal counter-reform, local heads of administrations began to be appointed in early 1992.²⁹ The centralisation of executive hierarchy was completed

Transition Politics 15, no. 4 (1999): 70-110. On the 1998 presidential elections, see Lankina. "Showcase of Manipulated Democracy."

²⁶ Personal interview, Yevgeniy Isaev, former Ufa soviet deputy, 16 June 1999, Ufa.

²⁷ According to the legislation still in effect at the time, the budgets were formed not at republican, but at the Union levels, and Ufa would have had to transfer excess revenue to the Union. Personal interview, Anatoliy Baranov, 4 June 1999, Ufa.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ The debates on local institutional reform and the strengthening of the republican executive hierarchy were linked to the question of the adoption of the republican constitution and the prevention of potential political challenge to

with the introduction of the presidency and the election of Murtaza Rakhimov in 1993. The institutional hierarchy that had come to be established shortly after the election, and had survived almost intact until the present, is as follows. The president appoints heads of administrations of cities, *rayony*, and districts within cities – municipal units corresponding to the republic’s 74 main administrative divisions. With the exception of one or two localities, where alternative practices were introduced “on an experimental basis” the appointed heads of administrations then appoint heads of administrations of smaller municipal units within the *rayony*. These heads of administrations ostensibly derive democratic legitimacy from election to the local soviet and then to head its executive structure by the soviet.³⁰ The heads of administrations in turn constitute half of the deputy corps of the House of Representatives, the upper chamber of Bashkortostan’s legislature. Although their election is not mandatory, with one or two exceptions, none of them fail to be “elected.” Both the law on elections to the state assembly and local governing organs allows the combination of deputy and executive functions.³¹

The above structural reforms substantially affected the lines of accountability of the local executive bodies. Following the 1992 recentralisation of authority, many local soviet heads were dismissed, and the reshuffle of “disloyal” heads of administrations is a common occurrence. Comprised exclusively of regime loyalists, these bodies perform important functions in the overall exercise of regime rule in a system similar to democratic centralism. Although local administrations now stress “professionalism,” they perform important political, and not just administrative and service, functions, much like the soviets in the Soviet system.

The distinction between the political and the administrative roles of local government has been a subject of much debate in American community power studies and practice.³² The political side of local government usually connotes its role as a vehicle for the representation of

this and other legislation aimed at strengthening the Rakhimov rule, from below. A Bashkir Supreme Soviet presidium decision cited the “need for executive discipline” and the getting away from “local soviets... as arenas of clashing political opinions and platforms.” The Supreme Soviet then amended the local self-government law to allow “the presidium the right of appointment of heads of region and city administrations and dismiss them at its initiative.” In turn, the heads of administrations of cities and regions were given the right to appoint heads of administrations of the lower administrative-territorial units. Ayupov, R.. “I za zemlyu pridyotsya platit’.” *Vechernyaya Ufa*, 3 March 1992, 1.

³⁰ For a more detailed discussion, see Lankina, Tomila. “Local Self-Government or Local Political Control in Russia? The Case of Bashkortostan.” New York: Institute for East-West Studies, Russian Regional Report, 1999.

³¹ Gabdrafiqov. *Respublika Bashkortostan*, 32.

³² For a discussion of these debates in the American settings, see Lineberry, Robert L., and Edmund P. Fowler. “Reformism and Public Policies in American Cities.” *The American Political Science Review* 61 (1967): 701-716.

partisan interests.³³ The administrative side of local government usually refers to the service functions to the local communities, such as public works, transport, safety, and so forth. Purely “administrative” local government, however, is a fiction. Local governments control important resources and their allocation and use is bound to be subject to pressures or control by competing partisan interests. Sceptical scholars of community politics and government have warned that the stress on “professionalism” and pure “administration” in LSG is no more than a smokescreen designed to mask advance decision-making by narrow political interests.³⁴ This view is very appropriate for the Russian setting. In places like Bashkortostan, LSG, despite its stress on “administration” has been looked upon as a political institution not in the sense of representing partisan local interests, but in the sense of the furthering of the interests and stability of the Rakhimov regime.

This function is no more evident that in the revival of the *nomenklatura* system of appointments in both name and the exact form. Ostensibly concerned with “professionalism” in local government and services, the system’s key function is the screening of candidates for political loyalty to the regime. It is the local administrations at all levels that are charged with maintaining the system.

An example is the *rayon* administration in the town of Chakmagush, whose structure replicates that of other *rayony*. The town of Chakmagush lies some 120 kilometres northwest of Bashkortostan’s capital Ufa. It is a rural town surrounded by hills and green farmland, whose fertility and efficient exploitation by the collective farms has made Chakmagush one of Bashkortostan’s most economically successful and self-sufficient regions. It is the administrative centre of Chakmagush region, and is the seat of the regional administration. The town’s 10,000 strong population is overwhelmingly Tatar, and Tatar is the predominant language spoken here: some of the interviewees had trouble expressing themselves in Russian, and had to rely on their colleagues for interpretation. Although the official percentage is lower (82%), de facto, its residents claim, as much as 95% of its population are ethnic Tatars. The rest are Bashkirs, Russians and the other smaller Volga groups.

³³ The traditional “public” view also refers to it as a vehicle for community participation in local decision-making, as opposed to the “state” model, which views LSG as “the lower chain of one whole state-wide managerial corporation.” Gel'man. “Federal'naya politika i mestnoe samoupravlenie,” 73.

³⁴ See Schattschneider, E.E. *The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960; for a general theoretical treatment of “behind the scenes” agenda-setting, see

The person in charge of *nomenklatura* in the *rayon* administration, Khafizov Akhmatziya Fayazovich, has the rank of deputy head of administration for cadres similar to the Soviet system.³⁵ His function: “The selection, placement and upbringing of the cadres.”³⁶ Khafizov maintains personal files, *lichnye dela* for top administrative posts in the locality, as well as reserve cadre. These are in turn divided into three categories: those appointed by the decree of the head of administration, those appointed “in consultation with the head of administration,” and chairmen of collective farms. Although the latter are formally elected, they are usually recommended by the administration as well. “Incidentally,” maintained Khafizov, “there was not a single case when our cadre had been turned down.” Overall, the local *nomenklatura* includes 113 appointive posts ranging from the heads of the lower level soviets, to heads of municipal enterprises and such agricultural service enterprises as *Agropromservice* and *Agropromtrans*, to directors of cultural institutions and the regional media and school heads. The latter are scrutinized before the administration’s commissions every year and their reappointment is coordinated with the head of administration. Heads of the local force agencies, such as the MVD (Ministry of Interior), although nominally subordinate to the higher agencies, work under the direct control of the head of administration.

The *nomenklatura* system has been effective because despite efforts at privatisation the state continues to control many industrial, production and service assets. This means that not only are key figures in local enterprises and service, cultural and recreational agencies screened and appointed by local administrations, but also that salaries to local enterprise employees are paid out of municipal budgets. The budgets in turn depend on levels of allocation from republican funds. This is also true for such donor cities as Ufa, although the overall yield of the city alone from its industrial production facilities comprises approximately 40% of the gross republican budget. The city also generates approximately 60% of all taxes gathered in the republic.³⁷ Of these, however, Ufa gets back only about half, the remaining going for subsidies to Bashkortostan’s poorer *rayony*. Most of the city’s industrial assets have passed on to the

Bachrach, Peter, and Morton S. Baratz. “Two Faces of Power.” *The American Political Science Review* 56, no. December (1962): 947-52.

³⁵ In the Soviet Union the second secretaries in the *ispolkomy* usually had responsibility for cadre.

³⁶ Personal interview, 17 June 1999, Ufa.

³⁷ Personal interview, Anatoliy Baranov, 4 June 1999, Ufa.

republican jurisdiction, leaving it with just one substantial enterprise, the Bashkir Trolleybus Plant.³⁸

The local administrations' prerogatives are also substantially wider than those exercised by municipalities in the West, which further facilitates the municipalities' control over local populations. The views of Baranov, who frequently travels to Ufa's sister city in Germany, Halle, are typical of local administrators:

When we are, say, in the West and ask a burgomaster or a mayor a question, what do you do if some food products are absent in the shop, he stares and says: "What do I have to do with this? Not my problem." Here, in contrast, we are responsible for all now... because in our country the redistribution of property has not occurred, and the main share of the property remains in state hands... In the West, he [the mayor] is not concerned with how enterprises are working, and firms, companies. It is not his problem. It is the problem of those who work there, who own it, who had found it. Here in contrast we have a headache today about this too, because today we don't have a real owner, it appears that everybody is the owner.³⁹

The republican bodies manipulate their control over appointments and local budgets as a means of political influence over the administrations: "If the mayor shows independence towards the republic, the republic will say: deal with the salaries yourself," claims Baranov.⁴⁰ The administrations, in turn, manipulate the disbursement of funds to enterprises to achieve the same goal in what has been observed in other regions as well and described as "pseudo-socialist activities."⁴¹ Enterprise managers in turn manipulate the issue of the payment of salaries to individual employees.

The social expectations of the municipalities' role are likewise much greater than of those in the West. "In contrast to the West," maintains Baranov, "when salaries are not paid here, even at privatised enterprises... workers come here, criticising the administration: why don't you pay

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Matsuzato found that in Kotovsk city in Tambov oblast' the city administration's Department of Control and Audit "going beyond its ordinary competence to audit municipal accounts, tries to regulate economic activity within the city" by auditing the accounts of local companies to reveal their ability to pay municipal taxes. Matsuzato. "Local Elites Under Transition."

us salaries?’ We have to interfere.”⁴² This view echoes the observations of scholars of local politics in other regions. In Sverdlovsk oblast’, for example, during a student protest demonstration, “the demands of the students concerning the reform of higher education were directed at the mayor and the governor, even though these officials were not included in the formulation of that series of reforms.”⁴³ The control of the budgetary tool, as well as the social perceptions of the local governments as omni-powerful entities, facilitate the manipulation of the issue of sanctions for deviating behaviour, since punishments could be tangible.

The local councils

How do the local councils fit into the overall system of regime power in Bashkortostan? As in many of Russia’s other republics and regions, the local councils are considered to be rubber-stamp agencies, accountable to the executive. This perception stems from their prima facie apolitical nature. Organised political interests, parties and voluntary associations are virtually absent in these bodies. In contrast to the stormy soviets of 1990, individual deputies, let alone, whole councils, fail to explicitly articulate opposition to the regime. Local observers maintain that this is because they are packed with lobbyists using the councils as a venue for rent seeking. On close scrutiny, however, it becomes evident that, rather than being simply pressure agencies the local councils constitute an important link in the overall exercise of the regime power. Just like the soviets’ executive arm, these bodies extend the reach of the regime to the lowest “grass-roots” level. An examination of the composition of the 1999 Ufa city council illustrates this point.

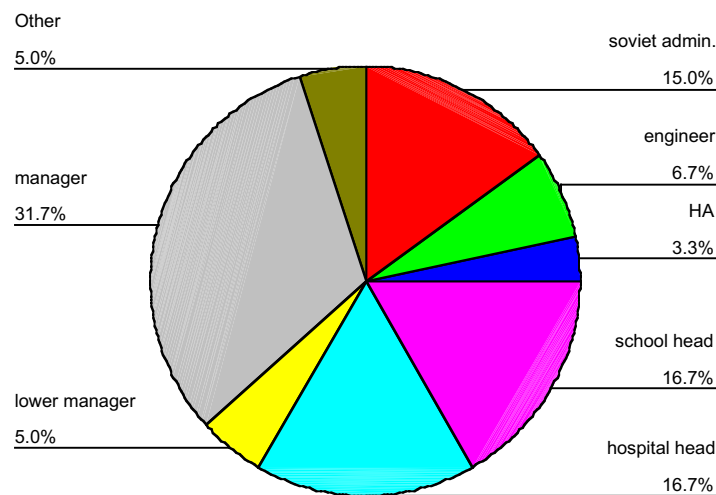
Out of fifty-eight elected deputies, the largest categories are as follows. There are five or 8.6% deputies directly connected to council administrations. 24.1% or almost a quarter, are heads of medical establishments. There are seventeen managers, or 29.3%, in the ranks of heads of enterprises; and eight, or 13.8% heads of educational institutions, mostly schools. The council also has one head of administration of a lower region.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Startsev, Yaroslav. “Gubernatorial Politics in Sverdlovsk Oblast.” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 15, no. 4 (1999): 336-361, 349.

These deputies, 23 or almost half of whom were incumbents from the previous soviet,⁴⁴ could be divided into five categories.⁴⁵ The first are those forming part of the common system of executive power, such as the head of administration and other local executives. The second category is the directors of state enterprises. These tend to be appointed by the republic Cabinet of Ministers, or conclude contracts with it. This category is subject to both institutional and less direct forms of accountability or control. The indirect dependence on local administrations stems from their vulnerability to the tax inspectorate, the police and other “force” agencies, which may or may not be de jure subordinate to the republican or local administrations, but are de facto under the control of local heads of administrations. The next category is the so-called “business entrepreneurs,” and there are several of those in the council. An examination of their activities and affiliations reveals that they tend to perform services vital to the city, and enjoy a certain status within the municipal services private contracts hierarchy. Take deputy Voropaev. He runs an enterprise for sanitary and technical works, and has an exclusive contract with the city to do so. While he is not appointed by the local administrations, he depends on the latter for material rewards.

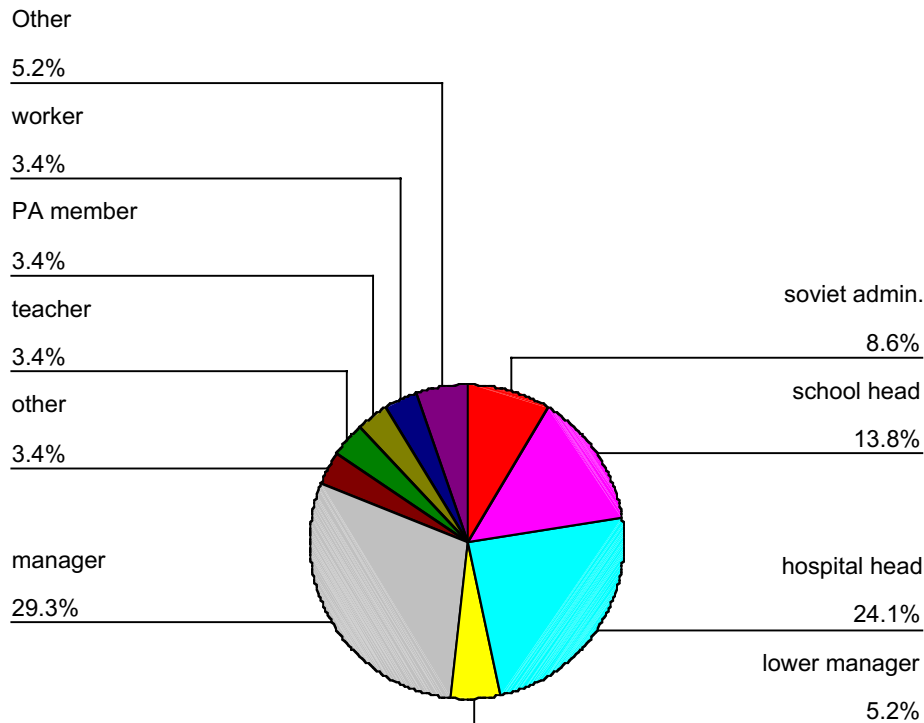
Figure 1: Composition of the Ufa City Soviet, 1995



⁴⁴ Personal interview, Anatoliy Baranov, 4 June 1999.

⁴⁵ Based on conversation with Artur Asaf'ev, Ufa soviet deputy, Ufa, 3 June 1999.

Figure 2: Composition of the Ufa City Soviet, 1999



The two largest categories after managers are heads of medical and educational establishments. In coding the various categories, I made the distinction between doctors and teachers on the one hand, and heads of the relevant establishments, on the other. The distinction is an important one, and prevents from grouping the latter into the broader “professional” or “intelligentsia” categories. The infiltration of the local councils by these two groups, which has increased in the Ufa council from 1995, to 1999, and is observed in other regions as well, is an interesting phenomenon. Some local interviewees believe that their electoral success stems from the generally high priority accorded to healthcare and education. School directors and hospital heads are successful at convincing the electorates that council positions would benefit the respective institutions in the form of greater financial and other rewards. According to some views, they may thus represent certain large “lobby” groups in the council aggregating the

preferences of their constituencies. However, hospital heads, as a local councillor maintained, are not mere doctors; they are entrepreneurs, “tsars and gods” within their institutions.⁴⁶

Although school directors could not be described as entrepreneurs, they are the most powerful individuals within their institutions and enjoy status and prestige in the republic’s educational hierarchies. Considering the amount of gate-keeping and “selectorates” involved in council elections, their high representation is unlikely to be accidental. Rather than reflecting constituency preferences, their election could be more of a top-bottom nature, with the republican elites ensuring that a high proportion of these “notables” get in.⁴⁷ Hospital staffs are in regular contact with district constituencies. Unlike in countries with privatised healthcare, in Russia hospitals continue to be attached to districts and one gets affiliated with it according to where one holds the *propiska*, or residence permit. Those who opt for free healthcare have to go through the local hospital, rather than the equivalent of the GP of their choosing. I was told that prior to the 1999 Ufa council election, GPs went around their duties campaigning for the election of their candidates. They are likely to also use this regular constituency contact for other means as well.

The same holds true for school heads. One gets attached to a school according to where one holds the *propiska*, although since 1991 some flexibility has been introduced into the system, and there are more privatised schools now than before. However, most people continue to send their children to the official state schools. School heads however, can exercise leverage as to who gets in, is attached to what classes, the grades and so forth. In Bashkortostan, school heads become important in the political process. Schools are used as polling stations during the elections. They are also a convenient media for information and agitation. These two categories are both subject to formal and informal lines of accountability. The appointment of school heads is done through the local administrations’ *nomenklatury*. Heads of hospitals are appointed either by local administrations or by the Ministry of Health.

What unites all of the above categories is thus (1) their dependence on the executive chain of command; and (2) their key positions within organisations representing business, social, professional and other networks. The lines of accountability continue downwards as we move on

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ For a similar observation based on a study of other regions, see, for example, Lallemand, Jean-Charles. "Gouvernance introuvable à Briansk et à Smolensk." *La Revue Tocqueville/The Tocqueville Review* 19, no. 1 (1998): 75-102. Lallemand wrote: “Les assemblées provinciales (...) semblent plus répondre à une logique de cooptation de l’élite provinciale que de représentation du corps social,” 85.

to the next level. The most straightforward “control”⁴⁸ framework is that over appointments within the organisation, vested in the respective heads or managers. The second is the control over payment of salaries. Heads of municipal organisations do not control this, but local administrations do. Heads of institutions are media through which the sanctions system gets spread: “We will not get salaries paid if...” These heads, considering their regular network contacts, status and influence, are thus notoriously crucial players in the local political process. Finally, one could also infer that social sanctions might be applied to those within these professional networks who deviate from a general political line, since as a result, the whole organization might be penalised.

The role of “networks” has long been recognised in sociological theory as important for suppressing or, alternatively, fostering or sustaining collective action.⁴⁹ To borrow Charles Tilly’s term, we could describe the Ufa 1995 and 1999 councils as having a large degree of “netness.”⁵⁰ The councils do not represent whole networks, but they have a large share of individuals, who could influence “collective action” within these networks by virtue of their status, prestige, and possession of material resources or “selective incentives” that they could provide to members of these networks in exchange for regime loyalty.⁵¹

Ideology

The social dependence on the local bodies and their “netness” facilitates the projection of regime ideologies into the “grassroots,” i.e., the local constituencies. Ideology here is understood as an official doctrine designed to justify a given political line or regime and increase mass support for it while stigmatising alternative views. Ideology could be explicit and elaborately formulated in writings, symbols, etc. It could also be more subtle, and could take the form of understandings about appropriate definitions of political and other issues. The republics’ nationalist ideologies

⁴⁸ The discussion of the role of such “control” frameworks in community decision-making is based on insights from Banfield, Edward C. *Political Influence*. New York: The Free Press, 1961.

⁴⁹ Olson, Mancur. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965; Oberschall, Anthony. *Social Conflict and Social Movements*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1973; and Klandermans, Bert. “The Social Construction of Protest and Multiorganizational Fields.” In *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, edited by Aldon D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.

⁵⁰ Tilly, Charles. *From Mobilisation to Revolution*. Reading: Wesley Publishing Company, 1978.

⁵¹ Olson, Mancur. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965.

are examples of the former. Both republics and regions, however, also practice the more subtle ways of increasing regime support. The stress on the need for “tough administrators,” *krepkie khozyaystvenniki*, or *pragmatiki*⁵² as opposed to “political amateurs,” and the stigmatisation of opposition activism as threatening to undermine a “fragile social consensus” are examples of the latter regional ideologies.

The expectation is that the greater the degree of ideological indoctrination of the public, the greater the levels of support for the regime. The closer the regime is to the mass public, the easier such ideological projection. It is here that municipalities’ role becomes central, much like it was in the Soviet system. The municipalities’ control over media and other instruments of influence over public opinion and over such venues of instruction and education as schools, allows for a centralised projection of regime ideologies, while stigmatising alternative views, at the very lowest levels.

In Bashkortostan, nationalist ideology became central to Rakhimov’s justification of his rise to power and the republic’s sovereignty projects. It was manifested in the search for historical justification of the idea of the Bashkirs’ ownership of the republic and their primordial association with the land from times immemorial. The more obvious expressions of this agenda were the lavish “Global Kurultay” (congress) of Bashkirs, the celebration of the Salavat Yulaev cult,⁵³ and numerous government funded publications, many of them pseudo-scientific, on the subject. On the face of it, these efforts remained more on a symbolic level, had no real practical implications for the average citizens, and were much ridiculed by the republic’s Russian and Tatar intelligentsias. When in 1992 the government tried to introduce Bashkir training in Ufa schools, it had to back down following protests from the then still vocal Ufa soviet.

In reality, these *prima facie* symbolic expressions of nationalism were increasingly accompanied by practical measures of ideological indoctrination throughout Bashkortostan’s localities. Municipalities, by the end of 1992 firmly controlled by the regime, have become central to this process.

A typical example is the local administration in the overwhelmingly Tatar town of Chakmagush. The deputy head of administration Damira Altaforvna Kazykhanova, aside from

⁵² For a discussion of the transformation of the former *apparatchiki* into self-proclaimed *pragmatiki*, see Mendras, Marie. “L’Etat, L’Argent, La Clientele.” *La Revue Tocqueville/The Tocqueville Review* 1 (1998): 35-54, 39; and Lallemand. “Gouvernance introuvable,” 77.

her administrative functions also has an ideological role, albeit one ostensibly concerned with preserving “interethnic peace and the development of culture of those living in the region.”⁵⁴ Kazykhanova, an ethnic Tatar, is the head of the *Ispolkom*, or executive committee of the regional Chakmagush branch of the republic-sponsored *Kurultay* (congress) of Bashkirs. The *Kurultay*’s branches apparently exist at all administrative levels irrespective of the ethnic composition of the localities. The *Ispolkom*’s main function, according to her, is to promote Bashkir culture in the region. Its main preoccupation has been the introduction of Bashkir language in the local schools. The instruction until now has been voluntary, although parents are encouraged to send the children for bilingual instruction. Furthermore, she maintained:

The Bashkir *Kurultay* also pays attention to the study of the genealogical tree. And truly, on close inspection of the genetic tree, one discovers that in the olden times, naturally, it was the Bashkirs who lived here... We even had a scientific conference, it was our work, the Bashkir *Kurultay* invited scientists from the state university... and people from the central archives, archaeologists... And truly we came to a conclusion that Bashkirs lived here in these villages, and so in the future, should parents wish, especially now that the law is passed... if there is such a wish among parents and children, let them learn the Bashkir language.

She concludes:

Therefore, we have to promote this genealogical tree, the classes of history and culture of Bashkortostan, so a pupil will know his genealogical tree and will think and reflect, and each parent will have to know... not forcibly, but with the help of explanatory work.

The projection of Bashkir nationalist doctrines into the local populations is just one aspect of the municipalities’ ideology. Another, common for both the republics and regions, is the juxtaposition of “politics” and “administration” in favour of the latter. Politics, understood in the sense of partisan interests, is presented as damaging to efficient local administration by the impartial *Krepie khozyastvenniki*. The “debating chambers” of the 1990 packed with “new”

⁵³ A Bashkir peasant rebel. In the Soviet textbooks Yulaev was presented as a fighter against Tsarist oppression. He is now described as a national hero, who fought for Bashkir rights against imperial Russian rule.

⁵⁴ Personal interview, 17 June 1999, Ufa.

“inexperienced” people are juxtaposed to the managerial *nomenklatura* of the past, many of whom continue to staff the local municipal administrations.

An example is Anatoliy Baranov, the deputy head of administration of Ufa city. He is the archetype of the apolitical administrator who had risen through the party ranks and soviet administration. Baranov had worked in the obkom for a number of years prior to being elected to the Ufa soviet. He had since been consequently re-elected to the Ufa soviet in 1990, 1995, and 1999. As Chairman of the soviet, he is also a deputy head of administration, which is a full-time administrative post. Baranov has apparently never been involved in big politics – opposition or other – even at the heyday of democratic upsurge in the early 1990s.

Baranov’s view of the mission of city government is its service, rather than the political side. The 1990 soviet, he maintains, “has for two years suffered from the malaise of politics, i.e., we, deputies, at the time tried to give a political assessment of what was happening in the country, the republic to a greater extent, and to a lesser extent paid attention to processes happening in the city from the point of view of creating normal conditions for life.” Finally, he concludes, “the soviet started to deal with the stuff that the representative organ is supposed to be doing, i.e., city administration.”⁵⁵ The predominance of *khozyaystvenniki* and administrators like Baranov in current municipal institutions – in both the executive and representative branches is thus presented as furthering the interests of the local communities at large. Such an ideology, however, is designed to stigmatise rival political and economic interests as threatening the “fragile social consensus” and work for the common well-being that these Weberian administrators ostensibly foster.

Bashkortostan is frequently cited as an outlier and an extreme case of regime control. However, Bashkortostan could be considered an “ideal case” of the usage of municipalities for the purposes of consolidation of the regime. The above features are observed throughout Russia’s constituent entities, the difference being that of degree. The republic of Adygeya, which otherwise differs from Bashkortostan according to a number of other parameters, is a case in point.

⁵⁵ Personal interview, 4 June 1999, Ufa.

Adygeya: Island of Stability in the Turbulent North Caucasus

Adygeya is a tiny republic landlocked in Krasnodarskiy krai covering a territory of just 7.600 square miles and with a population of just 450.500 people. It occupied a lower status of autonomous oblast in the Soviet Union's administrative hierarchy, and was until 1990 subordinate to the krai. Adygeya's population is overwhelmingly Russian, with the titular group comprising slightly over 20% of the population. In 1990 the Adyge *nomenklatura* led by the former obkom first secretary Aslan Djharimov joined the bandwagon of the parade of sovereignties as a way of consolidating its position within the republic. This process generated large-scale democratic and Russian nationalist opposition. In 1990-1991 much of the opposition activity was associated with the Maykop city soviet, which emerged as the key opponent of Adygeya's sovereignty process. Despite large-scale opposition to Adygeya's sovereignty project and efforts to rally support in Krasnodarskiy krai, the Djharimov regime managed to consolidate power locally and to introduce legislation to this effect in a virtually uncontested fashion. Adygeya now takes pride in being an "island of stability" in the turbulent North Caucasus. Compared to Bashkortostan, however, Adygeya has a more open political process. It has tolerated limited expressions of opposition to the regime from public associations of Slavic and democratic orientation. It has also allowed the election of avowedly opposition figures to both its local and republican level legislatures. Nevertheless, like Bashkortostan, it is an entity with one major power grouping – the Djharimov clan and those associated with it.

Local Self-Government Reform

Like Russia's other republics, Adygeya enjoyed a brief period of local government independence lasting from 1990 until the end of 1991. As in the other constituent entities the elections produced a cleavage between the capital city soviet, and, to a lesser extent, the *rayon* soviets, on the one hand, and the Adyge Supreme Soviet, on the other. The struggle between the Maykop city soviet and the oblast Supreme soviet was particularly acute. The soviet's deputy faction of democratic leanings called "Action" or *Deystvie* initiated the founding of the city newspaper, *Maykopskie novosti*, which became the mouthpiece of opposition to Adygeya's sovereignty

projects. The soviet rallied and sponsored public associations of civic and Slavic orientation behind the cause and tried to attract Moscow's attention to the perceived undemocratic nature of the sovereignty initiatives.

The prima facie democratic cleavage between the capital city and the republic masked the struggles over privatisation and the acquisition of jurisdiction over the city's assets. Maykop concentrates most of the republic's industrial facilities and continues to be the only donor to the republican budget. The stakes were also high for key individuals in the democratic opposition within the soviet and those allied with it, who were well-placed to benefit from political and economic liberalisation. Thus, the Maykop soviet's most active deputy and founder of the "Action" group, Valentin Lednev, had been the head of the federation of trade unions of the agro-industrial complex. Despite the influence of individuals like Lednev and the powerful institutional, industrial and social networks that they controlled, they were promptly silenced, coopted or squeezed out of the republic. Lednev had since pursued a career in Moscow having been prevented from running for the republic's presidency. The heads of the Maykop city and Maykop *rayon* soviets, likewise active in the opposition, moved to Krasnodar.

These moves were possible due to the federal-sponsored counter-reform of LSG, which in a sense pre-determined the victors in the above struggles throughout most of Russia's entities. In 1992, following Yel'tsin's recommendations on local government reform, many local soviets were disbanded, and the formerly elected local executives would now be appointed pursuant to a decree of the newly elected Adyge president, Aslan Djharimov. The decree initiated a series of successive executive initiatives aimed at bringing the soviets under the control of the chief executive and his appointed figureheads.

The mechanisms of regime rule

The institutional outlines of Adygeya's local government that came to be established after 1992 are on the face of it less centralised and hierarchical compared to Bashkortostan. The town and village districts, of which there are five and fifty, respectively, form part of local self-

government, and their heads of administrations are popularly elected figures.⁵⁶ However, on the levels of Maykop city, the city of Adygeysk, and the republic's seven *rayony*, Adygeya maintains "Local state government," which has allowed the republic to evade federal legislation on LSG in these entities. Although bowing to federal pressure, Adygeya in 1997 made the mayor of Maykop an elected figure, he forms part of the republic executive chain of command as a minister in Djharimov's cabinet.

Despite the greater openness of the Djharimov regime and the less centralised nature of municipal hierarchies, as in Bashkortostan, local administrations perform important political functions. Adygeya does not maintain a *nomenklatura* system strictly identical to the Soviet one. However, local administrations are in charge of appointments to municipal institutions, such as schools. The system is important for screening out candidates with opposition leanings. Local administrations also maintain jurisdictions over public properties and the activities of public associations, and actively manipulate this lever. Thus, the opposition Union of Slavs of Adygeya had for several years been denied office space in Maykop city. The group blames the mayor Chernichenko, a regime crony, for failing to take the politically risky action. The local administrations in every locality are also the first point of contact for public associations, which want to have a group discussion or gathering with the local populations. Thus, an activist of the opposition Union of Slavs of Adygeya maintains: "Suppose we go somewhere, to some *rayon* or *stanitsa* [Cossack settlement]. Where do I go first of all? To the head of administration." According to him, the head of administration's idea of local self-government is as follows: "Djharimov gathers a meeting [of heads of administrations] and gives them directives to do this and that..."⁵⁷

The reach of the local administrations formally extends even further down into the communities than in Bashkortostan. The city of Maykop, for example, maintains a system of KSMs, *Komitety samoupravleniya mikrorayonov* or committees of local government of micro-districts. The fifteen KSMs are composed of the elected committees and their chairmen. Their ostensible aim is genuine local government and citizen participation. However, the title of "self-governing" bodies is misleading, as they are known to be representatives of the republic's

⁵⁶ However, a July 1999 amendment to the republic's local government law stipulated that these local heads of administrations would be elected from amongst council deputies and their candidates presented by the *rayon* head, and could be removed by the council.

⁵⁷ Personal interview, Vladimir Karataev, Editor, *Zakuban'e*, (Union of Slavs' press organ) 9 August 1999, Maykop.

executive organs at the lowest territorial levels.⁵⁸ Moreover, KSMs are known to be watchdog agencies preventing the emergence of any opposition social activism against the regime. Thus, the KSMs prevented the opposition group, Union of Slavs of Adygeya, to hold opinion surveys and neighbourhood meetings with Maykop residents.⁵⁹ When Nina Konovalova, the Union's head, approached the KSM head with a request to meet with the local residents, the person in charge of the KSM turned it down and suggested she needs the permission of the higher head of administration, which was not forthcoming.⁶⁰ As such, these bodies are reminiscent of the "neighbourhood" committees in the Soviet system. While independent from the formal organs of local government, they are fused into the system of regime power extending its reach further down into the communities.

The continued dependence of the social actors on the state facilitates political control over the localities. Even such wealthy donor municipalities as Maykop ultimately depend on the republic for budget allocation. The city is the only donor territory in Adygeya. In 1999 Maykop collected 315 million rubles in taxes, but was only allowed to retain 125. Out of the collected taxes, 67 million went to the republic's budget and the rest to the federal one. The republic then returned to the city 30 million out of the 67, as a subvention. In a situation apparently typical of Russia's other regional capitals, Maykop was thus made artificially into a subsidised entity.⁶¹ The Adyge president has on several occasions used his decree power to try to further curtail the city's budget, which prompted legal suits by the more independent city council, but not from the mayor.⁶² The purpose of such budgetary control, according to a Maykop city functionary, is clear: "if you show too much independence, they start curtailing the subvention."⁶³

While Maykop can use the fact of its wealth in bargaining with the republic, and can protest the encroachment on its budgetary rights in court, the situation is worse for inherently poor localities with a lower status. Consider the example of the Kirovskiy village district. I visited the district's administrative center, a leafy rural town called Severovostochnye sady, Sady for short, or "North-Eastern Gardens." It is located some five kilometres outside of the city of

⁵⁸ Personal interview, Alexandr Semenchuk, Head, committee on local self-government, Hase (Adyge republican legislature), 4 August 1999, Maykop.

⁵⁹ Personal interview, Vladimir Karataev, 5 August 1999, Maykop.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Personal interview, Yevgeniy Efremov, Head, Organisational department, Maykop City Representative Assembly, 6 August 1999, Maykop.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

Maykop. In local parlance it is also referred to as *Armyanskiy Khutor*, or Armenian village considering the large Armenian population. The mostly Russian, Armenian and Ukrainian town has a population of 3,300 people. Sady forms part of the larger Kirovskiy village district, *Sel'skiy okrug*, which is in turn part of the Maykop region. As elsewhere, the district's part-time council, largely composed of appointed *kontraktniki* (employees depending on municipal contracts and salaries) from among the village intelligentsia – teachers, doctors, etc., – is considered to be a defunct rubber stamp body. It is the full-time local head of administration who is the major player and decision-maker in the locality.

According to Viktor Chernenko, the district head of administration, the only source of the district's revenue is the five taxes it was allowed to retain by the higher *rayon* authorities. These taxes in 1999 yielded a total of 150,000 rubles, which, according to Chernenko, is a meagre sum insufficient to cover the needs of the district's 7,000 strong population.⁶⁴ The *rayon* administration manipulates this budget control as a tool against the emergence of any opposition to the regime. It also fosters a strong sense among the local populations that should the village district head of administration show independence towards the higher authorities, it is the average people that will suffer. "The local mentality is such," maintains Chernenko: "if the *rayon* head is unhappy [with me] who will suffer? The people will suffer, because he will hurt us somehow, will not build a road, will not pay for the telephone, for gas, for water."⁶⁵ Thus, while the village district de jure forms part of LSG, independent from regional power, and its head of administration is elected, the municipality continues to be vulnerable to and controlled by the higher authorities fused into the republic's executive hierarchy.

The local councils

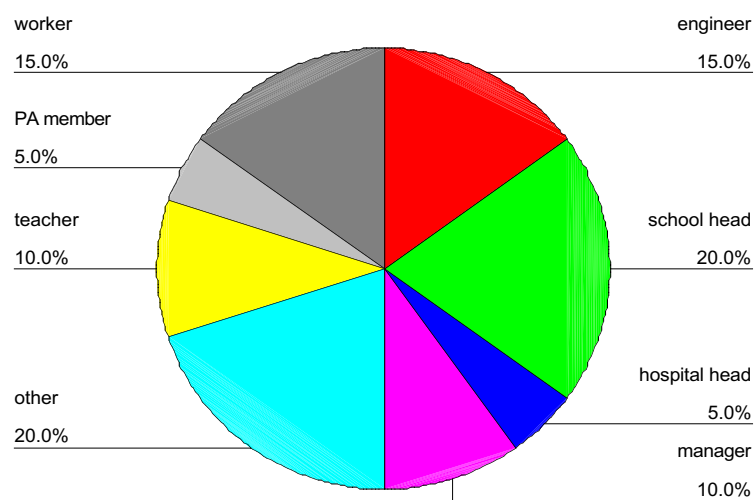
The Maykop city council, elected in 1995 supports the trend, observed in Ufa, of the large proportion of local "notables" and regular employees within state bodies, controlled by the executive. The council, however, is more diverse in its composition reflecting the more competitive electoral process in the republic. Out of the council's twenty deputies, the largest

⁶⁴ Personal interview, Viktor Chernenko, Head of Administration of Kirovskiy village district, Maykop *rayon*, 6 August 1999.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

single category is comprised of heads of educational establishments, with 20%; heads of hospitals comprise 5%. 10% are managers. Teachers, who are *kontraktniki* (depend on municipal contracts), comprise 10%, and workers 15%. There is one voluntary association member and three engineers. Four deputies, whom I included in the category of “other” include pensioners and a deputy listed as unemployed.

Figure 3: Composition of the Maykop City Representative Assembly, 1995



The greater diversity of the Maykop council is a reflection of the greater openness of Adygeya’s political process compared to that of Bashkortostan. However, the fact that such a large percentage of deputies are heads of educational institutions still needs to be explained. Studies of other regions have suggested that the election of such figures indicates lack of the constituencies’ familiarity with names, and their affiliation and status are indicators by which people vote.⁶⁶ However, the role that these “notables” perform in the overall political process in the republics would suggest a different explanation for their electoral “success.” School heads are part of the regional establishment and they represent an essential link between the average citizens and the regime. The comparison may not be entirely appropriate, but they may be likened to a local

parish priest, a Cure in rural France or pope in pre-Revolutionary Russia. Like these members of bourgeois or Tsarist establishment called on to maintain the social order, they are also omnipotent entities, on whom the ordinary subjects could rely for their daily needs and problems. Appointed by the local administrations and dependent on them for salaries, their deputy seat represents a further inclusion into the regime, and the reinforcement of the sense of obligation towards it. Yet, the arrangement is not that of simple extraction of loyalty from the subjects, but the projection of the sense of reciprocity and system of trust. School or hospital heads promise not to “neglect” or “hurt” *obidet*’ their constituencies in exchange for loyalty to the regime.⁶⁷

While such a system in and of itself makes coercion unnecessary, if need be, the notability is quick to punish the occasional black sheep or prevent it from poisoning the minds of the entire flock. Thus, it is to the dean of the university or head of school, or those sitting on the board of education that the Union of Slavs have to go in order to get permission to have an informal discussion with students or even teachers about the political situation in the republic.⁶⁸ Not only do they get denied permission to do so, but as a “prophylactic” the dean and teachers also hold “explanatory work” with the students against the Union, much like my late Brezhnev era school director would shame an occasional “hippi” student in front of a school-wide student meeting, *lineika*.

Thus, while the ultimate arbiter of all social activity in a locality, the “tsar and god” remains the local head of administration, it is to the heads of educational institutions and state enterprises and other agencies that he relies on to reproduce the regime on a daily basis and to prevent its corrosion from within.

Ideology

As in Bashkortostan, control over localities facilitates the projection of republic ideologies. In Adygeya, loyalty to the regime as a way of avoiding conflicts and the identification of the

⁶⁶ See, for example, Ovchinnikov, Boris. “Munitsipal'nye vybory: tendentsii i zakonomernosti.” In *Reforma mestnogo samoupravleniya v regional'nom izmerenii*, edited by S. Ryzhenkov and N. Vinnik. Moscow: Moskovskiy obshchestvennyy nauchnyy fond, 1999, 119.

⁶⁷ I am grateful to Marie Mendras for clarifying my thoughts on this matter, and for suggesting possible other ways of looking at the role of these “notables.”

⁶⁸ Personal interview, Vladimir Karataev, 5 August 1999, Maykop.

regime, with peace and stability form important parts of the republic's ideology. Adygeya's stability is juxtaposed to alternative scenarios, such as conflicts in Abkhazia, North Ossetiya, Chechnya, amidst which Adygeya represents a haven of peace and harmony.

Municipalities are instrumental at projecting this message through their controlled presses. As in Bashkortostan, they also project nationalist ideologies and programs formulated by republican functionaries. In the overwhelmingly Russian and Armenian Maykop *rayon*, for example, an ethnic Russian local administrative functionary, speaking on the conditions of anonymity maintained: "we regularly receive directives to the effect of increasing the proportion of Adyge cultural activities [in the overall repertoire of municipality-sponsored events]. What for? We have so few Adyge in the *rayon*..."⁶⁹ As Adygeya's other *rayony*, the Mykop *rayon* administration is also responsible for gradually putting the language law into effect, according to which Adygeya is to switch to Adyge language in state administration. In the *rayon*, efforts are made to introduce Adyge language instruction specifically in schools with predominantly Russian and Armenian pupils.⁷⁰ The ethnic Russian functionaries I spoke to in the *rayon* administration privately expressed apprehension at these policies, which they are nonetheless forced to execute subject to directives from above. Efforts to increase Adyge cultural presence and language training in the localities are not as crude as Bashkortostan's ideological discourses on the "genealogical tree." Yet, even the above practices are clearly at odds with the idea of local government by the people and in accordance to the ethnic, cultural or other peculiarity of a locality.

Other Regions

This article has focused on regimes with "one actor," i.e., where the president controls the political situation in the republic and does not face any significant challenge from other actors because of control over municipalities. How representative are these regimes of Russia's entire regional scene, of both republics and those occupying a lower status in the federal hierarchy? As an indication of the number of "uni-actor" entities I take a study by Sergey Ryzhenkov, which

⁶⁹ Personal interview, 10 August 1999.

attempted to devise a representative sample of different regional regimes.⁷¹ Out of the sample of 21 entities, which included both republics and regions, 7 had “one main actor,” Tatarstan being a typical example. 9 had two main actors (mayor and regional head), of which Udmurtiya was a famous case, and the remaining five cases had an “uncertain” configuration of actors.⁷² Thus, it may be inferred that close to half of Russia’s regions maintain “uni-actor” political regimes and hence maintain control over municipalities. While this study focuses on the “uni-actor” regimes, the arguments are applicable in other entities as well. Even where municipalities have emerged as actors in their own right, they are frequently used for furthering the interests of the narrow municipal counter-elite in its struggle with regional regimes, and not as an instrument for the empowerment of the wider citizenry. However, the republics have been more notorious in maintaining “uni-actor” regimes. Significantly, they have also been identified among entities of “highest resistance” to the implementation of federal legislation on LSG.⁷³ This further supports the contention that control over LSG is effectively used to prevent the emergence of alternative power bases for rival political or economic groupings. The following sections largely focus on the republics, but also provide examples from regions in order to make further generalisations.

Figure 4 below contains official Central Electoral Commission (*TsIK*) information on the composition of local governing bodies in all of Russia’s republics except for Bashkortostan and Ingushetiya, as of 1998. Bashkortostan was not listed in the report, while Ingushetiya has abolished its local governing bodies. Figure 4 reveals that organised social and political interests continue to be weakly represented in the local bodies, and in many cases are not represented at all.⁷⁴ Instead, it indicates the continued “executivisation” of local councils, as well as the

⁷⁰ Personal interview, Mumat Mukhtarovna Khatit, Deputy head of department of education of administration of Maykop *rayon*, 10 August 1999.

⁷¹ For another discussion of the regimes with one and two actors, see Gel'man. “V poiskakh avtonomii.”

⁷² Ryzhenkov. “Regional'naya elita i mestnoe samoupravlenie,” 96.

⁷³ Gil'chenko, Leonid. “Novyy etap reformy mestnogo samoupravleniya.” *Vlast'*, no. 3 (1997): 19-22, 22. Gil'chenko's study suggests that ethnicity, however, is probably not the key explanation for this fact. The republics' higher status in the federal hierarchy has allowed greater bargaining power in terms of delaying the implementation of the laws. Another explanation is the resource-rich nature of republics like Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, and Yakutiya, which increases the importance of control over the localities.

⁷⁴ For further evidence from the regions, see for example, Hahn, Jeffrey W. “Conclusions: Common Features of Post-Soviet Local Politics.” In *Local Power and Post-Soviet Politics*, edited by Theodore H. Friedgut and Jeffrey W. Hahn. London: M.E. Sharpe, 1994; Hahn, Jeffrey W. “The Development of Local Legislatures in Russia: The Case of Yaroslavl.” In *Democratisation in Russia: The Development of Legislative Institutions*, edited by Jeffrey W. Hahn. London: M.E. Sharpe, 1996; Hahn, Jeffrey W.

predominance of the managerial elite.⁷⁵ State and municipal employees form large proportions of the local deputy corps in all the republics. In Altay, for example, they constitute over half of all councillors, and almost a third in Buryatiya. Heads of enterprises constitute close to or over half of the deputy corps in Altay, Buryatiya, Kalmykiya, Mary El and Chuvashiya.⁷⁶

The *TsIK* report does not disaggregate the “municipal employees” category, and it is difficult to judge what percentage of them represent the “notability” in charge of educational, medical and other networks. However case studies of other regions indicate that further generalisations might be possible. A study of municipal elections in several cities indicated that those coming from “education” and “medical” professions constitute 64% in Pskov, 53% in Kirov, 52% in Ryazan’, 61% in Samara.⁷⁷

Studies of Russia’s regions also indicate that Adygeya and Bashkortostan are not alone in that the above notables are dependent on municipal administrations in one way or another and are vulnerable to random sanctions and penalties. This is in line with the continued “administrative” nature of local economic processes despite years of privatisation and efforts to create an independent entrepreneurial sector.⁷⁸ Thus, a 1997 letter by the prosecutor general to the Duma in the list of over 70,000 violations of the law on local government by local administrations identified the following as the most widespread: illegal licencing and taxation; illegal imposition

⁷⁵ Data compiled from Goryunov, P. A., N. A. Kulyasova, V. A. Malyshev, S. Yu. Nesterov, V. G. Sitnik, E. V. Shloma, and S. N. Shusharin. *Formirovanie organov mestnogo samoupravleniya v Rossiyskoy federatsii: elektoral'naya statistika*. Moscow: Ves' Mir, 1999, 58.

⁷⁶ This is also true for the capital of what has been hailed as a “Russian success story,” a showcase of Russia’s regional democracy, the Novgorod region. Petro, Nikolai. “The Novgorod Region: A Russian Success Story.” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 15, no. 3 (1999): 235-261. For a more recent argument about democratic decision-making in the region, see Zhovannik, Vladimir. “Nenuzhnyi progress: Unikal'nyi opyt Novgoroda federal'nuya vlast' ne interesuyet.” *Ekspert* 29, no. 22 (December 2000). Available online at: <http://www.expert.ru/sever/current/stoll.shtml>. For a critique of such perceptions, see Zimine, Dmitri A., and Michael J. Bradshaw. “Regional Adaptation to Economic Crisis in Russia: The Case of Novgorod Oblast.” *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics* 40, no. 5 (1999): 335-353; and Gel'man. “V poiskakh avtonomii.” Gel'man in fact implied in his article that the region is a “uni-actor” regime considering the staggeringly high vote (95%) the governor received in the 1999 gubernatorial elections ostensibly with the help of the “civic public.” The Novgorod city Duma and its administration is indirectly controlled by the regional governor, while the council has a large percentage of enterprise “notables.”

⁷⁷ Ovchinnikov, Boris. “Munitsipal'nye vybory: tendentsii i zakonomernosti.” In *Reforma mestnogo samoupravleniya v regional'nom izmerenii*, edited by S. Ryzhenkov and N. Vinnik. Moscow: Moskovskiy obshchestvennyy nauchnyy fond, 1999, 123. Case studies of other regions likewise support this trend. See, for example, Lallemand, Jean-Charles. “Politics for the Few: Elites in Bryansk and Smolensk.” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 15, no. 4 (1999): 312-335; and Lallemand, Jean-Charles. “Gouvernance Introuvable.”

⁷⁸ For a discussion, see Mendras. “L'Etat, L'Argent, La Clientele.”

of financial penalties; interference with the economic activities of enterprises, among others.⁷⁹ The fact that the enterprise notables in becoming local deputies might be motivated by the desire to avoid such penalties and lobby for favours does not diminish the argument of their vulnerability to the local organs and their resultant hesitance to espouse political opposition to the regional regimes. The municipalities in turn depend on the regional administrations for local enterprise and other tax rates, which could be randomly changed from year to year.⁸⁰

Figure 4: Composition of Local Representative Bodies in Russia's Republics, 1998

	Population	Total LSG deputies	Employed full-time in LSG	Nominated by electoral blocks	State and municipal employees	Enterprise heads
Adygeya	432,046	397	54	9	59	81
Altay	190,831	207	22		107	122
Buryatiya	1,038,252	341	11		108	155
Dagestan	1,802,188	5156	26		1053	749
Ingushetia	No LSG					
Kabardino-Balkariya	753,531	1410	59	9	239	340
Kalmykiya	322,579	830	117		109	378
Karachay-Cherkessiya	414,970	614	49	10	76	189
Kareliya	790,150	413	2	46	5	72
Komy	1,250,847	413		8	25	165
Mary El	749,332	438	1		32	170
Mordoviya	963,504	5478	496		838	784
Sakha (Yakutiya)	1,094,065	523	1		91	191
North-Ossetiya	632,428	1055			58	152
Tatarstan	3,641,742	6937	1856			125
Tyva	308,557	329	21	4	73	72
Udmurtiya	1,605,663	864	45	77	47	311
Khakasiya	566,861	698	18		13	97
Chuvashiya	1,338,023	571	1	19	76	283

⁷⁹ Mitrokhin, S. "Relizatsiya munitsipal'nogo proekta v Rossii: nekotorye aspekty federal'noy politiki." In *Reforma mestnogo samoupravleniya v regional'nom izmerenii*, edited by S. Ryzhenkov and N. Vinnik. Moscow: Moskovskiy obshchestvennyy nauchnyy fond, 1999, 32-33.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 40.

At the same time, heads of local administrations continue to be fused into local republican hierarchies and to be dependent on the republican chief executives.⁸¹ The Kremlin's efforts to ensure compliance with the 1995 law on local self-government, which mandates the election of local executives,⁸² have resulted in some de jure modifications of local government set-up. In practice, however, the republics have continued to sabotage this requirement and have devised nuanced ways of evading it. For example, according to *TsIK*'s factual report on local government in the republics, all of Adygeya's local governing bodies are popularly elected, while those of Tatarstan are ostensibly elected by the councils.⁸³ Most of the republics in the report, in fact, appear to have complied with the law by either electing heads of administrations popularly or through the local councils.

A more nuanced reading of the republics' local governing laws reveals a different picture. Adygeya appears to be a typical example of how the federal requirements are being evaded. As I have discussed above, Adygeya has introduced an elaborate distinction between local *state* government and local *self*-government.⁸⁴ It can thus justify to the federal centre that all of its local governing bodies are elected. However, the most important local figure, the mayor of Maykop, is legally part of local state government and not local self-government, and is a minister in Adygeya's government. He thus forms part of the republic's executive chain of authority. In other republics, popularly elected mayors can be removed at the initiative of or by the republican chief executives or by the local councils, dependent on them. In a number of republics, while local heads of administrations are elected at lower levels, they continue to be subordinate to the republican chief executives at the most important large city, *rayon*, or capital city levels. The table below summarises some of the provisions of republican laws that serve to subvert federal LSG requirements, while seemingly complying with them. The data covers the periods from 1993 until 1999, and is compiled based on a search of the Russian regional law database, *Konsul'tant plyus*, in the summer of 1999.

⁸¹ On the "etatisation" of LSG throughout Russia's constituent units, see Gel'man. "Federal'naya politika"; and Gel'man. "V poiskakh avtonomii." 2000; for case studies of smaller localities, see Kukolev, I. "Vybory v gorodke N." *Vlast'* 8 (1997): 27-33.

⁸² "Federal'nyy zakon ob obshchikh printsipakh organizatsii mestnogo samoupravleniya v Rossiyskoy federatsii." Moscow: Sobranie Zakonodatel'stva Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, art. 16.

⁸³ Goryunov et al. *Formirovanie organov mestnogo samoupravleniya*, 171.

⁸⁴ For a more detailed discussion of Adygeya's local government legislation and practices, see Lankina, Tomila. "Local Self-Government or Government Gone Local? The Case of Adygeya." *Russian Regional Report*. New York: Institute for East-West Studies, 1999.

Figure 5: Legislation on Local Self-Government and Provisions for Elections or Appointment of heads of administrations

	Laws on heads of administrations	The catch	Latest
Adygeya	1995 const., elected LSG	July 1996 Presid. decree on heads of administrations respons. for discipline n localities. 7.99 LSG amend, town and village heads nomin. by reg. head of administration and can be removed by councils	26.9.97, LSG law, does not include city and region levels. 23.1.98 law on LSG elections, LSG organs to be elected
Altay	30.05.95 law on state power organs recog. LSG, but no spec. of method of head of administration el.	20.6.96 amend. to law on local state power organs: local adm. subord. to higher exec. organs; head of administration can be removed by council; village head of administration can be app. by region head of administration	26.2.98 State assembly decree on extending term of heads of administrations till Dec. 99; 28.4.99 Law on el. of city and region heads of administrations
Bashkortostan	14.10.95, law on Local State Government	heads of administrations at all levels appointed by presid. decree	4.3.99 Fed. CC rules uncost. appt. of heads of administrations
Buryatiya	20.2.97 Ulan Ude charter, el. head of administration	5.9.95 law, Pres. can remove head of administration after consult. w/soviet	14.8.98 Law, head of administration to be elected
Dagestan	12.5.96 law mayor to be el.		3.7.97 law on status of capital, mayor el.
Ingushetia	No LSG organs		
Kabardino-Balkariya	18.10.95 LSG law, no ment. of el. or app. of heads of administrations	18.10.95 law stresses head of administration 'strong one man rule'	1.9.97 const., LSG in cities, regions & lower soviets
Kalmykiya	23.09.96 LSG law, Elista and other heads of administrations pop. el.	23.9.26 LSG law, Pres. can delegate state functions to head of administration and control their fulfil; can raise issue of head of administration popular removal; 15.9.97 pres. Can give state functions to Elista mayor, can initiate removal; head of administration under control of presid. rep.	3.1.99 law on legisl. changes guarantees LSG via elected and other means
Karachay-Cherkessiya	No data	No data	1998, Cherkessk mayor elected
Kareliya	23.12.9 LSG law, popl. el. heads of administrations		19.2.96 amended LSG law confirms el. heads of administrations
Komy	28.5.98, LSG law, head of administration to be el. by council	27.07.93 LSG law, head of administration subord. To soviet and higher organs. 8.7.99 LSG law, head of administration el. By presentation of republic head, strong one-man rule.	8.7.99 LSG law, head of administration el.

	Laws on heads of administrations	The catch	Latest
Mary El	10.11.93 LSG law, city & reg. heads of administrations app. by president		31.12.96 LSG law, head of administration el. Pop. Or by soviet
Mordoviya	16.2.94 const. amend. recogn. LSG; 9.9.94 LSG law, heads of administrations pop. el.	16.2.94, const. amend. recognised LSG, but does not specify if heads of administrations elected.	4.12.96 Saransk charter, head of administration el. By soviet; 14.7.98 LSG law, pop. el. head of administration
Sakha (Yakutiya)	30.6.94, law on local state power, el. of lower level heads of administrations	30.6.94, Law on local state power, Uluses and city of rep. Subord. heads of administrations app. by pres. After election; lower heads of administrations app. by higher heads of administrations after el.	27.11.97 law on local state power organs, amend, head of administration of Ulus and city of rep. subord. to be appr. by pres.; Ulus and lower heads of administrations to be appr. by higher heads of administrations.; 26.1.99 special govt. LSG implem. program
North-Oss.	No data		
Tatarstan	8.12.95, const. ed., head of administration can be pop. el.	30.11.94 const. ed., LSG incl. in state power; 30.11.95 const. ed., in cities of rep. subordination, LSG only on city district levels	30.11.95, const. ed. LSG in cities and villages
Tyva	No data		
Udmurtiya	27.1.94, LSG law, pop. el. head of administration	4.2.97 ed. of LSG law, Izhevsk Duma decision, pop. Elected head of administration appoints reg. heads of administrations	14.1.98, Law on head of administration elections
Khakasiya	19.10.94 LSG law, pop. el. heads of administrations	19.10.94, LSG law, soviet can remove pop. el. head of administration; 19.5.98, SS dec., state power in regions	19.5.98, SS dec., LSG to be on city and villages and towns
Chuvashiya	26.5.93 LSG amend., soviets can be disbanded and remove heads of administrations		29.8.96, Cheboksary charter, elected head of administration; 12.5.97 amend. LSG law, LSG to be at all terr. in cities and lower levels; 15.6.98 amend. LSG law, head of administration pop. el. or by soviet.

The predominance of “notables” and their dependence on the executive branch is at odds with some orthodox views of local self-government as “government by the people” and “grass roots” rule.⁸⁵ The size and numbers of Russia’s municipal bodies also suggest an unorthodox view of their role. In Russia, as in a number of Eastern European states, local government bodies could legitimately be established at very tiny village levels with a population of just a few

⁸⁵ For a discussion of the “orthodox” approaches to local government, see Stoker. “Introduction: Normative Theories of Local Government.”

hundred. Indeed, a very sizeable proportion of Russia's municipalities cover very small areas. Thus, 18,35% of municipalities have from 100 to 500 voters, and 31,37% – from 500 to 1,000.⁸⁶

In terms of their size, it has been noted, Russian and East European municipalities approximate Southern European countries and France, where the average sizes of local governing units range from an average of approximately 1,600 in France (the smallest commune levels have as few as 80-100 inhabitants),⁸⁷ to 7,000 in Italy.⁸⁸ In Northern Europe, the sizes are much larger, while “authorities with under one thousand inhabitants have been virtually organized out of existence.”⁸⁹ The average in the British Isles, for example, ranges from 42,000 in the Irish republic, to 127,000 in England. In the other northern European states, it ranges between approximately 9,400 in Norway, to 30,250 in Sweden.⁹⁰

The orthodox take on the choice of the variable size of these bodies across different countries is that they stem from “different principles and values.”⁹¹ Thus, Alan Norton wrote:

The Latin countries value the self-regulating historical community as the basis of their structure of self-government. They are prepared to entrench it as fundamental to their way of life. This is seen as justified by the principle of keeping responsibility as close as possible to the individual and family and educating citizens in the art of self-administration.⁹²

The approach taken here suggests a rather different view of local government's relation to the local communities. One might infer from the evidence presented here that the smaller the unit of jurisdiction, the greater the degree of control over local societies by municipal bodies. Such forums as KSMs and *skhody*, which might be hailed as normatively desirable paragons of

⁸⁶ Goryunov et al. *Formirovanie organov mestnogo samoupravleniya v Rossiyskoy federatsii*, 12.

⁸⁷ I am indebted to Marie Mendras for making this clarification.

⁸⁸ Note that these are average sizes, and many municipalities are actually established at levels with a population of just a few hundred or even less.

⁸⁹ Norton, Alan. “What East European Democracies Might Learn from the West.” In *Local Government in Eastern Europe: Establishing Democracy at the Grassroots*, edited by Andrew Coulson. Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1995, 270.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ For an alternative view of municipal governance in the French commune, and the discussion of the personalistic, paternalistic and clientilistic nature of the local prefect's rule, see Mabileau, Albert. “De la Monarchie Municipale À la Française.” *Pouvoirs* 73 (1995): 7-17. For another discussion of historical reasons for municipalities' variable size in different Western European countries, those in the “north” versus the “south,” see Delcamp, Alain. “La Démocratie Municipale chez nos Voisins: Une Typologie.” *Pouvoirs* 73 (1995): 125-139.

⁹² Ibid.

community self-rule, in fact reinforce such familiarity and provide further means for the head of administration to influence decision-making within his locality.

Conclusion

This article has found that institutions of local government to a substantial degree account for the puzzle of the stability of regional regimes. Despite a decade of reform of local government in Russia, the evidence presented above supports a path-dependent view of the local bodies. Similar to the soviets in the Soviet system, the local governing institutions in Russia's regions perform important control functions vis-à-vis the local populations, the organised political or economic interests, state agencies and the private sector. Like their Soviet counterparts, the current local bodies are packed with regime loyalists who come from industrial, educational, recreational and other networks. They influence these networks with the help of the local bodies' agenda-setting power and its control over municipal resources, such as salaries. The result is that features normally considered to be indicative of local civic power, such as the numbers of municipal bodies and their small size, only serve to perpetuate narrow regional regimes, rather than empower the grass roots.