

THE CENTER CANNOT HOLD?: ELITE MOBILITY AND PATRONAGE IN THE
NORTH CAUCASUS DURING THE SOVIET AND POST-SOVIET PERIODS

BY

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the evolution of elite mobility and patronage in the North Caucasus across the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. The North Caucasus is defined as Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and Stavropol *krai*. The thesis examines the career mobility and patronage relationships of both the regional first secretaries serving in these territories from 1956 to 1991 and the regional executives serving from 1991 to the present. It uses Henry Hale's conception of patronalism as a theoretical basis and attempts to apply his analysis of regime transitions in the post-Soviet space to leadership transitions in these regions during the Soviet and post-Soviet periods.

The thesis ultimately shows that though the functional characteristics of regional elites in the North Caucasus have evolved from the Soviet through the post-Soviet era, the political system is still characterized by exchanges of concrete rewards and punishments through networks of acquaintance—consistent with the conception of patronalism. However, Hale's analysis of regime transitions is ultimately inapplicable because the leadership changes in the North Caucasus from the Soviet through the post-Soviet periods are ultimately more consistent with the logic of personnel changes.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The composition and stability of political elites over time can offer important information about the characteristics of political regimes. This thesis surveys elite mobility and patronage in the North Caucasus during the Soviet and post-Soviet eras. The regional elites who are the basis of this study are the regional first secretaries of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the regional executives, both presidents and governors, of the post-Soviet era. Their mobility within the state apparatus and patronage connections to central government elites, such as the General Secretary of the CPSU or the President of the Russian Federation, are the focus of this study. Elite mobility and patronage connections are examined primarily through the lenses of ethnicity, education, career trajectory, and political affiliation.

This thesis defines the North Caucasus as Stavropol *krai*, the Chechen Republic, and the republics of Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and North Ossetia. Analysis of governance in this region is important because secessionism has been prevalent here since the nineteenth century. Governance in this region has therefore been closely connected to the territorial integrity of the Soviet Union and Russian Federation. Moreover, governance shapes regional challenges such as terrorism, corruption, and economic underdevelopment, which have been the focuses of recent scholarship. This thesis ultimately represents a thorough exploration of elite politics in the North Caucasus.

Its theoretical basis is the seminal work of Henry Hale: *Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective*. Hale proposes a new theoretical concept which seeks to explain and predict political events, like regime transitions, in the post-Soviet space. This concept is patronalism, which he defines as “politics in societies where individuals organize their political and economic pursuits around the personalized exchange of concrete rewards

through chains of actual acquaintance, and not around abstract, impersonal principles...or categorizations like economic class.”¹ Hale puts forward two categories of patronal political systems: the single-pyramid and competing-pyramid systems. In a single-pyramid system, a single leader drives outcomes, meaning that he controls rewards and punishments, and exercises influence over the population through, for example, monopolization of the media. In a competing-pyramid system, multiple leaders can hand out rewards or punishments, and maintain influence over the population through personal media outlets. Hale points out that a single-pyramid system can devolve into a competing-pyramid system when expectations change, such as when the leader of the system reaches his constitutionally-mandated final term, reaches an advanced age, or loses influence over the population.²

This thesis will examine whether patronalism explains patterns of elite mobility and patronage in the North Caucasus and whether factors that influence regime transitions also influence transitions here. The factors that influence regime transitions elsewhere in the post-Soviet space could influence leadership changes in the North Caucasus because the regions here were never fully integrated into the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union and have achieved limited autonomy during the post-Soviet era. So, in comparison to other Russian regions, the governments of the North Caucasus may be more likely to display the characteristics of a regime.

The remainder of this thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter Two presents a review of relevant literature dedicated to elite circulation and administration during the Soviet and post-Soviet eras. Chapter Three analyzes elite mobility and patronage in the North Caucasus from 1957 until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Chapter Four analyzes the evolution of elite

¹ Henry Hale, *Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 9-10.

² Ibid.

mobility and patronage after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It focuses on the effects of the two political systems that comprise this period: the decentralizing political system under President Boris Yeltsin and the recentralizing system under Presidents Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev. Chapter Five concludes.

CHAPTER 2: THEORIES OF ELITE CIRCULATION AND ADMINISTRATION

This chapter explores the political science literature which analyzes elite circulation and administration in the Soviet Union and Russian Federation. This literature is relevant to the current study because it provides a model on which to base an analysis of the evolution of regional administration and patronage in the North Caucasus. This chapter primarily discusses elite circulation and administration in the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation first during the presidency of Boris Yeltsin, and then during the presidencies of Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev. It also compares this literature to Henry Hale's concept of patronalism, which describes the political-social sphere in both the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. Finally, this chapter presents the theoretical framework of the current study.

2.1 The Soviet Union

The literature about elite circulation and administration in the Soviet Union is divided into two schools of thought. The first school focuses on systems. Authors within this school study either organizational or relational dynamics. Authors who study organizational dynamics focus on formal interactions between officials, while those who study relational dynamics focus on informal interactions. All view these interactions as consequences of the Soviet political system. The second school of thought focuses on the influence of individuals, primarily the General Secretary, on the evolution of elite circulation and administration. Overall, this literature illustrates a complex portrait of interactions between the center and the peripheries.

Within the systems school of thought, organizational dynamics are the focus of Jerry Hough. Hough emphasizes three organizational characteristics of the Soviet system that shaped formal interactions between officials. He highlights the importance of ethnically-based territorial administration, which influenced who secured power in the CPSU—as demonstrated through the

general secretaryships of Josef Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev, and Leonid Brezhnev, who were each the member of their respective Politburos who had the greatest experience governing non-Russians.¹ Next, he highlights the centralization of power, which subordinated the political system to the Politburo through a system of ‘verticals,’ representing the ministries based in Moscow, and ‘horizontal,’ representing the regional party committees and soviets.² Finally, he emphasizes the parliamentary organization of the party bureaucracy. The system formally prioritized the voices at the bottom of the pyramid because each tier elected the members of the tier above. However, as a consequence of this parliamentary organization, the Secretariat and General Secretary attempted to control the regional elites.³ Control of the regional elites entailed control of the Central Committee, to whom the Secretariat and General Secretary were formally subordinated. The formal organization of the Soviet political system therefore shaped relations between officials—though not always in the intended manner.

Though relations did not always adhere to formal structures, Hough nonetheless viewed relations between officials as a consequence of their formal positions within the Soviet bureaucracy. Other authors, such as Michael Urban, examined informal relations. In 1989, Urban published a study of elite circulation in the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (BSSR) from 1966 to 1986. His study contains two threads of analysis that are relevant to the current study. The first is his analysis of elite circulation. Urban posits that Soviet bureaucracy was based on “weak structures,” which entailed that relations between officials were not concrete and that promotions could be exchanged for compliance, rather than awarded on the basis of merit.⁴

¹ Jerry Hough, *Soviet Leadership in Transition* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1980), 65-6.

² Ibid.

³ Hough (1980), 76-7.

⁴ Michael Urban, *An Algebra of Soviet Power: Elite Circulation in the Belorussian Republic, 1966-86* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 4-5.

Though he supports the Western scholarly assessment that the Soviet political system represented an apt illustration of Max Weber's conception of patrimonialism, he criticizes the general use of the 'turnover model,' which employs individual-level data to study one-to-one turnovers of positions within a bureaucracy. The model shows the rate at which turnovers occur and the characteristics of both incumbents and recruits, but cannot explain how officials circulate within the bureaucracy.⁵ Urban employs instead the vacancy chain model, which follows a vacancy chain from its start, when an official leaves a position, to its end, when an external recruit fills the lowest position within the chain. Following the flow of vacancies through the political system shows how elites circulated within it. For the purpose of the current study, two conclusions are important. First, self-supply was the predominant recruiting trend in all institutions surveyed, including the party, government ministries, soviets, and the Komsomol.⁶ Self-supply means that organizational elites were primarily recruited from within organizations. Second, though this was the predominant trend, the party ultimately provided more recruits than any other institution because it employed the most officials at the greatest rate of turnover.⁷

The second thread of analysis that is relevant to the current study is Urban's analysis of patronage networks in the BSSR. Again he criticizes the prevailing methods of Western scholars. He points out that scholars do not generally explain how they detected a patronage relationship and that, when they do, they use clientilistic connections to as evidence. However, clientilistic connections, such as two officials having worked in the same institution or region, are ultimately insufficient because they do not prove any affinity. Though proving the existence of a patronage relationship is difficult, Urban proposes two models that more definitively

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Urban (1989), 82.

⁷ Urban (1989), 83.

demonstrate their existence. He employs Gyula Jozsa's *seilschaft* model and John P. Willerton's 'upward mobility model' to analyze regional patronage networks in the BSSR. Jozsa's *seilschaft* model compares the network to a team of mountain climbers because they ascend the Soviet hierarchy as a unit. Willerton's upward mobility model, on the other hand, focuses on identifying multiple promotions in a single institution or region controlled by a potential patron. While the *seilschaft* model reflects the vacancy chain model, the upward mobility model moves beyond vacancy chains.⁸ Both models ultimately expand already-studied patronage networks in the BSSR. Urban concludes that "patronage powers are deployed through the medium of the *nomenklatura* and function primarily on a regional basis."⁹

At the beginning of his 1992 study, Willerton posits that, contrary to popular expectation, patronage networks provided "coherence" and an informal system of checks and balances within the Soviet bureaucracy because power was distributed among multiple, competing networks.¹⁰ In order to examine this proposition, he analyzes the career information of over 2,000 officials employed during the Brezhnev and Gorbachev eras at the all-union level and the republic level in Lithuania and Azerbaijan. He discovers that the high centralization of the Soviet bureaucracy and the rigid structure of career opportunities within it encouraged ambitious recruits to cultivate connections within the *nomenklatura*, which encompasses all officials holding full-time positions within the party bureaucracy. These connections ultimately benefited both recruits and elites. They enabled recruits to rise into the ranks of the *nomenklatura* and enabled elites to build a loyal base of clients, from which to strengthen their positions. These connections also determine which recruits rise to the ranks of the elite. Willerton characterizes the majority of officials in

⁸ Urban (1989) 91, 95.

⁹ Urban (1989), 137.

¹⁰ John P. Willerton, *Patronage and Politics in the USSR* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 2.

the Brezhnev and Gorbachev eras as having “progressive” career ambitions.¹¹ These were individuals who possessed higher education credentials and experience within a variety of environments in the bureaucracy. These officials also tended to have experience in ‘springboard’ positions, which were within important regions and key Central Committee departments, like the organizational party work and general departments.

Under Gorbachev, this highly-structured career hierarchy and the patronage networks that it encouraged began to fall apart. Informal means of power distribution were replaced by formal means as a range of actors increasingly competed for power within the CPSU, and interest groups as well as political parties competed for power within the public sphere.¹² The traditional springboard positions also lost relevance as elected parliamentary positions became more important. Willerton concludes, however, that patronage could continue to be influential within such a system, but that it would no longer be dominant because new forces linked to electoral politics would compete.¹³

Contrary to Urban and Willerton, Bohdan Harasymiw studies elite circulation solely through the lens of recruitment. He proposes that there are three categories of analysis in examining recruitment: individual, societal, and institutional.¹⁴ Within each category, there are factors that push and factors that pull a recruit into a specific post. At the individual level, the factors that push are the recruit’s personality and career ambition, while the factor that pulls is patronage. At the societal level, the factors that push are the recruit’s occupational role and social status, while those that pull are his “political role” and the recruiter’s preferences.¹⁵

¹¹ Willerton (1992), 225.

¹² Willerton (1992), 3.

¹³ Willerton (1992), 229.

¹⁴ Bohdan Harasymiw, *Political Elite Recruitment in the Soviet Union* (London: Macmillan Press, 1984), 25.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Finally, at the institutional level, the factor that pushes is group affiliation and the factor that pulls is the structure of opportunities within the bureaucracy. Harasymiw hypothesizes that, where institutional factors are weak, the individual factors will dominate. He proposes that political recruitment in the Soviet Union occurred in four stages, throughout which push and pull factors operated.¹⁶ The first stage was the initiation of recruitment from a pool of candidates, which theoretically encompassed all party members. The second was the advancement of a party member to the reserve for promotion. The third was advancement into the political elite, which was represented by recruitment into a full-time political post and inclusion in the *nomenklatura*. The fourth stage was advancement into the power elite, which was represented by inclusion in the all-union *nomenklatura*.

Harasymiw argues that advancement into the political elite was highly structured and generally preceded by advancement into the reserve for promotion, which was the list of workers eligible for promotion maintained from the level of the factory to the *oblast*. Promotion into and within the *nomenklatura* was influenced by the recruit's personality, the recruiter's preferences, and organizational factors, such as conflicts, bureaucratic politics, and patronage.¹⁷ These recruitment factors produced an elite that shared notable characteristics. The majority were party members, possessed a higher or specialized secondary education, and were either socially or occupationally of a worker or peasant background. Harasymiw also notes that as one ascends the party hierarchy, the number of elites under the age of forty decreases, indicating that the recruitment ladder is structured and difficult to break into.¹⁸ Under Brezhnev, the recruitment ladder became more static as elites lingered in their posts for longer than they did under

¹⁶ Harasymiw (1984), 32-3.

¹⁷ Harasymiw (1984), 171.

¹⁸ Harasymiw (1984), 179.

Khrushchev. Harasymiw predicts—after the close of the Brezhnev era—that, as long as the recruitment ladder remains static, the pool of candidates eligible for promotion to the *nomenklatura* and will continue to grow and their chances for promotion will continue to fall.¹⁹

Harasymiw's study focuses on the mechanics of recruitment within the Soviet bureaucracy, rather than the reasons why an official was selected for a specific post. The preceding authors have generally focused on the influence of patronage networks on selection. However, William A. Clark asserts that the analysis of patronage networks in the Soviet Union, primarily through the *seilschaft* model, is only edifying “within a rational-technical environment that determines the opportunity structures for these personalistic forces.”²⁰ His study therefore adopts a rational-technical approach, which assumes that recruitment into the elite and mobility within it were influenced by rational criteria. For example, if the center prioritizes industrial development, then the rational-technical approach predicts that technical expertise would influence recruitment and mobility. Clark's study focuses on mobility rather than recruitment because mobility includes upward, downward, and lateral transitions, while recruitment is generally unidirectional. He focuses on two categories of characteristics that potentially influence the mobility of regional party first secretaries, the most powerful party officials at the *oblast*-level.

The first category of characteristics describes the region in which the regional party first secretary serves. Clark analyzes the mobility of 281 elites, who left their positions as regional party first secretaries in the RSFSR, and the Ukrainian, Belorussian, and Central Asian SSRs during the post-Khrushchev period. First, he attempts to construct a regional ranking of political mobility. He combines the methods employed by Peter Frank in 1974 and Philip Stewart in

¹⁹ Harasymiw (1984), 182.

²⁰ William A. Clark, *Soviet Regional Elite Mobility After Khrushchev* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 18.

1972. Reflecting Stewart, he uses a ten-part index of positions in the party hierarchy. Reflecting Frank, he includes a supplementary score of Central Committee representation under the position of the regional party first secretary, in order to address variations in regional ‘importance.’ Clark concludes that elites serving in predominantly Slavic regions and regions with greater representation in the Central Committee displayed greater political mobility.²¹ In the following chapter, he extends this analysis to incorporate economic and demographic variation. He discovers that “modern developing regions,” which are marked by large populations, high population density, and relatively young populations, are positively correlated with political mobility, while agrarian regions, marked by low urbanization and high percentages of collective farmers and non-Russians, are negatively correlated with political mobility.²²

Finally, Clark analyzes 255 regional party first secretaries, who left their positions from mid-1965 to mid-1981, in terms of twenty-four biographical characteristics. He finds that only ethnicity and type of education affected the political mobility of regional party first secretaries and that the regional elite was more homogenous than expected.²³ He also finds that level of education, length of tenure as regional party first secretary, and the age at which the official assumed the regional party first secretaryship surprisingly had no influence over political mobility. Ultimately, only the “structural characteristic of his base region” affected the mobility of a regional party first secretary.²⁴

The second school of thought within the literature of elite circulation and administration in the Soviet Union focuses on the influence of individuals, primarily the General Secretary. In 1990, T.H. Rigby published a sprawling analysis of relations between central and regional elites

²¹ Clark (1989), 47-8.

²² Clark (1989), 68.

²³ Clark (1989), 107-8.

²⁴ Clark (1989), 140.

from Lenin to Gorbachev. In this work, he links the Soviet social system, which was based on connections (*svyazi*) and protection (*protektsiya*), to the political system, which was governed by clientilism.²⁵ Though governing distinct spheres of interaction, both of these systems were based on personal relationships, rather than formal rules—echoing Michael Urban’s assertion that the Soviet political system was based on weak structures. Moreover, both of these systems were rooted in the chaotic 1920s.

Throughout Soviet history, the General Secretary controlled the appointments of party elites in the peripheries and shaped center-periphery relations. During the 1920s, Stalin upended the horizontal links between regional elites and strengthened their vertical links to the center.²⁶ From 1922 to 1923, the regional party first secretaries, who were directly appointed by the Orgburo, became the dominant regional elites. Under Khrushchev, the majority of Stalin-era regional party first secretaries were removed; in October 1961, only two from that period remained in office. In creating a network of clients under his patronage, Khrushchev promoted elites drawn from other regions as well as his former subordinates. However, when Khrushchev attempted to gain greater control over the regional party first secretaries by instituting minimum turnover levels and term limits in 1961, and splitting the regional party committees into industrial and agricultural sectors in 1962, the regional elites turned against him—thus enabling his ouster.²⁷

Brezhnev initially replaced no regional party first secretaries. However, from October 1965 to April 1966, as he was consolidating his power, eleven were replaced. Over the course of Brezhnev’s tenure as General Secretary, the rate of replacement of regional party first secretaries

²⁵ T.H. Rigby, *Political Elites in the USSR: Central and Local Cadres from Lenin to Gorbachev* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1990), 45-6.

²⁶ Rigby (1990), 66-7.

²⁷ Rigby (1990), 223-4.

gradually fell. Unlike Khrushchev, Brezhnev primarily promoted elites already working within a region to the regional party first secretaryship. Then, after the regional party first secretary's tenure ended, he would likely be transferred to a post in Moscow. Brezhnev therefore introduced stability to relations between center and periphery. However, Rigby argues that the extended patronage network that Brezhnev cultivated was based on his power over appointments, meaning that it was weak in comparison to networks based on kinship or personal connections.²⁸

Gorbachev ultimately attempted to uproot this Brezhnev-era patronage network. He replaced twenty-four regional party first secretaries in 1985 alone. The new regional party first secretaries were drawn from the center, rather than the regions—though some had work experience in the regions to which they were now dispatched. The career trajectories of regional party first secretaries also changed under Gorbachev. The flow of personnel from the regions to the center decreased, while the rate of retirement for regional party first secretaries increased sevenfold.²⁹

In 2000, Gerald Easter expanded this analysis of the influence that the General Secretary exercised over regional administration and patronage. However, rather than presenting an analysis of the Soviet era generally, he focuses on the development of the state under Stalin. Easter introduces the conception of formal versus informal power to the discussion. He proposes that informal power, which was derived from markers of elite status and patronage relations, constrained formal power, which was derived from formal position within the bureaucracy.³⁰ Power was ultimately a combination of both the informal and the formal. Easter criticizes Western scholars of the Soviet Union, arguing that they generally focus on formal manifestations

²⁸ Rigby (1990), 244-5.

²⁹ Rigby (1990), 270.

³⁰ Gerald M. Easter, *Reconstructing the State: Personal Networks and Elite Identity in Soviet Russia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 2.

of power and ignore the important informal manifestations. He proposes a study of the first generation of regional elites, employing a state-in-society approach, which views micro-level social structures as the antecedents of macro-level state institutions. In the aftermath of the civil war, institutions were not developed, so the center interacted with the peripheries primarily through personal networks—defined as non-kinship, informal associations. These networks were grounded in the civil war fronts, such as the Transcaucasus front, which produced the network that included Sergo Ordzhonikidze and Sergei Kirov. Reflecting Rigby’s analysis, Easter argues that, during the 1920s, these personal networks developed from inward networks, which seldom interacted with the center, to outward networks, which interacted closely with the center.³¹ However, during the 1930s, a conflict ignited between central and regional elites about the nature of the regime. While all parties expected an authoritarian regime, the central elites—most importantly Stalin—preferred a bureaucratic absolutist state that would subordinate the regional elites to central authority.³² The regional elites, on the other hand, preferred a proto-corporatist state that would protect their positions from arbitrary bureaucratic authority.

Easter concludes that the purges at the end of the 1930s resolved this conflict by severing the informal resources wielded by the regional elites, primarily their personal networks, from formal bureaucratic structures.³³ Their successors possessed no informal resources and their status as elites was predicated on formal position alone, which fell under the control of the center. This system persisted until Brezhnev became General Secretary. Under Brezhnev, the preference of the first generation of regional elites was finally realized as arbitrary bureaucratic authority was eliminated. The status of the regional elites was thus ensured. When Gorbachev

³¹ Easter (2000), 14-5.

³² Easter (2000), 16-7.

³³ Easter (2000), 166.

became General Secretary, he attempted to again subject the regional elites to bureaucratic authority, but ultimately failed because power had diffused from the formal structures under the purview of the center to regionally-based personal networks—reconstructed under Brezhnev.³⁴

Contrary to Rigby and Easter, Evan Mawdsley and Stephen White examine the evolution of the Soviet elite in terms of generations, rather than through the lens of individual General Secretaries. Within their study of the Central Committee from Lenin to Gorbachev, they posit that four generations of Soviet elites existed.³⁵ The first generation was born in the last decades of the nineteenth century. They were the professional revolutionaries and the first central and regional leaders of the Soviet Union. The second generation of elites, to which Khrushchev and Brezhnev belonged, was born in the first two decades of the twentieth century. They came of age after the establishment of the Soviet Union and participated in the Second World War. The third generation, to which Gorbachev and Yeltsin belonged, was born after 1920. They were generally too young to have participated in the war, so the Thaw represented the primary political event of their youth. The fourth generation was born after 1940. This generation, to which Vladimir belongs, was ultimately unable to achieve elite status until the Soviet Union collapsed.

Mawdsley and White also propose that three elite revolutions shaped Soviet elite development. The first was the 1917 Revolution, through which the professional revolutionaries seized power. The second revolution was the Great Purges of the late 1930s, through which Stalin violently broke the revolutionaries' two-decade monopoly on political power and installed the subsequent generation. This second generation of elites was more representative of the

³⁴ Easter (2000), 170.

³⁵ Evan Mawdsley and Stephen White, *The Soviet Elite from Lenin to Gorbachev: The Central Committee and Its Members, 1917-1991* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2000), 276.

general population and was initially more open than the preceding generation.³⁶ However, as Harasymiw has also noted, Brezhnev viewed Khrushchev's ouster as a testament against undermining the elite and therefore never prioritized elite renewal, so the elite became closed again. Gorbachev initiated the third elite revolution in order to replace the second-generation elites with third-generation elites. In 1986, the turnover in the Central Committee reached forty-five percent, and, in 1990, it reached eighty-eight percent—the highest in Soviet history.³⁷ However, Gorbachev's quest to reform the Soviet elite failed. As Hough revealed in 1980, the Soviet political system did not function in reality as it did on paper. Though the Central Committee on paper only implemented the decisions of the Soviet leadership, they could also act cohesively in order to maintain their status as elites.³⁸ In the 1930s, Stalin dominated the Central Committee by eliminating the majority of its members. However, Khrushchev and Gorbachev, unable and unwilling to employ such brutality, were ultimately dominated by it. Under Gorbachev, the result was the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The authors analyzing elite circulation and administration in the Soviet Union have produced a literature, which proposes a variety of factors that influence these phenomena. This literature is divided into two schools. The first focuses on systems. Authors within this school examine elite circulation and administration in terms of either organizational or relational dynamics. Hough notes that the formal organization of the Soviet political system shaped its character, even though relations in practice generally deviated from this template. Urban and Willerton show the pervasive influence of informal connections over elite circulation. Harasymiw analyzes the character of recruitment into the *nomenklatura*, determining that it was

³⁶ Mawdsley and White (2000), 281.

³⁷ Mawdsley and White (2000), 283.

³⁸ Ibid.

highly structured and produced a relatively homogenous elite. Finally, Clark attempts to parse the rational-technical bases of elite mobility, but finds that only structural characteristics of the region in which an elite was based affected his mobility. The second school focuses on the influence of individuals, specifically the General Secretary. As the authors within it show, each General Secretary shaped center-periphery relations and replaced elites appointed by his predecessor in order to cultivate an extended personal network. Collectively, the authors in both schools point to a variety of factors influencing elite circulation, including the influence of the General Secretary, patronage, and structural characteristics of officials' base regions. Further, the authors generally point to the importance of informal relations within the Soviet system and the rigidity of recruitment into and circulation within the elite.

2.2 The Russian Federation under Yeltsin

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the political system described by the authors in the previous section disintegrated. New analyses of elite circulation and administration under the presidency of Boris Yeltsin began to emerge. This literature is also divided into two schools. The first school focuses on continuity. Authors within this school argue that Soviet-era elites retained their status and ultimately converted the power gained under the former regime by adapting to the incentives within the new political and economic environments. The second school focuses on rupture. Authors within this school focus on either the renewal of elites following the collapse of the Soviet Union or the evolution of relations between the center and the peripheries. Those focused on center-periphery relations argue that the rupture of the vertical relationship between the regional party first secretary and the center resulted in a comparatively fluid relationship between the new regional executive—the governor—and the center.

The school of thought focused on continuity emphasizes that the elites of the new Russian Federation were rooted within the Soviet elite. In 2000, Mawdsley and White compared the late Soviet and early Russian elite. They cite a series of interviews of 1,800 elites conducted in 1988 and 1993 by the All-Russian Centre for the Study of Public Opinion. The interviews demonstrated that these elites were strikingly similar; they were overwhelmingly male, predominantly Russian, possessed higher-education qualifications, and the majority of the post-Soviet elite were formerly members of the CPSU. Moreover, eighty percent of the Soviet elites who were interviewed in 1988 were in positions “of the first or second rank of the post-communist elite.”³⁹ These interviews therefore support the argument that the post-Soviet elite was a reproduction of the Soviet elite—at least in the immediate aftermath of the Soviet collapse.

Mawdsley and White also posit two means by which Soviet elites maintained their status within the Russian Federation. First, they propose that the elite initiated a process of ‘power conversion’ intended to convert political power under the Soviet state to property under the Russian state. Power conversion would ensure that the *nomenklatura* remained the dominant political force within a new political and economic system based on private ownership.⁴⁰ Second, Mawdsley and White propose that the elite maintained their status because they monopolized administrative expertise. Yeltsin initially attempted to oust Gorbachev-era elites and primarily employed academics, who possessed no experience within the previous regime.⁴¹ However, the 1993 constitutional crisis, which culminated in the shelling of the Russian parliament, prompted him to rely on the experienced Soviet-era elites.

³⁹ Mawdsley and White (2000), 293.

⁴⁰ Mawdsley and White (2000), 298-9.

⁴¹ Mawdsley and White (2000), 300.

Olga Kryshstanovskaya and Stephen White likewise observe a process of power conversion that enabled Soviet elites to maintain their status within the new state. They focus their analysis on the ‘Komsomol economy,’ which developed in the late 1980s under the leadership of Yegor Ligachev. In 1987, the Council of Centers of Scientific and Technical Creativity of Youth was established. Its initial purpose was to organize the commercial activities conducted between district-level Komsomol committees and regional enterprises. However, in 1988, the scope of commercial activities under the purview of these centers was expanded to include manufacturing consumer goods, establishing contacts with foreign firms, and setting prices on imports; they were also relieved of all customs duties. Though the Komsomol was accused of predatory practices and eventually drew the rebuke of Gorbachev, this system expanded to include a commercial bank, an import-export center, and, by 1990, 17,000 youth cooperatives that employed roughly one million staff.⁴² Youth, like Mikhail Khodorkovsky, therefore converted their positions within the Komsomol into power within the developing commercial economy.

The youth, of course, were not alone in utilizing their party affiliations to garner wealth. Henry Hale notes that the 1987 Law on State Enterprises ended the subordination of regional enterprises to their central ministries, enabling them to make production decisions, retain part of their income, and set wages.⁴³ However, the directors of regional enterprises still faced popular elections. A subsequent surge in workers’ wages forced the state to end these elections, which granted directors de facto ownership of their enterprises. Similarly, ministries were privatized in the late 1980s. Kryshstanovskaya and White point out that ministries were privatized as concerns.

⁴² Olga Kryshstanovskaya and Stephen White. “From Soviet *Nomenklatura* to Russian Elite.” *Europe-Asia Studies* 48, no. 5 (1996): 717.

⁴³ Henry Hale. “Explaining Machine Politics in Russia’s Regions: Economy, Ethnicity, and Legacy.” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 19, no. 3 (2003), 235-6.

The minister became a consultant to the concern and a deputy minister became its president; the concern subsequently became a joint-stock company.⁴⁴ Other advantages within this evolving economic system were also accorded to former Soviet elites, such as the opportunity to convert assets to cash, access to credit, and the freedom to conduct property transactions.

Kryshtanovskaya and White thus posit that the Soviet elite was bifurcated into a political and an economic elite during the years leading to and immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Komsomol ultimately became the foundation of the economic elite.

At the end of their article, Kryshtanovskaya and White present their analysis of a series of investigations conducted between 1989 and 1994 by the Russian Academy of Sciences, which examined the biographies of 3,610 political elites from the Brezhnev, Gorbachev, and Yeltsin eras. They show that the elite in the post-Soviet era was younger than in the Soviet era, that it included a greater proportion of professionals educated in Moscow, and that it included a greater proportion of candidates or doctors of science.⁴⁵ Perhaps most importantly, however, they show that more than two-thirds of political elites under Yeltsin were members of the *nomenklatura* under either Brezhnev or Gorbachev. Amongst the post-Soviet regional elite, nearly sixty percent were members of the *nomenklatura* under Brezhnev and nearly forty percent under Gorbachev. Kryshtanovskaya and White therefore conclude that the political elite under Yeltsin was generally a reproduction of the Soviet elite.

Authors within the school of thought focused on rupture emphasize the disjunction between the Soviet and post-Soviet eras. Some authors, including Sharon Werning Rivera, focus on the elite, arguing that elite circulation occurred after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Rivera derives her conclusions from a survey of deputies and officials in Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod,

⁴⁴ Kryshtanovskaya and White (1996), 720.

⁴⁵ Kryshtanovskaya and White (1997), 724, 726-7.

and Tatarstan, which she conducted in 1996. Though she relies on the positional definitions of the elite employed by other scholars, she also uses a continuum of activities that range from ‘regime-challenging’ to ‘regime-supporting,’ in order to determine whether elites under Yeltsin were indeed reproduced from the Soviet era.⁴⁶ Regime-supporting activities ranged from party membership to *nomenklatura* membership, while regime-challenging activities ranged from listening to foreign radio to dissident activity. Rivera notes that the post-Soviet elite engaged primarily in regime-supporting activities, but focuses on their *nomenklatura* membership. She discovers that representation in the *nomenklatura*—i.e. inclusion in the elite—varies based on current position within the post-Soviet elite. She shows that, in 1988, fifty-eight percent of 1996 Duma deputies were not represented within the *nomenklatura*, while thirty-eight percent of federal officials were not represented.⁴⁷ Moreover, she finds that representation in the *nomenklatura* varies regionally. In 1988, fifty-two percent of Nizhny Novgorod elites were not represented in the *nomenklatura*, while forty-six percent of Tatarstan elites remained unrepresented. She posits that the majority of Russian elites in 1996 occupied mid-level positions within the Soviet bureaucracy, meaning that they represented only a proto-elite. Elite circulation following the collapse of the Soviet Union thus enabled this proto-elite to rise to the ranks of the elite.

David Lane and Cameron Ross likewise conclude that elite circulation occurred after the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, Lane and Ross not only question the argument that post-Soviet elites were reproduced from the Soviet *nomenklatura*, they also question whether the *nomenklatura* existed as a unitary class. They argue that the boundaries of the *nomenklatura*

⁴⁶ Sharon Werning Rivera. “Elites in Post-Communist Russia: A Changing of the Guard?” *Europe-Asia Studies* 22, no. 3 (2000), 417.

⁴⁷ Rivera (2000), 420.

have never been concretely defined within Western scholarship and that the *nomenklatura* was never unitary, but rather encompassed an administrative class and an acquisition class. The administrative class was comprised of bureaucrats, while the acquisition class was comprised of the intelligentsia and professionals, both of whom possessed marketable skills.⁴⁸ Under Gorbachev, the acquisition class became the elite. Lane and Ross analyze the biographies of 145 government executives appointed before August 21, 1991—the point at which Yeltsin gained control over appointments. They measure the number of years that an executive served in executive posts within the Soviet state apparatus, weighting the years served by the importance of the posts held. Like Rivera, they discover that sixty-four of these executives were ‘intermediates’ within the state apparatus, meaning that they occupied mid-level posts.⁴⁹ However, they also discover that forty-six of the executives were ‘new men,’ who had not served within the previous regime. These were the members of the acquisition class. Lane and Ross conclude that reproduction of the elite did not occur after the fall of the Soviet Union. Rather, “substitution” circulation, through which Soviet elites were replaced by elites of a similar background, and “structural” circulation, through which they were replaced by elites of a different background, occurred.⁵⁰ These new elites—the acquisition class—ultimately drove reforms during the Yeltsin era.

Other authors within this school of thought analyze administrative ruptures, including conflicts between the administratively-defined, majority-Russian regions and the ethnic republics. Under the 1992 Federal Treaty, the ethnic republics were given greater control over their regional economies and natural resources than the administratively-defined regions. Then,

⁴⁸ David Lane and Cameron Ross, *The Transition From Communism to Capitalism: Ruling Elites from Gorbachev to Yeltsin* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 163-4.

⁴⁹ Lane and Ross (1999), 137.

⁵⁰ Lane and Ross (1999), 202.

in February 1994, Tatarstan concluded a power-sharing agreement with the federal center, which guaranteed special privileges, in order to curb secessionism within the republic. Though the center never intended this agreement to be replicated elsewhere, it became a model for other ethnic republics. Marie Mendras notes that, though these republics were inherited from Soviet administrative divisions, Russians living within the regions viewed their existence as a consequence of rampant federalism and envied their special status.⁵¹ This envy was partially mitigated by the 1993 Constitution, which formalized and equalized the legal status of the regions and republics, and ultimately subordinated both to the center by granting the president the right to suspend regional laws that he deems unconstitutional. Then, from 1995 to 1996, the power-sharing agreements concluded between the center and some of the republics were extended to the regions. These developments initiated a contest for power between the center and the peripheries, encompassing both the regions and the republics.

This contest for power was founded within divergent visions of the future of the Russian state. Reflecting Gerald Easter's analysis of center-periphery relations during the 1920s, Kathryn Stoner-Weiss argues that central and regional elites exhibited different preferences regarding the structure of the new Russian Federation. While central elites preferred a national federal system—or 'federalism from above'—regional elites preferred a contractual federal system, as demonstrated by the proliferation of power-sharing agreements during the mid-1990s.⁵² This contest for power was manifested in the cultivation of interregional informal associations. Vera Tolz and Irina Busygina analyze the creation of these informal associations from 1992 to 1997. They point out that, as early as 1990, political and business elites began to

⁵¹ Marie Mendras. "How Regional Elites Preserve Their Power." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 15, no. 4 (1999): 298.

⁵² Kathryn Stoner-Weiss. "Central Weakness and Provincial Autonomy: Observations on the Devolution Process in Russia." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 15, no. 4 (1999): 88.

create interregional economic associations. When their article was published in 1997, eight of these associations existed, the most important of which was the Siberian Agreement.⁵³ The associations were comprised of regional governmental elites and the heads of both businesses and industrial enterprises. They were intended to gain greater control over regional economies and natural resources, but ultimately reduced the influence that the center could exert over the regions by creating a web of horizontal, interregional connections.

However, these interregional associations were not the only means by which regional elites reduced the vertical influence of the center. They also cultivated intraregional personal networks. In 1994, officials within regional and local administrations were granted the right to be elected to regional and local legislatures, which ultimately enabled governors to co-opt their regional legislatures.⁵⁴ Moreover, a 1994 decree by Yeltsin granted governors the right to appoint municipal executives. Mendras notes that, in general, these elites restricted regional political contests to those already within a regional network and united to fight outsiders.⁵⁵ These networks were thus similar to the inward networks that Easter describes because they were removed from the influence of the center.

Even though regional elites were attempting to gain greater autonomy within the structure of the Russian Federation, they also wished to influence the center from within. In August 1993, Yeltsin proposed the creation of a Federation Council, whose membership would consist of the regional governors and the heads of regional legislatures. He initially envisioned the new body as a means to bypass the parliament during the process of ratifying the constitution and hoped

⁵³ Vera Tolz and Irina Busygina. "Regional Governors and the Kremlin: The Ongoing Battle for Power." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 30, no. 4 (1997), 406.

⁵⁴ Tolz and Busygina (1997), 404.

⁵⁵ Mendras (1999), 305-7.

that it would remain subordinated to the will of the center.⁵⁶ However, in September, the governors rejected this proposal and countered that the purview of the Federation Council should be restricted to economic issues. They began the process of subordinating the new body to regional interests. In December 1993, the Federation Council was inaugurated as the upper house of the new Russian parliament, following the dissolution of the Congress of People's Deputies. It was more powerful than the lower house, the State Duma, because its members simultaneously served as governors and heads of regional legislatures. Following the December 1995 elections, Yegor Stroevev, governor of Orel *oblast* and vocal advocate for regional interests, became the new speaker. The Federation Council thereafter became powerful enough to negotiate on an equal basis with the center.

This power enabled the regional elites to push their removal from central control a step further. After the December 1995 elections, Yeltsin attempted to ensure that the Federation Council would at least remain predictable.⁵⁷ He attempted to legally enshrine the composition of the Federation Council, proposing that all governors and heads of regional legislatures become members on the basis of their offices. The State Duma assented, but only after obtaining the concession that all governors appointed by Yeltsin stand for popular elections by December 31, 1996. Because governors already commanded powerful networks within their regions that could restrict the pool of potential candidates, the introduction of elections only bolstered their power and further diminished the influence of the center. By the end of the 1990s, power was seeping from the center to the regions, prompting contemporary Western observers to question whether the Russian Federation was dissolving into a confederation.

⁵⁶ Tolz and Busygina (1997), 405.

⁵⁷ Tolz and Busygina (1997), 10.

Yet the center was not powerless, even at the end of the decade, because it still retained means to coerce regional elites. First, Moscow maintained control over federal aid programs supporting regional economic development. Tolz and Busygina point out that these were not necessarily allocated on the basis of development, but were often allocated based on political preferences and relations between the regional executive and central elites.⁵⁸ Governors were therefore incentivized to cultivate relationships with central elites and to pursue regional interests within the confines of acceptability to the center. Second, Moscow maintained various means to influence regional administrations. In 1991, Yeltsin created the position of presidential envoy, in order to stabilize relations with the regions. Then, in 1997, he issued a decree, which bolstered their power by subordinating all federal bureaucrats to their authority. Similarly, in 1995, he decreed that city mayors can work directly with Moscow to solve disputes. Both decrees ultimately attempted penetrate the personal networks that supported governors and thereby decrease their power. Finally, Moscow maintained control over the military. As Gail Lapidus notes, even though ethnic separatism remained popular within the republics, the desire to mobilize lost popularity in light of the war in Chechnya.⁵⁹ The proclivity of the center toward military force perhaps undermined the perceived drive toward a confederation.

The literature about elite circulation and regional administration under the leadership of Russian President Boris Yeltsin is divided into two schools of thought. The first school focuses on continuity. Its authors argue that the post-Soviet elite was a reproduction of the Soviet elite and delineate the process of power conversion. The second school focuses on rupture—within the post-Soviet elite and the administrative structures. The authors who examine the elite argue

⁵⁸ Tolz and Busygina (1997), 423.

⁵⁹ Gail Lapidus. "Asymmetrical Federalism and State Breakdown in Russia." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 15, no. 1 (1999), 75-6.

that elites circulated after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Unlike the authors who argue that elites were reproduced, these authors distinguish between posts within the new state apparatus and between central and regional elites. They demonstrate that reproduction of the elite is more evident in some posts, such as those within the state bureaucracy, and within the regional elite. They also question the boundaries of the *nomenklatura*. While Kryshtanovskaya and White seem to analyze the development of the Komsomol economy in terms of power conversion, Lane and Ross emphasize the separation between this acquisition class and the administrative class, who usurped the majority of positions within the Soviet bureaucracy. Authors within this second school of thought also analyze the administrative ruptures that occurred after the fall of the Soviet Union. They primarily study the evolution of the conflict between the center and the regions. Though the regional elites gained greater influence within their regions and within the new legislative bodies, the center still maintained important means of coercion.

2.3 The Russian Federation under Putin and Medvedev

On December 31, 1999, Boris Yeltsin abruptly resigned from the presidency of the Russian Federation. His prime minister, Vladimir Putin, became acting president until the 2000 presidential election solidified his status. Though he reached his constitutionally-mandated term limit in 2008, Putin retained influence within Russian politics, serving as prime minister under President Dmitry Medvedev until 2012. After constitutional reforms increased presidential terms to six years, Putin was reelected in 2012 and again in 2018. He will serve as president until 2024. Putin has ultimately presided over the majority of Russia's post-Soviet life, meaning that he has directed the political development of the country. The literature that analyzes elite circulation and regional administration during this period unanimously concludes that the political system has recentralized under Putin and Medvedev. Though the authors of this

literature reach the same conclusion, they analyze the process of recentralization through different lenses. One school examines recentralization through institutions within the vertical of power constructed under Putin, while a second examines it through political parties, such as United Russia. Authors within both schools disagree about the success of recentralization and its potential consequences.

When Putin entered office in 2000, he embarked on a series of centralizing reforms intended to reverse the devolution of power from the center to the regions that occurred under Yeltsin. These included the creation of seven federal districts under the control of presidential envoys, the removal of governors from the Federation Council, and the institution of gubernatorial appointments. Within the first school of thought, which analyzes recentralization through the lens of governmental institutions, Nikolai Petrov discusses the creation of the federal districts. He posits that the districts were created in order to weaken the governors and ‘police’ their actions by subordinating them to a new level of federal authority.⁶⁰ This was demonstrated partially by the elites who were chosen to run the new territorial administrations. None of the presidential envoys previously worked within the territories they now presided over; five were generals and two worked in civilian posts.⁶¹ Their deputies were also drawn from the Moscow elite—generally from the former organizations of the presidential envoys. For example, Viktor Kazantsev, who served as a general before becoming the presidential envoy of the Southern Federal District, drew his deputies from his former associates in the military.

The goal of weakening the governors was also demonstrated by the design of the districts. Rather than basing the federal districts on the eight existing regional economic

⁶⁰Nikolai Petrov, “Seven Faces of Putin’s Russia: Federal Districts as the New Level of State-Territorial Composition.” *Security Dialogue* 33, no. 1 (2002), 86.

⁶¹ Petrov (2002), 82.

associations, the new presidential administration chose to base them on the districts of the Ministry of the Interior (MVD). Though the regional economic associations were perhaps a more useful basis—because they were organizations intended to foster inter-regional cooperation—they were under the control of regional political and economic elites, so their use as a template for the federal districts could have strengthened the status of these elites. Using the MVD districts as the model signaled not only the purpose of the districts, but also the dominance of central over regional institutions. The creation of the seven federal districts ultimately led to the dissolution of the regional economic associations.

In 2007, J. Paul Goode examined the consequences of a second centralizing reform: the institution of gubernatorial appointments. Putin proposed the institution of gubernatorial appointments in September 2004, following the Beslan school siege. In December, the Russian parliament enacted the proposal, which enabled the president to appoint governors from lists of candidates compiled by the seven presidential envoys. Though Russian governors had successfully advocated for direct gubernatorial elections just a decade earlier, they generally accepted the institution of presidential appointments. Goode discusses why they accepted such an infringement of their independence and legitimacy. His first two explanations focus on intra-regional politics. He proposes that governors acquiesced to presidential appointments, first, because regional legislatures could no longer institute term limits and, second, because gubernatorial elections, which were generally considered unfair, provided less legitimacy than appointment by a popular president, like Putin, would.⁶² His third explanation focuses on elite circulation. Goode notes that the new governors appointed in 2005—like the presidential envoys appointed in 2000—tended to have no professional experience in the regions they now governed.

⁶² J. Paul Goode, “The Puzzle of Putin’s Gubernatorial Appointments.” *Europe-Asia Studies* 59, no. 3 (2007), 376-7.

One would expect that the incumbent governors, who were drawn from the regional elite, would suffer under a system that prioritizes outsiders over insiders, but the majority of incumbents were ultimately reappointed. Goode contends that elections were the primary driver of elite circulation in the regions; when elections ended, gubernatorial turnover slowed.⁶³ Moreover, the character of turnovers changed. An incumbent governor who would not be reappointed could now be appointed to the Federation Council, meaning that he would not be ousted from politics as he may have been had he instead lost a reelection bid. The status of the regional elite was therefore ensured under Putin—in spite of his effectively unlimited power of appointment.

Both Petrov and Goode show that the centralizing reforms introduced during Putin's first presidential term were generally successful. They stopped the devolution of power from the center to the regions and subordinated the regional elite to federal power, represented by the presidential envoy. However, other authors, who studied the effects of these centralizing reforms as the years progressed, observed unintended consequences that reduced the perceived success of recentralization. In 2010, Elena Chebankova argued that the results of the centralizing reforms do not match their intentions. She traces this gulf between intentions and results to political style. She writes that Russian political style is characterized by “personification of power, propensity for taking ideas to their extremes, and [the] arbitrary-authoritarian mode of governance,” traits which are ultimately incompatible with the federal division of power between the center and the regions that is the foundation of a stable federation.⁶⁴

An apt illustration of the gulf between results and intentions is the gubernatorial appointments. Chebankova writes that, even though the appointments were intended to

⁶³ Goode (2007), 390.

⁶⁴ Elena Chebankova, *Russia's Federal Relations: Putin's Reforms and Management of the Regions* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2010), 18.

centralize the political system, they actually decentralized it. The appointments inadvertently created strong regional legislatures and shifted the regions from presidentialist to parliamentary power distributions.⁶⁵ These strong regional legislatures could eventually challenge the control of the center—as the regional executives did in the 1990s. Moreover, as Goode also notes, the majority of incumbent governors were reappointed under Putin. Seventy-seven governors were appointed from January 2005 to December 2007, fifty-one of whom were incumbents, meaning that gubernatorial terms increased and elite circulation decreased.⁶⁶ Though this could show that Putin became the patron of the regional elite, Chebankova claims that it shows the employment of a “dual strategy” through which Putin appointed technocratic Moscow elites to some regions, while simultaneously supporting the local elites of other—selected—regions.⁶⁷ This strategy betrays the continued salience of the regional vs. republican division and perhaps the influence of personalistic connections.

Nikolai Petrov, writing again in 2010, also concluded that recentralization under Putin and Medvedev produced unintended consequences and inconsistencies that have undermined centralization. Petrov characterizes the Russian political system as an “overmanaged democracy” because societal and regional elites are not actively repressed, but simply not consulted by an overbearing state.⁶⁸ This lack of consultation has ultimately weakened the state because it remains disconnected from the issues that the country faces. The consequences of this disconnect are aptly illustrated by the government’s response to the 2008 financial crisis. In order to prevent social unrest, which could lead to anti-government protests, the new Medvedev

⁶⁵ Chebankova (2010), 137.

⁶⁶ Chebankova (2010), 148.

⁶⁷ Chebankova (2010), 143.

⁶⁸ Nikolai Petrov, “Regional Governors under the Dual Power of Medvedev and Putin.” *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 26, no. 2 (2010), 277.

administration increased regional subsidies. However, they were generally lost within the inefficient bureaucracies that exist at both the federal and the regional levels.⁶⁹ The increased subsidies never served their intended purpose. They never reduced the impact of the financial crisis and therefore never reduced the potential for social unrest. Petrov contends that such gulfs between intentions and outcomes are the result of Moscow's preference for obedient appointees over competent ones.⁷⁰ This preference did not change under President Medvedev, who ultimately continued the process of centralization that Putin began in 2000. In 2009, Medvedev initiated the institution of gubernatorial appointments from recommendations compiled by the majority-parties of the regional legislatures, rather than the presidential envoy. Though this innovation appeared to democratize the appointment process, it did not because United Russia—chaired by Prime Minister Putin—was the majority-party in all regional legislatures. The party of power would be unlikely to prioritize competency over loyalty.

Petrov also writes that an opinion poll conducted in sixty-eight regions by the Public Opinion Foundation in 2009 discovered that over one-third of respondents perceived both their regional and national leaders negatively.⁷¹ Pervasive social and economic issues in the regions, which may have been blamed solely on the governor when he was elected, were increasingly blamed on the president as well because the governor was ultimately his representative. The governors were therefore beginning to lose the legitimacy accrued through appointment by a popular president. Medvedev and Putin were likely aware of the waning popular support for the government—even before the massive protests sparked by the announcement of Putin's reelection bid in September 2011. Perhaps this is why Medvedev, in January 2012, initiated a

⁶⁹ Petrov (2010), 280.

⁷⁰ Petrov (2010), 285.

⁷¹ Petrov (2010), 286-7.

proposal to restore gubernatorial elections. The bill that the Russian parliament ultimately enacted stipulated three important qualifications. First, potential candidates were required to gain the approval of municipal deputies and chief executives in order to become candidates. Second, all candidates were required to consult the president. Third, the president retained the power of impeachment in order to safeguard against the election of ‘separatists.’⁷²

In March 2013, gubernatorial elections were further undermined when the Russian parliament revised the law to allow regions to dictate within their charters whether their governors will be elected or appointed. The revision followed Putin’s observation that ethnically diverse regions, especially those in the North Caucasus, should not hold gubernatorial elections because they can incite conflict. Though Moses claimed in 2014 that the North Caucasus alone would be affected by this revision, in September 2017, he observed that only sixteen regions held gubernatorial elections. Even though the municipal filter prevented the majority of candidates representing parties other than United Russia from running, Moses notes that Putin has nonetheless removed elected governors—even those who were just elected the previous year.⁷³ The center therefore exercises its power over the regions more arbitrarily than before.

While this first school of thought analyzes recentralization under Putin and Medvedev through the lens of political actors and governmental institutions, a second school analyzes it through political parties—specifically through the party of power: United Russia (UR). UR was created in 2001 after the two dominant parties in the political system—Unity and Fatherland-All Russia—merged. Vladimir Gelman points out that the structure of elections in the Russian Federation encourages such dominant party formation because parliamentary elections occur

⁷² Joel C. Moses, “The Political Resurrection of the Russian Governors.” *Europe-Asia Studies* 66, no. 9 (2014), 1413.

⁷³ Joel C. Moses, “President Putin and the 2017 Russian Gubernatorial Elections.” *Presidential-Power*, Sept. 19, 2017, <https://presidential-power.com/?p=6894>.

before presidential elections.⁷⁴ If presidential elections occurred first, a personalist system perhaps would have developed instead. From the 2003 parliamentary elections to the 2004 presidential election, the effective number of the legislative parties dropped from 4.7 in 2001-2003 to 1.97 in 2004, while the effective number of presidential candidates dropped from 2.69 in 2000 to 1.89 in 2004.⁷⁵ The decline in competition indicates that UR achieved dominant party status during this period.

In 2003, the Supreme Council was created to bring governors and ministers, who were barred from formally joining parties, into United Russia. After the prohibition was lifted, UR membership was nearly universal among governors by 2006—and remains so today.⁷⁶ Darrell Slider notes that UR supported governors who dominated their regional political spheres and attempted to oust those who were weak or unpopular—perhaps because strong governors could increase voter turnout for UR.⁷⁷ However, in 2004, Moscow attempted to check the power of these governors through the institution of gubernatorial appointments. Ora John Reuter argues that this check harmed UR electorally because the appointed governors possessed no authority over their populations and no patronage connections to regional elites.⁷⁸ Though the return to direct gubernatorial elections promised greater turnout for UR, it also promised the return of strong governors whose power was not dependent on the Kremlin. The Kremlin ultimately chose dependent, but generally incompetent governors, over independent governors, who could more competently govern their regions, but also challenge federal authority.

⁷⁴ Vladimir Gelman, “From ‘Fleckless Pluralism’ to ‘Dominant Power Politics’? The Transformation of Russia’s Party System.” *Democratization* 13, no. 4 (2006), 552.

⁷⁵ Gelman (2006), 546.

⁷⁶ Darrell Slider, “How United is United Russia? Regional Sources of Intra-Party Conflict.” *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 26, no. 2 (2010), 260.

⁷⁷ Slider (2010), 271.

⁷⁸ Ora John Reuter, “Regional Patrons and Hegemonic Party Electoral Performance in Russia,” May 16, 2010. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2060830>.

Though the authors examining elite circulation and regional administration under Putin and Medvedev demonstrate that their reforms ultimately produced unintended consequences and inconsistencies that could reduce the efficacy of the state, centralization nonetheless continues. Authors within the first school of thought presented here study the impact of centralization through the actors and institutions that comprise the vertical of power constructed under Putin. While they note that Putin indeed stemmed the devolution of power from the center to the regions, they also point out that his reforms have generally reduced elite circulation in the regions and increased inefficiency. Authors within the second school of thought examine centralization through the development of the party of power: United Russia. Though the reforms—particularly the institution of gubernatorial appointments—have reduced the viability of UR, neither Putin nor Medvedev have introduced democratizing reforms. In 2007, J. Paul Goode referred to Putin’s gubernatorial appointments as a ‘puzzle;’ they remain so over a decade later.

2.4 Patronalism Explored

In the introduction of *Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective*, Hale notes that his work is intended to explain the forces that drive regime transitions in the post-Soviet space, so that analysts can predict transitions, rather than attempt to explain them after the fact. The concept that he introduces, patronalism, describes a political-social sphere, in which political and economic activities are driven by personal networks. This analysis is not completely unique to Hale. Writing about the Soviet Union, T.H. Rigby also points out that the most mundane facets of Soviet life were molded by connections (*svyazi*) and protection (*protektsiya*). Yet Hale alone applies this analysis to the highest strata of the post-Soviet elite.

He compares his concept of patronalism to others that are generally used to describe the conduct of politics in the former Soviet Union; these include clientilism, patrimonialism or neopatrimonialism, and informal politics. He argues that clientilism, which Rigby and others use to explain Soviet and post-Soviet politics, is too specific to describe the phenomena that he is analyzing. Clientilism automatically entails a power differential—a patron-client relationship—while patronalism does not.⁷⁹ Patrimonialism and neopatrimonialism are also commonly used to describe Soviet and post-Soviet politics. However, patrimonialism, a concept employed by Michael Urban, is assumed to be antithetical to bureaucracy. Though neopatrimonialism is intended to reconcile patrimonialism to bureaucracy, Hale argues that it is also too narrow because it describes the state, while patronalism describes a political-social sphere. Finally, Hale contrasts the conceptions of patronalism and informal politics, stating that, while patronalism and informal politics can describe the same phenomena, patronal activities are not necessarily informal and informal politics not necessarily patronal. In describing the latter distinction, he notes that actors can cooperate informally to support an ideology.⁸⁰

Patronalism is ultimately a more general concept than others within the literature describing the conduct of politics in the Soviet Union and its successor states. Hale notes throughout his work that regime transitions within the post-Soviet space are cyclical; regimes have opened, but invariably closed again. The personal networks that are the basis of political and economic decision-making within these political systems elucidate these cyclical regime transitions. As noted in the introduction, patronal systems are either single-pyramid or competing-pyramid. Within a single-pyramid system, one network monopolizes the resources

⁷⁹ Henry E. Hale, *Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 23.

⁸⁰ Hale (2015), 26.

necessary to hand out rewards and punishments. Within a competing-pyramid system, multiple networks control these resources and compete to achieve a monopoly. Yet change is not unidirectional. As Hale notes, patronal networks constantly compete; this competition can eventually engender the collapse of a single-pyramid system, ushering in a transition. What ultimately causes single-pyramid systems to fail? Hale notes the importance of expectations. Clients continue to follow patrons who will plausibly maintain not only the capacity to hand out rewards and punishments, but also the capacity to monitor their actions.⁸¹ When clients doubt the durability of their patron, they begin defecting to rival networks, thereby fulfilling their prophecy of imminent network collapse. Yet these contests between networks do not occur solely within the realm of elite politics. Networks already in power and those trying to take power—especially those promoting democratic transitions—attempt to cultivate popular support. Though politicians use the language of democratization and attempt to garner the support of citizens, their political systems are nonetheless founded on ‘understandings,’ rather than institutions.⁸² Such informal norms are persistent and impervious to institutional change, meaning that patronal regimes are stable over time.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

Within the framework of this thesis, the elite encompasses the Soviet and post-Soviet regional heads and members of the Soviet or Russian central government, such as ministers, parliamentarians, or members of the presidential administration. Through these selected regional and central elites, this thesis analyzes the mobility of regional heads and their patronage connections to central elites. It employs William Clark’s definition of elite mobility, which focuses on one-to-one positional transitions, classifying these as upward, downward, or lateral.

⁸¹ Hale (2015), 34.

⁸² Hale (2015), 454.

Whether a transition is defined as upward, downward, or lateral is based on the period analyzed. The thesis examines elite mobility rather than elite circulation because circulation is a systemic phenomenon, which would not be illustrated well through the small selection of cases examined here. Patronage is ultimately the secondary issue examined here; it is defined as the influence of personal or kinship connections over elite mobility. Patronage connections are determined through the biographies of the regional elites. In determining the existence of patronage connections, this study employs Jozsa Gyula's *seilschaft* model as well as secondary scholarly evaluations, and extrapolates from the regional affiliations of elites.

The regions analyzed here are Stavropol *krai*, the Chechen Republic, and the republics of Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and North Ossetia. These regions were selected in order to analyze patterns of elite mobility and patronage within both Russian and non-Russian regions through the Soviet and post-Soviet eras. They were also selected because they share an administrative history. From 1924 until 1937, Stavropol *krai*, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Checheno-Ingushetia, and North Ossetia were incorporated within the North Caucasus *krai*. Moreover, until 1990, Karachaevo-Cherkessia existed as an autonomous *oblast* within Stavropol *krai*. In 2000, President Putin created the Southern Federal District, which included Krasnodar *krai*, Rostov *oblast*, Volgograd *oblast*, Stavropol *krai*, Astrakhan *oblast*, the Chechen Republic, and the republics of Adygea, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia, Ingushetia, Kalmykia, and Dagestan. In 2010, President Dmitry Medvedev created the North Caucasian Federal District, which encompasses the regions analyzed within this thesis.

These regions also face similar challenges posed by ethnic conflict. The North Caucasus is ethnically and linguistically diverse. When Arab emissaries first arrived in the area between

the seventh and eighth centuries CE, they referred to it as *Jebel al-Asan*, or the Mountain of Languages. This diversity has engendered conflict throughout the history of the North Caucasus, the most obvious manifestation of which is perhaps the declaration of the independent Chechen Republic of Ichkeria in 1991—and the wars that followed. However, ethnic conflict is also prevalent within Karachaevo-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria, where oppressed Karachai and Balkars have long nursed secessionist aspirations. It is also apparent in the 1992 conflict between North Ossetia and Ingushetia over the status of Prigorodnii *raion*, which was ceded to North Ossetia following the deportation of the Ingush in 1944. Finally, ethnic conflict is increasingly prevalent in Stavropol *krai*, where thousands of refugees have fled to escape the conflicts raging elsewhere in the North Caucasus. This spike in the population of non-Russians has sparked a surge in Russian nationalism. Dagestan has not faced the same turmoil as its neighbors because rotation of leadership posts between the three dominant regional ethnicities—Avars, Dargins, and Kumyks—has been engrained in the political system since the 1940s. Yet clan-based conflict is also prevalent within the region—perhaps as a consequence of its rotational system.

The biographies of the Soviet and post-Soviet regional elites examined in this thesis are drawn from a variety of resources. Biographies of Soviet elites are primarily drawn from biographical dictionaries, such as *The Soviet Political Elite* by Boris Levytsky, *Kto est' kto v istorii SSSR: 1953-1991* by K.A. Zalesski, and *A Biographic Directory of Soviet Regional Party Leaders* by Gavin Helf. Data about the candidate members and non-members of the Central Committee is also drawn from the online encyclopedia, *Spravochnik po istorii Kommunisticheskoi partii i Sovetskogo Soyuza, 1898-1991*. Biographies of post-Soviet elites are drawn from a greater variety of resources, including *Who's Who in Russia Today: A Biographical Dictionary*

of More Than 2,100 Individuals from the Russian Federation Including the Other Fourteen Former USSR Republics by Ulrich-Joachim Schulz Torge, the Russian Regional Report, and the International Center for the Study of Institutions and Development (ICSID) Biographies of Russian Governors. Finally, this thesis uses personal and professional data drawn from Russian media reports and the analytical reports of Western policy organizations, such as The Jamestown Foundation and RFE/RL.

CHAPTER 3: THE EVOLUTION OF ELITE MOBILITY AND PATRONAGE IN THE SOVIET UNION, 1956-1991

This chapter will analyze the evolution of elite mobility and patronage from the beginning of Nikita Khrushchev's tenure as General Secretary to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Its focus will be the thirty-four regional party first secretaries, who served in Dagestan, Checheno-Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and Stavropol *krai* during this period. The chapter will first examine personal characteristics to determine whether the regional party first secretaries of the North Caucasus over the period surveyed shared a specific profile. Next, it will examine the professional characteristics of these elites, in order to determine their mobility over time. Finally, it will analyze the impact of patronage connections on elites within this region.

3.1 Personal Characteristics

The examination of personal characteristics presented here is intended to develop a portrait of the North Caucasian elite from 1956 until 1991. Experiences, like higher education or military service, that are not subsumed under their career within the CPSU and traits, like ethnicity, are considered personal characteristics. As Bohdan Harasymiw and William Clark have noted, respectively, the regional elites of the RSFSR possessed either a specialized secondary education or a higher education, and were predominantly Russian. All thirty-four regional party first secretaries of the North Caucasus possessed either a specialized secondary education or a higher education. Two areas of study were important. Eighteen of thirty-four regional first secretaries specialized in either agriculture or industry. Though agriculture and industry were important in the North Caucasus, this was representative of the Soviet Union generally—as demonstrated by Clark. 108 of 170 Brezhnev-era regional elites within his data-

set specialized in these fields.¹ In Checheno-Ingushetia, six of the seven regional first secretaries who served during the period surveyed here specialized in agriculture or industry; of the five who specialized in industry, three specialized in natural resource extraction. In Stavropol *krai* and its autonomous *oblast*, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, six of the fourteen regional first secretaries specialized in either agriculture or industry. However, unlike in Checheno-Ingushetia, all six here specialized in agriculture. Even Gorbachev, who was already advancing through the ranks of the Stavropol *krai* party apparatus, earned a degree in agro-economy from Stavropol Agricultural Institute, indicating the importance of this specialization within the region.

Though the North Caucasus is majority non-Russian, only eleven of the thirty-four regional first secretaries who worked within the region were non-Russians. As shown in Table 1 on the following page, these non-Russians served primarily in Dagestan, North Ossetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria, but one served in Checheno-Ingushetia as well.

¹ William A. Clark, *Soviet Regional Elite Mobility after Khrushchev* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 90.

Table 1: Ethnicity of North Caucasian Regional First Secretaries, 1956-91

| Region | First Secretary | Term | Ethnicity |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Checheno-Ingushetia | D.G. Zavgaev | 1989-91 | Chechen |
| | V.K. Foteev | 1984-9 | Russian |
| | A.V. Vlasov | 1975-84 | Russian |
| | S.S. Apryatkin | 1966-75 | Russian |
| | F.Ye. Titov | 1963-6 | Russian |
| | A.S. Trofimov | 1959-63 | Russian |
| | A.I. Yakovlev | 1956-9 | Russian |
| Dagestan | M.G. Aliev | 1990-1 | Avar |
| | M.Yu. Yusupov | 1983-90 | Avar |
| | M.I. Umakhanov | 1967-83 | Dargin |
| | A.D. Daniyalov | 1948-67 | Avar |
| Kabardino-Balkaria | B.M. Zumakulov | 1990-1 | Balkar |
| | V.M. Kokov | 1990 | Kabardin |
| | Ye.A. Yeliseev | 1985-90 | Russian |
| | T.K. Malbakhov | 1956-85 | Kabardin |
| Karachaevo-Cherkessia | V.Ye. Lesnichenko | 1988-91 | Russian |
| | A.A. Inzhievskii | 1978-88 | Russian |
| | V.S. Murakhovskii | 1975-8 | Russian |
| | F.P. Burmistrov | 1968-75 | Russian |
| | N.M. Lyzhin | 1961-8 | Russian |
| | V.I. Antonov | 1957-61 | Russian |
| | A.I. Vaskov | 1957 | Russian |
| North Ossetia | A.Kh. Galazov | 1990-1 | Ossetian |
| | A.S. Dzasokhov | 1988-90 | Ossetian |
| | V.Ye. Odintsov | 1982-8 | Russian |
| | B.Ye. Kabaloev | 1961-82 | Ossetian |
| | V.M. Agkatsev | 1953-61 | Russian |
| Stavropol | I.S. Boldyrev | 1985-91 | Russian |
| | V.S. Murakhovskii | 1978-85 | Russian |
| | M.S. Gorbachev | 1970-8 | Russian |
| | L.N. Yefremov | 1964-70 | Russian |
| | F.D. Kulakov | 1960-4 | Russian |
| | N.I. Belyaev | 1960 | Russian |
| | I.K. Lebedev | 1956-60 | Russian |

In Dagestan, all regional first secretaries were non-Russians; three were Avars and one was a Dargin. Avars, Dargins, and Kumyks are the dominant ethnicities within Dagestan; they co-opted positions of political power within the republic during the Soviet era and continue to do so today.² In North Ossetia, Ossetians, who had been considered a ‘trusted’ nationality since the Tsarist era and were not deported in 1944, held three of the five regional first secretary posts in

² Alex Marshall, *The Caucasus Under Soviet Rule* (London: Routledge, 2010), 290.

that republic during this period. Finally, in Kabardino-Balkaria, two Kabardins and a Balkar served as regional first secretaries. Kabardins, a second nationality that did not face deportation in 1944, occupied two of the four regional party first secretary posts in that region. However, in 1990, a Balkar, B.M. Zumakulov, became regional first secretary. Balkars, like the Chechens, Ingush, and Karachai, were deported to Central Asia in 1944 after the Soviet government accused them of collaboration with the German military. Though the accusations against these nationalities were not formally withdrawn until an April 1991 decree by President Yeltsin, D.G. Zavgaev, a Chechen, and Zumakulov both became regional first secretaries in 1990. The center perhaps intended these appointments to blunt the secessionist aspirations gaining popularity amongst Chechens and Balkars at the end of the 1980s. The biography of D.G. Zavgaev is detailed below in Figure 1.

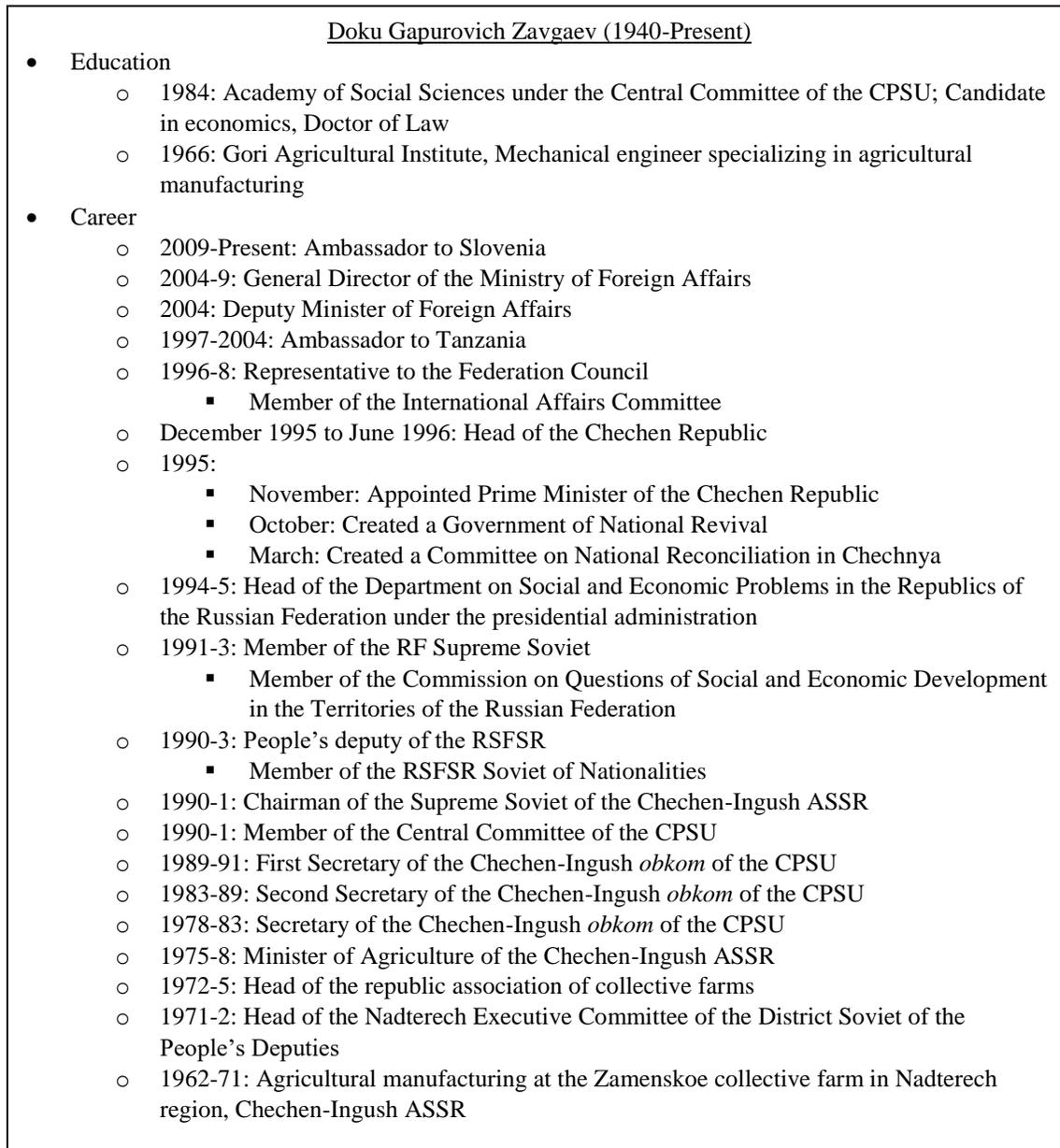


Figure 1: Biography of a Non-Russian Regional First Secretary

In his study of elite mobility in the RSFSR and the Ukrainian, Belorussian, and Central Asian SSRs, Clark notes that membership in the Komsomol or military service could affect elite mobility. Experience within the Komsomol or the military could benefit an individual under consideration for recruitment into a full-time party post, thereby affecting recruitment into and mobility within the elite. Yet Clark ultimately concludes that neither Komsomol membership nor military service influenced elite mobility because fewer than half of Brezhnev-era regional

elites could claim either experience.³ In the North Caucasus, however, eighteen of the thirty-four regional first secretaries were former Komsomol members. The majority of these elites were active within the organization while they were students, but some joined shortly after their student days ended. Like the characteristics examined above, Komsomol experience shows regional variation. In Dagestan, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, North Ossetia, and Stavropol *krai*, majorities of the regional first secretaries were former Komsomol members. Though military service shows similar regional variation, only nine of the regional first secretaries served in the military. Of these, seven were first secretaries in ethnically-divided Kabardino-Balkaria or Karachaevo-Cherkessia. Though this could show that military experience increased mobility within ethnically-divided regions, no regional first secretary in Checheno-Ingushetia possessed military experience. Moreover, those who had military experience were generally draftees who served during the Second World War or for a two- to four-year term, so they were not career servicemen.

3.2 Professional Characteristics

This chapter will also examine the professional characteristics of the thirty-four regional party first secretaries who served in the North Caucasus from 1956 to 1991. Professional characteristics are restricted to work experiences within the CPSU apparatus. They include work experiences that an official had before and after his regional first secretary post. Yet they also include other details that fall within the professional life of a regional first secretary, such as whether an official attended the Higher Party School, the age at which he gained his regional first secretary post, the length of his term within that post, and whether he became a Central Committee member—factors that Clark included in his analysis of elite mobility. While the

³ Clark (1989), 92-3.

preceding section focused on individual traits and experiences that influenced elite mobility within the North Caucasus generally, this section will place a greater emphasis on inter-regional differences, especially when discussing Central Committee membership.

In his analysis of patronage in the Soviet Union, John Willerton states that experience within organizational party-work departments increased elite mobility. These departments focused on cadre-development, so their importance within a political system based on informal structures and patronage connections would be reasonable. Half of regional first secretaries in the North Caucasus—seventeen of the thirty-four—worked in an organizational party-work department over the course of their careers within the CPSU apparatus. Experience within an organizational party-work department appears to have influenced elite mobility in Checheno-Ingushetia and Karachaevo-Cherkessia, where five of the seven regional first secretaries that served in each region worked in such a department. Both Checheno-Ingushetia and Karachaevo-Cherkessia were majority non-Russian regions governed nearly exclusively by Russians. In Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, and North Ossetia—regions in which non-Russians served as regional first secretaries more often than Russians—only four regional first secretaries worked within an organizational party-work department. Only one of these four, M.G. Aliev, the regional first secretary of Dagestan from 1990 to 1991, was a non-Russian. He was ultimately the only non-Russian worked in an organizational party-work department; the remaining sixteen were Russians. Experience within an organizational party-work department therefore influenced the mobility of Russians almost exclusively.

Higher Party School attendance is within the battery of individual-level characteristics that Clark uses to analyze elite mobility. Attendees of the Higher Party School were marked as the future political elite of the Soviet Union, so it is reasonable to expect that attendance would

increase elite mobility. Indeed, of the regional first secretaries for whom attendance dates could be found, the majority were serving in posts at the *raion* or *gorod* level of the CPSU apparatus while enrolled in the Higher Party School. Even those serving at the *oblast* level were generally not regional secretaries, meaning that Higher Party School attendees had not yet reached the top of the regional elite. Yet the majority of those who eventually reached regional first secretary posts in the North Caucasus never attended the Higher Party School. Only thirteen attended over the course of their careers; and only in Kabardino-Balkaria were the majority—three of the four regional first secretaries—attendees. Attendance at the Higher Party School was therefore never a prerequisite for promotion into a regional party first secretary post in the North Caucasus. However, it is interesting to note that attendance at the Higher Party School does not display the same ethnic delineation that work experience within an organizational party-work department does. Seven Russian and six non-Russian regional first secretaries attended the Higher Party School, meaning that this experience was accessible to and could benefit both Russians and non-Russians.

Of the personal and professional experiences surveyed so far, higher education in the fields of agriculture or industry, Komsomol membership, and experience within an organizational party-work department describe the majority of North Caucasian regional first secretaries. While specializing in agriculture or industry and Komsomol membership benefited both Russians and non-Russians, experience within an organizational party-work department is a work experience that is almost exclusive to Russians. Do the positions that regional first secretaries served in immediately prior to their appointment display a similar ethnic delineation?

Immediately prior to their appointment, thirteen of the thirty-four regional first secretaries served as regional secretaries. As Clark notes, each *obkom*, or regional committee, was

composed of five secretaries, who comprised the highest echelon of the party elite at the regional level.⁴ In Karachaevo-Cherkessia, four of seven regional first secretaries served as secretaries in Stavropol *krai*, indicating that Stavropol *krai* provided elites to its autonomous *oblast*. It is also interesting to note that three regional first secretaries served as first secretaries in other regions immediately prior to their appointment in the North Caucasus, meaning that their career transitions were lateral. A.I. Yakovlev, who became the regional first secretary of Checheno-Ingushetia following its territorial reconstitution in 1956, previously served as the regional first secretary of Grozny *oblast*—a region created to partially absorb the territory of Checheno-Ingushetia following its dissolution in 1944. Before his appointment as the regional first secretary of Grozny *oblast*, Yakovlev served as second secretary. Two regional first secretaries of Stavropol *krai* also previously served as first secretaries. L.N. Yefremov served as the regional first secretary of Gorkovskii *krai*—now Nizhny Novgorod *oblast*—while V.S. Murakhovskii served as the regional first secretary of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, highlighting the prominence of Russian elites in this region.

Seven regional first secretaries served as members of elite governing bodies, such as the Presidium or Council of Ministers, at the regional or republican levels. In Dagestan, three of four regional first secretaries served as Chairman of the Dagestan Council of Ministers immediately prior to their appointment. This indicates that advancement within the Dagestani elite was highly structured through the majority of the Soviet period. Yet those regional first secretaries who served within elite bodies did not necessarily serve within the regions where they were eventually appointed. N.I. Belyaev, who became the first secretary of Stavropol *krai* in 1960, previously served as a member of the Presidium of the Kazakh Supreme Soviet, while

⁴ Clark (1989), 8.

F.Ye. Titov, who became the first secretary of Checheno-Ingushetia in 1963, was a member of the Presidium of the Uzbek Supreme Soviet. Belyaev and Titov were both Russians; their careers were illustrative of a trend that distinguished Russian from non-Russian elites.

While non-Russian elites generally served in a single region, the careers of Russian elites generally spanned multiple regions. In the North Caucasus, the majority of non-Russian regional first secretaries—seven of eleven—worked in the region where they were appointed first secretary immediately prior to their appointment. Only four of twenty-three Russian regional first secretaries held such consecutive posts; the remaining nineteen Russians who served as regional first secretaries in the North Caucasus from 1956 to 1991 worked in other regions or republics prior to their appointment. Despite their greater geographic mobility, these Russian elites generally did not hold posts in Moscow. Only five Russian regional first secretaries held a central post prior to their appointment. Of these, three served as Inspectors in the Central Committee—a post focused on cadre-development. That few regional first secretaries worked in the center and that the majority of those who did performed organizational party-work supports Clark’s contention that appointment to a regional party first secretary post was a means by which regional elites could be vetted for posts within the all-union elite.⁵

The regional party first secretaries of the North Caucasus generally entered these trial posts in their late forties, meaning that they already possessed extensive experience in the regions or republics. The age at which regional first secretaries were appointed did not change significantly across regions or between general secretaries. However, their term-lengths varied depending on the General Secretary. This is summarized below in Table 2.

⁵ Clark (1989), 9.

Table 2: Number of Regional First Secretaries Nominated by Each General Secretary

| | Stalin | Khrushchev | Brezhnev | Andropov | Chernenko | Gorbachev |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Checheno-Ingushetia | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Dagestan | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Kabardino-Balkaria | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Karachaevo-Cherkessia | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| North Ossetia | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Stavropol | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

During his tenure as General Secretary, Nikita Khrushchev appointed thirteen regional first secretaries in the North Caucasus. Khrushchev replaced regional first secretaries throughout the RSFSR. He reduced their tenure and transferred them to new regions more frequently, thereby undermining their ability to cultivate networks of local elites. As Rigby notes, he retained only two Stalin-era regional first secretaries. One was A.D. Daniyalov, who served as the regional first secretary of Dagestan from 1948 until 1967; local networks here were already rooted and powerful. Though Brezhnev served as General Secretary for about twice as long as Khrushchev, he appointed fewer regional party first secretaries in the North Caucasus. After witnessing the ouster of Khrushchev by the regional elite, Brezhnev realized that ‘stability of cadres’ would be key to his continued retention of power.⁶ He appointed only nine regional first secretaries in the North Caucasus across his almost twenty-year reign, meaning that their tenure and ability to cultivate local personal networks increased. Brezhnev never even appointed a regional first secretary in Kabardino-Balkaria; T.K. Malbakhov served there from 1956 until 1985. In 1985, the removal of regional first secretaries accelerated again as Gorbachev attempted to finally seize

⁶ Yoram Gorlizki (2010) points out that ‘stability of cadres’ is related to the policy of ‘trust in cadres,’ unveiled by Brezhnev at the Twenty-third Party Congress in March 1966. Gorlizki argues that trust in cadres was ultimately a more expansive term that entailed the development of norms and personal relationships. The regional party first secretary was a major beneficiary of this change as his position was generally ensured in exchange for loyalty to Brezhnev. The narrower term, ‘stability of cadres,’ is appropriate here because it is focused on positional turnover, rather than the more general shift in the conduct of elite politics.

power from the aged Brezhnev-era elites. From 1985 to 1990, Gorbachev appointed nine regional first secretaries in the North Caucasus. He appointed at least one new first secretary in each of the six regions, highlighting his commitment to elite renewal. However, this renewal ultimately ended prematurely.

Term-lengths of regional party first secretaries varied depending on the General Secretary in power, but did not vary regionally. Representation in the Central Committee likely displays variation by General Secretary, but perhaps displays variation by region as well—considering the interregional variation in administrative classification. As shown in Table 3, twenty-one of the thirty-four North Caucasian regional first secretaries became full members of the Central Committee, five became candidate members, and eight remained non-members.

Table 3: Regional First Secretaries by Central Committee Membership

| | Full Members | Candidate Members | Non-members |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Checheno-Ingushetia | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Dagestan | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Kabardino-Balkaria | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Karachaevo-Cherkessia | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| North Ossetia | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Stavropol | 7 | 0 | 0 |

In Dagestan and Stavropol *krai*, all regional first secretaries became full members of the Central Committee. In 1971, Peter Frank argued that such high representation in the Central Committee is an indication of regional importance.⁷ In Karachaevo-Cherkessia, on the other hand, the majority of regional first secretaries were never members of the Central Committee. Only V.S. Murakhovskii, who served as the first secretary of Stavropol *krai* after Gorbachev vacated the post in 1978, became a full member of the Central Committee in 1981. As shown previously, the

⁷ Peter Frank, “The CPSU Obkom First Secretary: A Profile,” *British Journal of Political Science* 1, (1971), no. 2: 217-320.

majority of first secretaries of Karachaevo-Cherkessia were second-tier elites within Stavropol *krai*, meaning that they would be unlikely candidates for Central Committee membership.

In Checheno-Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, and North Ossetia, majorities of the regional first secretaries were full members of the Central Committee. Yet there were also regional first secretaries who remained candidate members or non-members. These regions demonstrate the influence of the General Secretary over Central Committee representation. Over the course of Brezhnev's tenure, Central Committee representation was increasingly linked to posts within the CPSU apparatus, rather than to regional importance. In Checheno-Ingushetia and North Ossetia, three regional first secretaries were candidate members and two were non-members. The three regional first secretaries who became candidate members—A.S. Trofimov and S.S. Apryatkin in Checheno-Ingushetia and B.Ye. Kabaloev in North Ossetia—were either appointed by Khrushchev and continued to serve under Brezhnev or were appointed by Brezhnev before 1970. The two who never became members of the Central Committee—A.I. Yakovlev in Checheno-Ingushetia and V.M. Agkatsev in North Ossetia—were appointed and served the length of their terms under Khrushchev. The failure of these elites to advance to full or candidate membership in the Central Committee supports the contention of Rigby and other scholars that, as the era of stagnation progressed over the 1970s, Central Committee representation was increasingly linked to specific posts within the party elite. B.M. Zumakulov of Kabardino-Balkaria was the only regional first secretary appointed after the 1960s to not achieve full membership in the Central Committee. As noted earlier, Zumakulov was a Balkar, so his appointment may have been intended to undermine Balkar secessionism, meaning that he may never have truly been considered a member of the elite.

Clark concludes that regional importance, which is generally illustrated through Central Committee representation, contributed to the mobility of regional elites. However, in the North Caucasus, Central Committee representation was not necessarily linked to greater elite mobility. Rigby notes that transitioning from a regional party first secretary post to a Central Committee secretary post or a deputy chairmanship within the Council of Ministers were considered promotions within the Soviet political system.⁸ Transitioning to a minister post was a lateral career transition, while transitioning to a deputy minister post was a demotion. Though all four regional first secretaries of Dagestan were full members of the Central Committee—meaning that the region was judged important within Frank’s framework—none of the regional first secretaries were promoted following their appointments. Of the three regional first secretaries who did not immediately retire, two served as chairmen of the regional Supreme Soviet. The third served as the Deputy Chairman of the RSFSR State Planning Committee (Gosplan), which would likely constitute a demotion within Rigby’s framework. Non-Russian elites elsewhere in the North Caucasus faced similar fates. In Kabardino-Balkaria, two of three non-Russian regional first secretaries continued to work within the region. In January 1982, B.Ye. Kabaloev was dismissed from his post as regional first secretary of North Ossetia after the murder of an Ossetian taxi driver by an Ingush assailant sparked protests that he could not quell.⁹ He was demoted to a post at the USSR consulate in Mongolia and replaced by V.Ye. Odintsov, a Russian and eminent Brezhnev-era “nationalities troubleshooter.”¹⁰ As Willerton notes, non-Russian elites ultimately displayed decreased mobility within the Soviet political system.¹¹

⁸ T.H. Rigby, *Political Elites in the USSR: Central Leaders and Local Cadres from Lenin to Gorbachev* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1990), 235.

⁹ John Birch, “Ossetia: A Caucasian Bosnia in Microcosm,” *Central Asian Survey* 14, no. 1 (1995), 54 .

¹⁰ Gavin Helf, *A Biographic Directory of Soviet Regional Party Leaders* (Munich: Radio Liberty Research, 1988).

¹¹ John P. Willerton, *Patronage and Politics in the USSR* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 226.

Unlike Russians, they were generally constrained to their regions of origin and were thereby excluded from positions not only in the center, but in other regions and republics as well.

Yet the Russian regional first secretaries serving in the North Caucasus generally did not display greater mobility than their non-Russian colleagues. Using Rigby's framework as a basis, only M.S. Gorbachev and V.S. Murakhovskii of Stavropol *krai* were promoted following their tenure as regional first secretaries. Gorbachev became the secretary of the Central Committee focused on agriculture in 1978, while Murakhovskii was promoted to First Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers in 1985. Though A.V. Vlasov of Checheno-Ingushetia, whose biography is detailed in Figure 2, was never promoted to either of these posts, he became a People's Deputy of the USSR and RSFSR in 1989. In 1990, he was almost elected Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, but lost to future Russian president Boris Yeltsin by sixty votes. Vlasov also climbed the ranks of the Soviet political system, even though he never reached the highest strata of power at the all-union level. What experiences did these men share that ultimately distinguished them from their colleagues in the North Caucasus—whether Russian or non-Russian? All were Russians, who possessed a specialized secondary or higher education and were formerly members of the Komsomol. This last experience likely only aided their recruitment into full-time party work—not their recruitment into the elite. Both Gorbachev and Vlasov were educated in the fields of agriculture or industry. While Gorbachev's education at the Stavropol Agricultural Institute likely influenced his promotion to Central Committee Secretary, Vlasov's education at the Irkutsk Mining and Metallurgical Institute only influenced the posts he attained in the Komsomol and at the start of his party career. Gorbachev and Vlasov also worked in an organizational party-work department over the course of their careers. Yet Murakhovskii possessed neither of these educational or career experiences, indicating that they

were not prerequisites of elite mobility. This mirrors the conclusion of Clark's study that the majority of functional characteristics did not influence elite mobility within the all-union CPSU apparatus.

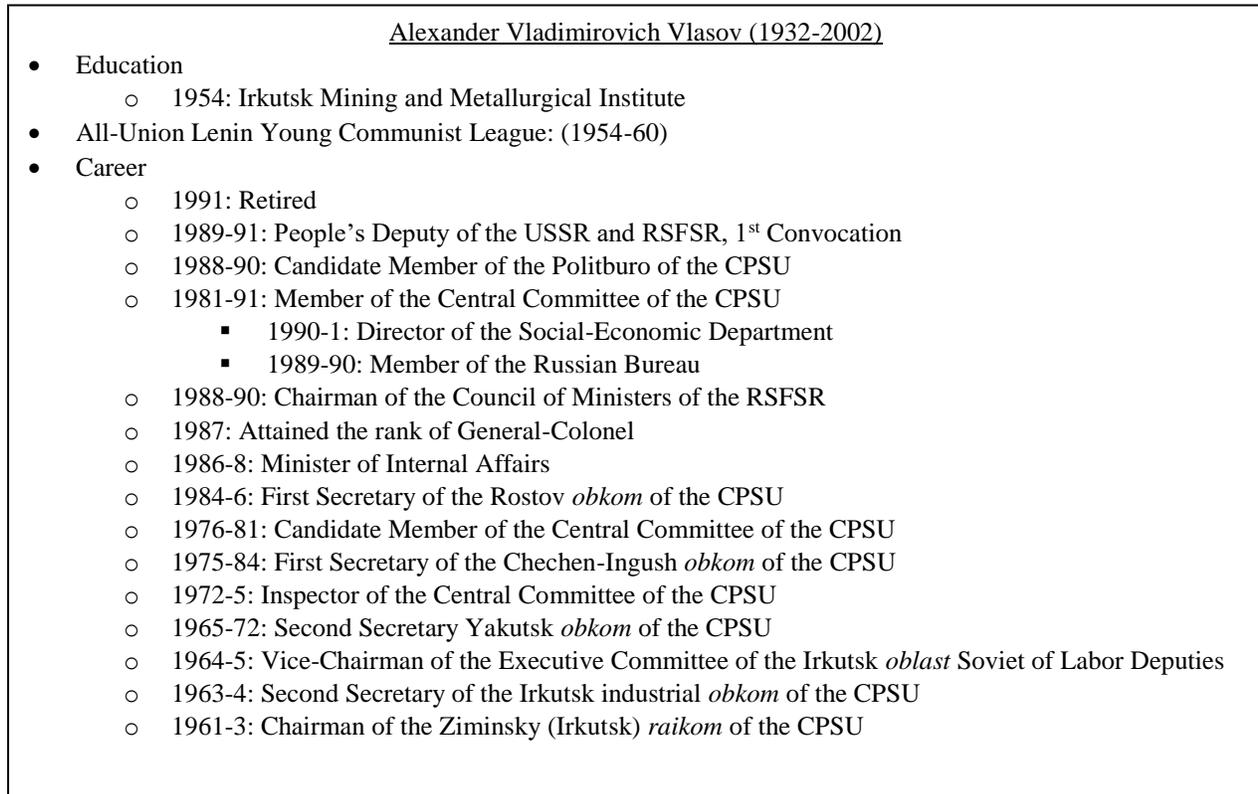


Figure 2: Biography of a Russian Regional First Secretary

3.3 Patronage Connections

The regional party first secretaries of the North Caucasus shared similar personal and professional profiles. The majority were Russians, were educated in the fields of agriculture or industry, possessed experience within the Komsomol or an organizational party-work department, and became full members of the Central Committee during their tenure as regional first secretary. Such personal and professional characteristics provide no means to distinguish the three regional first secretaries who experienced upward mobility within the Soviet political system from the majority who did not. As Urban and Willerton argue, patronage connections were perhaps the primary means by which the regional first secretaries attained their posts at the

top of the regional party hierarchy and eventually advanced through the CPSU apparatus. This section will examine the relationship between patronage and elite mobility in the North Caucasus from 1956 through 1991. It will first analyze the local networks that predominated in Dagestan. Next, it will examine whether such influential networks existed elsewhere in the North Caucasus. Finally, it will examine the personal network that developed around the future General Secretary M.S. Gorbachev.

In Dagestan, local networks, rather than central elites, controlled the career trajectories of local elites. As previously noted, the influence of local networks in Dagestan was reflected in the ethnic composition of the regional first secretaries. All were drawn from the three predominant regional ethnicities and all worked exclusively within the region prior to their appointment as the first secretary. Upon closer examination of their career trajectories, the *seilschaft* model appears applicable. The *seilschaft* model proposes that elites ascended the Soviet political hierarchy like teams of mountain climbers; when the patron was promoted, his clients were promoted in tandem. Such promotion chains are discernible in Dagestan. When A.D. Daniyalov became the first secretary in 1948, M.I. Umakhanov became the head of a department within the Dagestan *obkom*. He subsequently advanced through the party apparatus, becoming the Chairman of the Dagestan ASSR Council of Ministers in 1956. In 1967, Umakhanov was appointed the regional party first secretary. In 1983, he retired from this post due to poor health and was replaced by his longtime client, M.Yu. Yusupov.¹² Yusupov's career trajectory is reflective of Umakhanov's. He became the first secretary of the Buinaksk *raikom* after Umakhanov's appointment in 1967. In 1978, he was appointed Chairman of the Council of Ministers—the launch pad to the first secretary post. In 1983, Yusupov became the regional first

¹² Helf (1988).

secretary—a post that he held until 1990, when he became the Deputy Chairman of RSFSR Gosplan. His successor was M.G. Aliev. Like his predecessors, Aliev received a promotion at the start of the preceding first secretary's term. He became the Deputy Director of the Department of Organizational-Party and Cadres Work in 1983. He was subsequently promoted to Director—the post that he held until his appointment as regional first secretary in 1990.

The *seilschaft* model appears applicable in Dagestan because, upon his appointment, each regional first secretary appears to have promoted his clients to influential posts. Though local elites also ascended to the regional first secretary posts in North Ossetia and Kabardino-Balkaria, these simultaneous promotions are not evident there. They are also not evident in Stavropol *krai* or its autonomous *oblast*, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, indicating that Dagestan had a uniquely closed political system. Though the realm of elite politics elsewhere in the North Caucasus was comparatively open, patronage connections remained influential. In 1956, I.K. Lebedev became the first secretary of Stavropol *krai*. Lebedev exemplified the professional profile of a Khrushchev-era regional elite because he served in regional and republican posts across the Soviet Union. From 1944 to 1949, he served as the second secretary in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia. Two future first secretaries of Checheno-Ingushetia served there at the same time. F.Ye. Titov was a secretary and second secretary in the Latvian Central Committee from 1944 to 1952, while A.S. Trofimov was the second secretary in the Lithuanian Central Committee from 1946 to 1952. Each became the first secretary of Checheno-Ingushetia after Lebedev came to the North Caucasus; Trofimov was appointed in 1959, while Titov was appointed in 1963. Lebedev also served as the first secretary of Penza *oblast* before his appointment in Stavropol *krai*. He worked there from 1949 to 1952. F.D. Kulakov, who became

the first secretary of Stavropol *krai* in 1960, served under him as the Head of the Agricultural Department of the Penza *obkom* from 1944 to 1950.

Though Michael Urban argues that common regional affiliations cannot definitively show patronage connections, these affiliations still appear to show affinity. Titov and Kulakov would have worked directly with Lebedev in Latvia and Penza *oblast* respectively, while Trofimov and Lebedev likely would have interacted as elites working in neighboring republics. Lebedev likely would have developed relationships with each, which perhaps influenced their eventual transfer to the North Caucasus. If these relationships existed, then this cohort of four elites could provide an illustration of how regional elites circulated within the Soviet system. If one elite is transferred to a new region or republic, he could lobby for the transfer of his former colleagues. Appointments would therefore not be without logic, but also would not necessarily be contingent on the functional characteristics of elites, but rather on their relationships.

The network that developed around future General Secretary M.S. Gorbachev demonstrates how patronage enabled regional elites to attain coveted posts in Moscow. During his tenure as the first secretary of Stavropol *krai*, Kulakov became Gorbachev's patron. Under Kulakov, Gorbachev became the Head of the Organizational Party-Work Department in the Stavropol rural territorial committee. In 1965, Kulakov was appointed Head of the Agricultural Department of the Central Committee. He became influential within the Moscow elite. He cultivated relations with M.A. Suslov and Yu.V. Andropov, and eventually gained notoriety as a potential successor to Brezhnev.¹³ Suslov and Andropov frequented health spas in Stavropol *krai*, where they likely interacted with his young client, Gorbachev, who was also becoming influential.¹⁴ In 1970, Gorbachev became the first secretary of Stavropol *krai*. Kulakov

¹³ K.A. Zalesski, *Kto est' kto v istorii SSSR: 1953-1991* (Moscow: Veche, 2010).

¹⁴ Jeanne Vronskaya, *A Biographical Dictionary of the Soviet Union: 1917-1988* (Munich: K.G. Saur Verlag, 1989).

ultimately died of heart failure in 1978. Though he died before his client could attain a post in Moscow, Gorbachev nonetheless became the secretary of the Central Committee focused on agriculture. Even though Gorbachev lost his regional patron, he had already gained a new patron: Yu.V. Andropov—who would indeed become the successor to Brezhnev. His meteoric rise to power thus continued.

Gorbachev himself became a patron to other regional elites of the North Caucasus. The career trajectory of his primary regional client, V.S. Murakhovskii, is reflective of those of the first secretaries of Dagestan. In 1970, the year that Gorbachev became regional first secretary, Murakhovskii was appointed first secretary of the Stavropol *gorkom*. In 1974, he became a secretary of the Stavropol *kraikom* and, in 1975, the first secretary of Karachaevo-Cherkessia. When Gorbachev became a secretary of the Central Committee in 1978, Murakhovskii replaced him as first secretary of Stavropol *krai*. When Gorbachev ultimately became the General Secretary in 1985, Murakhovskii became the First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR. Other than Gorbachev, he was the only regional first secretary of the North Caucasus to receive a promotion, illustrating the power of patronage within the CPSU apparatus.

A.V. Vlasov is another regional elite who became a client of Gorbachev.¹⁵ Yet Vlasov never worked in Stavropol *krai*, so the origin of their relationship is not as clearly discernible. Vlasov was the first secretary of Checheno-Ingushetia from 1975 to 1984, so he and Gorbachev served concurrently as first secretaries for three years. It is likely that they interacted as regional party heads working in the North Caucasus. A powerful patron could increase mobility within the Soviet political system, so Vlasov may have noted Gorbachev's status as a rising star in the party and pragmatically decided to form an alliance. Following his first secretary post in

¹⁵ Helf (1988).

Checheno-Ingushetia, Vlasov became the first secretary of Rostov *oblast* in 1984 and the Minister of Internal Affairs in 1986—both of which represented lateral career transitions. However, Vlasov eventually gained influence within the RSFSR; he became the Chairman of the RSFSR Council of Ministers in 1988 and just barely lost the chairmanship of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet to Yeltsin in 1990.

A third client of Gorbachev was I.S. Boldyrev, who succeeded V.S. Murakhovskii as the first secretary of Stavropol *krai* in 1985. Boldyrev, who was a client of both Murakhovskii and Gorbachev, reportedly presided over Gorbachev's territorial base in Stavropol.¹⁶ Boldyrev never reached the central elite like Murakhovskii and Vlasov because their status was dependent on their patron. Gorbachev never regained his authority over the Soviet state after the attempted coup against him in August 1991. The dissolution of the Soviet Union into fourteen independent states was the ultimate aftermath of the coup. The political system of the new Russian Federation was now under the control of the President Boris Yeltsin. As 1991 progressed and the fate of their patron became increasingly obvious, Murakhovskii and Vlasov retired, while Boldyrev simply disappeared from the records. Their connection to Gorbachev appears to have precluded the continuation of their political careers under Yeltsin.

3.4 Conclusions

This chapter examined the career mobility and patronage connections of regional first secretaries working in the North Caucasus from 1956 to 1991. First, it examined personal characteristics, which primarily influenced elite mobility prior to appointment as the regional first secretary. Personal characteristics were defined as experiences that predated party membership like education, experience in the Komsomol, and military service, as well as

¹⁶ Helf (1988).

personal traits, like ethnicity. As Clark and other scholars note, the majority of regional and republican elites in the Soviet Union possessed either a specialized secondary or higher education. The regional first secretaries of the North Caucasus were representative of this trend; all had either a specialized secondary or higher education. The majority of these—eighteen of thirty-four—specialized in either agriculture or industry. This was again representative of the Soviet Union generally, indicating that these specializations increased recruitment into and mobility within the regional elite. Eighteen of thirty-four regional first secretaries of the North Caucasus were also former Komsomol members. Though this was not representative of the Soviet Union generally, Komsomol experience could have increased recruitment into full-time party posts in some regions. Military service was a second experience that could increase recruitment into full-time party posts. However, it ultimately appeared unrelated to elite mobility in the North Caucasus because only nine regional first secretaries served in the military.

As Clark notes the majority of regional and republican first secretaries in the Soviet Union were Russians. Here again, the North Caucasus was typical because twenty-three of thirty-four regional first secretaries were Russians. Ethnicity impacted mobility within and beyond the regional elite. The second section of this chapter examined the professional characteristics of the North Caucasian regional elite. These included not only the posts that each regional secretary held before and after his appointment, but also whether he attended the Higher Party School, worked in an organizational party-work department, which General Secretary appointed him regional first secretary, and whether he became a member of the Central Committee. Of these, only experience within an organizational party-work department seems to have affected mobility within the regional elite. Eighteen of the thirty-four regional first secretaries worked in an organizational party-work department over the course of their careers.

However, seventeen of these eighteen were Russians, indicating that posts within organizational party-work departments may not have been as accessible to non-Russians. Though representation in the Central Committee increased under Brezhnev, elite mobility remained low for both Russians and non-Russians working in the North Caucasus. Russians experienced greater geographic mobility within the Soviet Union, but generally did not ascend the Soviet political hierarchy.

The notable exceptions to this generalization are M.S. Gorbachev, V.S. Murakhovskii, and A.V. Vlasov. Each of these regional first secretaries were the clients of powerful Moscow elites. Gorbachev was a client of Kulakov and Andropov, while Murakhovskii and Vlasov were clients of Gorbachev. The primacy of patronage connections over functional characteristics supports Hale's contention that a patronal system existed in the Soviet Union. Rewards—in this case promotions—were indeed distributed through chains of actual acquaintance. When Gorbachev could no longer effectively distribute rewards and punishments—or monitor his clients—his personal network disintegrated. The political-social sphere of the new Russian Federation coalesced around a new patron: Yeltsin. Though Gorbachev's extended network was generally reconstituted under Yeltsin, those closest to Gorbachev were ultimately excluded from political life.

CHAPTER 4: AFTER THE SOVIET UNION: ELITE MOBILITY AND PATRONAGE UNDER YELTSIN, PUTIN, AND MEDVEDEV

On December 25, 1991, Gorbachev resigned as President of the Soviet Union and ceded his powers to Russian President Boris Yeltsin. The following day, the Soviet flag was lowered for the last time at the Kremlin and replaced by the Russian tricolor. The personalistic Soviet political system was now defunct, but the character of the system that would replace it was still unknown. This chapter analyzes how the collapse of the Soviet Union impacted elite mobility and patronage in the North Caucasus.

It is divided into two sections, which reflect the two political systems that have existed in the Russian Federation. The first section analyzes the decentralizing system under Yeltsin. At the end of 1991, the regional executive—referred to as a ‘governor’ in the administratively-defined majority-Russian regions and as a ‘president’ in the ethnic republics—replaced the regional first secretary as the head of a regional administration. Under the decentralizing political system of the 1990s, the new regional executives were directly elected. The second section of this chapter analyzes the recentralizing system under Putin and Medvedev. Under this system, regional executives lost the right to direct elections. They were henceforth appointed by the president. Though direct gubernatorial elections were restored in 2012, the Federal Assembly qualified that decision by enabling regional legislatures to mandate direct gubernatorial elections or presidential appointments within the regional constitution. Both sections of the chapter ultimately examine how the profile of North Caucasian regional executives changed within this evolving system and whether patronage connections have retained influence over elite mobility.

4.1 The Russian Federation under Yeltsin

Boris Yeltsin served as President of the Russian Federation from 1991 through 1999. He presided over the chaotic years following the collapse of the Soviet Union, during which the political norms and institutions of the new Russian Federation developed. This chapter, like the last, will examine the profiles of North Caucasian elites, focusing on personal and professional characteristics. The personal characteristics surveyed in this section are ethnicity and education, while professional characteristics include military service, professional experiences—such as whether an elite ever served as a parliamentarian or a regional first secretary—and the career mobility of non-Russian elites within the new political system. In conclusion, the section will discuss the continued salience of patronage connections.

4.1.1 Personal Characteristics

During the Soviet era, eleven non-Russian elites served as regional first secretaries in the North Caucasus. The majority of these eleven were from Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, and North Ossetia. However, when the Soviet Union collapsed, the ethnic composition of the new regional executives shifted, as demonstrated in Table 4 on page 66. Of the eleven regional executives who served in the 1990s, eight were non-Russians. At the end of the 1980s, Gorbachev attempted to stem the tide of nationalism by appointing local elites to first secretary posts in non-Russian regions across the union. However, these appointments never stemmed the ethnic tensions that had developed in the North Caucasus over decades. In 1988, Karachai elites began to push for the reconstitution of their territory, which existed as an autonomous *oblast* within Stavropol *krai* from 1926 until the deportation of the Karachai in November 1943.¹ As Ann Sheehy shows, the Karachai were considered enemies of the state even after their

¹ John Forsyth, *The Caucasus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

rehabilitation in 1957 and were systematically excluded from posts in the CPSU apparatus until 1987.² A monument was even erected in 1979 to commemorate the murder of 150 orphans in Nizhnaya Teberda by the Karachai—an atrocity that never happened. Decades of oppression culminated in the declaration of the Karachai SSR in 1990. However, the Karachai remained frustrated because the Karachai-Cherkess SSR was proclaimed simultaneously in order to stem fears of destabilization of the RSFSR.

Like the Karachai, the Ingush began to push for the reconstitution of their territory in 1989. However, their push for autonomy also exacerbated an intractable border dispute with North Ossetia. After the Chechens and Ingush were deported in 1944, the Chechen-Ingush ASSR was dissolved and the majority of its territory ceded to its neighbors. Territory ceded to neighbors included Prigorodnii district, which comprised half of the territory of the former Ingush autonomous *oblast*. In a December 1991 referendum, the majority of Ingush supported the creation of an autonomous republic that would incorporate Prigorodnii district. The center may have challenged this bid for autonomy had the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria not declared independence from the Soviet Union in November 1991. In June 1992, the Russian parliament enacted a law to create an Ingush republic. However, before the borders of the new republic could be drawn, Yeltsin issued a decree that prohibited border changes in the North Caucasus. This decree not only halted the incorporation of Prigorodnii district, but also jeopardized the creation of legislative and administrative institutions within the republic.³ The new elites of Ingushetia and Karachaevo-Cherkessia thus emerged from political chaos. Though elites elsewhere in the North Caucasus did not face similar political chaos, they nonetheless survived amidst pervasive ethnic tension.

² Ann Sheehy, “Justice at Last for the Karachai?” *Report on the USSR* 2, no. 52 (1990), 18.

³ Julian Birch, “Ossetia: A Caucasian Bosnia in Microcosm.” *Central Asian Survey* 14, no. 1 (1995), 56.

Table 4: Ethnicity of North Caucasian Regional Executives, 1992-99

| Region | Regional Executive | Term | Ethnicity |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Chechnya | D.G. Zavgaev | 1995-6 | Chechen |
| Dagestan | M.M. Magomedov | 1994-2006 | Dargin |
| Ingushetia | R.S. Aushev | 1993-2002 | Ingush |
| Kabardino-Balkaria | V.M. Kokov | 1992-2005 | Kabardin |
| Karachaevo-Cherkessia | V.M. Semyonov | 1999-2003 | Karachai |
| | V.I. Khubiev | 1992-9 | Karachai |
| North Ossetia | A.S. Dzasokhov | 1998-2005 | Ossetian |
| | A.Kh. Galazov | 1994-8 | Ossetian |
| Stavropol <i>krai</i> | A.L. Chernogov | 1996-2008 | Russian |
| | P.P. Marchenko | 1995-6 | Russian |
| | Ye.S. Kuznetsov | 1991-5 | Russian |

How did the elites of this tumultuous region compare to elites throughout the new Russian Federation? Kryshstanovskaya and White point out that higher education remained an important characteristic of the elite after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The percentage of political elites who were candidates or doctors of science increased from twenty-three percent and twenty-nine percent under Brezhnev and Gorbachev respectively to 48.4 percent under Yeltsin.⁴ In the North Caucasus, three Yeltsin-era regional executives possessed advanced degrees: D.G. Zavgaev of Chechnya, V.M. Kokov of Kabardino-Balkaria, and A.S. Dzasokhov of North Ossetia. While V.M. Kokov completed his graduate education within ten years of finishing university, D.G. Zavgaev and A.S. Dzasokhov each completed theirs decades after finishing university, indicating that graduate education became an important marker within the elite during the last decade of the Soviet era. Yet seven of the eleven Yeltsin-era regional executives—including D.G. Zavgaev, V.M. Kokov, and A.S. Dzasokhov—were educated in the fields of agriculture or industry, important markers within the Soviet-era regional elite. In Stavropol *krai*, all three governors who served during the 1990s specialized in either agriculture or engineering. The continued preeminence of elites educated in agriculture or industry may hint

⁴ Olga Kryshstanovskaya and Stephen White, “From Soviet Nomenclature to Russian Elite.” *Europe-Asia Studies* 48, no. 5 (1996), 727.

that the Soviet-era regional elite retained power in the North Caucasus in the decade following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

4.1.2 Professional Characteristics

Mawdsley and White argue that Soviet-era elites retained power in the Russian Federation through two means. First, they initiated a process of ‘power conversion’ through which they transformed the material benefits they accrued as Soviet elites into monetary benefits within the new political-economic system of the Russian Federation. A popular example of this is the Komsomol economy, which developed during the late 1980s and generated the private enterprises of the nascent Russian Federation. The second means by which Soviet elites retained power was through their monopolization of administrative expertise. In the North Caucasus, this second means of power retention seems salient. Four of the eleven regional executives in the North Caucasus previously served as regional first secretaries: D.G. Zavgaev in Chechnya, V.M. Kokov in Kabardino-Balkaria, and A.Kh. Galazov as well as A.S. Dzasokhov in North Ossetia. In fact, of the five post-Soviet regions that had a Soviet-era regional political elite, only in Stavropol *krai* were the Yeltsin-era governors not drawn from this elite. Ye.S. Kuznetsov and P.P. Marchenko were involved in regional enterprises during the Soviet era, while A.L. Chernogov worked within the regional administration. Though the elites who retained their status after the fall of the Soviet Union had vast administrative experience within their respective republics, center-periphery relations and intra-regional politics also motivated their retention of power.

On August 19, 1991, eight Communist hard-liners initiated a coup against Gorbachev while he was vacationing in Crimea. Though the coup failed on August 21st, it ultimately ended Gorbachev’s career, drew international acclaim for Yeltsin, and hastened the collapse of the

Soviet Union. Yet the reverberations of the coup affected not only the center, but the regions as well. In Checheno-Ingushetia, the Supreme Soviet supported the coup. However, D.G. Zavgaev, the regional first secretary and chairman of the Supreme Soviet, supported Gorbachev.⁵ While the republican Supreme Soviet lambasted Zavgaev as a traitor to his people, Ruslan Khasbulatov, acting chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, asked the central authorities to remove regional first secretaries and dissolve regional legislatures who supported the coup.⁶ In spite of Zavgaev's support for Gorbachev, Checheno-Ingushetia was one of the regions Khasbulatov named. The chaos within the republic provided the former Soviet Air Force general Dzhokhar Dudayev the impetus to begin a putsch against the Communist elites of Checheno-Ingushetia. The putsch prompted Zavgaev to flee the republic on September 6th and the dissolution of the Supreme Soviet on September 15th. However, Zavgaev ultimately returned to the republic in 1995 as the head of the pro-Russia shadow government. He passed the intervening years in the Supreme Soviet and the presidential administration, where he gained enough trust from the central elites to become their arbiter in Chechnya.

Support for the coup did not upend elite politics elsewhere in the North Caucasus. In North Ossetia, the elite supported the coup, but remained in power. A.Kh. Galazov retained his post as chairman of the Supreme Soviet and, in 1994, became the President of North Ossetia. In Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Prime Minister V.I. Khubiev initially supported the coup, but ultimately echoed Yeltsin's condemnation of it.⁷ He remained prime minister after the coup, becoming president in 1992. In Dagestan, M.M. Magomedov, the chairman of the Supreme Soviet, simply declared the coup unnecessary and retained power as Chairman of the State Council from 1994

⁵ K.A. Zalesski, *Kto est' kto v istorii SSSR: 1953-1991* (Moscow: Veche, 2010).

⁶ Ann Sheehy, "Power Struggle in Checheno-Ingushetia." *Report on the USSR* 3, no. 46 (1991), 22.

⁷ Forsyth (2013), 727.

to 2006. Finally, in Stavropol *krai*, Ye.S. Kuznetsov, who condemned the coup, was appointed Head of the Administration after the ouster of Gorbachev-ally, Boldyrev. The coup thus proved unrelated to elite mobility following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Intra-regional politics proved the more important determinant. Though the Supreme Soviet under Zavgaev supported the coup, the central elite required an experienced arbiter who they hoped would possess popular legitimacy within the republic—criteria the only non-Russian regional first secretary of Checheno-Ingushetia could fulfill. The central elite likewise preferred the pro-Russia bureaucrats of North Ossetia to retain their dominance over regional politics. Finally, though V.M Kokov met the conspirators in Moscow, he remained the preferred regional executive because he stemmed Balkar secessionism in Kabardino-Balkaria.⁸ Maintaining stability in the republics of the North Caucasus remained the primary objective.

Because ethnic tension and conflicts are pervasive within the North Caucasus, military service could increase elite mobility there. Military service was ultimately judged unrelated to elite mobility during the Soviet era because only nine of thirty-four regional first secretaries served in the military—all of whom were draftees who served either during the Second World War or for a two- to three-year term. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, two career servicemen became republican presidents: R.S. Aushev in Ingushetia, whose biography is detailed above in Figure 3, and V.M Semyonov in Karachaevo-Cherkessia.

⁸ Eds. Robert Ortung, Danielle N. Lussier, and Anna Paretskaya, *The Republics and Regions of the Russian Federation: A Guide to Politics, Policies, and Leaders* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 2000).

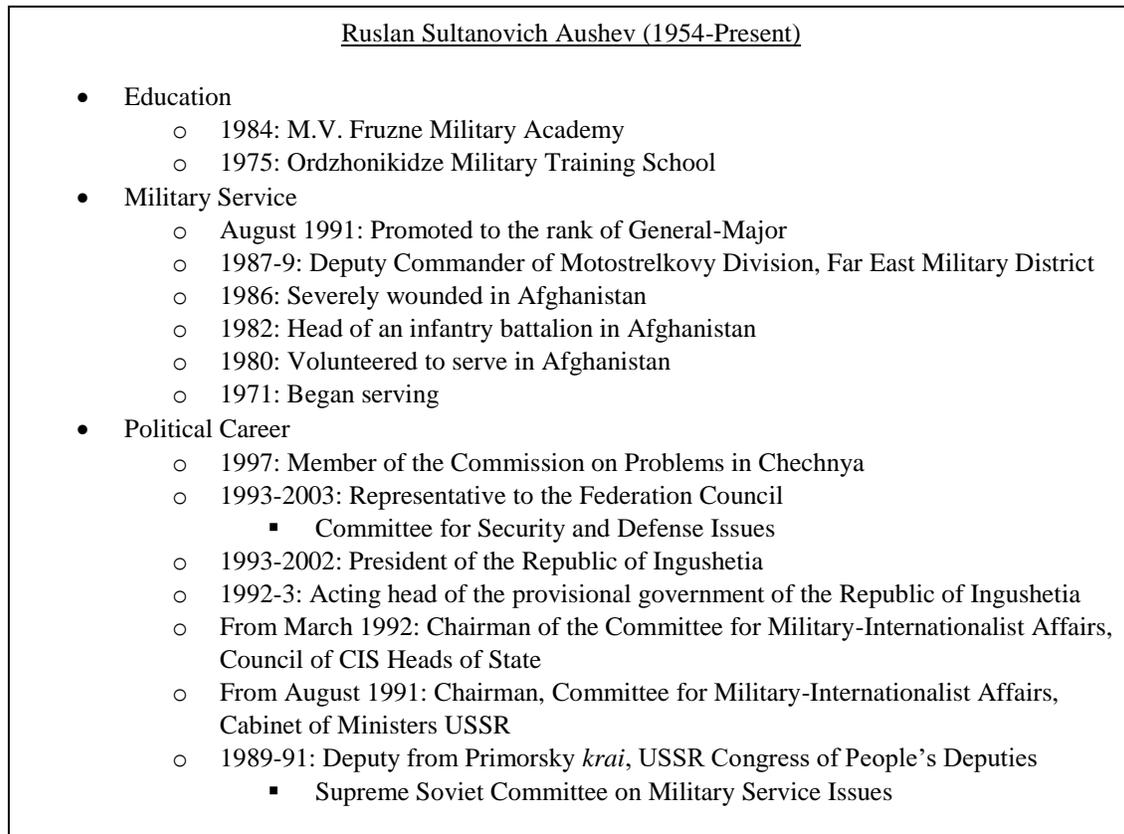


Figure 3: Biography of a Yeltsin-Era Regional Executive

Both Aushev and Semyonov served in republics that were not autonomous during the Soviet era. Though Ingushetia was not subordinated to another region, like Karachaevo-Cherkessia, the Ingush were a minority in Checheno-Ingushetia, meaning that they, like the Karachai, lacked access to influential posts within their republic. Moreover, the specter of ethnic conflict loomed over both republics. In Ingushetia, the specter was the conflict with neighboring North Ossetia over Prigorodnii district. In Karachaevo-Cherkessia, however, it was longstanding tension between the Karachai and the Cherkess. The electorates in both republics may have selected former military elites because they projected strength and resolve. However, they may have also selected former military elites simply because Karachai and Ingush proto-elites, blocked from entering the regional elite, were pushed into other organizations, such as the military. In Ingushetia, R.S. Aushev was elected president in 1993 after a year of service as

acting head of the republic. He received enthusiastic support from the Ingush who fled Prigorodnii district when a clash flared up between the opposing sides in October 1992.⁹ Though he was unopposed, he may have received the support of this constituency regardless because he steadfastly promised the return of their land. Indeed, Aushev won contested elections in 1994 and 1998.

Semyonov may have likewise projected strength and resolve when he became the first elected president of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, beating incumbent president V.I. Khubiev and Cherkessk Mayor S.E. Derev. Unlike the Karachai, the Cherkess—a minority within Karachaevo-Cherkessia—were never excluded from the administration of the autonomous *oblast*. After Yeltsin appointed Khubiev, a Karachai, as the president of the republic, they perhaps expected a Cherkess to become the president next. However, Semyonov defeated the Cherkess candidate, Derev, igniting protests from the Cherkess, who argued that the election was fraudulent. The Kremlin decided to intervene in this heretofore peaceful republic in the interest of maintaining stability. They supported their preferred candidate, Semyonov, who advocated for the republic to remain unified, over Derev, who advocated for the creation of a Cherkess autonomous *oblast* within Stavropol *krai*.¹⁰ Semyonov served as president until 2003.

As the political contests detailed above demonstrate, the central and North Caucasian elites interacted more frequently than during the Soviet period. Moreover, the nature of these interactions changed because they were now occurring within a contested political realm. Regional elites now negotiated the boundary between the Kremlin, which wanted stability, and their constituents, who could fall prey to nationalistic appeals. John P. Willerton proposed in 1992 that within the realm of contested politics, parliamentary experience would replace

⁹ Birch (1995), 66.

¹⁰ Orttung et al. (2000).

experience in an organizational party-work department as a driver of elite mobility. Six of the eleven Yeltsin-era regional executives were members of regional or local legislatures before becoming the regional executive. These five included D.G. Zavgaev, V.M. Kokov, and A.Kh. Galazov, each of whom served simultaneously as regional first secretary and chairman of the Supreme Soviet beginning in 1990. Moreover, seven of the eleven regional executives served in the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation or Congress of People's Deputies before becoming the regional executive. These seven generally served concurrently in a regional post. For example, M.M. Magomedov served concurrently as a member of the Congress of People's Deputies from 1990 to 1993, while serving as the chairman of the Dagestan Supreme Soviet. This indicates that the first Russian parliament, like the Soviet parliament, was not constantly in session. However, in 1993—following the constitutional crisis—Yeltsin abolished the Supreme Soviet and Council of People's Deputies and instated the Federal Assembly. The new Federal Assembly was comprised of the State Duma and the Federation Council. Two regional executives served in the State Duma before their elections, while all eleven were mandated to serve in the Federation Council as regional executives.

4.1.3 Patronage Connections

The frequency that regional executives served in legislatures—both regional and national—supports Willerton's contention that legislative experience would displace experience in organizational party-work departments during the post-Soviet era. Elites not only engaged in policy debates within legislatures—which could enhance their favorability amongst their constituents—but also established personal networks. Henry Hale argues that the political machines regional executives created in the 1990s were most powerful in the ethnic republics

and in agricultural regions, such as Stavropol *krai*.¹¹ Six of the eleven regional executives surveyed here served in a regional legislature before becoming the regional executive. Four of these served as the chairman of the Supreme Soviet, meaning that they could become the patrons of local networks. In Dagestan, M.M. Magomedov served as the chairman of the State Council—never as an elected president. He remained in power because the government was comprised of his clients. During the March 1999 elections to the People’s Assembly, he ignored the pervasive electoral violations committed by his supporters in order to maintain control over the legislature.¹² A second former chairman of a Supreme Soviet, V.M. Kokov of Kabardino-Balkaria, likewise dominated regional politics. He stacked the legislature with economic elites who supported him and marginalized his opposition so completely that he campaigned for reelection in 1997 unopposed, which violated federal law.¹³

Though Magomedov and Kokov violated the constitution and federal election law respectively, the Kremlin did not intervene to support the citizens of Dagestan or Kabardino-Balkaria. While this was partially due to the fact that both presidents maintained stability within their republics, it was perhaps also due to their patronage connections to central elites. The majority of regional executives served in the national parliament before becoming the regional executive and all served within the Federation Council as regional executives. They could therefore cultivate patronage relationships with powerful central elites. Party membership appears to be an important marker of such relationships. As Darrell Slider notes, Viktor Chernomyrdin’s party, Our Home is Russia, attracted one-third of regional executives after its

¹¹ Henry Hale, “Explaining Machine Politics in Russia’s Regions: Economy, Ethnicity, and Legacy.” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 19, no. 3 (2003), 244, 249.

¹² Orttung et al. (2000).

¹³ *Ibid.*

formation in 1995.¹⁴ Indeed, in the North Caucasus, four regional executives were members of Our Home is Russia. M.M Magomedov and V.M. Kokov, who were allies of Chernomyrdin, were both members; Kokov even served as the deputy chairman of the party.¹⁵ Two more regional executives were members of the second powerful bloc: Fatherland-All Russia. Fatherland-All Russia merged Fatherland—founded by Moscow Mayor Yury Luzhkov—and All Russia—founded by Tatarstan President Mintimer Shaimiev. R.S. Aushev was an early supporter of the latter.

However, these networks were less durable than those of the Soviet era because, as Willerton points out, loyalty was a predominant characteristic of Soviet politics.¹⁶ This entailed that an ambitious proto-elite could not switch to a more successful network without drawing rebuke. When Chernomyrdin lost his premiership in 1998, Our Home is Russia collapsed. Deputy Chairman V.M. Kokov resigned, while M.M. Magomedov became a member of Unity, the party endorsed by Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. V.M. Semyonov of Karachaevo-Cherkessia likewise abandoned Fatherland-All Russia to become a member of this emerging party of power. Regional elites of the post-Soviet period thus attempted to discern who would have power in the future and to join his network in order to both avoid a Kremlin-backed in future elections and maintain the ability to lobby the center for greater financial support.

4.2 The Russian Federation under Putin and Medvedev

In March 2000, Vladimir Putin was elected to his first presidential term. He immediately began to revoke the privileges that regional executives gained under Yeltsin. He subjected them to greater federal control through the presidential envoy, limited their ability to cultivate personal

¹⁴ Darrel Slider, "How United is United Russia? Regional Sources of Intra-Party Conflict." *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 26, no. 2 (2010), 258.

¹⁵ Orttung et al. (2000).

¹⁶ John P. Willerton, *Patronage and Politics in the USSR* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 228.

networks in Moscow by removing them from the Federation Council, and finally, in 2004, checked their ability to cultivate regional personal networks by replacing direct gubernatorial elections with presidential appointments. However, in 2012, the incompetence of regional executives and increasing unpopularity of the national government prompted Medvedev to initiate a return to direct gubernatorial elections. In 2013, Putin, citing the North Caucasus as an impetus, gave regional legislatures the choice to modify their constitutions to mandate either a direct gubernatorial election or presidential appointment. This section will analyze the effects of recentralizing the political system and of direct gubernatorial elections versus presidential appointment on elite mobility and patronage in the North Caucasus.

4.2.1 Personal Characteristics

This section surveys the twenty regional executives who were elected or appointed after Putin was elected president in March 2000. It does not include the six regional executives who were elected under Yeltsin and retained their posts after 2000. These six were M.M. Magomedov of Dagestan, R.S. Aushev of Ingushetia, V.M. Kokov of Kabardino-Balkaria, V.M. Semyonov of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, A.S. Dzasokhov of North Ossetia, and A.L. Chernogov of Stavropol *krai*. As shown below in Table 5, the ethnic profile of the Putin-era elite has generally remained similar to that of the Yeltsin-era elite. However, in October 2017, Putin appointed V.A. Vasilyev, who is half Russian and half Kazakh, acting head of Dagestan. Both Yeltsin and Putin previously appointed Russians as acting republican heads. In 1999, Yeltsin appointed Igor Ivanov, the Chairman of the Karachaevo-Cherkess People's Assembly, and Valentin Vlasov, the Chairman of the Central Election Commission, as acting heads of Karachaevo-Cherkessia after the 1999 republican presidential election. Moreover, in 2004, Putin appointed S.B. Abramov, the Head of the Commission for Budget Control in the Chechen Republic, acting republican head

after the assassination of Akhmad Kadyrov. However, as Sufian Zhemukhov notes, unlike these predecessors, V.A. Vasilyev could be appointed Head of Dagestan.¹⁷ He would be the first leader of Dagestan who is neither an Avar, Dargin, nor Kumyk since 1948.

Table 5: Ethnicity of Regional Executives, 2000-18

| Region | Regional Executive | Term | Ethnicity |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Chechnya | R.A. Kadyrov | 2007-Present | Chechen |
| | A.D. Alkhanov | 2004-7 | Chechen |
| | A. Kadyrov | 2000-4 | Chechen |
| Dagestan | V.A. Vasilyev | 2017-Present | Russian/Kazakh |
| | R.G. Abdulatipov | 2013-17 | Avar |
| | M.M. Magomedov* | 2010-13 | Dargin |
| | M.G. Aliev | 2006-10 | Avar |
| Ingushetia | Yu.B. Yevkurov | 2008-Present | Ingush |
| | M.M. Zyazikov | 2002-8 | Ingush |
| Kabardino-Balkaria | Yu.A. Kokov | 2013-Present | Kabardin |
| | A.B. Kanokov | 2005-13 | Kabardin |
| Karachaevo-Cherkessia | R.B. Temrezov | 2011-Present | Karachai |
| | B.S. Ebzeev | 2008-11 | Karachai |
| | M.A. Batdyev | 2003-8 | Karachai |
| North Ossetia | V.Z. Bitarov | 2016-Present | Ossetian |
| | T.K. Aguzarov | 2015-16 | Ossetian |
| | T.D. Mamsurov | 2005-15 | Ossetian |
| Stavropol <i>Krai</i> | V.V. Vladimirov | 2013-Present | Russian |
| | V.G. Zerenkov | 2012-13 | Russian |
| | V.V. Gaevsky | 2008-12 | Russian |

Though the ethnic profile of the North Caucasian regional executives in the Putin era remained generally the same as in the Yeltsin era, the educational profiles of these elites diverged. While seven of eleven Yeltsin-era regional executives specialized in either agriculture or industry, only five of the twenty Putin-era regional executives specialized in these fields. Like the Yeltsin-era governors, all three Putin-era governors of Stavropol *krai* specialized in either agriculture or industry, indicating the continued importance of these fields within the regional economy. Half of the Putin-era regional executives specialized in either law—the specialty of six regional executives—or economics—the specialty of five. Moreover, eight of the twenty

¹⁷ Sufian Zhemukhov, “Outsiders and Locals: The Kremlin’s Policy of Appointing Governors in the North Caucasus.” *Russian Analytical Digest*, no. 222 (2018), 9.

were candidates or doctors of science, indicating that graduate education became a driver of recruitment into and mobility within the regional political elite. Figure 4 shows the biography of T.K. Aguzarov, a highly educated elite who was appointed Head of North Ossetia in 2015.

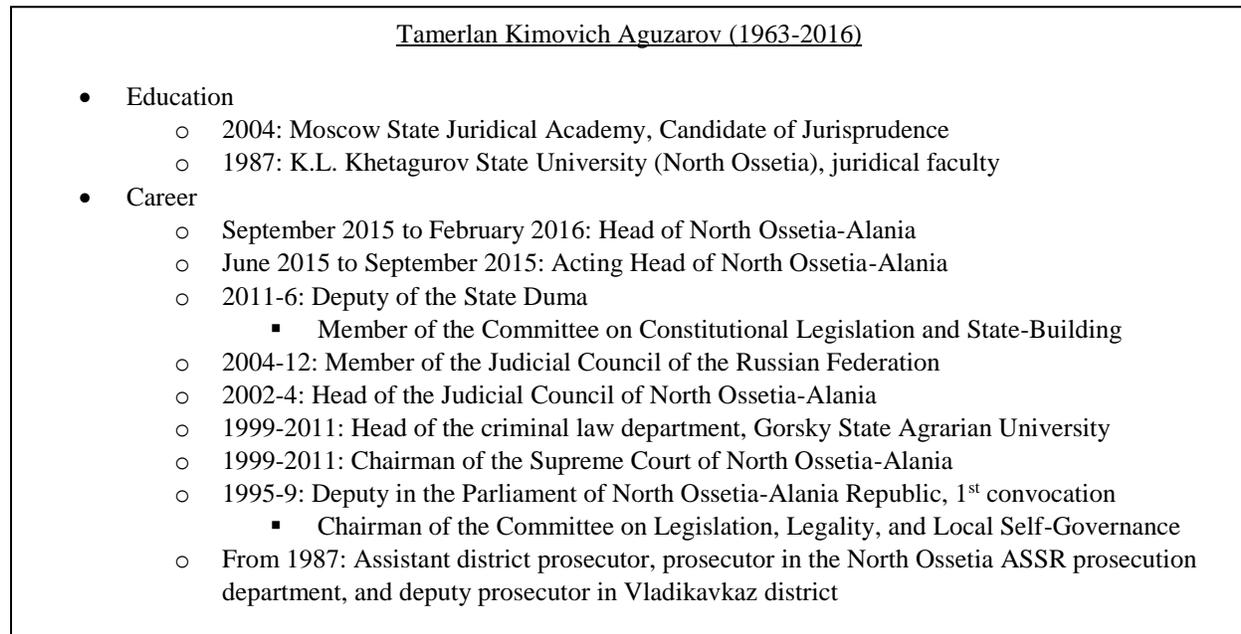


Figure 4: Biography of a Putin-Era Regional Executive

4.2.2 Professional Characteristics

Sharon Werning Rivera and David Rivera argue that the presence of those who have security-forces experience in the Russian political elite has been overestimated, while the presence of those who have business experience has generally been overlooked. In the North Caucasus, six regional executives possessed extensive experience in the security forces—defined here as the MVD, FSB, and military. Four of the six worked in the MVD; five became regional executives in the eastern North Caucasus—Dagestan, Chechnya, and Ingushetia. This is unsurprising because these republics were the epicenter of a local anti-Russia insurgency, which was primarily the product of the First and Second Russo-Chechen Wars. Though Rivera and Rivera posited in 2006 that the militarization of the elite would be a temporary phenomenon,

militarization of the North Caucasian political elite has continued. The only heads of Kabardino-Balkaria and Dagestan who have extensive security forces experience—Yu.A. Kokov and V.A. Vasilyev—were appointed in 2013 and 2017 respectively; both continue to serve. Meanwhile, in Chechnya and Ingushetia, Putin has appointed two concurrent regional executives drawn from the security forces.

Contrary to their interpretation of the militarization of the Russian elite under Putin, Rivera and Rivera argue that the increased recruitment of former business professionals into the political elite is an emerging trend. The emergence of this trend ultimately marks an irreversible generational shift within the elite. In the North Caucasus, the salience of this trend is supported by the shift from specializations in agriculture and industry to specializations in law and economics. However, only seven of the twenty regional executives were former business professionals, which is similar to the proportion who formerly worked in the security services. These seven are also geographically concentrated. While five of the six regional executives who worked in the security services were concentrated in the eastern North Caucasus, all regional executives who worked in business were concentrated in the west—in North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and Stavropol *krai*.

Nikolai Petrov points out that the 2010 appointment of Alexander Khloponin, the governor of Krasnoyarsk *krai*, as the first presidential envoy of the North Caucasus Federal District demonstrates that the Kremlin chose to emphasize regional economic development over security.¹⁸ Yet, in spite of this contention, only one republican head with business experience—R.B. Temrezov of Karachaevo-Cherkessia—was appointed during Khloponin’s tenure, which ended in 2014. Further, only one other regional executive with such experience—V.V. Gaevskii

¹⁸ Nikolai Petrov, “Regional Governors under the Dual Power of Medvedev and Putin.” *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 26, no. 2 (2010), 297.

of Stavropol *krai*—was appointed under Medvedev, even though Medvedev was the primary driver of the shift toward regional economic development. Though appointments of security personnel may have decreased and appointments of business professionals increased elsewhere in the Russian Federation, these trends appear equally salient in the North Caucasus.

The institution of gubernatorial appointments in 2004 enabled the Kremlin to appoint outsiders who would perhaps prove unelectable under direct gubernatorial elections because they lack both popular legitimacy and a local political machine. Regional executives are defined as outsiders if they have spent the majority of their careers elsewhere in the Russian Federation. For example, R.S. Abdulatipov, whose biography is detailed in Figure 5, is defined as an outsider because he has spent five years of his nearly-forty-year career in Dagestan, where he served as president from 2013 to 2017. The career history of R.S. Abdulatipov demonstrates that outsiders are no longer exclusively Russian, as they were during the Soviet era. Regional executives are defined as insiders if they have spent their careers in the region where they served as regional executives. For example, T.K. Aguzarov, whose biography was detailed in Figure 4, spent two-thirds of his career in North Ossetia, where he served as head from 2015 to 2016.

Ramazan Gadzhimuradovich Abdualtipov (1946-Present)

- Education
 - 1978: A.A. Zhdanov Leningrad State University, Candidate of Philosophy
 - 1975: Dagestan State University
- Career
 - 2017-Present: Special Representative to the President of the RF on Questions of Humanitarian and Economic Cooperation with the Governments of the Kaspiysk Region (Dagestan)
 - 2013-7: Head of the Republic of Dagestan
 - 2013: Acting Head of the Republic of Dagestan
 - 2011-3: Deputy in the State Duma
 - 2009-11: Rector of the Moscow State University of Culture and the Arts
 - 2005-9: Ambassador to Tajikistan
 - 2000-5: Member of the Federation Council (Saratov *oblast*)
 - 1999: Minister of the Russian Federation
 - 1998-9: Minister of National Politics
 - 1997-8: Vice Chairman of Administration of the Russian Federation
 - 1996-7: Deputy in the State Duma
 - 1994-6: Vice Chairman of the Federation Council
 - 1994: First Deputy Minister on Issues of Nationality and Regional Politics
 - 1990-3: Chairman of the Soviet of Nationalities, RSFSR Supreme Soviet
 - 1988: Head of the Analysis and Forecasting Sector, Central Committee of the CPSU
 - 1985-8: Head of the Philosophy Department, Dagestan Pedagogical Institute
 - 1979-85: Associate Professor, Department Head at the Murmansk Higher Engineering Naval College
 - 1978-9: Assistant Instructor at Leningrad State University

Figure 5: Biography of a Putin-Era Regional Executive

Outsiders and insiders have varied by the length of their terms as the regional executive. The six regional executives who were elected during the Yeltsin era and continued to serve in their posts during the Putin era—all of whom were regional insiders—served for an average of 11.4 years. However, the fourteen insiders who were elected or appointed after the 2000 presidential election served in their posts for less than half of that time—4.7 years on average. The six outsiders who were appointed following the institution of gubernatorial appointments in 2004 served longer—for an average of 5.1 years. These decreased term lengths demonstrate that the overall rate of turnover of regional executives increased in the North Caucasus during the Putin era. Outsiders were ultimately slightly advantaged within the system of gubernatorial appointments perhaps because they lacked personal networks within their regions, meaning that

they possessed no independent power base from which to challenge the Kremlin. The Kremlin, however, has consistently appointed neither outsiders nor insiders in the North Caucasus. As Table 6 shows, regional insiders have monopolized the regional executive posts in Chechnya and North Ossetia. They also monopolized power in Dagestan and Stavropol *krai* until 2013, when Putin appointed outsiders to both regions. Meanwhile, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Karachaevo-Cherkessia display the opposite trend because appointments of outsiders have been followed by appointments of insiders.

Table 6: The Proportion of Insiders and Outsiders Serving as Regional Executives in the North Caucasus, 2000-18

| Region | Regional Executive | Insider or Outsider | Term |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Chechnya | R.A. Kadyrov | Insiders | 2007-Present |
| | A.D. Alkhanov | | 2004-7 |
| | A. Kadyrov | | 2000-4 |
| Dagestan | V.A. Vasilyev | Outsiders | 2017-Present |
| | R.G. Abdulatipov | | 2013-17 |
| | M.M. Magomedov | Insiders | 2010-13 |
| | M.G. Aliev | | 2006-10 |
| Ingushetia | Yu.B. Yevkurov | Insider | 2008-Present |
| | M.M. Zyazikov | Outsider | 2002-8 |
| Kabardino-Balkaria | Yu.A. Kokov | Insider | 2013-Present |
| | A.B. Kanokov | Outsider | 2005-13 |
| Karachaevo-Cherkessia | R.B. Temrezov | Insider | 2011-Present |
| | B.S. Ebzeev | Outsider | 2008-11 |
| | M.A. Batdyev | Insider | 2003-8 |
| North Ossetia | V.Z. Bitarov | Insiders | 2016-Present |
| | T.K. Aguzarov | | 2015-16 |
| | T.D. Mamsurov | | 2005-2015 |
| Stavropol <i>Krai</i> | V.V. Vladimirov | Outsider | 2013-Present |
| | V.G. Zerenkov | Insiders | 2012-13 |
| | V.V. Gaevsky | | 2008-12 |

4.2.3 Patronage Connections

Patronage connections to central elites perhaps became a more influential determinant of regional elite mobility after the institution of gubernatorial appointments. J. Paul Goode notes that the regional executives who lost office from 2005 to 2006 generally followed the nomination process detailed in the 2004 law on gubernatorial appointments, while regional executives who

maintained their office appealed directly to President Putin.¹⁹ Goode shows that this occurred in the North Caucasus as well. A.S. Dzasokhov, V.M. Kokov, and M.M. Magomedov followed the nomination procedure and were replaced, while M.M. Zyazikov and A.L. Chernogov appealed to Putin and remained in office. It is important to note, however, that other factors perhaps contributed to the replacement of Dzasokhov, Kokov, and Magomedov. Dzasokhov faced protest across North Ossetia in the wake of the Beslan school siege, while Kokov and Magomedov were likely replaced due to poor health and old age respectively.

Though analyzing nominations versus presidential appeals may not be a failsafe method of determining which regional executives would be replaced in the North Caucasus, the re-appointment of Zyazikov nonetheless speaks to the importance of patronage connections within Putin-era political system. M.M. Zyazikov, a Kremlin-ally, was elected President of Ingushetia in 2002 after R.S. Aushev suddenly resigned from the post in 2001. The Kremlin likely pressured Aushev, a vocal critic of the wars in Chechnya, to resign and pushed his preferred candidate, Interior Minister Khamzad Gutseriev, from the election, thereby ensuring that Zyazikov would be victorious.²⁰ The influence of powerful patrons over regional elite mobility is further demonstrated by R.A. Kadyrov's rise to power. In 2006, the struggle for power over the Chechen Republic reached its peak as Kadyrov attempted to oust President A.D. Alkhanov. Though Alkhanov boasted the support of influential figures in the MVD and FSB, Kadyrov had the more powerful patron: Deputy Chief of the Presidential Administration, Vladislav Surkov.²¹ In 2007, Alkhanov was appointed the Deputy Minister of Justice, enabling the rise of Kadyrov.

¹⁹ J. Paul Goode, "The Puzzle of Putin's Gubernatorial Appointments." *Europe-Asia Studies* 59, no. 3 (2007), 377-8.

²⁰ Robert Orttung, "Kremlin's Candidate Replaces Aushev in Ingushetiya." *Russian Regional Report* (2002), 215.

²¹ Mairbek Vatchagaev, "The Increasingly Deadly Struggle for Power between Kadyrov and Alkhanov." *North Caucasus Weekly* 7, no. 37 (2006).

Perhaps the most recent illustration of the influence of powerful patrons is the appointment of V.A. Vasilyev as the acting head of Dagestan. Vasilyev is connected to preeminent figures within the Russian security forces. He worked under Sergei Stepashin and Boris Gryzlov at the Ministry of the Interior, as well as under Vladimir Putin and Sergei Ivanov at the Security Council.²² Unlike Zyazikov and Kadyrov, Vasilyev already advanced beyond the ranks of the regional elite to the central elite, which entails that his appointment as a regional executive would not constitute a promotion, but a demotion. However, Vasilyev was appointed the acting head of Dagestan as a powerful central elite capable of challenging the authority of the local networks that have controlled the republic for decades. Yet, like his predecessor, R.G. Abdulatipov, Vasilyev has only replaced a few officials at the top of the republican administration. The majority of officials remain in office because they have the connections, local knowledge, and legitimacy that outsiders like Abdulatipov and Vasilyev lack.²³ The political culture of Dagestan thus remains unchanged.

The ongoing battle between Moscow and the republican elites of Dagestan demonstrates that regional patronage networks have remained influential after the cancellation of direct gubernatorial elections. V.M. Kokov of Kabardino-Balkaria and Magomedali Magomedov of Dagestan selected their successors when they were not reappointed in 2005 and 2006 respectively.^{24,25} V.M. Kokov selected A.B. Kanokov as his successor, while Magomedali Magomedov agreed to resign if M.G. Aliev was appointed his successor and his son, Magomedislam Magomedov, appointed Speaker of the People's Assembly of Dagestan.

²² "Biografiya vriio glavy Respubliki Dagestan VladimiraVasilyeva." *TASS* (Moscow, Russia), Oct. 3, 2017.

²³ Paul Goble, "Vasilyev's Much-Ballyhooed Cadres Revolution in Dagestan Has Not Happened." *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 15, no. 52 (2018).

²⁴ Elena Chebankova, *Russia's Federal Relations: Putin's Reforms and Management of the Regions* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 148-9.

²⁵ Petrov (2010), 284.

However, succession was influenced not only by patronage networks, but also by dynastic connections. In Chechnya and Dagestan, R.A. Kadyrov and Magomedislam Magomedov succeeded their fathers as republican presidents in 2007 and 2010 respectively. Moreover, in Kabardino-Balkaria, Yu.A. Kokov, a distant relative of V.M. Kokov and member of his extended patronage network, became the republican head in 2013.²⁶ The influence of these regional connections demonstrates that gubernatorial appointments were not necessarily judgements handed down from the all-powerful center. They could also be the product of interactions between the self-interested center and periphery.

4.3 Conclusions

In December 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed, producing fourteen independent states that faced complex political transitions. In the Russian Federation, the post-Soviet period has thus far witnessed the rise of two political systems: a decentralizing system under President Yeltsin and a recentralizing system under Presidents Putin and Medvedev. It also witnessed the replacement of the regional first secretary by the regional executive as the head of a regional government. All regional executives were elected through direct gubernatorial elections by the late 1990s. In December 2004, following the Beslan school siege, direct gubernatorial elections were replaced by presidential appointments. In January 2012, the Federal Assembly reauthorized direct gubernatorial elections, but qualified that decision in 2013—after President Putin expressed concern about direct elections in the ethnically-divided regions of the North Caucasus. Regional legislatures can now decide whether their regional constitutions should mandate direct gubernatorial elections or presidential appointments of governors.

²⁶ Zhemukhov (2018), 8.

The development of the political system during the post-Soviet era enabled elites of varying profiles to become regional executives. During the Yeltsin era, five of the eleven regional executives were drawn from the upper echelon of the Soviet-era regional elite, meaning that circulation of elites generally did not occur in the first decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Circulation occurred only in Stavropol *krai*, where second and third tier Soviet-era elites became the regional executives following the collapse of Gorbachev's extended patronage network. Military elites also became regional executives in the North Caucasus during the Yeltsin era; they have continued to be elected and appointed as regional executives during the Putin era—especially in the tumultuous eastern North Caucasus. The Putin era has also witnessed the start of a generational shift within the regional elite. Whereas during the Yeltsin era the majority of regional executives specialized in agricultural or industry, during the Putin era the majority have specialized in law or economics. Moreover, a greater proportion have experience in business—especially in the western North Caucasus. A second trend that has become salient during the Putin era is the appointment of outsiders. Though outsiders have tended to serve slightly longer as regional executives than regional insiders, neither outsiders nor insiders have served as long as the regional executives who were elected during the Yeltsin era. Moreover, outsiders have not served the purpose the Kremlin intended; they have not been able to uproot local networks that can challenge the authority of the center.

Patronalism remains a relevant concept to describe the post-Soviet political system. Though elections were introduced during the Yeltsin era, they nonetheless involved the exchange of concrete benefits through networks of acquaintance. Within regions, the extended patronage networks of the Soviet era has remained salient, meaning that loyalty to the regional patron—or his clients--could elicit a promotion or other financial inducement. However, the nature of the

exchange of benefits between the Kremlin and the regions changed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. North Caucasian regional executives could exchange increased voter turnout for the party of power or greater stability for benefits like a reappointment or increased federal subsidies. Such exchanges have maintained a personalization of governance reminiscent of the Soviet era in the North Caucasus and elsewhere in the post-Soviet space.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has examined the evolution of elite mobility and patronage in the North Caucasus during the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. It defined the North Caucasus as Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and Stavropol *krai*—the regions that comprise the North Caucasus Federal District. It focused on the regional leaders of the Soviet and post-Soviet periods, examining the biographies of the regional first secretaries who served from 1956 through 1991 and the regional executives who have served from 1991 through the present.

Henry Hale's *Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective* served as the theoretical basis. In this work, Hale endeavors to explain regime transitions across the post-Soviet space. He proposes patronalism as a means to describe the political-social sphere in these states. Within a patronal system, politics is based on the exchange of concrete rewards and benefits through chains of acquaintance. Regime transitions are therefore the result of an actual—or perceived—reduction in the ability of a patron to effectively distribute rewards and punishments, and monitor the actions of his clients.

The central question of this thesis was whether the evolution of elite mobility and patronage in the North Caucasus from the Soviet to the post-Soviet eras fits the conclusions that Hale draws. The regions of the North Caucasus—especially Dagestan, Chechnya, and Ingushetia—were never fully incorporated into the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union. Moreover, they have achieved relative autonomy within the Russian Federation, so one may expect that the analysis of post-Soviet regimes that Hale presents could apply here as well. As discussed in the conclusions of Chapters 4 and 5, the evolution of elite mobility and patronage across the Soviet and post-Soviet eras reflects Hale's description of the political-social sphere

under patronalism. During the Soviet era, a proto-elite could give loyalty to a powerful elite and thereby ascend the political hierarchy in tandem with his patron. During the post-Soviet era, the benefits changed, but the exchange remained. A North Caucasian regional executive could now exchange electoral advantages or greater stability for rewards, including a reappointment or increased federal subsidies.

Though the political-social spheres of the North Caucasus are patronal, Hale's analysis of regime transitions is not suitable here. The regional executives of the post-Soviet era, like the regional party first secretaries of the Soviet era, are dependent on Moscow, so leadership changes here remain more similar to personnel transitions than regime transitions. Moreover, as J. Paul Goode has noted, the shift to appointments in the Federation Council means that an ineffectual regional executive can be packed off to Moscow to serve as a Senator. From there, he could be dispatched to the regions yet again, indicating that leadership changes are cyclical personnel transitions. Eleven former regional executives currently hold positions in Moscow, the majority of which are in the Federation Council or Presidential Administration. They ultimately comprise a reserve of known regional executives, whom Moscow could dispatch to maintain order in the troubled North Caucasus.

This thesis ultimately represents the beginning of an analysis of governance in the North Caucasus across the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. Future research endeavors on this important topic could include analyses of elite mobility and patronage within regions, analyses of relations between key regional leaders and their central patrons, and further analysis of the logic of gubernatorial appointments in the North Caucasus.

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