

«New» Political Parties of Russian Federation: Electoral Achievements And Perspectives

Los «Nuevos» Partidos Políticos De La Federación De Rusia: Logros Y Perspectivas Electorales

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ABSTRACT

The article is concerned on election problems and perspectives of Russian opposition parties. The focus of the article is on political parties created after 2012. Article reveals the parties which were successful in regional and local elections. Also it is determined which of them can get maximum election chances in future. Electoral niches which can be taken with such parties, appeared after 2012, away from major political players is pointed. The circumstances that can prevent the electoral success of such parties are also noted. The conclusion that chances of the parties created after 2012 on real electoral success in nearest future is made.

KEYWORDS: Russian Federation, political parties, opposition, federal law, minimal quantity required, growth, changes, the election participation, electoral perspectives, parliament.

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RESUMEN

El artículo se ocupa de los problemas electorales y las perspectivas de los partidos de oposición rusos. El artículo se centra en los partidos políticos creados después de 2012. El artículo revela los partidos que triunfaron en las elecciones regionales y locales. También se determina cuál de ellos puede obtener las máximas posibilidades de elección en el futuro. Se apuntan nichos electorales que se pueden tomar con tales partidos, aparecidos después de 2012, lejos de los principales actores políticos. También se señalan las circunstancias que pueden impedir el éxito electoral de dichos partidos. Se hace la conclusión de que las posibilidades de los partidos creados después de 2012 sobre el éxito electoral real en el futuro próximo se hacen.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Federación de Rusia, partidos políticos, oposición, ley federal, cantidad mínima requerida, crecimiento, cambios, participación electoral, perspectivas electorales, parlamento.

INTRODUCTION

The political parties are one of the most important actor in political system of any country. Their main objective is to establish and maintain between civilian society and political institutes, responsible for the most important political decisions. The most important criteria for political party's functioning is its electoral success. This is absolutely true for all countries, including modern Russian Federation.

We should note that for the goal of this article by “new” political parties we assume those political parties which were created after 02.04.2012 when Federal Law № 28-ФЗ (№28-FZ) “About changes in Federal Law “About political parties”” (Federal`ny`j zakon, 2001). The most important of its states is, in authors opinion, is in art. 1: “...the minimal quantity of political party's members is 500”. Earlier, for example, the minimal quantity was 40000 members, thus this limit was 40 times higher (Valentov, Gusarenko & Shumskij, 2020). “Such drastic lowering member quantity level was an answer of the state on civic society demands for government institution system democratization” (Pogorelov & Shabarov, 2015). As a result, after passing changes in a Federal Law N 95-ФЗ “About political parties” (Fomenkov, 2010) the number of political parties has increased. There were only seven political parties in this country before 02.04.2012. At the time of writing there are 39 officially registered parties in Russia (Tamer`yan & Kachmazova, 2019). But there were times when the number of the political parties were more than 60 (РБК, 2020). The main thing, in author's opinion, is that eight years of monitoring grant us the conclusion of Russian

Federation political system transformation after 02.04.2012. Also we may have a clear view on electoral perspectives of the parties created after this day.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The author of the article analyses the features of different level election campaigns political parties' participations. Conclusions are drawn about the high and low chances of Russian political parties to get a representation in the State Duma of the Federal Meetings of the Russian Federation in 2021.

Predicting election results is a relatively recent and increasingly popular part of sociological and political science research. Competitive elections are a hallmark of modern democracy, and predicting the winner is of interest to all those participating in or watching the election campaign. Election forecasting stands out from other political science studies, as the forecast is:

- based on statistical and operational data, which are characterized by limitations and unreliability;
- focused on a time-limited task;
- related to the error of the measurement methods of the source data;
- it is related to the specifics of the election campaign and the election itself.

We also point out that we do not take into account the mobilization capabilities of the current government during the election period, that is, we proceed from the idea of a rather democratic nature of the will of citizens.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Note, that, from author's point of view, the most important criteria of political party's success is not its members' quantity but election results. There were a lot of elections from county to federal level for the past eight years. It must be admitted that the most important election campaigns of that period didn't bring to "new" parties any significant result. For example, on a presidential election in 2018 the best result from all of "new" parties' candidate was demonstrated by K. A. Sobchiak from "Civilian initiative" party – 1,68%. At the moment new parties couldn't lead any of their representative on a post of the head of regional executive branch leader. There was no deputy selected from new parties in The State of Duma in 2016 either.

Regional parliament elections were more successful for those parties for the past eight years. For example, in 2013 5% barrier was overcome by: "Civilian Platform" party during the election in People's Hural of Kalmykia and Le-

gislative Meeting of Irkutskaya Oblast' (9,37 и 8, 51 % respectively), "Communists of Russia" party during the elections in Higher Council of Khakassia (6,44 %). Moreover, deputies from "Civilian Platform" party and "Russian Republic Party – PARNAS" party were elected in Yaroslavl' regional Duma. In 2014 one representative of "Motherland" party was chosen in Regional Duma of Tula's oblast', one deputy entered in Deputies Meeting of Autonomous region of Nancy from "Motherland" and "Civilian Power" respectively, one representative of "Motherland" party joined The Duma of Moscow. In 2016 three seats in Legislative Meeting of Saint-Petersburg were given to "ROSTA party", 1 seat in Legislative Meeting of Primorsky Krai was given to Party of Retired People, "Motherland" party got one mandate in Duma of Tambovskaya oblast'. In 2017 ROSTA Party got one place in Legislative Meeting of Krasnoyarskiy Krai. In 2018 during the elections in Kurultai of Bashkortostan Republic one seat was given to "Green Party" representative, two seats in Higher Council of Khakassia Republic were given to "Communists of Russia", one seat in Legislative Meeting of Zabaikalskiy Krai was given to Party of Retired People, one deputy of SUCP (Soviet Union Communist Party) got seat in in Legislative Meeting of Vladimirskaya oblast', three deputies from "Civilian Platform" Party entered in Legislative Meeting of Irkutskaya oblast', one seat in in Legislative Meeting of Ulyanovskaya oblast' was given to "Communists of Russia". In Deputies' Meeting of Autonomous region of Nancy one mandate came to "Motherland" Party and one to "Communists of Russia". In 2019 representatives of parties "Communists of Russia", "Motherland", "Civilian platform", SUCP, "Action Party", "ROSTA party", "Russian Ecological Party "Green", "The party of Russian Retired People for Social Justice" passed several regional parliaments. In 2020 the representatives of "new" parties like "For Truth", "New People", "Green Alternative", "Motherland", "The party of Russian Retired People for Social Justice" and "Social Aid Party" passed several regional parliaments. It is worth mentioning that "new" parties often were successful in county elections. The most well-known example is the victory of "Civilian Party" member E.V. Roizman in Ekaterinburg mayor election in 2013. Such success of "new" parties on county elections can be explained by protest voting, party member's individual charisma or some local factor (for example: T.L. Kaminskaya (2020)).

Thus, several intermediate conclusions can be made. First, part of "new" parties –like "Motherland" party– is quite comparable by its election results and perspectives with such "old" parties like "Yabloko" or "Patriots of Russia" (Bokareva & Tkachenko, 2020; Spisok, 2020). They do have some local success, but there are no serious perspectives on entering The State of Duma of Russian Federation Federal Meeting, the best thing they can achieve is the victory in one of one mandate county. Second, there are no positive electoral dynamics among "new" parties, no more than statistic fluctuation. Third, among "new" parties there are "the newest", created in 2020. These are "New

people” (Amiantova, 2020) and “For Truth” (Mushtuk, 2014). We must admit that both of them had good election start in contrast with “new” parties, like “Motherland” and others with representation in regional legislatures. Still, entering the lower house of Russian Parliament in 2021 is not guaranteed for them. The situation is similar with Presidential election – never in Russia history the third place on them have given any positive push in political career. We should note that Russian party system is going to change soon enough. The merging of three parties, “Russian Justice”, “Russian Patriots” and “For Truth” is going to happen. Such united left-patriotic party is able to become the second one in Parliament. But less optimistic scenario, when alliance of “ruling party” moderate opponents with zealous acting president’s proponents won’t automatically lead to mechanical summarizing of their electoral base and only slightly increase their share as a fourth Parliament party (the first three are “United Russia”, Russian Federation Communist Party and Russian Liberal Democracy Party), is also possible. Anyway, the example of “For Truth”, which allied with previously created parties, and, what is the most important, with Parliament party, shows that it is almost unreal for “new” (and even “the newest”) parties to enter the Parliament at a present time. What can help or stop opposition parties with electoral perspectives to get seats in Parliament in 2021? This question is mostly concern left-patriotic and statist parties. They are using ideas both of the Great Russia (right nationalism in the essence) and social justice, unifying them harmonically in their programs and leaders’ speeches. In the opinion of these parties’ members, the moderate socialism is fully compatible with Russian civilization features (Pakhomova & Fomenkov, 2019; Reshetnikova, 2004; Federal’nyj zakon, 2015). Such ideas were sounded during 1980-s – 1990-s by several political organizations in Soviet Union and later in post-Soviet Russia (Fursova, 2016).

They do have high level of popularity (mainly because of their anti-western and anti-liberal rhetoric). However, three parties rivaling the same electoral pool may, as a result, fail, even on the edge of entering The State of Duma. That can happen because of dispersion of electorate between ideologically relative organizations. Such dispersion can be even more, but in 2019 “The Great Fatherland” party, led by The President supporter and publicist N.V. Starikov, has terminated its existence (Verxovskij & Strukova, 2014; 136; Shestakov, 2015). Now Starikov is an active supporter of “For Truth” party. Also we have lost “National Course” party, also well-known as “NLI” (National Liberation Initiative, НОД in Russian). At the present time it is supposed to create “People. Fatherland. Spirituality” party (also НОД as acronym). In case of denial in registration the NLI potential electorate will give their votes to one of three statist parties. It should be mentioned though that the dispersion of left-patriotic electorate still exist, despite of decreasing the number of such parties. It is quite problematic to say for sure how effectively such dispersion can be decreased with the help of such significant technology for

Russia as using of administrative pressure (Voronczova & Zvonovskij, 2003; Rodionov, 2016).

Moreover, attempts of party creation made by orthodox businessman K.V. Malofeev (one of his most well-known projects is TV-channel “Tsargrad” (The city of King of Kings as Christian metaphor)) it cannot be denied. We should not forget about the position of famous opposition politic I.I. Strelkov. Malofeev, of course, is right-wing politic, but he also supports the idea of including Donbass region to Russia in the same manner as leader of “For Truth” party Z.N. Prilepin. At the same time I.I. Strelkov is quite popular among Donbass former combatants, which makes it difficult to use the problem of Donbass War in election campaign will not be easy (the attempts of polemics about determining true South-East Ukraine Civil War combatants and imposters are also possible).

When we talk about “New people” party we cannot deny the fact that it can get votes from part of liberal electorate. But at the same time this electorate is also dispersed (Andronova & Kamaletdinova, 2015). Indeed, the “Yabloko” party is still functioning, and there is ROSTA party. Apparently, “Civilian Initiative” party and “People’s Freedom party” will continue their existence up to the start of the campaign. This could lead to dispersion of liberal electorate is even larger scale than it is among the left-patriotic electorate. “New People” party will have to fight for votes of so called “swamp” – citizens with uncertain political opinion, spontaneously displeased with current political power, especially with actions and politics of “United Russia” party, but at the same time these people are not ready to support the opposition, both traditional and non-system. The problem is that such citizens are very negative to liberal ideas (due to the negative experience from the 1990-s), mostly patriotic and conservative, the revolution scares them. Of course there are many such apolitical citizens unwilling revolution, but their political activity and polling station turnout is very low, especially on county elections – partly because of the fact of their political indifference. “New People” party can get the votes of apolitical citizens, but there is no guarantee that it will be enough to enter in Lower House of Parliament (though there are good chances on regional and county elections). Chances of ecological parties on passing in Parliament are traditionally low, despite of local success in some regions (Dolgix, 2019; Mylnikov, 2017; avlov, 2020; Saly’kov, 2016).

CONCLUSION

Thus we can say that next draft of Russian Federation Federal Meeting State of Duma will be once again presented by four Parliament parties, which are “United Russia”, Russian Federation Communist Party, Russian Liberal Democracy Party and “Russian Justice” party in alliance with parties “Patriots of Russia” and “For Truth”.

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